

The Storytellers Handbook

The Complete Handbook for Storytellers of Vampire

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Word From the White Wolf Game Studio:

Now there are three more recent hires to talk about. First came Travis Lamar Williams - shipping man, writer, America Online guru and all-around sweetheart. Ask him about the "Doodoo Man" next time you see him. Then came René Lilly, our sales machine and Stewart's much-desired relief. Last (and hopefully there will be no more for at least two products)

came Richard Thomas, White Wolf Magazine's art director for longer than he (or we) care to remember. He will be handling the same duties here full-time as well as heading up the production department. By the way, we appreciate everyone's concern for helping our staff grow, but the next founding left in swaddling clothes on our doorstep gets fed to Ken's fish.

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The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

- Lord Alfred Tennyson,

In the Valley of Caerteret

At the heart of all communication lies the story - the holder of hopes and dreams, fears and hatreds, passion and mystery. What we are, what we will be and what we want to be comes to us in this form. But it is not enough to just create a tale.

Images must flash past the shocked faces of those around. Pulsing noises have to fill their world, allowing them little respite. Scent swirls around, and even the feel and taste of existence should flow through their bodies. Here exists the essence of the story; here it has life meaning beyond the voice of the Storyteller.

The Story can be no greater than its creator; the Storyteller, little better than her creation. But together they forge new ground, becoming far more than either alone.

Chapter One: The Story

Storyteller: 1. One who is accustomed to tell stories or anecdotes in conversation;

2. Euphemistically: a liar;

3. One whose business it is to recite legendary or romantic stories.

- Oxford English Dictionary

Storytelling is the focus of this book. It is also the whole point of the **Vampire** game. But what exactly is Storytelling? There are two trite answers to this question: *Storytelling is what Storytellers do*, and *Read this book and find out..* Both are true, but neither is particularly helpful.

Storytelling is what Storytellers do. In **Vampire**, the Storyteller creates and presents Stories in which the players participate through the control of their characters. The result is an interactive type of storytelling, where everyone in the group contributes to the progress and final form of the Story. The Story is at the heart of the whole process, and it is the Story with which this Chapter concerns itself. Other Chapters will cover different aspects of the Storyteller's role - Read this book and find out.

What is a Story?

Story, n. A narrative of real or, more usually, fictitious events, designed for the entertainment of the reader or hearer; an incident, real or fictitious, related in order to amuse or interest.

- Oxford English Dictionary

A **Vampire** Story is more complex than many other forms of tale, because it is interactive. The audience (that is, the players) do not sit passively and simply absorb the story; they take an active part in shaping it through the words and deeds of the characters they control. It is very difficult to formulate a simple, pithy definition of this kind of Story; the definition which follows is by no means perfect, but it is hopefully enough to work with:

Story: a situation, event or series of events requiring action on the part of certain characters, presenting problems and challenges, and offering rewards for successful action.

Story Parts

Just as a character in **Vampire** is an amalgamation of many component parts - trait scores, nature, demeanor, equipment and so on - so a Story is made up of several things. On one level, the Story consists of characters, locations and situations - these will be discussed a little later. For now, we will concern ourselves with the bones of a Story - concept, plot, theme and mood. These will normally be the first four things you decide on when planning out a Story, whether you are conscious of doing so or not.

Paying attention to these basics can help you create a Story more easily, and combined with a little practice you can use them to create something with as much depth and originality as anything in literature or films. Of course, you have to be prepared to put something of yourself into the process; the notes in the next few paragraphs can't do the work for you. There is no such thing as a wholly mechanical system for

creating a Story - and hopefully there never will be, for the products of such a system would inevitably be without depth or soul. But this chapter is intended to help the bewildered or nervous Storyteller through the process of creating a Story, and point out a few useful ideas, tricks and techniques.

Concept

They only have six plots, but they swap them round a bit.

- George Orwell, 1984

This quote - according to some literature teachers at least - was originally intended to reflect cultural impoverishment under the nightmarish rule of Orwell's Stalin-clone Big Brother, rather than telling a universal truth about the narrative form. However, the **Vampire** Storyteller will certainly find that certain themes and types of story crop up again and again, in **Vampire** Chronicles as well as in vampire literature and films.

The information in this section is by no means exhaustive, and Storytellers are actively encouraged to find and develop new types of Story to add variety and depth to their Chronicles. It does, however, provide a basic treatment of the more common themes and narrative structures; as well as being a useful last-resort source of inspiration, it should help the Storyteller identify and avoid clichés and repetition within a Chronicle.

There are as many types of Vampire as there are beasts of prey.

- Captain Cronos: Vampire Hunter

There are certainly as many types of vampire story as there are types of story, and most of them have been covered in one medium or another. Consider the shelf and section labels in your local bookstore: aside from the fantasy, science fiction and horror sections where most vampires are to be found, there will also be mystery, romance, thrillers, adventure, western, literature and many other genres and subgenres of fiction. All genres have

featured vampires at one time or another, and each has its own potential as a concept for a **Vampire** story.

Mystery

I can't find your face in a thousand masqueraders

You're hidden in the colors of a million other lost charades

- Alice Cooper, *Hell is Living Without You*

Mystery stories ("whodunnits" to British readers) start with a mystery (normally something like who killed someone and why), and follow a character or characters through the process of discovering facts, piecing together clues and finding the guilty party. They can range from the comparatively simple to the fiendishly baroque - some of Agatha Christie's later work became particularly convoluted, as increasingly savvy fans demanded ever more baffling mysteries.

Vampire stories lend themselves well to the British style of mystery writing. The company is rarified, resources are scarcely a problem, political infighting, jealousy, revenge and other motives abound, and the fear of a Blood Hunt is a powerful incentive to plot the perfect murder. It is almost irresistible to envision Christie's Hercule Poirot immortalized as a Ventrue Justicar, feeding exclusively from mortal murderers.

The main American mystery style is the "hard-boiled detective story," springing from the works of Raymond Chandler and Dashiell Hammett, and carried on today by the likes of Ed McBain and Mickey Spillane. It was once said of Hammett that he took murder out of the vicar's rose garden and gave it back to the people who were good at it. Cynicism and gritty realism are the keynotes of this genre. Motivations are nearly always sordid, characters and locations sleazy and interactions violent. This kind of mystery is ideal for Stories involving the Sabbat, Brujah and other less stylish Clans.

The mystery/manhunt theme has long been a favorite in vampire fiction and movies, whether the main characters are mortals like the reporter Kolchak or Kindred like Nick Knight. Always remember, too, that there are other crimes than murder, especially among the Kindred. Barbra Hambly's *Immortal Blood* is a manhunt, as the Kindred of London work together with a coerced mortal specialist to find a Cainite who is becoming dangerously prolific in the creation of Progeny. The search for a known or unknown vampire is a subplot that

has appeared again and again in Anne Rice's *Vampire Chronicles*, and Le Fanu's classic *Carmilla* has the heroine (or villainess) leading Fearless Vampire Hunters a merry dance as she flits around the central European countryside under a number of anagrammatic pseudonyms.

Romance

If she was an ace and I was just a jack

And the cards were never seen

We could have been the king and queen

- Dire Straits, *The Planet of New Orleans*

Romantic fiction is the most widely-read, and at the same time the most widely reviled, literary genre, and there are good reasons for both. But **Vampire** is in many ways a romantic game, and a great many vampire stories have been of the type generally described as "gothic romance."

John Polidori's seminal *The Vampyre*, with its hero based on Polidori's employer Lord Byron, was a spectacularly unsuccessful foray into gothic romance; *Carmilla* was

essentially romantic, and many commentators have seen *Dracula* itself as being essentially a romance, with the cadaverous Count obsessed by Mina Harker. Both film versions of *Nosferatu* play up romance, casting the vampire as victim as well as monster; Fred Saberhagen's modern-day *Dracula* stories - especially *An Old Friend of the Family* - also owe much to the Count's romantic attention to Mina.

Themes used in romantic fiction are normally loss, yearning and triumph over adversity. There is frequently a section where one of the protagonists must overcome immense internal obstacles - obsession with work, personality problems, the hurt of past affairs or whatever - in order for the relationship to succeed. All of these can be used within the context of a **Vampire** Story, and of course there are the additional problems of the Hunger and the Beast. A Cainite falling in love with a mortal will face many problems, ranging from the farcical (*Love at First Bite*) to the soul-wrenching (for example, the dilemma presented in the song *Moon Over Bourbon Street*), and players who enjoy throwing themselves into their roleplaying will be able to make a great deal of this kind of situation.

Romance makes a better subplot than main plot, but can sometimes carry a story all on its own; subplots are discussed later.

Thrillers

War makes rattling good history; but Peace is poor reading.

- Thomas Hardy

Thrillers are probably best regarded as a subgenre of the adventure story (see below), but are distinguished by the fact that they almost always involve espionage, politics, advanced military hardware and dirty dealing in high places. Depending on taste, the reader might consider John le Carré, Tom Clancy, Len Deighton or Robert Ludlum.

Themes generally involve discovering secrets, gaining possession of objects or people before The Opposition does so, and so on. Since Cainites around the world (especially the power-hungry Ventrue) gravitate to high places, there are many opportunities to work with Stories of this kind. It also gives the Storyteller the chance to come up with some truly wonderful pieces of alternate history, conspiracy theories, and general what-iffing. The two words "what if" are probably the most powerful tool in story creation.

What was the role of Vampires in the Cold War? Was the Brahms Network headed by a Cainite? What if *Red October* was actually designed as a safe, floating Haven, and American Ventrue found out and wanted to get hold of it? Are Kindred highly placed in the CIA? Do espionage agencies have teams of Vampire operatives? Plenty of roleplaying games have addressed the thriller genre - with varying degrees of success - but adding Vampires into the equation turns the adventure into something quite different.

Adventure

I have made the big decision,

I'm gonna try for the kingdom,

'Cause when I put a spike into my vein,

I tell you things aren't quite the same,

When I'm rushing on my run,

And I feel just like Jesus's son,

And I guess but I just don't know...

- Velvet Underground, *Heroin*

Adventure is the most miscellaneous and polyglot fictional genre. About the only constant factor is a hero (usually, but not always, male) with considerable combat and survival skills who faces and overcomes a number of life-threatening situations before finding the gold, thrashing the evil genius, winning the girl and doing whatever else passes for success in the particular setting and story. Most science fiction and fantasy stories are pure adventure; so are the Indiana Jones movies, any swashbuckler film you care to name, most Westerns, and the vast majority of historical novels which are not romances.

The keynote is action, and plenty of it. John le Carré's hero George Smiley takes part in espionage stories; Ian Fleming's James Bond stars in adventure stories. Thought and investigation take a back seat, and intellectual challenges are often limited to ways of getting out of the latest life-threatening situation.

This type of story has become such a staple of roleplaying games that it is almost fatuous to mention it here. Much vampire fiction is based in the action-adventure genre, often with the vampire cast as the threat to the mortal hero. *Sunglasses After Dark*, *Lost Boys* and *Near Dark* all count as adventure stories. In **Vampire**, there are numerous physical threats to a character's existence, which are adequately covered in the main rulebook.

Plot Archetypes

Just as players can use archetypes to help define the personality of their characters, so the Storyteller can use archetypes to assist in the process of developing a Story plot. The list of archetypes here is by no means exhaustive, and it is intended merely to provide the Storyteller with a starting point.

Mystery: An event or series of events has taken place, and the characters must find out what it all means, who is behind it and what action, if any, must be taken to safeguard the interests of themselves, their Clan, the Masquerade, or Kindred in general. Events might involve killings of mortals and/or Cainites, breaches of the Masquerade, destruction of Kindred-owned property, or almost anything else where the perpetrator and reason is not clear.

Bug Hunt: A killer is on the loose, and must be found and stopped. Unlike the Mystery, the Bug Hunt is purely a search-and-destroy mission, with little investigation and no interest in reasons and wider implications. The target might be a Vampire against whom a Blood Hunt has been called, a Sabbat cell, another supernatural entity, a mortal serial killer, a Fearless Vampire Hunter who has been a little too successful lately, or any of a number of others.

Treasure Hunt: The existence of something of immense value has become known to the characters, and they must try to obtain it before anyone else, and preferably without anyone else finding out. Other Kindred who also discover the existence of the item will want it for themselves, and will probably stop at nothing to obtain it. The treasure might be a fragment of the *Book of Nod*, the person of an Elder or Methuselah in Torpor (which can be used as a political bargaining chip or for Diablerie), knowledge which can be used for blackmail or political gain, or even an enchanted item of some kind - a weapon which causes aggravated wounds, a cup which enhances the nutritive effect of blood drunk from it, and so on.

Escape: The characters are threatened by something very powerful which they cannot hope to defeat - such as a

Blood Hunt, a powerful renegade Vampire, or a Sabbat uprising which has destroyed all their potential allies. Their only hope for survival is to escape and find a place where this threat cannot reach them. They must arrange to travel a long way (or at least, get out of the city or fief where they currently exist), dodging aggressors and agents of all kinds.

Rescue: The characters must penetrate an enemy stronghold, find a friend imprisoned there, and effect the escape of this character. The prisoner might be a mortal, such as a retainer with too much knowledge of a character's Haven, protections and dealings, or a Cainite, such as the Sire or Mentor of one or more characters. The prisoner might be held by mortal authorities - perhaps in a cell with a window or skylight, adding a time element to the rescue of a Vampire prisoner to whom the light of dawn will be fatal. Or a Kindred rival or enemy might have the prisoner, surrounded by faithful guards including Ghouls and possibly Neonates. Villains often bait traps by kidnapping those dear to a hero.

Attack: The characters must find and neutralize an enemy stronghold. This is similar in many ways to the Bug Hunt archetype, except that the accent is less on searching and more on destruction. Problems will involve analyzing the stronghold's defenses and choosing the correct tactical options to maximize the characters' effectiveness in mounting the attack.

Defense: The characters have been targeted for an attack. The enemy might be rival clan members, servants of an Elder they have recently crossed (knowingly or unknowingly), servants of one of more Methuselahs and/or Antediluvians involved in the Jyhad, Sabbat strike troops, Witch Hunters, Lupines, and so on. The characters may or may not have prior warning of the attack, and must either defend the area in which they find themselves or try to escape (see above).

Siege: A special case of the Defense archetype, in which the characters are surrounded or otherwise unable to escape. May be combined with the Guard archetype (see below). Think of *Assault on Precinct 13* with Vampires, Ghouls, Werewolves and other supernatural elements.

Guard: Another special case of the Defense archetype, where the characters have to retain possession of an item or individual. Items might be of the types listed under the Treasure Hunt archetype above, while individuals might be of the types listed under Rescue.

Betrayal: The characters are sent on a mission which appears to be of another kind, but they have been betrayed. They may be pawns in the Jyhad, to be sacrificed for some obscure political advantage, or they may be sent out to throw a mortal witch hunter off the trail of a greater Cainite. It may even have been decided, over the characters' heads, that their Embrace was not authorized by the Prince and/or Primogen, and the betrayal is a way of getting rid of them, like unwanted kittens.

Jealousy: The characters have inspired envy or jealous rage in another, and steps are being taken against them. Their enemy might be someone who one or all of them recently crossed, or a rival of the Sire of one or more of them, enraged at not being allowed to make Progeny of his/her own or jealous of their Sire's support and determined to remove her manpower base. This might lead to an Attack (see above) to to some other kind of hostile action.

Conspiracy: Two or more antagonists or groups of antagonists are planning a course of action which

threatens one or more of the characters, either directly or through Sires or clan ties. The means by which the conspiracy comes to fruition can be various; direct assault is a possibility, but others include Framing (see below), attacks on the character's resources, allies and contacts, the placing of traps or assassins in their Havens, and so on. This archetype can lead naturally

to a Mystery as the characters try to discover the identity of their enemies and take action to neutralize the threat.

Framing: One or more characters are maneuvered into a situation where they appear to have committed an offense of some kind. This might be a breach of the Masquerade, a plot against the Prince, an attack on the interests of a rival Elder or clan, and so on. The characters may need to Escape (see above) for a while, and events may unfold into a Mystery as they try to find out who is responsible for framing them and uncover enough evidence to clear themselves.

Love: One or more characters (ideally one) are suffering the pangs of love, and must find some way to resolve the situation. The object of affection might be a Cainite from a rival clan (*Romeo and Juliet*), an Elder or other superior who is hopelessly out of reach (any number of historical romances), a prominent figure on the other side of the Anarch-Primogen divide (*Wuthering Heights*), or a mortal whose involvement with the character threatens the Masquerade, facing the character with the problem of convincing a skeptical Prince to allow the character to Embrace this mortal. Enemies will find many opportunities to thwart or spite the character through the loved one. Perhaps the love is unrequited, or the character cannot reveal her true nature. This archetype is best suited to subplots (which are discussed in a later section), but can carry a Story all by itself if done well.

Injustice: A wrong has been perpetrated, and the characters feel obliged (or are ordered) to right it. The wrong might have arisen from an accident, a misunderstanding, or from conscious action on the part of the characters or others. The consequences of the wrong are likewise diverse in their possibilities; an individual might be the subject of a Blood Hunt, or might sit in a jail cell awaiting execution, or might have been ruined financially, politically or personally. Injustice might force the characters to take the side of the Anarchs against a tyrannical Prince or Primogen.

Theme and Mood

It can help tremendously in the design of a Story if you spend a few minutes thinking about the theme and mood you want to project. More is said about these two things in the **Vampire** rulebook, and in the Chronicle chapter of this book.

The theme of a Story is a summary, in a word or phrase, of what the Story is about. Note that it is not a summary of the Story itself, but of what the Story is about. This is a subtle but important distinction. For example, the theme of *Macbeth* might be summarized as ambition/power/corruption, while the theme of *Hamlet* could be seen as revenge/tragedy and the theme of *Othello* as jealousy. A theme is a broad concept which underlies the Story as a whole. It is useful as a focus - a starting point around which to build the Story.

Mood is much more of a surface feature, but no less important. The mood of a Story provides a basic idea for the Storyteller to keep in mind when presenting the Story to the players. To repeat the examples above, the prevailing mood

of *Macbeth* is brooding and somber, while *Othello* is angry. Moods correspond fairly closely to human emotions, and choosing a mood for a Story allows the Storyteller to select which of the players' (and/or characters') emotions will be most stimulated by the story.

Choosing Theme and Mood

A plot archetype will normally suggest a range of themes and moods, and you'll find plot, theme and mood developing together as an organic whole. Sometimes, though, it can be fun to stretch things a little. Combining a plot with themes and moods which would not normally match provides an interesting intellectual challenge for the Storyteller, and can also produce a unique and very memorable Story if things work out. Never be afraid to try something unusual - testing preconceptions and pushing against perceived limits is the best way to develop your Storytelling skills, and will help avoid hackneyed, two-dimensional plots.

For example, let's start with the Bug Hunt archetype. Logical themes for this kind of Story would be exploration and searching, while tension and horror are the moods most strongly suggested. As might be inferred from the name of the archetype, we're dealing with something like *Alien*. But how about if the theme and mood become - to pull two words out of the air - betrayal and grieving? Betrayal: who has been betrayed - the killer or the characters? And by whom? A whole range of motivations and general skullduggery opens

up. Grieving: has the killer just destroyed a friend or loved one of one of the characters? Or has a deeply -felt loss pushed the killer over the edge, allowing the Beast to break through? Immediately the Story begins to develop depth and atmosphere.

Experience and Other Incentives

Have you ever been experienced?

- Jimi Hendrix, *Are You Experienced*

As well as having ideas about the plot, theme and mood of a Story, you will also need to know what rewards it offers to the characters. It is best to start thinking about this at an early stage, for a number of reasons.

First, at least some of the rewards will provide an incentive for characters to involve themselves in the Story; these will have to be sufficiently obvious from the outset, and will therefore need to be built into the design of the first few scenes.

Other potential rewards will reveal themselves as the Story unfolds. They will affect many things in the course of the Story: the character's choice of directions at key points, the attitudes of various encounters, and the likelihood of the characters being faced with opposition, competition or cooperation, to name but three. The Storyteller has to be aware of these potential rewards before the Story starts, in order to gauge their effects on the Story's progress.

Here are brief notes on a few types of reward and incentive. As with plot archetypes, the possibilities are literally endless, and this list is only intended to serve the Storyteller as an example and a source of inspiration.

Experience

Experience points will be earned by nearly every character from nearly every Story in which she participates. The reward of experience points, and their promise of increased character Traits, are a powerful motivation to

players, but not to characters, who of course have no perception of game mechanisms. Characters may have some awareness of learning and sharpening their abilities, but very few will risk their lives for the sake of experience, although some may do so for the sake of adventure.

Knowledge

This is the main prize of investigative Stories, and in many other kinds of Story, Neonates will have the opportunity to learn about the society of the Kindred, the power structure and politics of their particular home area and so on. The most coveted knowledge is that contained in the *Book of Nod*,

although there are so many fragmented, falsified and otherwise unreliable versions in existence that the knowledge gained may never live up to the characters' expectations. Knowledge can be divided into three types, which for the sake of argument might be named Lore, Dirt and Savvy.

Lore has been formalized into a series of Knowledges in **The Players Guide**, and can be useful to characters who are still coming to terms with their own abilities and who wish to understand the abilities of those around them.

Dirt is detailed knowledge of the Kindred of the city, their relationships, dealings and plans - the sort of thing which might be used for political advantage and blackmail.

Savvy is knowledge of the nature of Kindred, what it means to be one, and how to survive. This also includes a certain knowledge of politics and power structures in the city.

Favor

A powerful incentive for resolving problems is the favor of powerful Kindred. Like knowledge, favor comes in a number of guises. It may enhance a character's status with the higher levels of the city's Kindred, simply causing certain influential Cainites to look favorably on the character. This may be done purely through roleplaying, or it may be formalized into a bonus to dice rolls for dealing with them. It may lead to some reward, such as patronage, intercession with the Prince or protection from enemies. It may even lead to the character being able to claim a favor from an Elder, although this is very rare.

Like the gratitude of princes, the gratitude of Vampires is grudging and does not last. A Neonate who holds a favor over an Elder had better use it quickly, or risk being seen as a threat. However, if worked properly, the characters can tie an Elder to them through the bonds of Prestation, as detailed in **The Players Guide**.

Allies

It is a far easier and safer thing to make allegiances with those on one's own level, forming a network of friends, allies and contacts among the city's Kindred and kine without the political tensions and dangers of becoming involved with the Elders. In almost any Story, characters will interact with mortals and with other Kindred, and friends are always a good thing to have. More will be said later about non-player characters, or NPCs - those characters controlled not by the players but by the Storyteller.

In play, this can be reflected by die roll bonuses for dealings with certain individuals or it can take the form of an increase to one or more of a character's Background scores - Allies, Contacts, or some other score, as appropriate. Strict Storytellers will insist on these increases being bought with experience points.

Influence

Characters who regularly solve problems and overcome difficulties will find that their reputation is spreading among the Kindred of their home city. This can be a double-edged sword - along with the good opinions of some will come the enmity of those they have crossed, embarrassed, or simply caused to become envious. As with favor and friends, this might be reflected by appropriate die roll modifiers, or dealt with more formally by increases to Traits bought with experience points earned during the Story in question.

Material Rewards

Wealth is always useful to Kindred, whose opportunities for raising a little extra cash by conventional means are, to say the least, somewhat limited.

Other material rewards might take the form of actual goods - equipment which is difficult and/or illegal to obtain openly, such as heavy weaponry and specialized ammunition, for instance. Obviously, the availability and desirability of certain items of equipment will vary according to the tone which the Storyteller has chosen for the Chronicle. This is covered in a later chapter.

On rare occasions, characters might be able to obtain more specialized items, perhaps even enchanted items like those mentioned in the description of the Treasure Hunt plot archetype.

Survival

For all the appeal of fame, influence and material gain, nothing impels a character to action like the prospect of continued survival - or the lack of it. This is the strongest of all motives, and should not be overlooked or overworked.

Patronage

If a character has friendly contact with a Sire, Mentor or Elder, this individual can become a patron. The advantages of patronage have been explained under the heading of Favor above; in return, the patron might well require certain small services, giving the Storyteller an ideal means of introducing the character to a Story and a good reason for the character to become involved.

For all its attractions, though, patronage should not be overused; in certain games it has become as much of a cliché as the time-honored "you are all sitting in the village tavern when..." opening. Overusing a patron encourages characters to become passive, waiting for the next assignment to be handed to them; this can lead to lack of player initiative and the eventual stagnation of the Story and the Chronicle.

Creating a Story

*Having so much fun with the poisonous people
Spreading rumours and lies and stories they made up
Some make you sing and some make you scream
One makes you wish that you hadn't been seen
- David Bowie, Candidate*

The Story Worksheet has been designed to help the Storyteller develop a full-fledged Story from the bare bones discussed in the previous section. Like everything in this chapter, it is intended as an aid to the Storyteller's own creativity, and not a substitute for it; essentially, it is a blend of checklist and scratch pad, helping the Storyteller organize thoughts and ideas.

Setting

I always wanted your surroundings

A room to rent when the lizards lay crying in the heat

- David Bowie, *We Are The Dead*

This first thing you need to know about a story is where and when it is going to take place. If the Story is part of an ongoing Chronicle, it will probably be set in much the same time and place as the rest of the Chronicle, although this need not always be the case. If the Story is a one-shot designed to stand alone, the choice of setting is much more open.

As a game, **Vampire** is set primarily in the present day, and favors urban over rural settings. When choosing a setting for a Story, the Storyteller should bear in mind not only which time and place would best suit the events of the Story, but also how easily the players and their characters will be able to come to grips with the setting. By setting a Story in the present day, and in a place which is well known to both Storyteller and players, it is possible to save a great deal of work, both in researching the setting and in communicating it to the players during play.

Main Plot

Get your facts first, and then you can distort them as much as you please.

- Mark Twain

This is perhaps the easiest part of the Story to create. Earlier in this chapter a number of plot archetypes were discussed, along with other things which can assist the Storyteller in designing a main plot. The Story Worksheet has a space for jotting down brief notes about the main plot - these notes are all that are needed at this stage, although any details which spring to mind might be kept on some scrap paper until the process of writing begins.

Subplots

Subplots are optional, but they can be very useful in creating the feeling that the characters are part of a real world, with more than one thing going on at a time. It is quite possible to run a Story with a single plot very well, but the illusion can begin to waver if the players form the impression that everything their characters experience is part of the same plot. If the action begins to flag, for instance, and there is a period of time where nothing can happen to advance the main plot, then you are faced with a blank area.

Subplots give you something to fill the blank areas, and can also add to the challenge and entertainment value of a Story by facing the characters with minor problems and plotlines which have to be resolved while dealing with the main plot.

Details

The next thing the Storyteller needs to know is what major NPCs will be involved in the Story, and what role each of them will play. This comes mainly from the setting (see above), although in many cases the Storyteller will also have to invent new NPCs, as required by the plot of the Story. At this planning stage, all that is needed is a list of names and a few notes on the role each will play, and the way they will react to the characters' involvement in the Story.

As well as characters, the Story needs locations. The events of the Story need somewhere to happen, after all. Again, a few names and general descriptions are sufficient at the planning stage, and in the case of an ongoing Chronicle

some locations may already be known to the Storyteller and/or players.

Other details are largely a matter of taste. Plot twists, double-crosses and the like can be planned in at this stage, or added whenever inspiration strikes. Many Storytellers prefer to leave these out of the original design of a Story, and add them according to whim during actual play. The possibilities for plot twists are endless, but the two most popular types are the reversal (your friend is your enemy, your protector has betrayed you, the prisoner you rescue is a terrible Beast who should have remained imprisoned, etc) and the unexpected continuation (out of the frying pan into the fire, wheels within wheels).

Another type of embellishment is the throwaway - an incident or encounter that has absolutely no connection with the Story, but happens anyway. Players can make what they will of these things, and like subplots they give the impression that the characters are operating in a complete and "real" world. They can also allow the Storyteller to accomplish various goals: to sow the seeds of an upcoming Story or subplot, to confuse and misdirect players and characters and even to break tension with comic relief or an urgent distraction.

Story Structure

Having worked out the bones of a Story, it's time to start adding some flesh. The first big decision is the overall shape of the thing: how long it will be (in terms of individual Scenes, gaming sessions or elapsed time), where the key events will be, and so on. The first step in doing this is to break everything down into three basic categories: the beginning, the middle and the end.

The Beginning

(The) opening section is called 'the lead', and if you don't write a good lead, it doesn't matter what you call the rest of the article. Nobody's going to read it.

- Marshall J. Cook, Journalism Lecturer, University of Wisconsin

The beginning of a Story is by far the most important part, and if the beginning fails, there isn't much future for the rest of the Story, no matter how much work you may have put into it. This part of the Story has to do three vital jobs:

- It has to catch and hold the interest of the players.
- It has to provide some incentive or imperative for the characters to become involved.
- It has to give both players and characters some idea of what is going on - although it doesn't matter whether or not this idea is accurate.

This can be achieved in a number of ways.

Crescendo

Opening with a crescendo is often useful. An initial flurry of action is sure to get everyone's attention, and may create enough waves to ensure that the characters become involved, if only in the interests of self-preservation. No one is left in any doubt about what has happened, and players' natural inclinations will be to look for explanations and try to ensure that the same thing doesn't happen again.

Slow Build

The opposite of the crescendo is the slow build, which requires some expertise to handle effectively. If overdone, it might be so subtle as to be imperceptible, but go too far the other way and the characters begin to see metaphorical

neon signs reading "I am a significant event." The best way to handle a slow build is to start the Story with a couple of subplots, adding in clues and minor elements from the main plot more or less as throwaways, and building up their frequency and intensity until the main plot takes over. Done well, this can make for a breathtaking plot twist later in the Story.

Patrons and Rumors

The perfect turn of phrase is one where crafty placing makes an old word new.

- Horace, *Ars Poetica*

Patronage and favor have already been discussed as the rewards of a Story successfully completed. An individual who is in a position to give the characters information, or even commands, provides a good way of getting a Story started with a minimum of fuss. The NPC simply calls the characters together, gives them the information which is available at the start of the Story, and asks or orders them to get on with it.

Another way of achieving pretty much the same result is to leak rumors to the characters through their social contacts, hopefully piquing their curiosity enough to stir them into action. Nightclubs and other meeting places offer ideal facilities for this, just as the ubiquitous tavern does in generic fantasy games.

This type of opening goes back a very long way, and is regarded by some as stale and clichéd. Some refuse to use it at all any more, but the patron/rumor opening still has its uses. It can quickly become stale if overused, and it can lead to players becoming passive, simply waiting for the next order or rumor rather than looking for themselves.

The trick is never to use this opening straight. It's fine to have the characters' Sire, Clan leader or Prince send them into a Story in this way, but they should always be left with something to discover and a few surprises to experience along the way. The patron may know more than the characters are told, or may lie to them, or may simply be misinformed; they may find themselves betrayed or sacrificed, or discover that things are not as they seem. Patrons are difficult to refuse, of course, but they cannot always be trusted.

The same is true of rumor. The tale may have grown in the telling, or may have become distorted by a process something like the parlor game of Chinese Whispers. It may even have been started deliberately by an enemy of the characters or their patron, as part of some fiendish plan.

The Middle

Don't Panic.

- Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

This is the main part of the Story, and the part which has to have the most flexibility in it. Having experienced the beginning, the characters set out to resolve the problems that face them, uncover a heap of additional problems and challenges, and try to get to the end of the Story in one piece.

Troubleshooting

The Edsel... must be the most thoroughly planned product ever introduced.

- *Fortune Magazine*, September 1957

As Storyteller, you'll have an idea from the outset about what the characters should do - and as you grow in

experience as a Storyteller, you'll learn that they will never, ever do what you expect; hence the need for flexibility. You have to be able to cope if the characters miss a vital clue, leap to the wrong conclusion, or simply do something weird. Sometimes you'll face the heartbreak of having to dispense with a scene you love, one you spent hours carefully plotting out, because the characters have taken another approach and short-circuited your plans. It's all in the game.

The midsection of a Story is a balancing act. You have to prevent the characters from wandering entirely out of the Story without appearing to limit their freedom. This is not an easy task. It helps if, while designing a Story, you decide what the critical events are - those without which the Story would collapse completely - and try to map out a few contingencies for use if the characters don't approach these events as expected. Obviously it's impossible to anticipate every possibility, and there will be times where improvisation is necessary, but it's often possible to get a Story back on track by moving a key event which the players have missed into the characters' path somehow. It is even possible to do this without the players ever knowing.

Say, for example, the Story demands that the characters uncover some vital information about the location of an opponent's Haven before things can progress to the next scene. Clues have been placed, but the characters have passed them by, ignored them or gone somewhere else. Think carefully. Do the characters really need to find this out? What happens if they don't? Perhaps they will give their opponent a tactical advantage, but still somehow be able to carry on. If the Story really will fail without the characters acquiring this knowledge, then it has to be placed where they can find it. An easy way around this (perhaps too easy) is to have an Ally come up with the information, but there are several other possibilities. The characters might be attacked by their opponent or by his/her minions; the attack can be beaten off, but the retreating enemy can be tracked to the Haven, or some clue as to its whereabouts can be dropped during the battle or found on the dead or unconscious body of one of the attackers.

The Easy Life

Perhaps the greatest luxury of all is to sit back and let the players do as they will, simply reacting on behalf of the rest of the world. This takes considerable nerve on the Storyteller's part, as well as thorough preparation and the ability to think on one's feet. But in many ways, it's a good deal less stressful than constantly worrying about the planned course of the

Story and how to keep the players moving along the intended route.

The main thing is to know the setting and the major NPCs. Whatever the characters do, wherever they go, whoever they meet, you have to be ready. This is not as hard as it sounds; it's more a matter of practice and self-confidence than anything else. Do not be afraid to freeze game time in order to check up on something or think something through - the players will probably welcome this opportunity to hold an impromptu tactical conference of their own. When the characters stray into terra incognita, be careful not to let the players realize this; it might be a good idea to have a prepared stock of generic locations (shop, warehouse, station, church) and NPCs for use in such situations.

Also remember that the Story keeps on going even if the characters are not taking an active part in it. The master villain is not going to sit and wait just because the heroes have not shown up on cue to foil the plan. As well as keeping on top of what is happening where the characters are, the Storyteller should at least try to have some idea of what is happening where they aren't.

Always remember, the storytelling in **Vampire** is interactive, and the final form of the Story is the joint creation of the Storyteller and the players. Forcing the direction of things robs players of the freedom to create their part of the Story, and can reduce them to the status of a passive audience. If that happens, they might as well go and read a book instead - and eventually, many will. Allow the characters to get into a mess, and let them get out of it by themselves as much as you can. Mollycoddling can be as bad as forcing wipeout situations - both deprive characters and players of their own initiative. When characters head off in some unexpected direction, think of them as writing their own subplot. Let them go. Sooner or later there will come an opportunity to rejoin the main thread of the Story.

The End

If you start out to take Vienna - take Vienna.

- Napoleon Bonaparte

When exactly does a Story end? This may seem like a fatuous question, but it is vital to know from the outset what conditions must be fulfilled in order to bring the Story to an end. Remember, too, that there's more than one way to do it. Even the simplest Story has two possible endings - success and failure.

Like the beginning, the end of a Story has a number of tasks to perform. It must resolve the main plot of the Story, one way or another. Everyone involved in the Story (NPCs as well) must have a sense that things have changed as a result of the events of the Story. This is important, or players will develop the feeling that their characters exist in a kind of sitcom limbo, where everything is left the same for the start of the next episode. TV networks need this kind of fudging so they can show the episodes in any order, but **Vampire** demands something more than that. In most cases - but by no means all - the ending of a Story must also give those involved a sense of whether they have won, lost or merely survived.

Types of Ending

The most common type of ending is the climax - the showdown with the enemy, the discovery of the desired item or information, the removal of the threat, or whatever. Once this tense, action-filled scene is resolved the Story is over, and the winner in this scene will almost always be the winner in the overall Story.

Anticlimax can also be effective, but needs careful handling. If the sense of anticlimax is communicated from the characters to the players, there is a chance that the players will become frustrated or disillusioned. When you have risked your life and seen close friends lose theirs, it can be hard to come to terms with the fact that it was all for nothing. Even if the result of the main plot is an anticlimax, the Storyteller should make sure that the subplots and other circumstances give the characters something over which they can feel a sense of achievement.

Anticlimax works best when it is combined with a lead forward. Both players and characters will be happy to channel their frustration into a new Story, and if the blame for the anticlimax can be laid at the door of a particular

NPC or group, the characters will have a ready motivation for further action against them.

Loose Ends

I'll be back.

- T101-800, *The Terminator*

While the ending of a Story should resolve the main plot one way or another, loose ends can often benefit from being left untied. Especially in an ongoing Chronicle, these are the things which provide continuity, lead to subplots or new main plots, or hang unresolved over characters' heads for some time to come. If the ending of a Story brings the Chronicle to a major crossroads, then it may be better to tie up all the loose ends at once, but in other circumstances loose ends can have their uses.

Aftermath

Once the Story is over, the characters are awarded experience, and players busy themselves with developing and updating their characters. This is also the time when the Storyteller should take stock and update the setting, for the events of the Story will not have left it unchanged.

The Characters

There are guidelines in the **Vampire** rulebook to help the Storyteller award experience to surviving characters. These are sufficient in most cases, but those Storytellers who use the additional rules in **The Players Guide** may need to take certain extra details into account.

Increased character knowledge has been discussed under the heading of Experience and Other Incentives above.

The Setting

The events of a Story leave very little of what they touch unchanged, and while the players are busy updating their character sheets, the Storyteller should take a few minutes to note changes to the setting. As well as material things like buildings which have been destroyed and artifacts which have changed hands, there are intangibles like NPC attitudes, alliances and power structures.

NPCs

The events of the completed Story will have wrought some changes on the NPCs who took part in it as well as the players' characters. Some may be dead, and others injured, forced into Torpor or reduced in power and influence. Many will have gained knowledge and changed opinions and attitudes. Some may now be friendly to the characters, and others will want them extinguished.

Most of this is merely a matter of making a few notes in the appropriate places. Optionally, the Storyteller may decide to award experience points to key NPCs, according to their actions in the Story, and to advance these characters just as the players are advancing theirs. This is a lot of work, and should be restricted to those NPCs who were directly and actively involved in the events of the Story.

Troupe-Style Play

My name is Legion; for we are many

- Luke 8: 30

Troupe-style play is a concept which was introduced in White Wolf's **Ars Magica** game. Instead of each player controlling only one character, a player may control several characters of different types, selecting the most appropriate character to play in any given situation. This style of play has a number of advantages.

First, having several different characters to choose from allows a player to take an active part in the Story even if the "main" character is absent, injured or killed. It also allows a player to undertake several actions at once - for example, a more scholarly character might be off researching a dilemma while a more active character is taking a direct approach to the problem. The group as a whole has a wider range of abilities to draw upon, and is not so severely weakened by the death or incapacity of one character. And from the storytelling point of view, this style of play reflects minor characters like friends, allies and contacts very well, without giving the Storyteller the added burden of playing additional NPCs.

Troupe-style play is not for everyone, and the Storyteller has the final say over whether it will be used in a particular Chronicle.

Approaches

There is more than one way to handle troupe-style play in **Vampire**, and again the Storyteller must decide which is most appropriate for the Chronicle.

Clan Spread

Consider this situation: the group has discovered some vital information, and must get it to the Prince, who is currently attending a very exclusive Kindred affair in the Elysium. Most of the group are Brujah and Nosferatu, whose fighting and stealth skills have enabled them to get this far without too many problems - but these characters are hardly likely to be welcomed in the Elysium. All are Neonates, and lack the authority to simply barge in on their own. Brujah are fractious and unrefined, and nearly all are suspected of having Anarch sympathies. And as for Nosferatu - well, they're hardly likely to get past the Toreador Ancillæ who are guarding the door.

Normally, the characters would be faced with a problem. They might be able to find an ally from the Ventrue or Toreador clans who could get word to the Prince for them, but by the time they have done so it might already be too late. It could be that everyone from the more socially acceptable clans is already attending the Prince, behind closed doors and unreachable. And from the storytelling point of view, to go through an NPC at this stage takes the action out of the players' hands, leading to a feeling of anticlimax and inevitably breaking the tension that has built up in the Story so far.

One solution to this problem is to have each player create a character from a different clan, so there is at least one Ventrue, one Tremere, one Toreador, and so on. But then again, this can lead to tensions within the group - especially if the characters are played to the full - which could lead to the whole Story breaking down. What Toreador would be seen in the company of Nosferatu? What Ventrue would trust his or her life to the companionship of a Brujah - or worse, a Malkavian?

The problem might be solved if each player were allowed to create a number of characters. From this pool of characters, it would then be possible to put together a party with the appropriate skills and background for almost any situation. Intrigue in high places? Leave the Brujah at home and bring out the Ventrue, Tremere and Toreadors. Tough fight ahead? Load up on Brujah, with a couple of Nosferatu scouts and

perhaps a Tremere for supernatural coverage. A foray into the Barrens? Concentrate on Gangrels, with Nosferatu and Brujah for support.

When a player creates a troupe of characters, the Storyteller and the other players should get together to work out the details. Since this pool of characters will all know each other and be able to cooperate to an extent, they will need reasons for overcoming their normal clan hostilities and prejudices, and these will need to be worked out in order for the whole troupe to work effectively.

It's no good switching from a Brujah to a Ventrue character if the Ventrue refuses to have anything to do with these near-Anarch rabble, for instance, so relationships and connections have to be found. In many cases these will strengthen and deepen in play, but there should be at least some connection to start off with. Two characters might have been colleagues, buddies or even relatives in their breathing days, or they might be drawn together by some common interest or priority.

Don't neglect the character archetypes when considering this. A Caregiver might well feel impelled to look after a Child, even if the Child is from a normally hostile clan. A Conformist will stick with a Director or Architect of another clan in the absence of any clearer lead from closer to home, while a Fanatic or Visionary will use anyone to further the Cause. A Rebel, on the other hand, might take pleasure in associating with those of other clans, especially if this outrages the more traditional clanmates of either character.

The Warband

In **Ars Magica**, a player typically controls one of the powerful wizards, along with a small entourage of men-at-arms and other companions. In **Vampire**, this idea might be translated into a player controlling one Cainite, along with any Ghouls, retainers and other hangers-on associated with that character. In the language of skirmish wargames, this would be described as a hero and warband.

Playing this way frees the Storyteller of the need to play these NPCs, who would normally hang around with the Vampire character anyway. It gives the player a few more pairs of hands, and the ability to be active in daylight. But it is not without its drawbacks, especially when dealing with inexperienced or power-hungry players.

Most of the time, the player will be fully occupied by the Vampire character, and it will be more or less assumed that any hangers-on follow this character around obediently. When the action becomes intense, an inexperienced player can sometimes be a little overwhelmed by the strain of having to look after three or four lesser characters as well as the main one. The Storyteller can overcome this by handling the lesser characters most of the time, and only handing control of them to the player upon request, or when one of the lesser character has something important to do or some critical decision to make.

A greater problem is the cannon fodder syndrome, where the lesser characters take all the risks, and are generally pushed around and thrown away for the benefit of their Cainite master. Unless the Kindred has them sufficiently Dominated to turn them into mindless slaves, this is not only unbelievable, but it is not using the lesser characters to their full potential. In the end, it devalues the whole game.

There are various ways to deal with this. One is for the Storyteller to insist on some kind of loyalty check for lesser characters whenever they are required to do something life-threatening, against their nature (remember, these lesser characters should be created with as much detail as a main character), or just plain unpleasant. This dice roll

should take into account things like Domination, how well the master has treated the lesser character in the past, potential rewards, and so on. A good roll would be the Vampire's Manipulation + Leadership vs the servant's Intelligence + Courage (it takes a certain amount of nerve to refuse a command from a Vampire), but the Storyteller can vary the Traits used to reflect the situation.

Another way to prevent the abuse of underlings is to have the Vampire character make a Conscience roll to avoid loss of Humanity each time a lesser character is knowingly sent into a dangerous situation. This tends to make even the most autocratic of Kindred think twice, and is, after all, one of the things that the rules mechanism of Humanity is intended to cover.

Live-Action

Just a game that you like to play

Sleepwalking through a world of pain

Just another pretty face in the romeo rain

Now you're wide awake in dreamland

-Pat Benatar, *Wide Awake in Dreamland*

The **Vampire** rulebook makes some mention of live-action roleplaying in the game as a means of bringing certain scenes more vividly to life. Live-action roleplaying is where the distinction between game and improvised theatre almost vanishes altogether, and with the right scenes, characters and players a live-action session can be very effective indeed. Like troupe play, live action is not for everyone, and should always be considered as optional.

Choosing Scenes

Just as some scenes in a Story might be particularly suitable for a live-action treatment, so some scenes might be particularly unsuitable. When preparing to play out a Story, the Storyteller should decide which scenes, if any, will be played live.

Scenes which are most suitable for live action tend to be those without combat or other kinds of dice-rolling; it can ruin the atmosphere of a scene if it becomes necessary to swing constantly from live play to dice-rolling. Discussions and negotiations are easy to play live, and indeed many people do so without even realizing it - they are sitting around a table face-to-face with the Storyteller, just as their characters are sitting face-to-face with one or more NPCs. Other, less static types of scene can also be played out live, but these tend to require a little more preparation. More will be said of them later.

Combats are the least suitable scenes for playing live, mainly because of the amount of dice rolling involved in the average combat, but also because of the risk to players, as opposed to characters. In most cases, specialized facilities are required for handling live-action combats. Such facilities do exist, and can be found advertised in most hobby games magazines, but few if any of them are either compatible with **Vampire** in their setting or flexible enough to accommodate a story or scenario which they have not designed themselves.

Styles of Play

Anything can happen in the next half-hour!

-Commander Shore, *Stingray*

The question of style in live-action play really revolves around one question: How far do you want to go? Do you

want to cover every possible scene live, or only use live play when it is particularly easy or appropriate to do so? Do you want to get involved with scenery, props, costumes - or would

you rather keep these in the imagination, and concentrate on the words and deeds of the characters? Do you want to seek out suitable locations, or adapt the space you normally use for gaming? How much extra work do you want to put into things? What resources do you have to devote to setting live play up? This is a decision that each group will have to make for itself, according to its own preferences and resources.

Props

I'm putting on my top hat

Tying up my white tie

Brushing off my tails

- Fred Astaire, *Top Hat*

Props can add a great deal to a live-action play session, and some players like to use props as a part of their characters. Something like a silver-topped cane, a monocle or a certain item of clothing can quickly become a trademark, identifying a character as much as an attitude or a catch phrase. Groucho simply isn't Groucho without the tailcoat and cigar, no matter how well you do the walk. Where would Obi-Wan Kenobi be without his hooded robe and lightsaber, or Darth Vader without his mask? Or Don Corleone without his ring? Or Ripley without an enormous gun? What would Stan and Ollie do if they didn't have their hats and ties to fiddle with? You get the idea.

This is just as true of NPCs - it's normally just a figure of speech when people say the Storyteller wears a number of hats during the course of the game, but it can become literally true in live action! A prop, a mannerism or a style of speaking can all help bring an NPC to life and separate her from the many other characters the Storyteller must play during the course of a Story.

Some props are part of the action instead of being part of a character. The most common type of prop is the "player handout" - a copy of a map, picture or document which can be given to the players when their characters find its counterpart in the Story. But in a live session, the possibilities broaden. Books, pieces of jewelry, scraps of paper or cloth - almost any kind of clue or significant item can be represented in the flesh, so to speak, instead of the Storyteller simply describing to the players what it is that their characters have found. Props are also good for set dressing (see **Settings** below), helping to convey the atmosphere of a location more eloquently than any amount of verbal description can.

Props are neither as difficult nor as expensive to obtain as you might expect. Thrift stores, "nearly-new" shops, yard and garage sales, and house clearance auctions are all good sources. If you make a habit of cruising such places, keeping an open mind and looking for useful and interesting items rather than having a rigidly fixed idea of what you want, then you can find a good collection of interesting props fairly inexpensively.

Settings

My set is amazing

It even smells like the street

There's a bar down at the end

Where I can meet you and your friend

- David Bowie, *Candidate*

Most live-action gaming sessions will probably take place in much the same surroundings as the "round-the-table" sessions: someone's home or another convenient meeting place. There are some occasions, though, where another setting can add a great deal to the experience of the game.

Even when planning a live session in the normal gaming location, there are ways to make the place look and feel more like the location in the Story. Props have already been mentioned, and simple things like moving a few pieces of furniture can go a long way. Other senses, such as smell, can be as important as sight in creating the feel of a place, but is a little more limited in its possibilities. You might not want to make your home smell like a city sewer for a scene in a Nosferatu stronghold, for instance, but a little incense and perhaps a tape of Gregorian chanting in the background, and you have an atmosphere ideal for a Tremere Chantry or an Elder's Haven.

For special scenes, you might even find an outside location, but this must be done with great care. First, permission must be obtained for any activity on private land, and gaming

is no exception. Second - and perhaps more difficult - it is important to make sure that no members of the non-gaming public get the wrong impression about what is going on. This may sound like a minor point, but it is quite possible to get arrested for attacking (or **appearing** to attack) another person in a public place, and many people tend to become worried when they see black-cloaked figures flitting in and out of churchyards or abandoned houses late at night.

There have been a few unfortunate incidents in the history of this hobby where such misunderstandings have led to arrests and even death. Rare as these incidents are, they are always seized upon by the sensational press, and by those who would like to prove that this type of gaming is dangerous, unwholesome, satanic or otherwise undesirable. Nonparticipants have a hard enough time understanding what this hobby is about, given the often confusing statements of gamers and the scaremongering claims of the hobby's enemies. Don't get your hobby a bad name, or help reinforce harmful misconceptions about it. That harms all of us, not just yourself and your group. The key words are permission, planning, safety and responsibility.

As with all aspects of live play, the Storyteller must choose exactly how far to go in the pursuit of realism. Few will have the time or other resources to create movie-likesets for their live gaming sessions, but everyone can do something to create a sense of place.

Cheap Tricks

From ghoulies and ghosties

And long-leggity beasties

And things that go bump in the night

Good Lord deliver us

- traditional English prayer

The ruses and techniques discussed in this section can apply to round-the-table gaming as much as liveaction; in many ways, they provide a kind of halfway house between the two. As with everything in this section, the ideas presented here are only examples, and the Storyteller is encouraged to develop his or her own ideas and techniques, according to the tastes and gaming style of the group.

Sound

Music and sound effects are among the oldest techniques for establishing atmosphere in a gaming session, and several companies - White Wolf among them - produce collections of music and sound effects specifically designed for gaming. Many record stores also stock recordings of sound effects - the BBC series is particularly recommended - and enterprising Storytellers with recording equipment can easily make their own.

As well as being part of the background ambience of the gaming session, sound can be used for specific purposes as well - especially sound effects. At its simplest, this involves

playing a sound effect instead of describing to players what they hear at a particular time. In a more developed form, it can involve concealing small speakers about the place, and playing previously-cued sounds at the appropriate time without letting the players see you hit the switch. Unexpected crashes of thunder, explosions or sounds of breaking glass can produce much the same feelings in players as in their characters.

Searching

Another of the basic semi-live tricks is to have players search for clues instead of letting them roll dice for their characters' searching. This works particularly well in conjunction with a moderate amount of set dressing, and of course the clue or clues should be concealed before the gaming session begins. Apart from adding some liveaction realism to the game, this technique can also stop players whining about the Storyteller's restrictions on how large an area can be searched in a given amount of time - they'll realize it takes longer than they thought!

Of course, a Storyteller who uses this technique does have to be prepared for the players to take the room apart, and make sure there is nothing there that they are not supposed to find.

Tasks

In a round-the-table gaming session, players roll dice to decide the success or failure of many of their characters' actions, and it is often the case that the amount of dice-rolling necessary determines the suitability of a scene for playing live. In some circumstances, it is possible to have a player attempt a task, instead of merely rolling dice as the player's character attempts the same task. Searching, discussed above, is one example of this, but there are many other possibilities.

Say, for example, a character is trapped in a semi-ruined building at dawn. Sunlight is beginning to filter in through gaps in the walls and roof. These can be simulated by setting up a number of narrow-beam flashlights at various points in the room, and turning out the other lights. The character has to make it to the darkness of the cellar in order to rest for the day, and so the player might be required to make it across the room. Every time the player breaks a flashlight beam, the character has stumbled into a shaft of sunlight, and suffers accordingly.

Some gamers prefer not to have players attempt tasks on behalf of their characters, pointing out - quite reasonably - that the character often has very different abilities from the player. It's no good expecting a player who has never had a music lesson to play the piano, for instance, even if that player's character does happen to have Music 5 specializing in keyboard instruments. There are some tasks which a player simply cannot perform on behalf of the character, and in these cases it is far better, and fairer, to fall back on dice rolls.

VAMPIRE STORY WORKSHEET

Storyteller:

Chronicle Name:

Geographical Setting:

Start Date:

Characters:

Story Concept:

Plot Archetype(s):

Subplot(s):

Theme:

Mood:

Plot Summary:

Key NPCs:

Key Locations:

Key Situations:

Troubleshooting:

Rewards:

Reward Conditions:

Opening:

Location:

NPCs:

Ending:

Location:

NPCs:

Conditions for success:

Conditions for failure:

Chapter Two:

The Chronicle

*When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights.
- William Shakespeare, The Sonnets of Shakespeare*

Not all **Vampire** players and Storytellers want to engage in a Chronicle. Many stay perfectly happy with one-shot Stories, complete in and of themselves, with no relationship to the next Story. Some may even use the same characters, settings and antagonists, but still not want to tie them together. However, most players and Storytellers prefer the character growth and interaction that only comes from a Chronicle, which explains why **Vampire** has been set in its current form.

Characters develop and grow, their enemies' schemes change and evolve, and slowly the characters begin to piece together what their existence is all about. The layers of the onion unravel, unveiling deeper and deeper intrigues, greater and greater enemies, and more and more exciting stories. Both the crescendo and the culmination that can only be experienced in Chronicles add additional levels of excitement absent from single Stories.

However, it remains possible to ruin Chronicles with poorly thought-out actions, mistakes in planning or just plain bad luck. The unplanned actions of characters can easily sabotage all the Storyteller's careful work and scheming. Thus developing and reshaping a Chronicle around the characters' actions can be just as important as the original setup devised by the Storyteller, but both are essential to an enjoyable Chronicle.

Where to Begin

Vampire itself details a number of ways to begin Chronicles, as well as aspects to consider in their establishment. As with character and Story creation, the place to start is with a concept of what the Storyteller wants the Chronicle to be. Will it follow one of the classic lines, with the characters as members of a gang defending its turf against Anarchs, the Prince, hunters, Lupines, demons and others? Will it be more roleplaying-oriented, with the characters desperately caught up in their Clans' politics? Or will it be far more bizarre, with the characters some of the few Kindred still existing in a world that believes in the Undead - and hunts them down with ruthless efficiency?

Chronicle concept often takes a meandering route through the Storyteller's brain. Many times the process begins with a Storyteller flipping through a book (maybe even the **Vampire** rulebook) or talking to someone when something will click in her head. Maybe it will be the

setting ("Wouldn't it be wild to set a Chronicle in Berlin, with the East and West parts of the city still being run by competing Princes?"), a major antagonist ("What if one of the characters' Sires, under the delusion the characters betrayed him, made a deal with the devil in order to get revenge?") or even just a mood ("How

would the players handle a Chronicle where everything was designed as sensually as possible?").

Even if the Storyteller has a fairly clear idea of all these aspects - where the Chronicle will be set, who will play major roles in it and what will happen - it is probable that much remains vague. Exactly what role will the characters play in the Chronicle? Will they be pawns of higher forces? Wild cards uncontrolled by the powers that be? Or a potent force in their own right, working together to drive their enemies from power?

In developing the concept, the Storyteller must look at what the players seem to want out of the game. If they all make up Anarchs, then she can safely make the assumption they hope to battle it out with the Prince and Camarilla. If they all make Toreadors, Ventrue, Tremere and Malkavians, then it is likely they hope to have a game of politics most treacherous. Finally, if they end up with a mixed bag of Brujah and Ventrue, Toreador and Nosferatu, Gangrel and Tremere, she should be prepared for intense roleplaying, with the stories serving as a backdrop for the coterie's internal conflicts as much as anything else.

Chronicle concept requires more Storyteller-player dialogue than does any other aspect of creation. The Storyteller might hope to have the Chronicle revolve around the characters' battles with the egotistical Prince, but those battles will take a far different form if the players run Ventrue and Tremere than they would if the characters were Brujah and Caitiff.

Were this the case, the Storyteller might tell the players the setting she has in mind, and something about the situation ("A new Prince recently seized power here in Dallas, and nobody is quite sure what the future holds."). Then the players can start developing their characters and she can begin to see what direction you hope to go in. So if the players start saying "I want to run a Ventrue who was allied with the old Prince," or "My character is going to be a Gangrel who hates all Princes," she can see what will be coming. And thus the concept is born.

Prelude

Many Chronicles begin with the Preludes, an excellent time for players to get to know their characters and for the Storyteller to figure out what the players want out of the Chronicle. Usually Storytellers heavily script the Preludes, for they must ensure the characters become Vampires and survive up until the time the Chronicle is supposed to start.

However, even here things can begin to go wrong. What if the characters befriend the Elder the Storyteller hoped they would hate? How about the time they attacked a member of the Inconnu by accident? What if they seek out and join the Sabbat a month after the Embrace?

None of these occurrences is especially critical to the Chronicle, despite their apparent significance. Since the Storyteller has great leeway during the Prelude, anything which happens here can change. Additionally, she should be able to draw ideas from this part of the Chronicle for future Stories. Thus if the characters do meet and impress the Clan Elder who should have proven a great impediment to their advancement, she still has time to make the Elder change her mind about them.

Just remember, the Prelude does more than just serve as an exciting Story. It gives the player a chance to get to know his character and get into the role before the important scenes of the Chronicle begin. The Storyteller should also take the opportunity to size up the character and the events of character creation. While the concept behind the Chronicle should already be firmly planted, one can always add to it. If the players seem more intent on violence than she first thought, now is the time to make their enemies more brutal. If the players appear to enjoy schemes and plots, add even greater layers of conspiracy to your concept.

Where to Go

Now that the Storyteller has the concept down pat, fleshed out with setting, characters and major players, she needs to devise a plan. The plan details in what directions she wishes to see the Chronicle go and what the goals are. This can be as specific as "The characters shall track down and slay their

Sires, thereby regaining their mortality," or it can be as fuzzy as "The characters slowly unravel the mysteries of the city, learn who is behind what actions and thus become a power in their own right."

The easiest way to handle this plan often involves setting up a final destination and establishing checkpoints which should be reached if the Chronicle is on course. For instance, if the goal of the Chronicle is to have the characters drive the evil Primogen from power and take its place, ushering in a new era of peace and harmony, then she can set up a number of checkpoints.

First the characters must learn just how evil the Primogen is, accomplished easily enough by having the Primogen persecute them unjustly, perhaps turning them into scapegoats for the sins of one of the Primogen's own Childer. The next stage would be for the characters to achieve a position of relative safety, either by leaving the city or by recruiting powerful allies (perhaps from their own Clans).

Now the characters should start learning about the Primogen's weaknesses, be they its inherent friction, the hatred it has earned from all the city's Kindred or the fact that half its members are diabolists, Setites or turncoats

from the Sabbat. The characters reach the fourth checkpoint when they begin using this knowledge to their own advantage, and the Primogen begins to weaken.

The fifth and final checkpoint comes when the characters finally drive the Primogen from power, perhaps by turning its members upon each other, and either take over the city themselves or install someone of their liking. This may have taken anywhere from 10 to 100 or more individual Stories to accomplish, with a number of odd Stories (hunters, encounters with Lupines, Clan meetings, etc.) to add spice and variety. Now the characters have met the goal and the Storyteller can consider the Chronicle through. After all, now the characters rule, and most of their time gets taken up with the petty aspects of government, not always the stuff of enjoyable Stories.

However, perhaps the members of the Primogen were the pawns of powerful Methuselahs, and the characters' actions force one to rise from Torpor. Now a whole new Chronicle begins, where the concept revolves around this new evil power loose in the characters' city, and the goal has to do with their tracking it down and doing away with it.

The Chronicle Map

An alternative to the game plan is the story map. Similar to the game plan, its main difference lies in the amount of control the players have over what will happen. The Chronicle map takes the same form as the Story map which is used in **White Wolf** products like **Ashes to Ashes** to show Storytellers what may happen depending on the characters' actions. At its most basic, the Chronicle or Story map has two points on it - where you plan to start the characters and where you hope they will end up.

Most maps have more, however. Since any Scene or Story can end in a number of different ways, the map points out the results of what may happen given the characters' actions. For instance, if one scene calls for the characters to meet and interrogate a police officer in order to find out what prompted the raids on their havens, the scene would have arrows pointing to what could happen should the characters get the information they need, not get the information, get partial information or even get arrested.

Each of these results would lead to a different scene, which would then become a new point on the map from which new arrows to new scenes would be drawn. Thus, if the characters get the required information from the cop, they can seek out the Cainite who ordered the raids, present the information to the Prince for its high risk to the Masquerade or do nothing, in which case the arrow points to the next fiendish (and potentially lethal) plot of their enemy.

While the map can be extremely useful in planning individual Stories, its true utility becomes apparent when planning out the Chronicle. This sort of map has to be vaguer than the story map since it covers much greater events. Thus the Story about the Cainite who ordered raids on their havens would only take up one point on the map. From this point would come such options as: Characters slay Cainite, Characters driven out of town, Characters drive Cainite out of town, Characters bring pressure to bear on Cainite so he stops overt action against them, and even Characters make peace with Cainite (not bloody likely).

This Chronicle map, instead of showing the route the characters should take (as the game plan does), shows the routes they may take, and allow the Storyteller to get a feel beforehand of what consequences their actions may cause.

While this map will not have the same definition of either the game plan or the story map, it allows the Storyteller to anticipate what the characters may do and how to handle it.

Additionally, each point on the map should have an arrow leading to a blank space to allow for completely unforeseen results. Other events should have arrows going both ways between it and another nexus, showing how the characters can take either route and still get to the same place.

Stops Along the Way

Nothing ever works as easily as this. If the Storyteller thinks for one minute the players will happily follow the game plan or story map, she is sadly mistaken. Perhaps one or more hope to side with the Primogen, turning in their coterie in exchange for favorable treatment. Perhaps they chuck the whole thing and head out to the Anarch Free States. Maybe in seeking power to combat the Primogen, they become so caught up in diablerie that they forget the original purpose of their murders.

The changes may not even result from character actions. The Storyteller, in taking the characters through some sub plot or another, may well notice the players and herself becoming more interested in this side aspect than in the main part of the Chronicle. Maybe a red herring you throw out attracts so much attention you decide to make it a major element of the Chronicle, and the players need never know it originally played no role.

In any case, the Storyteller needs to prepare for that which cannot be prepared for. Unexpected twists and turns are one aspect of roleplaying which makes it so interesting and exciting. These can occur at any moment, from the first session to the last.

Expansion

Once the actual Chronicle has started, it cannot help but grow as Storyteller and players explore the different facets of the Vampiric existence. Handling that growth is no easy task, as new plot lines develop, new enemies form while old ones fall by the wayside, and the characters begin turning their desires into Stories. In fact, it is during this period of growth, after the action has gotten underway but before it approaches a conclusion, that the Chronicle is at its most vulnerable.

Keeping it Together

The most obvious problem lies in keeping the Chronicle compact. A Chronicle can quickly unravel amidst a flurry of captivating, yet unconnected, Stories. No matter how exciting battling Buddhist Witch-Hunters one night and Ravnos Archons the next may be, eventually you and the players lose all sight of what is going on around their characters. Real life has never been a series of random events, and while there is no reason to make the players feel everything in the world rests on their shoulders, they should at least understand that their actions one night will effect what happens the next.

The easiest way to bring this about is through the use of a unifying theme and mood for the Chronicle, as explained in **Vampire**. For instance, if you follow the leadership theme presented in the rulebook, then characters will begin to get a sense of how control and authority affect them and the Gothic-Punk world. Thus they see how their own actions related to being leaders and followers changes the game.

Even with a sustained theme and mood, however, the Chronicle can begin to branch off in a million different directions as characters follow their own plans and stories take a life of their own. In this case the Storyteller needs to combine her two great weapons - planning and improvisation - into one.

The plan has been discussed above, and the Storyteller should already have a good idea of what she wants the characters to accomplish. As they start getting off track, maybe by turning someone else's ghoul retainer into a Vampire and then running off to Gary instead of rescuing the Salubri who could tell them about the Methuselah Dominating the Justicar, the Storyteller needs to carefully weigh just how important it is to point the characters back in the original direction.

A Storyteller can always follow the high-handed method to bring the characters back into line with his plans (a loved one threatened, the characters kidnapped, offers too good to refuse, etc.), but many players resent being treated in this way. On the flip side, the Storyteller can chuck all the careful preparation she has made in order to go with the characters' whimsy - a result as unsatisfying as the one which forced the characters to toe the line.

However, it is almost always possible to bring the players and the Storyteller into a mutually agreeable solution. One way to handle this situation is to weigh the benefits of getting them back into the original Chronicle against the potential of these new events. Is it possible to accomplish the same goals within the framework of what the characters have done?

For instance, if the Storyteller hopes to have the characters uncover the true power behind the throne, can they find clues in their new location which will set them back on track, but on their own timetable? Or, if the goal was much broader in scope, perhaps forcing the characters to choose between siding with two evils (say the Salubri and the Tremere), then there is no reason why the Storyteller cannot create a compromise.

Another way to handle this situation is with redirection. Something has caused the characters to diverge from the course the Storyteller had hoped they would follow - now it is up to the Storyteller to give them a reason to return

Which Way Did He Go

Another area which can quickly blow up is the setting. As a Chronicle grows and grows, more and more places begin to take on greater and greater importance. By now the characters may have developed a number of back-up havens, visited other cities, been forced to seek shelter among the Lupines during a Blood Hunt and generally been around so much that the Chronicle no longer revolves around one location.

While good in itself, multiple settings can quickly become too much for a Storyteller. Not only does she have to know something about a variety of different places, but each setting is filled with its own fascinating individuals and their interactions. Each area undergoes change whether the characters are there or not, and it becomes exceptionally difficult to keep track of these when the Storyteller needs to make decisions for four or five unconnected areas, especially when a number of these are large cities.

The easiest way to keep the settings from blowing up in the Storyteller's face is to designate one as the main place of business. Using the setting from **Vampire** as an example of this, Gary would be the main location for the characters,

though they would make regular incursions into Chicago and occasional forays to Milwaukee. Thus the Storyteller would have to put the most work into Gary, keep a close eye on

Chicago and let Milwaukee simmer in the back of her mind - a much easier task than trying to juggle all three.

Deciding which setting should be the main location for a Chronicle should be a relatively easy task - which one is the Storyteller most interested in, and which can provide the most interesting Stories? While characters might become more attracted to the other places, the Storyteller should have little difficulty keeping the characters in one place. As they spend more time there, they will begin to have more and more invested in it. Thus, no matter how often they leave town to seek allies or safety, they will eventually return to their "home."

An alternate way of handling a plethora of settings is by giving each one a sole purpose, and only having to look at that location in a specific light. To use Gary once more, it would be the place for power plays as the characters strive to take over. Chicago would be a place of quiet conspiracies and plots while Milwaukee would allow the characters to let loose with spasms of violence. Thus the Storyteller would only have to stay cognizant of those factions the characters would be interacting with instead of the entire spectrum of Kindred.

Who Do I Hate Tonight

Another area which can easily grow out of control are the villains of the Chronicle. While it may be true that there is no such thing as a "good" Vampire, not all of the Kindred need be hostile to the characters. However, it can be a great urge to have every Vampire want to use them for their own appalling purposes.

If the characters find they can never trust another of the Undead, or that every mortal is a pawn of some Cainite or another, their players can swiftly become fed up with always being in conflict and the Storyteller will find she spends more time keeping track of the villains than having fun with the Chronicle. It becomes very tedious when every time the characters are attacked they have to run through a growing checklist to decide who it might have been. Finally, it detracts from the impact any one foe can have when the characters must battle every other individual they encounter.

The best method for avoiding this fate is to follow a tactic similar to handling the settings - establish a main enemy or group of enemies. While only fighting one enemy would rapidly become boring, the characters should at least be able to concentrate their attentions in one direction. Of course, this does not mean the characters will necessarily know who their enemy is - there should always be a level of uncertainty in the game. However, they should at least have something to aim at (the Prince's brood, the Anarch gang, two Clan Elders, etc.).

Once you have decided on the overarching evil of the Chronicle, it becomes much easier to integrate the other foes the characters will meet. Each will have a purpose and job, becoming something more than another punching bag for the characters to pound on. Finally, the minor villains, thanks to their very pettiness, will make the main ones that much more impressive by comparison.

The Web

A final area the Storyteller has to keep a close eye on is the growing web and depth of entanglements and conspiracies

the characters become involved in. **Vampire** lends itself well to deep plots and intricate ties between characters and NPCs, but these also make the Storyteller's job that much harder. It is not always enough to just keep in mind that the Anarch gang boss is Blood Bound to the Toreador Clan leader.

Instead, the ties between the Clans, its Elders and its Neonates all play a role in how the leader will use the Anarch. Whether or not the leader will have the Anarch help, hinder or ignore the characters (or even if the leader lets the Anarch act freely) will depend as much on outside factors as it will on how she herself views the characters and their mission.

Only the loosest of Storytellers should try and keep all this information in her head. **Chicago by Night** and **Milwaukee by Night** provide coterie maps which show how individuals feel about each other, and these are good starting points for Storytellers. As your Chronicle develops, you can add each major player to the map, and illustrate her relations with the others. Change these as the characters change, and feel free

to make major revisions should the Chronicle seem headed off course.

Additionally, you can interconnect these webs as you desire. No coterie exists without feeling the impact of other Kindred, and the more connections existing on your map, the more detailed the Chronicle can be. This also aids the Storyteller in keeping the Chronicle together, as even though she may add more pieces, they stay in an organized, planned manner, usable as the Storyteller wills.

Consistency

The final factor which can cause an entire Chronicle to fall apart is a lack of consistency. All the above suggestions should help keep it together, but if players begin getting the feeling that the Storyteller never knows what is going on, and cannot keep things the same, then they lose the trust and credibility which is the basis of the Storytelling experience.

This lack of consistency does not refer to just forgetting which building the Prince makes her haven in or what side of the room has the hidden doorway. Instead it becomes important when the Storyteller has villains act differently from one Story to the next for no reason, when taking one pattern of action works sometimes and inexplicably fails other times or if the Storyteller seems to be backtracking constantly to recover when things go against her.

Consistency is as much a matter of perception as it is reality. If players see the Storyteller as inconsistent, it does not matter if she really is or not, and vice versa. Thus the Storyteller should first endeavor to be consistent, keeping accurate notes and listening to player worries as soon as they crop up.

However, other tricks can help as well. For instance, keeping a motif to the Chronicle (as described in **Vampire**) immediately gives it the illusion of stability. After all, if players see events happening in a constant manner or at least with the appearance of a plan supporting them, then they assume everything operates in that way.

Another way to keep the consistency together is to avoid even the slightest hint of favoritism. Nothing causes a Chronicle to degenerate as quickly as players believing they are being treated differently from each other. Even if you feel everything has been equal, the players may not see things the same way. Listen to each player as much as any

other, pretend to give their plans the same amount of consideration and never let them see the dice when you fudge a roll.

Handling Time

One problem unique to **Vampire** lies in the handling of time. In roleplaying games, the characters are usually mortals with relatively brief lifespans. In **Vampire**, however, the characters have the potential to live forever, and the Chronicle can last eons. The obvious problems begin when the Chronicle begins advancing faster than real time does, until the Storyteller is left trying to decide what her city and world will be like in 10 or 100 years.

Storytellers have used a number of tricks to deal with this predicament. The easiest involves keeping the Stories related to the night-to-night events of the characters, thus preventing the game from advancing far beyond the rest of the world. The opposite side of this coin requires the Storyteller to plan for a science fiction Chronicle, and let it advance at a high rate of speed in order to avoid ever having to get too deeply involved in one place and time (which would require the Storyteller do prodigious amounts of work for multiple eras).

Neither of these angles is particularly satisfying, and both limit the Storyteller in the ways she can direct her Chronicle. Thus there are two other ways to handle the passage of time, each of which keeps the Storyteller from having to do too much work but gives greater freedom to advance the clock at will.

Sleeping Beauties

The first way requires the characters to enter torpor, preferably voluntarily. At some point, most Kindred who have survived the better part of a century begin to tire of the waking world. They have seen most of what they want to see, and the latest innovation barely attracts their interest. At this

point they create a heavily protected resting place or seek out a quiet place in the wild where they can meld with the earth.

Voluntary torpor differs from that which Kindred enter when they suffer grievous wounds. Kindred who enter this state without being forced to can generally awaken at the time they desire (or at least within a decade or so). Those with Auspex may be able to keep a vigil over the world and pick their time of revival. Indeed, many who have involuntarily entered torpor due to wounds can awaken earlier than they do, but opt to continue sleeping until they feel ready to come out.

Thus at some point the characters should decide, as a troupe, to enter torpor and when to arise. One easy way to bring this about is to have them battling some great foe who himself disappears for decades at a time. With the use of the proper ritual (thoughtfully supplied by the Storyteller), the characters can revive themselves whenever their archenemy comes out of torpor as well. Thus the characters stay in hiding from the villain's minions, but can still combat him as necessary.

While this method can also be used with the downtime rules found later in this chapter, it works best when the characters sleep the years away. Given years of downtime, far too many players would begin demanding gobs of experience for their characters, possibly increasing the power level of the game before the Storyteller is ready.

Back to the Future

Another way to handle the passage of time involves starting the Chronicle at an earlier date. If a Storyteller began the actual game in 1950, she would have a wealth of details about the time and be able to slowly advance it to the present day. While she might have to take care about keeping the characters from changing the present (no characters allowed in Dallas on November 22, 1963 or sleeping in the Watergate Hotel nine years later), even that can be fun.

Storytellers can handle the Back to the Future method one of two ways. With the first method, time passes normally, with the characters spending as much time on the Stories as they would if the Chronicle started today. In the second, the Storyteller speeds up time leading up to the present. After all, many players find it difficult to separate their knowledge of the past from their characters' actions, so if the Storyteller keeps events moving quickly, the players cannot exploit the situation. Still, the Chronicle will be able to encompass at least some of the scope of what being immortal is all about.

Humor and Tension

The final aspect of the Chronicle to keep in mind is the mix of player moods. This does not refer to Chronicle moods like suspense and darkness, but instead to how the players themselves feel. No Chronicle can survive if it always makes the players feel the same way. Even if the horror is of the best kind, or the suspense always dramatic, eventually people get fed up with the same menu over and over.

Varying the emotions in each scene cannot always be planned out. You may be able to say when the characters will be in the greatest danger, and when they face their most horrendous foe, but the players themselves might feel the most horror during the anticipation of what is to come, and find the actual battle a relief (at least they know what they're up against).

The Storyteller can maintain some control over how the players feel, however. Modulating the tension requires as much attention to what the players are doing as to what their characters are up to. When they are distracted from the game, nothing will make them feel the suspense you have spent so long building up. On the other hand, when their concentration becomes complete, they will feel every emotion of their characters.

Once you know how the players themselves feel, you can begin the process of manipulating their moods (after all, is that not what storytellers of all kinds aim for?). Contrasts are probably the easiest way to handle this. For instance, if the dramatic Scenes won't happen for a while, use humorous situations to relax the players. Then, as the tension begins to rise, cut back on the levity. Have the vain retainer you've been playing for laughs return home and ship the bumbling cop off to the doughnut shop.

By the time the most important scene comes up, you have prepared the players both with a buildup of tension and a reduction of humor. While the players remember (at least subconsciously) past times of whimsy, you have readied them for the more serious moments to come.

The same holds true for Chronicles as it does for Stories. Have some episodes played for laughs. Put the characters up against one of the Prince's brood who has become renowned for his incompetence. While the players will enjoy laughing at the amazing ineptitude of this foe, the Storyteller can set up the first in a series of Stories which will allow the players to realize the Prince has set the city up for an attack by Lupines. When the culminating battle

against the Lupines and their demon allies takes place in a deep salt mine on the night of a full moon, both the characters and the players will be ready.

Their Own Devices

All of this can be happily blown out of the water by that most ephemeral of Chronicles - the character-driven campaign. Instead of the players taking their cues from the Storyteller, the Storyteller devises the scenes around the plans of the players. For instance, if the characters decide they want to set one of their number up as Prince while establishing the others as ruling candidates, the Storyteller need do nothing to begin the Stories or keep the running.

Instead, the characters decide what they plan on doing. For instance, the first step in their schemes might involve discrediting the Prince, which they will do by setting up a number of threats to the Masquerade which the Prince will be unable to deal with. The players describe what actions their characters will take - perhaps revealing the Prince's control of the police to the media at the same time they begin a series of "Dracula" attacks - and the Storyteller leads them through each scene, throwing obstructions in their path and generally adding to the excitement level.

This sort of Chronicle is both easier and harder than a normal one. While the Storyteller does not have to spend as much time beforehand getting everything ready, he has to be deeply involved in the players' planning in order to make the Scenes as interesting as possible.

Additionally, he needs to add depth to the Chronicle so it does not degenerate into a series of wish fulfillments for the players. The challenges must still be there, the scenes must still require effort and sacrifice on the characters' part, and characters should not be allowed to assume things will always go their way.

The character-driven Chronicle requires great Storyteller involvement, but little preparation for each story. Instead, character sheets for a number of important figures, a free-wheeling imagination and a willingness to go along with the players' hair-brained schemes will take the Storyteller through all but the roughest parts of the Chronicle.

Other Times, Other Places

By now, most of us are familiar with most features of the Gothic-Punk world of **Vampire**. After all, it is our own world. Keeping up with current events and changes is as easy as watching television or reading a newspaper. If the Storyteller sees something she believes would add flavor to the Chronicle, she simply makes a note of it or cuts it out and incorporates it. The Chronicle gains a bit more detail and becomes richer for it. The players have one more little thread to consider in the tapestry of their unives.

But one of the most exciting elements of roleplaying is the fact that we are not limited to our own late 20th century world. Through the medium of our own collective imaginations we can adventure with mighty heroes in the dawn of prehistory or walk down the dark and mysterious streets of 1920s Arkham in search of mind-blasting terrors. We can travel to lands under the earth or to the farthest reaches of the galaxy. **Vampire** should be no exception to this. That's what this section is about - how to travel to those far and fabulous times and places through the medium of a Storytelling Chronicle.

There are a few basic concepts, however, that need to be discussed before we proceed to those strange places. The first and most important is internal consistency. What this

means is that there are certain basic premises that govern a world. Things can be expected to work in a certain way, at least most of the time. One example of this would be a world in which Magic worked with the same regularity as science

does in our world while Science was a very arcane and chaotic undertaking whose principles were understood only by a learned few.

This may seem crazy and at first, but think about it. If it works consistently throughout the world then it isn't chaotic, now is it? Another example is the world of **Vampire**. It can be summed up in two words - "Vampires exist." Everything else is built outward from this basic premise. This is a very important consideration whether you are creating a Chronicle set in 12th century England or 21st century California. It must have its own internal consistency; otherwise it will fall apart under its own weight.

The Famous Few

The next consideration applies to historically-based Chronicles and relates to handling historical figures and celebrities. Virtually every place and time in human history has produced at least one individual who made it into the history books as well as famous works of literature associated with specific times and places. The Storyteller should give a great deal of thought as to whether or not to include encounters with some of the rich and famous of a particular time period as well as notable figures from literature. They provide color and give a feel of reality to the Chronicle, but risk making the action of the players fated if the Storyteller does not want to change history, or turning a Chronicle into an undead version of an "Excellent Adventure."

If the Storyteller does decide to use historical personages, then the next question is how big of a part are they going to play. If the Storyteller isn't careful, the celebrities may overshadow the characters, which is definitely something to be avoided. Experience has shown that the best way to handle celebrities is to have them make a cameo appearance. An encounter at a social function is usually the best way to do it. It is also more fun if the celebrity in question is relatively young and unknown at the time. Be forewarned, however, that there will probably be at least one player who may decide to try and Dominate the celebrity. This is not a good idea unless the results can be part of your overall Chronicle.

Another form of celebrity is, of course, the celebrity Vampire. This NPC requires some special work and a special criterion for deciding whose made it into the ranks of the undead and who sleeps quietly in their grave. First of all, the celebrity Vampire should be an extremely rare occurrence, for otherwise the entertainment value is lost. After all, if everybody who was anybody winds up with fangs, it becomes boring, the one thing a **Vampire** Chronicle should never be. So keep them a rare item and the Chronicle will be the better for it.

Another criterion for a celebrity Vampire is avoiding those who are too obvious a choice. A perfect example of this would be the notorious Roman Emperor Caligula. Here is a man who is known for his sadistic excesses and his famous quote: "Would that all of Rome had but one neck." Having Caligula turn up as a Vampire would probably come as no great surprise to anybody familiar with Roman history or the movies. Another example would be Lord Byron, the English Romantic poet. Lord Byron's poetry contains many allusions to death and the undead, so having him turn up

as a Vampire would hardly raise an eyebrow. Like all rules, however, there are always exceptions.

Playing the Past

Now that we've gone through some of the basic ideas, let's talk about the most important aspect of historical Chronicles: research. It is through good research that we can really make a Chronicle "come alive" by providing atmosphere and detail. It is not necessary to be an expert on the era, but a good basic working knowledge can increase both you and your players' enjoyment.

As an example of how to conduct research, let us say that a group of players have gotten together with the Storyteller and expressed an interest in doing a Chronicle set in Victorian England. The Storyteller knows a little about the period, but not enough to feel comfortable running a Chronicle set there. It is time to put that Investigation Trait to use.

Where do you start? The best place is, of course, a good library. You should get a pad, some pens and/or pencils, and a pack of index cards. Some change for the copy machine may also be helpful. The first place to look in the library is in the Reference Section. You should find a good set of encyclopedias (preferably the *Encyclopedia Britannica*). Look under "England" to get a general overview of the country and its history, paying special attention to the Victorian Era. Make a quick outline and use the index cards to note prominent figures, including some from before the era who might make interesting celebrity Vampires. At this point, you should also begin to consider whether or not to include Werewolves, Magi and other strange denizens in your Chronicle along with the Kindred.

By now, you should be getting some basic plot and theme ideas for your Chronicle based on the setting. The time has come to start to really focus in on the Victorian Era. Check the encyclopedia again as most of them should have a separate section on the Victorian Era, including a bibliography for more in-depth research. Now you can begin to really get a feel for the period. Look in the encyclopedia for the entry for London, which should have, among other things, a fairly extensive history of the city itself.

If possible, you should photocopy this material and make it available for your players to help them develop their characters' backgrounds and Preludes. This background will also help the Storyteller develop various plots and subplots for the Chronicle. By now the Storyteller should also begin to consider the starting year for the Chronicle. (For the sake of example we'll say that the Storyteller decided on the year 1881.)

By now, there should be a number of index cards with names of famous people on them. Now comes an important decision point. Victorian London was home to many famous fictional characters and one all too terrifyingly real one. Sherlock Holmes, Doctor John Watson and their archenemies, Professor Moriarty and Colonel Sebastian Moran, are probably the most famous fictional residents of Victorian London.

The question the Storyteller should ask is, "Do they exist in my campaign and if they do, how large a part do they play?" Certainly, Sherlock Holmes, with his vast intellect, powers of deduction and iron will, would make a formidable Vampire hunter, as would Professor Moriarty. Having such powerful NPCs running about would certainly add a great deal to any chronicle but would also require a bit more work on the part of the Storyteller.

Other popular fictional characters from this time are Bram Stoker's Count Dracula, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Fagin and the Artful Dodger, Captain Nemo, Phileas Fogg, Professor Challenger and Allen Quartermain. Pick with care which you use, but most times have a wealth of such characters from which to choose.

It is ironic that the most infamous and terrifying of Victorian London's denizens actually existed. Jack the Ripper was real, and in the space of a few short months in the fall of 1888, he created a reign of terror with few equals. His body count was modest compared to more modern serial killers,

but none can equal him in evoking terror whenever the name is mentioned. Perhaps it was the fact that he was never caught or even remotely identified that makes him such a terrifying specter. Who he was (or is) and why he (or she) did what he did is left up to the Storyteller to develop and work into the Chronicle.

At this point, the Storyteller should sit back and consolidate all of the information gathered so far; there should be enough to get the Chronicle up and going. As the Chronicle progresses, the Storyteller should be prepared to return to the library. This time, the Storyteller should use the card catalog to find books and other materials to provide even more detail to further enrich the Chronicle. These will help add authentic attitude and feel, for every era has had its distinct features. For instance, the people of Victorian England were far more convinced of their superiority and place in the world than are people today.

Now comes the nuts and bolts of setting up the Chronicle. A good way to start is to go through the character sheet and skills list in both **Vampire** and **The Players Guide** and decide which ones will be applicable to a Chronicle set in Victorian London. At this point, the Storyteller should also decide what Flaws and Merits will be available. Assemble the Troupe, have it start setting up characters and proceed from there.

An example of a Victorian London Chronicle might go something like this: The Chronicle starts in 1881 with the theme of the struggle to advance socially and what kind of ruthlessness it takes to do so. The Players are Neonates who have recently been presented to the Prince of London. The Storyteller plans to use the Followers of Set and some of their human allies in the London underworld as the main villains of the piece.

Sherlock Holmes and company will gradually make their presence felt as the Chronicle progresses. Count Dracula will also make his presence felt, but in an indirect way. The climax of the first Chronicle will be the hunt for Jack the Ripper. The Storyteller hasn't quite decided yet who or what the Ripper is but that can be decided later on.

As a subplot, the Storyteller is going to have the Followers of Set attempt to infiltrate and subvert an occult society. All of this is done against the panoramic backdrop of the foggy streets of one of the greatest cities in the world. Careful attention will be paid to social status and class differences. (If you think the Ventrue are snobs now, imagine what they must have been like in Victorian England.) With enough research and attention to details, the world of Victorian London can be made to seem real. There are other worlds as well, so let's have a look at some of them and the possibilities they present.

Other Worlds

Carpe Nocturnem (Seize the Night) - Ancient Rome figures quite prominently in several **Vampire**

publications. The same research methods used for Victorian England would work well here. Consider the following questions: Why did Nero play the harp while Rome burned? What really went on in the catacombs beneath the city? Who caused the downfall of this great empire? All of this and Attila the Hun too.

The Hundred Years War - It is a time of great turbulence in Europe. France and England are busy tearing each other apart. Heresies abound and the Black Plague is everywhere. Who were those voices that guided Joan of Arc? Gilles de Rais, one of her most trusted lieutenants, was in reality a sadistic child molester who practiced Satanism and indulged in torture-murders as a hobby. It is during this time that the Sabbat wars are at their fiercest. Again, the same research techniques that were used for the Victorian Chronicle can be used here.

The Renaissance - If you want a Chronicle filled with intrigue and Machiavellian plottings, what better time than that of Machiavelli himself? It was a period of rebirth for the arts and sciences, so the Toreador Clan would probably figure prominently in the proceedings. The first Conclave of the Inner Circle of the Camarilla was held at this time in Venice. Why was it called? What was the problem? What were the consequences? The themes of corruption and decadence would fit in quite well here. An entire Chronicle could be based around the rise of Clan Giovanni.

The Terror That Was Paris - Paris during the French Revolution can provide an excellent setting for a Chronicle that combines both action and intrigue. The Anarchs and the Sabbat are battling it out for control of the streets. The Camarilla are trying desperately to preserve their existence while being hunted by both sides. Perhaps the characters are a group of Kindred who are trying to smuggle their Elders out of Paris as in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. The Marquis de Sade was active at this time - who knows what strange and diabolical plots this twisted madman may be up to? All in all, a time of great excitement and revolutionary fervor.

The Second World War: The Really Untold Story - The Nazis have occupied Europe. What was the Kindred response? Some may have aided Hitler and his cronies while others fought against them. Most probably tried to avoid the whole thing and enjoy the opportunity to feast freely. An interesting setting in this period would be Vienna, Austria, the home base of Clan Tremere. It also has a Foundation house of the Arcanum there as well. What if elements of the Gestapo coerced members of the Arcanum into helping them try to prove the existence of Vampires? Think of the possibilities there. Imagine what kind of hunters the Gestapo would make. Here's another tidbit: the Nazis developed "Operation Werewolf," allegedly a guerrilla movement. What if there was another part of "Operation Werewolf" with a much more sinister meaning?

The next couple of Chronicle ideas use background material from other roleplaying games. There are some advantages to this. First of all, there's a very good chance that either the Storyteller or at least one of the players will have access to the material. Second, several of the Players may already be familiar with the background, which saves a great deal of time in the initial setup phase. Last, but not least, a lot of this material is just downright interesting.

The Deepest Darkness - It is the 1920s and the Players must not only face the daily terrors of Vampiric existence but must slowly come to grips with the existence of Great Cthulhu and its minions. You should read the works of H.P. Lovecraft and check out Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu*, an excellent source of background information on the

1920s and the Cthulhu Mythos. The actual mechanics of converting the critters to **Vampire** may take a little work but the results will be well worth it. Be forewarned, however, that this **Vampire/Call of Cthulhu** crossover can produce an extremely grim Chronicle. Not even the Kindred should be immune to the terrors of Great Cthulhu.

Darkness: 2000 - Game Designers' Workshop has put together a post-holocaust setting for its *Twilight: 2000* game series. It is well detailed and has generally withstood the test of time and world politics. The devastation of post-holocaust Europe provides an eerie background with high-tech barbarians charging about in the form of ruthless marauder bands. The characters could be soldiers who now find themselves Vampires. This is a chance to introduce some techno-thriller elements, especially if their Vampiric condition was the result of a biological warfare weapon rather than the more traditional Embrace. How would other Kindred regard them? Will they ever make it back home? Do they even want to? Was the nuclear war the result of human stupidity or has Gehenna truly arrived?

CyberFang - It's a grim future out there, folks. It's hard to tell the real Vampires from the biosculpted ones. R. Talsorian Games has created a vision of a dark future with their *Cyberpunk 2020* game. The background is well fleshed out and easily adaptable, especially to a "Lords of the City" style of Chronicle. The *Night City Sourcebook* is an excellent example of a Cyberpunk-style city. Besides, choomba, if you think the Inquisition is bad news, just think of what it would be like having a major megacorporation gunning for your undead butt!

Well, there you have it. Remember, the key to creating a good alternate setting for your Chronicle is research. It's the little details which help give your setting a life of its own. It's the little things that help build and maintain the internal consistency that is so necessary to hold everything else together. It pays off in enjoyment for you and your players. After all, isn't that what we are here for?

Organizing Downtime

The unlives of Vampires can last many thousands of years, spanning periods of intense action and complete inactivity. Even though few Chronicles last a similar amount of time, periods still occur when the players may find their characters' actions boring. Known as downtime, these are the essential yet less interesting parts of roleplaying. One cannot play out every moment of the character's unlife, yet that unlife goes on. Events during these periods of stability are the essence of most normal people's lives, yet they are anathema to the roleplayer who always wants her character to be involved in interesting and exciting events.

Thus, to facilitate the inclusion of "real life" in a Chronicle without boring both Storyteller and player, we have included a section on events going on during downtime. This has been divided into background changes and story threads. While characters' Backgrounds should not change during downtime (anything that important should be the result of an adventure into which the players have input), forces of time and coincidence can affect them and the characters' abilities to use them.

The following charts have greatest impact during periods of extended downtime - generally more than a month's worth. Simply roll a die to see which Background is affected. Another die roll indicates what happens to that Background. If the character does not have the Background affected, then she goes through no change. No

charts have been included for Status, Generation and Mentor, as these Backgrounds should not change during downtime.

Backgrounds are not the only things affected by downtime. After all, the character does have a life. For this we have added story threads. These threads, divided up by theme, allow the Storyteller to tell the player about significant events which occurred during downtime or which could be turned into stories of their own. Storytellers use these charts much like they use the ones for Background - roll to see which theme to follow and then roll on the theme chart.

One final note: please feel free to ignore the dice altogether. If one Background change or story thread leaps out at you, grab it and use it as you will. Do not feel bound to obey the dice.

Backgrounds

Roll - Background

- 1 - Allies
- 2-3 - Contacts
- 4 - Fame
- 5-6 - Herd
- 7 - Influence
- 8-9 - Resources
- 10 - Retainers

Allies, Contacts and Retainers

- 1-4 Mortal is ill and will be of little help to the character in the upcoming adventure.
- 5-7 Mortal has been promoted or received additional training which makes him more useful to the character.
- 8-9 Mortal has moved and will be of only limited use in the future.
- 10 Mortal has gained access to significant information which will be of great use to the character. Can the character find out about it in time?

Fame

- 1-4 Due to positive publicity, the character's fame has been waxing. For the upcoming Story, treat him as though his Fame were one point higher. If this gives him a six, then almost everyone knows him.
- 5-7 Due to a lack of publicity, the character's fame has been in decline. For the upcoming Story, treat her as though her Fame were one point lower (which could mean nobody knows about her).
- 8-9 The character's fame has attracted the attention of (media representatives, advertising agencies, obsessive fans, etc.). Whatever it is will hound the character throughout the next Story.
- 10 Negative (possibly true, possibly false) information has given the character a very bad reputation in town. Anyone who recognizes him will be highly put out.

Herd

- 1-4 One point worth of the character's Herd is not available for the adventure (a truly terrifying experience for a Ventrue).
- 5-7 The character's Herd increases (either due to conventioners in town, a birth, new employees or whatever). She begins the next adventure with one

additional blood point (as long as it does not take her over her maximum) and has one additional point of Herd for the upcoming adventure.

8-9 Character's Herd has come down with a communicable disease. If the character does feed on any member of her Herd for this adventure, she loses one point from Strength, Dexterity and Stamina.

10 The character's Herd has been discovered, either by hunters, other Vampires or the members of the Herd itself.

Influence

- 1-4 One of the character's main followers temporarily gains additional power, effectively increasing the character's influence.
- 5-7 One of the character's main followers temporarily falls out of power, making it harder for the character to manipulate events.
- 8-9 Power plays among the kine cause the character to lose some major followers, but in the shakeup which follows, new ones are gained to replace those who were lost. While the character still has the same amount of influence, decide how the changes have affected it.
- 10 Media outlets have become aware of the character's influence (though not the character's true nature). Unless the character deals quickly with this threat, her influence will suffer.

Resources

- 1-4 One of the character's Resources (car, house, bank account) is in sorry condition. She will be unable to take use it during the upcoming Story.
- 5-7 Unless the character takes prompt action, she will likely suffer a great loss of Resources. This can happen due to lawsuits, bad investments, gambling or other Vampires' malevolence.
- 8-9 The character has impressed somebody in a position of importance. Whoever it is offers the character employment or contracts which would substantially increase her income. However, if she accepts, her freedom may be curtailed.
- 10 The character has a chance to increase her Resources (through stocks, gambling, employment, inheritance or whatever), but it requires her to take some chances.

Theme

- 1 - The Beast
- 2 - Intrigue
- 3 - Introductions
- 4 - Nostalgia
- 5 - Premonitions
- 6 - Pursuit
- 7 - Romance
- 8 - Secrets
- 9 - Vengeance
- 10 - Weirdness

The Beast

At the core of Vampiric existence lurks the Beast - that inhuman creature of passion yearning to be free. While most Humanity losses and frenzies come about during game play, the very horror of day-in, day-out blood feeding brings with it its own penalties.

1-4 Hunting areas are becoming sparse. Character starts with half the normal blood for the next adventure.

5-7 Hunting has become extremely difficult. Not only does the character begin the next adventure with half the normal amount of blood but she is much more likely to frenzy. The target number for any roll to avoid frenzy increases by one.

8-9 Blood is the only thing on the character's mind. Character begins with one blood point and had better find some soon (but make it tough).

10 Rumors that a clue to Golconda is to be found in the area have been spreading. Characters get a hint as to what they should do.

Intrigue

More goes on in the world of the Vampire than any of them know. These conspiracies are still in action even when the characters are not.

1-4 As the characters go about their nightly existences, plots are being hatched which will threaten their Masquerade. Someone wants to (1-4) recruit their aid, (5-7) move against them, (8-9) manipulate them or (10) turn them into scapegoats.

5-7 War of Ages heats up. If the characters have not already chosen sides, they may soon have to.

8-9 There is a plot afoot to overthrow the Prince. While the characters do not necessarily have to choose sides, if they fail to do so both sides may view them as potential enemies.

10 The Camarilla has called a Conclave in the characters' area. There can be no limits to the intrigue involved here.

Introductions

Vampires are always interested in new blood, and the very nature of the characters' feeding habits requires that they meet new people constantly.

1-4 Character meets a mortal in a position of power. If handled correctly during the game, the kine could turn into a contact, a retainer or even an ally. If mishandled, he or she could become a potent enemy,

5-7 Character meets the Prince or some of her main supporters at a mortal affair. They do not have much time to interact there, but they now know of each other.

8-9 Character encounters a powerful non-Kindred supernatural entity. Be it Magus, Lupine, ghost or hunter, the character becomes aware of someone who could pose a powerful threat.

10 Character runs into one of the area's powerful Elders, but remains unaware of the individual's true nature.

Nostalgia

The characters had a life before they died and were reborn; this previous existence can appear in numerous ways.

1-4 Reminders of the character's old life have begun to crop up all around him. If he does not handle it well, it may well lead to frenzies in the next Story.

5-7 Someone significant to the character's mortal existence has gotten into trouble. However, helping her might be perilous for the Vampire.

8-9 The person the character would least like to see in this new form seeks her out.

10 Malicious rumors have begun to spread about the character's past life. Stopping the spread of gossip might be beyond even a Vampire's power.

Prenonitions

Even Vampires without the Auspex discipline know their minds sometimes give them hints about the future. Therefore, they pay greater attention to their dreams and feelings of *deja vu* than do most mortals.

1-4 While passing a place, feelings of the area's importance overwhelm the character. In fact, the place will play a significant role in the Chronicle.

5-7 The character has a dream in which the symbols spell out what will happen in the upcoming Story. More than likely the player will misinterpret them.

8-9 Someone else is having dreams about the character. Could it be their family, a hunter or another Vampire?

10 While feeding on a mortal, the character has a vision of an enemy Vampire feeding on him the same way he feeds on the kine. It is up to the Storyteller as to why or even if this ever happens.

Pursuit

Many chase the Vampires - media, hunters, family, magi and even other Vampires. Their pursuit never stops.

1-4 Someone with ties to the character's mortal existence begins to gather clues as to her current location or condition.

5-7 Police have begun investigations into the stories of the kinky assailant who attacks people and kisses their necks (yes, the character or another Vampire). If the character does not take care, he may find that his next victim is a police officer serving as bait.

8-9 A new Witch-Hunter has come to town and has managed to find out something about the character.

10 The character's Sire has come to town and is looking for her.

Romance

Despite their sexless lives, Vampires remain creatures of great passion. For them romance is still one of the most important emotions.

1-4 Character encounters a mortal who reminds him of someone he used to love.

5-7 Character meets a Cainite who reminds her of someone she used to love.

8-9 Character meets someone he used to love.

10 Character meets an old lover from her mortal life, and the lover has become a Vampire.

Secrets

Even during the day-to-day tedium of most people's lives, there are still secrets to be learned and questions to be answered.

1-4 Somebody (either Kindred or kine) has discovered a major secret of the character's.

5-7 Character comes across a clue which could lead to significant discoveries about the mortals in the Chronicle.

8-9 Character comes upon a clue regarding the Cainites in the chronicle.

10 Character gets a clue as to who is behind it all.

Vengeance

The lust for revenge does not wait for the story to continue. Whether someone hunts the characters or the characters hate someone else, vengeance never rests.

1-4 Somebody who despises the character begins a campaign of harassment against him; all the little things start going wrong.

5-7 Character becomes involved in someone else's plans for vengeance, either as a pawn or an ally.

8-9 Somebody the character despised during his mortal existence appears on the scene in a role which cannot be ignored. However, taking vengeance on this old foe via Vampiric powers could lead to a Humanity loss.

10 Character discovers somebody has the dirt on an individual she despises. If she manages to obtain this information, it can be used now or saved for later blackmail.

Weirdness

Weird things happen in everyone's lives, but since the existence of a Cainite is so strange to begin with, what they consider odd is correspondingly stranger.

1-4 Character becomes ill from feeding on tainted blood. Lower her Physical Attributes by one point for the next Story.

5-7 A chance encounter with an ancient, philosophizing gypsy has given the character a mystical amulet. With the amulet, she can contact the gypsy any time and vice versa. Thus when the character is deeply involved in the Story, the gypsy will ring her up to discuss the paradox of Zeno's Arrow and whether it can move where it is or where it is not.

8-9 Rumors begin to fly through the Kindred community about a new Discipline similar in effect to Golconda. However, to learn the truth of these rumors, the characters must track down a hunter with a deadly reputation.

10 Mars Needs Vampires! Another coterie has decided to blame space aliens for its actions, and will attack characters under the guise of bug-eyed little green men. After all, if the characters believe in the undead, why not Martians?

Chapter Three:

The Setting

*Death is everywhere
There are lambs for the slaughter
Waiting to die
And I can sense
The hours slipping by
Tonight*

- Depeche Mode, Fly on the Windscreen – Final

The Cainites, often bored of their immortality, wage constant war in the great Jyhad. Across the empty wastes of the wilds the Werewolves reign supreme, challenging any who would violate their ancestral lands. Around the world in deep, secret places Magi practice their cunning art for their own purposes. Into the madness that is the Gothic-Punk world your Troupe is cast. This chapter will help you, the Storyteller, design a city, describe a scene and build the Gothic-Punk world into a place that can contain the struggles of your greatest heroes and shroud the deeds of your most sinister villains.

In **Vampire** the action often centers around a city in which the Kindred hide during the burning rays of day and skulk out at night to feed and play. When building your Chronicle you will no doubt choose a basic mood and theme, but your city can have a mood and theme as well. In many cases they will be the same as the Chronicle itself, but they do not have to be. The Chronicle may emphasize the Vampires' struggle and the hope they find to continue their miserable existences. At the same time the setting may dictate that the world is nothing but a wretched place where there is no law, no order and no hope. These two contradictory themes work against each other in a dramatic way that allows for more conflict and makes a more intriguing Chronicle.

Choosing a City

After deciding what flavor you want your Chronicle to have and what themes and moods your setting is going to project or reflect, you must choose a city. Choose carefully. All cities have strengths and weaknesses that will both expand and limit your Chronicle. Some cities are too small to support a large population of Vampires, while others are so big that it would be difficult for the players to have any effect on the city at all. On the other hand, a small city (like Gary) might allow the Vampires to be critical in fighting off the Vampires from a larger city, while a big city (like Paris) with a large Kindred community can allow for an immensely complex game that keeps you and your players on your toes for months of game play.

Each area of the Gothic-Punk world has its own tone. Choose your city accordingly. Europe houses one of the oldest Vampire communities. The Kindred here, often very ancient and the Princes very powerful, enforce the rules of the Lextalionis more fiercely than their counterparts in the New World and often strictly control the number of Kindred in their cities.

In North America, the East Coast resembles Europe. The Vampire Princes are more powerful and tend to have more control over their kingdoms, though in the eyes of the European Vampires the Kindred of America are wild and out of control. The further west you go in America, the younger the cities get and the wilder the Kindred become. West Coast cities are almost free of the rules imposed by the Camarilla. Many say that these cities more than any others endanger the Masquerade, while others feel that western states serve as a pressure valve in Vampiric society that releases the wild Kindred to places where they will be less noticed.

There are many other more exotic areas of the world that are much less constrained by the politics of the Camarilla. This makes these areas vary widely in their attitudes and distribution of power. An innovative Storyteller could easily set a Chronicle in Cairo, Jerusalem, Beirut or Tehran. Many of the cities in Africa, India or South America could produce rare and unusual environments for **Vampire**. In these out-of-the-way places, away from the economic power centers of the world, Kindred are safer from the Camarilla and the Sabbat who vie for control of the prime real estate. Not that either organization would not interfere if it thought it could gain power in that area; they certainly would, but they will not likely actively involve themselves in the cities of poorer nations unless they are invited by some faction.

The Orient is another exciting place for your adventures. Tokyo, Saigon, Beijing, Seoul, or Manila are all exotic cities with much to offer a Storyteller. In these cities the Camarilla does not exist at all. The Orient is controlled by its own Vampires, with different forms and customs than those who rule the west. A Chronicle set in the East would require a Storyteller to spend more time in preparation, but would provide an extremely unique setting for the

game and is ideal for a troupe who has been playing long and needs a change.

The important thing to remember is that each city in each part of the world has its own character. Stick to that character and the city will soon gain its own distinct flavor and style that will be unlike any other city. It is, unfortunately, easy to generalize and say that Tokyo is much like Los Angeles which is just like New York. All three are modern cities, with a great deal of wealth, population and influence over their respective regions.

When one does not generalize, we begin to see that these cities are very different in style and character. New York is considered grimmer and darker than the other two. Its problems with crime seem to be much greater, and in the Gothic-Punk world it is largely controlled by the Sabbat. Los Angeles is wilder than the other two, with a feeling of youth and energy which can only be found in the youngest of cities (a city of Anarchs perhaps?). Tokyo is a shiny new city of glitz and neon, but underneath it lie centuries of ancient tradition. All of these cities face the problems of urban life that are becoming only too common in the 20th century, yet each will choose different ways to deal with them. Find your city's character and your saga will become strong and very real.

Of course you may want to choose a city a little closer to home. You may even want to use the city you live in or one nearby. Choosing a familiar city has its good points and bad points. The advantages are that both you and your players are likely to know what certain areas of the city look like, and it will be easier for your players to envision the settings you describe. Information about the city will be readily available, and you will not have to research the city too thoroughly. Finally, everyone knows of mysterious parts of their own city, and what better setting can there be than an area already imbued with mystery?

The disadvantages are that your players will know the city as well or better than you do. They may have certain expectations as to what the city is really like and may argue with you over trivial facts. Furthermore, while the Gothic-Punk world is not entirely identical to our world, some changes you make to your city may be difficult for your players to swallow.

Choosing a city far from where you live is always a safe bet, but it will require you to obtain maps and information on the city before you begin. Maps are easy and can be obtained from a map store or from AAA. Other information can be obtained in the same places or you can go to a library for more information. Most large cities also have tourist bureaus that you can call to receive pamphlets, maps and other tourist information through the mail.

Once you have chosen a city you must find a "look" for it (or a "look" for each city which your Troupe will spend time in). The look of a city is the element that makes it unique. A city with a distinctive feel and look could be recognized as soon as you stepped into it. While many of our cities today in the real world seem to look very much alike, a close inspection will reveal many differences which all go into characterizing the city. For instance, Los Angeles has practically no buildings over three stories high (The First Interstate World Center notwithstanding) and most are only a single story. The roofs are hardly sloped at all because of the lack of rain. Almost all the buildings have air conditioning and the sunsets are mostly pastel colors, perhaps because of the smog. The heat of the day can still be felt in early evening, but because it is a desert climate the evenings often cool off quickly, even in the summer.

New York, on the other hand, has tall, old buildings, many of which date from the early part of the century. The climate is fairly cold, with warm months lasting for only about four months out of the year. It rains frequently, giving the city a damp, fresh feeling. The tall buildings cast stark shadows and create vicious wind tunnels that funnel the offshore breezes. New York has many slums and even some of the nicer buildings look old and dilapidated on the outside, though their interiors are lavish. It snows in the winter, and the hurrying of the pedestrians and cars about the streets quickly turn the soft white snow into a grey slush. The commuters can be seen standing in their blue and black winter coats, blowing at their cold hands while waiting for a bus or taxi.

This is just an example of the differences between two cities in our world. Los Angeles and New York are both extreme cities with rather extreme characters and are easy to depict. Cities like St. Louis, Seattle, Atlanta, Orlando, San Francisco, Tulsa, Boston, and Dallas may be a little harder to characterize, but with a little research you will find that each city has its own flavor and character which you need to bring out and keep alive in your Chronicle.

In the Gothic-Punk world, your city may well be more extreme. For instance, since New York is controlled by the Sabbat, the buildings might be more rundown, their upkeep ignored by a Sabbat which does not care for human suffering. The crime is more rampant and the city a little dirtier. All of these effects are brought about partially by the Vampire rulers. Los Angeles, on the other hand, is probably dominated by Anarchs who fled west from other Princes who would not tolerate their indiscretions. The Kindred who control this city have made it wilder than it already is. The gang problems are much worse and the culture is much wilder, more exotic and more avant-garde than it is in the real world.

Once you have found your city's character, you may wish to alter it to better reflect the effects that its Vampire inhabitants would have on it. But you are not done with the city's look there. You must decide how much "Gothic" you wish

to add to your city and how much "Punk." These are the parts of the city that make a look uniquely **Vampire**. Without these qualities, your city is just a modern city with some Vampires in it. It has no flair, no flash of style.

To New York, one could add more Gothic than Punk. New York's tall brooding buildings suggest Gothic architecture. Since New York in reality does have a very large group of street people and is an intensely urban community, you might not want to build on these aspects. Too many changes will make the city unrecognizable. Los Angeles, on the other hand, has hardly any Gothic look to it at all. To make the city look more Gothic (tall buildings with elaborate architecture and many statues) would make the city almost unrecognizable and goes completely against its character in the real world. However, Los Angeles has quite a street life which could well be expanded to give L.A. more Punk. In L.A. you might not make anything Gothic at all, fearing that this would look silly since everything else looks so modern.

Once all of this is done you will be left with a city that is very much like its counterpart in our world yet has been subtly altered by its Kindred inhabitants and has all the flair and style of the Gothic-Punk universe. Once the city's "look" has been established in this way you will find that other settings just seem to come naturally to your stories.

The Kindred

To make a city seem real you have to fill it with real people. It is impossible to separate the city from characters in a game like **Vampire**. Thus, once you have chosen your city and found its special character, you must begin to populate it with Vampires. Before beginning play, detail the personalities (not necessarily the Attributes) of at least half the Vampires you plan on including in your city. This will allow you to ad-lib with minimal effort and will not require you to make up too many Vampires on the spot.

The Camarilla generally enforces a rule of no more than one Vampire for every 100,000 people. This is a good rule for you to follow as well, but remember that it is not in the slightest bit binding. Many cities are far more overcrowded than this and many others (especially in less-developed parts of the world) are almost empty of Kindred. In other words, put in as many or as few Kindred as you like. To keep your game seeming "real" you will need to explain why you chose the number of Kindred you did, especially if you went for an extreme. Lots of Kindred can always be because of overcrowding (many of the American cities have this problem) and a lack of Vampires could be attributed to a strict Prince or a recent purge (maybe by the Inquisition, the Lupine, a Magus or other Kindred).

The Prince

The most influential person in your city the characters are likely to meet is the Prince. While the Primogen and even the

Anarchs hold a kind of power, the Prince alone can often stand against them all. He may well have been holding the throne for years, shaping the city in his own image. His power will include many of the mortal institutions, which he may well have twisted for his own needs. So choose your Prince first and choose carefully. If you find that he does not suit your needs later you can always arrange an "accident."

Whichever Clan the Prince is from will probably be the most powerful in the city. By tradition the Prince is the only one who may create Progeny freely and so he frequently surrounds himself with a bodyguard of his own creations to extend his power and protect him from his enemies. He also frequently comes from Clans Ventrue or Toreador.

This is the norm in Kindred society, but by no means the only option. A more interesting city might be ruled by a Nosferatu Prince whose power resides only in her own personal abilities and who refuses to create Childer to help her maintain control. She may be so powerful that no Kindred in the city can dare oppose her singly and she may be so clever that she can keep her enemies from ever getting together. Do not feel bound by tradition like the Vampires do. Make your Prince unique above all else.

The Primogen

The leading group of Elders are often called the Primogen. They sometimes represent all seven major Clans and hold power alongside the Prince. The Primogen often helps the Prince rule his city by performing the less important day-to-day tasks, while he worries about general policy and the big picture. At least that is what they are supposed to do. More often than not they are a very dangerous group who seek only power over other Kindred. Many members of the Primogen think they would make wonderful Princes, and frequently it is from this group that a new Prince emerges when an old one has "passed away."

Depending on the kind of campaign you want to run, these people may require the most detail. If your Vampires are to

be involved in the Jyhad, vying for power and blood with the Elders, then this group will be critical. Make sure that the relationships between them are complex and passionate. If your Chronicle is going to be centered around some other conflict you can give the Primogen less detail. Remember, though, that as a group the Primogen will have a huge effect on the city, and their actions are likely to affect the Vampires of your Troupe whether or not your Vampires want them to.

The Anarchs

The other camp into which your Troupe may fall is that of the Anarchs. Constantly rebelling against the power of the Primogen and the Elders, this group includes some of the most violent and unpredictable Kindred in the city. Your players' Vampires may well fall into the ranks of this group as young Vampires of the 20th century are prone to do.

If you want your city to center around this group, you may wish to increase the informal limit of one vampire per 100,000 mortals to twice that number. This creates a city with more conflict and the Anarchs will have to duel one another for feeding grounds. Like the Elders, there will be more than one faction among the Anarchs and you should detail at least two or three different groups before the game begins.

Others

There are many other Vampires that do not fight in the War of Ages between the Anarchs and the Elders. These are the neutrals, and they play a very dangerous game. Having no friends, they are often targets for Diablerie or worse for Vampires from either camp who need the power. Still, they tend to be very independent, and therefore powerful, Vampires who can make good allies for your player Vampires.

Some of these other Vampires may work for the Sabbat as spies or assassins, while others are Caitiff or other rogue Vampires hiding from the establishment. Many may be political refugees from other cities who would not be allowed in by the Prince of your city if they officially Presented themselves, so they hide, knowing that if they are ever discovered they will be slain. This group can also include powerful Kindred seeking Golconda or Cainites who are among the ranks of the Inconnu and disdain contact with other Kindred. This group of Kindred will require the least

detail and you can add members to its ranks as your Chronicle progresses. Few are powerful enough to seriously affect the dynamics of the city, so their addition later in the Chronicle will not change things.

Mortals

It is for the mortals that the Cainites come to the cities. Some respect and appreciate the mortals. The Toreador try to save the best among them from the ravages of time, and many use the mortals for protection and power. Some Kindred, especially the younger ones, identify with the mortals and see little difference between themselves and their prey. Many Vampires, such as the Sabbat, view the mortals as cattle to be slaughtered and used at the whim of the immortals. This group of thinkers often commits the most atrocious acts of violence against the mortals to satisfy their own sick and twisted psychological needs.

Mortals are very important to your city. Who is the mayor? Does he know about Vampires? Does he care? An interesting mayor might be one who is a Vampire or, worse, one who knows about Vampires and is secretly making a plan to hunt them down. Mortals have as many

varied reactions to Kindred as Kindred do to them. Many respond with fear, but there can be no doubt that many humans find something attractive about being able to live forever, whatever the cost in blood.

The Mayor

The mayor's office can be very influential in mortal politics, and in order to control and manipulate the mortals the Kindred often control the mayor. Control of this office is easier than control of other mortal organizations because you only need Dominate one person and the power is in your hands. You can easily use the mayor already in your city, or you can make up your own.

The advantage of using real public officials in your games is that you can then use real newspapers as the newspapers from your version of the city. If in the real world the mayor is called before a grand jury on corruption charges you can use this as source material for a Story. This is easy if you have set your Chronicle in your home town but even if your city is across North America you can frequently have the paper delivered (sometimes a day or two late) or keep up with it at a library.

Whoever controls the mayor's office and the mayor himself will have a chokehold on the city. Give careful choice to which member of the Primogen (or perhaps the Anarchs) controls this important mortal. Conflict over control of the mayor could lead to many Stories for your Troupe.

The Police

The police have the greatest immediate effect on the lives of the Cainites. It is the police who watch the streets and their inhabitants and guard them from harm. Since Vampires must kill or at least harm people to live, they frequently come into conflict with the police. Furthermore, the police are trained in combat. Though Vampires aren't vulnerable to most weapons, guns can hurt a Vampire or even force her into Torpor. Once captured by the police, a Vampire may be forced to stay in jail for at least one night and into the daytime, a catastrophe for the Vampire as well as the Masquerade. Additionally, the police keep detailed records. If any organization is in a position to discover and reveal Vampires to the world, it is a police department.

It is only natural that the Vampires would seek to control the police if for no other reason than their own protection. This is easier said than done, however. While controlling the police chief will give you a certain amount of power over general policy, it will not allow you to get yourself released from jail. You need to control a particular precinct captain to do that, and even then the detectives are going to ask questions. In order to coordinate a search for a particular individual (like an enemy Vampire you want to find), you need to control the police chief or specific detectives. Even then, if you start having those policemen you control do strange things for no obvious reason, Internal Affairs will arrest or suspend them.

There are five levels of the police department, each of which may be controlled by different Vampires. They are:

- Police Chief. This office orders general policy and can fire the policemen from other areas lower down in the power structure. He can have precinct captains fired or hired.
- Precinct Captains and the detectives handle most of the investigations; they can be used to hunt down enemy Vampires you wish captured or found and they can also be used to get you out of jail. Control of this group is difficult because there is no centralized authority.
- The uniformed policemen on the streets. These men can be used for a localized search or to avoid capture if you

happen to know the cop who is about to capture you. You can direct them to patrol areas you wish protected and they can also be used by the precinct captains to conduct a large-scale search.

- Internal Affairs. These guys are in charge of finding cops who are committing crimes or altering procedure and have them arrested or fired. Vampires who control this group use it to gain control of the others by having all of the mortals that other Vampires control fired.

- The police bureaucracy. This low-level group is often overlooked by Kindred who want flashy, dramatic results. However, these are the people to go to when you want specific information, an APB sent out or officers maneuvered away from a specific area by Dispatch. These are also the folks who can cover up autopsy reports, make crime scene photos disappear and keep you updated on investigations.

As you can see, the internal politics in the police department can get horribly complex. If different Vampires control

each group, then they may use the police against one another in an attempt to gain control of the entire station or force. The problem is that if the police are involved in a civil war created by their Vampiric masters, then the streets are not being properly protected and the city suffers. For this reason, many Princes lay claim to the police and do everything in their power to control the entire force. This prevents Vampires from squabbling over the department and risking a breach of the Masquerade.

You may also want to consider creating the characters of a few individual policemen to use in your Chronicle. These guys may know or start to guess at the existence of Vampires. They may begin hunting down Vampires, specifically your players' coterie, which might require your Vampires to "remove" these nosy policemen.

The Media

The media threaten the Masquerade constantly. Reporters from newspapers and television stations constantly comb the streets, looking for stories and bizarre occurrences - a massive threat to the Vampire community as a whole. To make matters worse, reporters are usually headstrong, self-reliant individuals who are difficult to bribe or control for any length of time, especially if they smell a story or cover-up.

For this reason Vampires who wish to control the media usually do so through the administration. This way the administration simply kills those stories the Vampires do not want printed or produced, and the Masquerade is protected. This makes the media easier to control than the police, but the consequences of a loss of control can be much more severe. The media announces things to large audiences, and it would be impossible to cover up such a story if it was released to the world. As a result the Vampires do not fight for control of the media; the costs of discovery are too high. Frequently this organization is simply left for the Prince to handle. As a result it is a symbol of power to have sway in the media, and is usually the mark of a powerful Elder or the Prince himself.

When planning your Chronicle and your city, consider what part the media will play and invent a few journalists and producers. The key to creating a realistic setting is to make it filled with realistic people, so sprinkle in a few journalists to keep the players on their toes.

Fire Department

This may not seem like a particularly important organization for Vampires, but when you consider Vampires' weakness for fire, you will see that this department does have more than a few uses. Its primary concern is, of course, fire fighting, but if the trucks are late or committed to a fire elsewhere, a Vampire's Haven which might be otherwise saved could be burned to the ground. Combine this sort of thing with a few Assamite assassins, and any Vampire in the city you want "removed" is as good as gone. Consider who controls the fire department, because they can be used to deadly effect.

The Gangs

Mortal street gangs are a common problem in many cities across America. These gangs, often organized racially, are usually violent, emotionally disturbed and very well armed. They make ideal pawns for the Anarchs because they embody the Anarchs' philosophy of rebellion against society. Anarch gangs often control lesser mortal gangs through Dominate or other Vampiric powers, though simple force and intimidation is also effective.

When you create your city, give some thought to the mortal gangs. They should be placed around your city, centering around the poorer areas, and they all have turf which will likely share a border with the turf of other gangs. These gangs often fight with one another over the size of their turf. Decide which gangs are already enemies and which ones are allies. Then you need to give control of some of the gangs to the Anarchs or even to some of the Elders if you think any of the Vampires in your city are inclined to use these unreliable troops. Invent a few gang leaders and some of their most dangerous warriors. These characters will be useful when your Vampires are on the street. You can also use them to spice up a Vampire's nightly hunt for blood.

Other Creatures

Vampires are not the only mystical beings to inhabit the Gothic-Punk world. Other creatures have their own goals and motivations, some of which are detailed in **Chapter Five**, but the most interesting antagonists are the ones you come up with. You also may wish to make up your own mystical creatures.

The Lupines have the most interesting relationship to the Kindred. The two are enemies in their very philosophy. The Kindred live off mortals and think that whatever promotes the growth of human society is good, no matter what the cost to the earth. The Lupines worship nature and feel that it must be preserved even if it hurts mankind. As the cities spread into the wilderness, the Lupines get more desperate as they try to preserve their way of life in the face of the new urban life of the coming century.

The Magi are humans who have mastered the arcane art of magic to higher levels than even the Tremere. They too live among mortals and hide their activities from those who would not understand. These humans search for many bizarre artifacts with their arts and sometimes require special ingredients, like a drop of Vampire blood. Their overall plans and goals are their own and are specific to individual Magi, so you can add a few of these mysterious wizards to spice up your city.

Among the other creatures your Vampires may have truck with are Ghosts. These beings are sometimes bound to specific locations or at least they seem to like certain areas better than others. Sometimes they will appear to Vampires and haunt or talk with them. When creating a few ghosts to add to your city, consider how they died and

how that might affect their behavior in their afterlife. Violent deaths may produce violent ghosts, while calmer deaths may produce more friendly ghosts.

There are, of course, the Faeries. These creatures don't make too many appearances in urban areas, so the Vampires are unlikely to meet too many of them. Even so, the Faeries don't stay in one place as much as the other magical creatures do, so you don't have to plan them out as part of your setting. Just include them as your plot demands later on. Whatever you do, don't overuse these creatures. This is a game about Vampires, so don't make these beings very common.

Locations

Once you have decided on the characters who inhabit your city, you need to give them places to live, meet, hunt and gather for parties. Here is where your research on your city will come in handy, as you can use the locations described in your travel guides and other literature as the locations for Vampiric activity. You also may want to look ahead at the section "Choosing Settings" to get some ideas for Vampire locations, if your research material isn't helping you any.

The first thing you have to decide is where the Prince and the Primogen meet. This will be the center for Vampire politics, a kind of Cainite town hall. Do they meet in the Elysium like the Vampires of Chicago? Or, like the Vampires of Milwaukee, do they meet in a hotel complex? Perhaps they meet somewhere really different, like outside of town, in the sewers, on a yacht, in a cave, or in a funeral home. Where the Primogen and the Prince meet will often characterize your city and the kinds of problems it has.

Once you have placed Vampire Town Hall, you need to find Havens for the Vampire characters you have created. The Havens of older Vampires like the Prince, Primogen and other Elders will be more important because these Kindred move around a lot less, and their Havens will remain consistently the same through much of your Chronicle. Choose these Havens carefully, and keep in mind the character of the Vampire when you do so. No doubt your Troupe will have contact with most of the major Vampires in the city at some point, so you want their Havens to characterize them well.

You also have to place your Anarchs' areas of control. Frequently (though not always) the Anarchs take control of certain parts of town just like mortal gangs. These areas of turf should be marked out on a map so that you know where certain Anarch groups are likely to be found. This will also show you where it is dangerous for the characters to hunt because many Anarch gangs are very rigorous in controlling their territory.

Finally, once you have placed the Havens and controlled areas of all of the major Vampires, you need to add other areas

that hold interest to the Kindred. The most important of these are the hunting grounds. Many cities in the Gothic-Punk world have a "club row" where all manner of clubs and bars can be found. This place is called many things by the Kindred, including "the Rack" and "The Crucible". Here Vampires can be found, hunting for fresh blood or meeting with others of their own kind to make plans or negotiate deals. There are other kinds of hunting grounds as well. Indeed there are as many hunting grounds as there are Vampires. See the **Vampire** book for the different styles of hunters. Slummers will need to go to the slums, while those who seek to get a rush by drinking from the

drunk or the stoned might need to go to entirely different places.

The Wilds

Despite all the work you have put into your city, eventually your Vampires are going to leave it. They may be moving to another city or they may be simply fleeing into the wilderness, having been on the losing side of some great (or more likely petty) battle in the Jyhad. Either way you need to realize that while the same basic principles for making a scene dramatic still apply, there are some important differences that arise as soon as your Vampires leave the neon lights of their home and enter into the musty darkness of the wilderness.

In **Vampire**, all of the cities are Gothic-Punk. Simply put, they have aspects of the Gothic horror novels and aspects of

street culture today. In the wilderness, there is little street and therefore little Punk. However, the Gothic is still very much alive. The Gothic wilderness has a very distinct look that you will want to make use of in your **Vampire Chronicle**.

The Gothic wilderness is very dark. There are nearly no streetlights, except for one out in the middle of nowhere at an intersection to make a harsh light. The moon is often full (or hidden behind ominous clouds), and the wind whistles eerily through the trees. If it is not a clear night, then rain pours down in torrents to buffet the weary traveller. In the real world, the rural areas often have little gas stations or motels dotted about to take in the lonely traveler. In the Gothic world many of these are gone, leaving larger areas of open space, free of man-made buildings and devices.

Under the open moon and in the swirling mists lie a few small towns that close up their doors at night. These little hamlets are sometimes distrustful of strangers and are usually poor, unless they are just bedroom communities for a nearby city. The Kindred do not exist out here so the people are free from their hunting. The mortals must, however, deal with the ravaging Werewolves, whose fury can know no limits. These monstrous beasts travel in packs on nights of the full moon when their rage consumes them, hunting for victims to rend and destroy.

Just make sure you don't overdo it. You don't want to make the Gothic-Punk world seem so different from our world that your players cannot identify with it. Make sure that you tailor how much Gothic you add to your wilderness to the amount of Gothic you added to the cities. If your city is covered in gargoyles and made of dark black stone, then the wilds should have dark, brooding mansions on hills overlooking cold, stony moors. The moon may well be full, and there should always be an icy mist creeping across the landscape, accompanied by the howl of a lonely wolf. If your cities are not so Gothic, then make the rural areas more like the real rural areas in our world.

When describing rural areas, realize that Vampires tend to see them differently than mortals. A lack of mortals means no *vitæ*, and for a Vampire this means death. Thus the Vampires tend to see the wilderness as despairingly lonely, unlike many humans who see the wilderness as a place for comforting solitude. The woods are full of Werewolves, who are the mortal enemies of the Vampires, and while many find the wilderness to be filled with a kind of peace, the Vampires only find war here. Just like the city, there is no safety for them even here.

Thus with all of these problems to confront a Vampire in the woods, they will see the rural areas differently than you

may. Do not describe birds as "chirping from a tree." Rather, the birds would "cackle at you from above." The moon is not beautiful and soft; rather, the Kindred see it as a watching eye illuminating their position with stark shadows and gives them away to the wolf men who lurk all around. Wide, open expanses of terrain, which many mortals find lovely due to

their peacefulness, are merely empty to Vampires, who feel naked when out in them. The open sky overhead seems to threaten to swallow the Kindred up in its great black void, and the stars which are rarely visible in the brightly lit city seem to laugh maliciously at them.

You need to describe the rural areas as the Vampires perceive them, not as we perceive them. For many Vampires the wilderness is a frightening, unknown place they have not visited in many years. They have only heard rumors about the terrifying Werewolves who live there and what they do to the Kindred they catch. When you describe the scenes in this way, your players will learn to distrust the wilderness, as they should.

There is always the possibility, however, that you wish to run your Chronicle as a traveling story where the Vampires never stay in one place for any length of time. There are a number of possible reasons for this and many are given in **Vampire**. In this case you will wish to do a little research and find good, dramatic settings to place your Vampires in. You will also want to make the rural areas seem a little less desolate and dangerous than I have recommended above, or the Chronicle will quickly become extremely oppressive.

The possibilities for setting in rural areas are a little more limited than in the city, so you will need to work a little harder if you want a mobile Chronicle. The Vampires will rarely meet the same people more than once, and they will spend a lot of time away from the large concentrations of people. Thus you will have to find more ways to make the Chronicle interesting. This will also affect your plots and your characters, of course, but here are some suggestions about setting.

Think of exotic places in the wilderness that will make good settings for scenes, such as abandoned houses, deep mines, ghost towns, misty swamps, forbidding caverns, brooding forests, old rock quarries and lofty mountain peaks with dangerous cliffs. You must look at the terrain that exists in the area of the world that your Chronicle is in, so choose your initial location very carefully. New England, Eastern and Western Europe and the new states of the old Soviet Union are all classic Gothic terrain which would make wonderful settings for a rural **Vampire Chronicle**. The more adventurous Storyteller might choose a more exotic area like northern Africa, but this can lead to more trouble than it's worth, so only do it if you're sure of your knowledge and ability.

Making It All Come Alive

No matter what kind of Chronicle you are planning on running or in what part of the world you have placed your Vampires, you must be able to make the setting seem real, dramatic and dynamic. This section includes tips and secrets for novice and experienced Storytellers alike.

Choosing Settings

Once your city is complete the setting for your Chronicle is still incomplete. You only have the larger framework in which you will build the more important scene settings. Your Troupe will experience the Gothic-Punk world only through the settings you describe to them. If your city has all of this great flavor and great style but you do not let that

come out in the individual scenes, then it was all for nothing. You must let the look of your city shine through in each individual scene.

In order to best create an individual scene, the biggest and most important task is to choose a location. Once you have found your location, you can think about what makes it different from other similar locations in other cities. For instance, an inner-city slum in Los Angeles may have a cultural mix of Mexicans, African-Americans and Asians, though many are racially segregated. One in New York would have mostly African-Americans and Hispanics with a mix of European nationalities. Both are inner-city slums, but once you add the flavor of your own city they look, sound and smell very different.

You need not spend as much time with the settings for your scene as you do with your plot and characters, but each time you create a scene, ask yourself who will be there, what will they be doing and where will they be? Exotic and interesting settings can bring to life an otherwise ordinary and even boring scene. Following is a list of a few exotic scenes that have been popular in chronicles. The list is by no means exhaustive, but it may help you when ad-libbing or improvising a Story.

On the upper strata of wealth, the penthouse apartment is always an interesting location. The extravagance can make for an interesting place to bargain and negotiate in. It's also quite fun to stage large fights in penthouses as the resulting collateral damage is guaranteed to be very high. Usually the whole city is laid out in front of a big picture window with a marvelous view. This also can make the scene more dramatic if, for instance, two opposing factions are fighting for the city while the city is laid out behind them in panorama.

Mansions are another good place to locate your Elders and to negotiate deals and treaties. Try to stay away from the typical Hollywood mansion that we see in every other movie. Do something different with it. Include an elaborate garden in the back, a maze of bushes, a sculpture garden, or a zoo. With Vampires and wealth, anything is possible. Why not make the mansion a grand old castle that some old Vampire had brought from Europe stone by stone or had a replica built here to remind himself of his past? A grand castle on a hill overlooking the city would be an impressive sight and an unusual landmark for your city.

Yachts can be very exotic and interesting locations for deals or fights. Again, try to make the yacht unique. There are not too many strange things that you can do with a yacht because of the space limitations, so you will probably simply

have to describe it differently. The yacht could have exotic railings and a beautiful wooden deck. Or perhaps there is about to be a party and the deck is covered in streamers, balloons and sweet treats for the guests.

On larger ships you can include swimming pools, bars and a whole host of luxuries. Indeed, a cruise could make a very interesting place for Vampires to have an adventure. Cabins inside the hull might not have windows, so Vampires could hide safely in the day and only come out for the great night life. You could even include old sailing vessels. The *U.S.S. Constitution* still lies in Boston harbor and sails often enough to keep it commissioned in the U.S. Navy. There are many other ancient ships still around from the last few centuries that could well have been bought by some Vampire who wished to remember his old days.

Some Vampires still hold positions in corporations and may want to meet your characters in one of the corporate

towers that dot many cities. These tall glass and steel buildings make very dark and grim settings at night. Most of the lights are off and the elevators open up on dark and silent carpeted hallways. There might be security cameras to be dodged as well as the odd guard or two that must be subdued or avoided. If you play up the silence and darkness of this enormous building, the effect can be quite creepy.

Many Elders belong to social clubs. While most of these clubs center around daytime activities like golf and tennis, there are often parties and other events going on at night at which Vampires might be found. This setting is just as exotic as the mansion or the yacht with the advantage that it is probably neutral ground for the Vampires who are to meet here (for whatever reason). Huge chandeliers glitter from the ceiling and crystal fountains bubble colored water down into their marble basins. The decadence of these places can be quite extraordinary.

Expensive restaurants always work well as a good setting for a **Vampire** adventure. Vampires cannot keep food down, and this can pose some very unusual problems for Vampires who are expected to eat (watch as the characters dump drinks into plants and hide food in their pockets). Some Vampires who can actually keep the food down for a while will agree to meet other Vampires at restaurants. The Vampire capable of eating is much less likely to be embarrassed and thereby gains an advantage in any social transaction.

Restaurants do not make good places for open fights, but they are great for subtle battles where silenced guns are fired under tables when the cymbals are hit in the band's performance or when champagne bottles are being opened. This can make for a very tense scene as each Vampire knows that murder is taking place but is unable to do anything that would risk the Masquerade.

Bars are a very common place for adventures to take place in **Vampire** as well as many other games. So common, in fact, that all bars in games may look alike to your players - happily, an avoidable phenomenon. Vampires spend lots of time in bars because they don't have to drink, and bars are great places to get vessels. Make each bar different. Have a small band play reggae, hard rock, jazz or punk. Or have the bar decorated in particularly strange theme. One favorite is "*Arabian Nights*," decorated with murals of the desert and with silky cloth hung over the ceiling like a huge Persian tent. The music tends to be softer than in many places, and it is known as a good place to bring a date. Give each bar its own style and it will come alive; describe it just as "a bar" and it will remain dead and uninteresting.

The Elysium, as it is called in Chicago and many other cities, is the area where the Primogen meet to argue, debate and vote on various subjects. The Elysium offers many setting possibilities. Art museums can be used for several different kinds of encounters. Many of the museums are closed at night, leaving their rooms free from the prying eyes of the mortals. Furthermore, these beautiful halls filled with the greatest works of art from history are often occupied by Elders who gather here for meetings or for their own pleasure. The works of art themselves can reflect the action taking place in your adventure. For instance, an Elder might be looking at a Greek statue of a fallen warrior while he threatens an Anarch player with death. The art can thus become symbolic of the action that is taking place in the story.

This works equally well with plays (if not better). The play that the Vampires have gone to see can mirror the action in

the story itself, except perhaps with a twist. It can be used to

foreshadow doom and death to a particular Vampire who sees himself as one of the characters in the play. Look at Shakespeare for good plots that may well mirror plots of your own (especially *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet*). These plays have the advantage that their plots are likely to be known by your troupe and you will not have to read them the play for them to get the point.

Movies can work even better to convey this effect. While movie houses are not often part of the Elysium, they can make great places to use this parallel plot effect. Movies your troupe has seen can be used to great effect. Many cities have out-of-the-way little movie houses that show old movies that were either "cult" or artistic. While these places might lack the deadly intrigue of the Elysium, your troupe may well be more aware of the plots of movies than those of many plays and so they are useful for your symbolic purposes. A movie or a play can even give a hint as to what is actually happening in the adventure. If the Vampires cannot understand what is wrong with a particular Vampire - why he seems so strange and upset perhaps - when they see *Hamlet* they might guess that the disappearance of their friend's Sire may not have been an accident.

Sporting events often take place at night and are a great place to find vessels. Some Kindred follow sports teams like mortals do just to add a little excitement into their lives. Here in the flash of the artificial lighting and amidst the roar of the crowd, the Kindred can conduct their business, whatever it may be. The movement and shouting of so many excited mortals is like a drug to the Cainites. To be close to so much excited vitæ stimulates their senses and gets their adrenalin pumping. Those who have little self-control should avoid such places, though this can allow the Storyteller to cause interesting problems.

Shopping malls can always be found in today's world. Most shopping malls close at around nine at night, so Vampires may often find themselves having to break in. A mall late at night can be a sad, eerie place. The halls that should be filled with people are empty for the Vampires and the mannequins stare vacantly through their cold windows. All the shops are closed up with cages for doorways and all the fountains are off. If the Kindred have taken over the mall, they could arrange to have the fountains on and they might even be able to get keys to the doors of the stores. With the music on and the fountains going, it could actually be quite fun, having the whole place to yourself with items there for the taking. So you see, a mall can be a rather creepy place or a lot of fun, depending on how you describe it.

Another great place to go for fun is an amusement park. Many cities have at least one of these to visit. In the Gothic-Punk world, Kindred can come to these places for vessels or to relax. They could also be meeting somebody here to negotiate some sort of political deal or even for violence. Depending on the park, you may want to describe how artificial everything looks. Carnivals are especially great places to give Vampires the creeps. Just look at how many *Twilight Zone* episodes took place in a carnival. Carnivals seem overly gaudy and extremely fake. The cheap ones look tattered and worn down. There is something chilling about those wild rides, flashing lights, almost grotesque Harlequin faces and the strange shows. The mortals are often lost souls who have no family and no home because they are constantly on the move. A strange,

gaudy, flashy, tattered old place filled with lost souls and glaring, laughing clown masks can be extremely horrid.

If your city has a television industry (like L.A. or New York), it can be fun to have your Vampires fight across movie sets. One encounter between Vampires and a contact began with a meeting inside a television studio, turned into an ambush, and the Vampires soon found themselves defending themselves inside the sound stage of a popular sitcom. All the players had seen the show, so it was easy to imagine the scene. I would not recommend doing this more than once. It makes for a very strange, somewhat comical battle. You can also set battles in more interesting (and darker) places than the set for a sitcom. How about a set from *Hook*, *Robin Hood* or *Aliens 3*? Obviously the movie will have to have been out recently to justify the set still being up, but this shows you how wild you can get when you let your imagination go.

Parks are typical places to meet if you don't trust the person you're meeting. They are open and it is harder to hide an ambush. You want to make your parks as distinctive as possible. Remember to include swingsets and jungle gyms in some and botanical gardens and outdoor theaters in others. Some will have memorials to war heroes with statues or long lists of names engraved on stone walls. Parks are good spots to hide from the police and many parks are very dangerous for mortals if not for Kindred (Central Park in New York has become infamous).

Every major city in America has a zoo. Almost all the zoos close at sunset, so Kindred will have to sneak in after dark. Social situations in front of the lions can add a little background to an otherwise ordinary scene, and a battle in the snake house is one to remember. Dancing among tigers in the middle of a gunfight always adds a little thrill as well.

There are also several places that deal in illegal goods which could make for a very interesting setting. How about a brothel? Every city has at least a few of these. Kindred might go to one to get easy vessels. There might even be a house that deals specifically with Kindred and their needs. Whorehouses can either be very slimy, horrible places that use runaway teenagers for their bodies, or they can be slick, clean establishments that keep their girls well cared for and charge big bucks from their wealthy clientele.

Many cities outlaw gambling, and the crimelords may have set up private gambling clubs for those who cannot do without. Only the very rich and decadent would be found in such a place and the money that could correspondingly be made would be enormous. No doubt the whole interior would have plush rugs and bright lights, just like a Vegas casino. Since Vampires are often the richest members of the

community, they would likely have been invited to enjoy the festivities.

The wealthy social places in the city are all very good if you want your Vampires to make deals or get information, but if you want a little more action you're going to have to find some places a bit more out-of-the-way. There are lots of really great places scattered throughout every ordinary city that make great action scene locations. One favorite is the cemetery. These are located randomly across every major city in America today. At night they are very creepy, and the gravestones make for interesting cover and tactical possibilities. The graveyard is also a reminder of death and can make a fight all the more fearful.

A slaughterhouse is wonderful for a fight or a chase. In the first place, it smells horrible. The stench makes the scene

uniquely grotesque. Second, the great slabs of meat hanging from hooks from the ceiling make for disgusting cover in a fire. Your players will not likely forget a fight they had in an abattoir, and it will seem different from all the other battles they have had, even if in many ways it was the same.

These are just a few ideas for dramatic places where you can set scenes in your Chronicle. Use them in an emergency when you can think of nothing else, or let them spark your imagination for your own scenes and locations within your city.

Describing Scenes

Once you have the scene in your head, you must describe it to your troupe. This is much easier said than done. Ultimately all you can do is practice and eventually it will come to you. There is no substitute for experience in this matter and it is one of the things that separates a good Storyteller from an inexperienced one. Still, there are some techniques that writers use and some techniques that other Storytellers have used that may be of some use to you.

When describing a scene, you must first decide on the mood you wish to set. While you will often simply describe the scene in a very utilitarian way, you will often want to set a tone or mood for the scene to come. This can be creepy, dangerous, peaceful, safe or whatever else you want. For example: "When you open your eyes you realize that you might as well have left them closed. The darkness completely surrounds you. You can see nothing, hear nothing and feel nothing except the cold concrete floor under your back." Here the darkness is an unknown that could very well hide an enemy or something worse. On the other hand: "When you open your eyes you see that you are shrouded in darkness. There is a peaceful silence and the floor beneath you is cool on your skin". Here the darkness is peaceful. It offers protection from your enemies and peace to those who require it.

Once you have chosen your tone, you must choose your methods - the tools you can use to create an image. Writers and poets have been using many of these methods for centuries, and there is no reason why you shouldn't use them as well. These are only here to help you get started. Ultimately we can never teach you how to describe a scene; you must learn the knack for it. It is something that is done at an intuitive level through a combination of a hundred thousand places and things that you have seen. Inventing and clearly describing new, imaginary places isn't easy and it takes experience and talent to do it well. Use these methods to get you started or to expand your abilities if you are already an experienced Storyteller.

Individuals experience much of the world through their eyes, so you must learn to describe the world in terms of color and shape. "His ashen face glares at you, with the fangs protruding from beneath the upper lip are as sharp as knives, and his eyes gleam like two bright coals." This is an example of a use of color and shape. Here we have only two colors, grey and red. However, realize how boring the description would read if you said "His face is grey-white and his eyes are red." Be specific. If his face is grey, what shade of grey? If his eyes are red, what kind of red? Be as specific as possible and give as much detail as you can on important people or things.

Hearing is usually the second most important sense used in setting a scene. Sounds make your scene seem much more real. Whenever you can, listen to sounds and try to describe them. We usually take sound for granted, but as a Storyteller you cannot. You must be able to describe the

sound of a gunshot, an explosion, scratching on a door, a wolf howling, a beautiful voice or a car accident (was there a minor thunk signifying a fender bender, or was there a tremendous crash followed by an explosion?). Make sound effects if you can. To add to our description of the ashen-faced Vampire we might say "His silk suit rustles as he moves and his voice is harsh and raspy, like a heavy smoker's."

Now we have to add smell. Smells really do it for a description of a place in a game. We identify so many things with smell that we don't even realize it. Pay attention to the smells in your life; they will come in handy as a Storyteller. Think about the smell of rain, cars, alcohol, sweat, food, exhaust, dust, stale air, something dead, garbage, the ocean, the subway and blood. Every scene you describe will include smells, even if it is only the smell of mortal vitae. To continue our description of the Vampire with the ashen face we will add a little smell, such as "His soft clothes are soaked in a thick, sweet perfume that smells of cherries."

Touch can be used to great effect in the description of a scene, but it is not essential to every one (the same goes for taste). Do not leave touch out though. Whenever the Vampires make a special point of picking something up, describe how it feels. For instance when a Vampire draws his gun, you could say "You fumble inside your jacket until you find it; it seems to slip into your hand and the icy metal fits snugly into your grip." This helps the player experience the Gothic-Punk world to its fullest.

Now if we put our ashen Vampire together we get: "His ashen face glares at you, with the fangs protruding from beneath the upper lip are as sharp as knives, and his eyes gleam like two bright coals. His silk suit rustles as he moves and his voice is harsh and raspy, like a heavy smoker's; all the while his soft clothes are soaked in a thick, sweet perfume that smells of cherries." This is a complete description of the Vampire, including all of the essential elements, but it lacks technique. It lacks little methods that can bring a scene to life and make it that much more real to the players.

Two of the greatest methods we have to help us paint a scene are metaphor and simile. For instance, in the description of the Vampire we might say "his eyes gleam like two bright coals, as though his face were a dying fire." This implies that the Vampire is old and burnt out. We might also change the description of his voice to read "his voice is harsh and raspy, like broken glass."

Metaphors like those above can be used to add flavor but they can also be used for many other things. Use metaphors to give an inanimate object action. Don't say "the old house sits on the hill" but rather "the old house squats on the hill like an enormous toad." Don't say "the light is incredibly bright." Instead, "the light sears your eyes like the afternoon sun." Sometimes you want your metaphors to be wild (like comparing a house to a toad) and sometimes they will be very conservative (saying a light is like the sun), but you want to use both kinds. Wild metaphors make your troupe think and it can make ordinary objects take on a character of their own. Conservative metaphors make a description more vivid and do not confuse the listener with a strange comparison.

A cousin to metaphor is personification. To personify something is to turn a concept or object into a person. To say that "death knocked on the door" is to personify death, implying that death is a person who can ring a doorbell. In **Vampire** you can say things like "the moon stares down at you like a lidless eye" or "the shadows seem to dance wildly

about as you light the fire" or "the storm shouts and thunders as it hurls its rain at the uncaring city streets." Giving an unthinking object thought or emotion can add a great deal to your setting. It adds life and dimension to otherwise bland and flat objects.

There are many other tools that you can use to improve your scenes but we will leave these for you to discover on your own. If you want new ideas, just read a good book. Writers and poets have spent literally thousands of years trying to find different ways to say things, so you should not overlook them as a valuable resource.

Tools of the Trade

Not only are there many ways to create setting with your voice, but there are also methods to create setting with lighting, music and other special effects that can add a great deal to your Chronicle as a whole. You may find some of

these devices to be useful and some not to your taste, so use only what you think is necessary to create the mood and set the scene for your Chronicle. Also be aware that the techniques you use on one night to create a mood may not be appropriate on another night when the mood of the Story for that evening is totally different. These tools are designed to help your troupe "get into it" and have been used by other gamers for years for just that purpose.

Music is perhaps your most powerful tool in making a setting and indeed, a whole game come alive. Choose your music carefully. Compact Disks are best if you can get them because you can easily select the kind of music you want by track. This allows you to quickly skip over music that does not fit the current mood of the Chronicle. The ultimate is a five CD changer that allows you to skip from CD to CD with a remote control. This keeps the hassles of being a DJ to a minimum and does not require you to stop the game to get up and fix the music.

Music without words is frequently the best because it does not distract the players with lyrics. As a result classical music and movie themes are frequently the best for your purposes. Make sure you review your music carefully before a game. You don't want to be suddenly surprised when the music changes from a battle song to a love theme. You may also wish to consult with your players before choosing music for an evening of play. Musical taste is very personal and one of your players may loathe the music you have planned, distracting her from the game.

Lights are also a great creator of mood. **Vampire** almost always takes place at night. It is best to begin just as the sun sets if you can, as this is the first thing a Vampire would see when he awakens and it can be the first thing your players see as they get into a game. Also, there is something beautiful and lonely in a sunset that makes us pensive. By forcing your players to think what it would mean to their lives if the first thing they saw upon arising from sleep was a sunset, you get them into the mood of **Vampire** and they are reminded what the world looks like when it is dark. Candles and colored lights (especially red) are very useful for **Vampire**.

It is the practice of some theater directors to gather their actors together before a performance, turn out the lights and give a little pep talk to allow time for the actors to get into character. Once the lights come back on, the actors have left their own selves behind and there is only the character left. This technique has proven very useful for roleplaying. The most destructive elements to a game are the digressions the players are prone to (the latest movie, a party on Saturday or whatever).

If you can get the players to stay in character until you turn the lights off again at the end of the Story and "reenter" the real world, your game will run more smoothly and your troupe will have fuller, more developed characters. By turning the lights off at the beginning of the session you make the darkness a kind of doorway into the imaginary world of **Vampire** and your players will only leave the Gothic-Punk world when you open the door (turn off the lights) to let them back into our real world.

You can say anything you want when you turn the lights out. For **Vampire** you may have a theme song you listen to, and playing it is a signal that it is time for the players to leave this world behind and forget all that would distract them in the game. You can also say nothing at all and just let your troupe meditate on the darkness or the music. Both work well for **Vampire**.

Lighting, music and other theatrical techniques can have a great influence on how well your troupe sees the Gothic-Punk world. A well-constructed atmosphere for the game will make your troupe more open-minded in picturing in their minds the world in which you describe, so use these techniques to enhance the descriptions of the places that your Vampires experience and your games will reach new levels of reality and imagination.

CITY WORKSHEET

City: _____

Mortal Population: _____ Vampire Population: _____

Mood: _____ Theme: _____

Describe your City's "Look":

Prince: _____ Clan: _____ Haven(s): _____

Primogen Role:

Names and Clans:

Anarch Overlord (if any): _____

Gangs and their Leaders:

Sabbat Presence:

Notable Neutrals:

Mayor: _____

Controlled by: _____

Police Chief: _____

Controlled by: _____

Precinct Captains: _____

Controlled by: _____

Prominent Uniformed Cops: _____

Controlled by: _____

Internal Affairs Detectives: _____

Controlled by: _____

Newspaper: _____

Controlled by: _____

Newspaper: _____

Controlled by: _____

TV Station/Network: _____

Controlled by: _____

TV Station / Network: _____

Controlled by: _____

Radio Station: _____

Controlled by: _____

Radio Station: _____

Controlled by: _____

Vampire Storytellers Handbook

Lupines: _____

Magi: _____ Ghosts: _____

Vampire Town Hall: _____

Elysium: _____ The Rack: _____

Other Hunting Grounds:

Chapter Four:

The Motive

*Softly to swim inside your veins
Softly in ripping cellophane
to float and glide in time
to the rushing in your brain
I wanted your lips. yes I wanted your kiss
Siouxsie & the Banshees, Softly*

Why do your characters do those crazy things they have become so known for? It would seem the easiest thing for a Vampire to do would be disappear into hiding, far from the wars of the Jihad, feeding on obscure visitors or secret herds. In fact, some Kindred follow this path, disappearing for decades from the sight of others. What a dull game that would make.

Thankfully, your characters (and their players) are special. Not for them these unlives of quiet desperation. Set up a series of odd events for them to investigate, and they fall over each other seeing who can get into the most trouble. Imply that the west side of town has become a dangerous place to hang out, and your characters rush out there, guns ablaze, to prove you right.

Bringing characters into Stories like this, with some event or tale sparking their interest in the scenario you have created, is often the easiest and most effective way to get the ball rolling. However, it is not always the best.

The following sections involve motivations which are both Storyteller- and player-driven. Stories involving these plots only rarely begin with the Storyteller presenting a situation to the players and having them go through planned events. Instead, the Storyteller creates the greater framework (who the antagonists are, where major events occur, what unforeseen occurrences throw well-laid plans off kilter, etc.) and the characters work to fulfill their goals within it.

These sections on politics, Golconda, rebirth, Diablerie and the others are suitable for creating an entire Chronicle, or can be mixed together. Either way creates a satisfying string of Stories for all participants.

Politics of the Camarilla

Peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations - entangling alliances with none.

- Thomas Jefferson, First Inaugural Address

This section describes the formal conventions, polite lies and harsh realities of Camarilla politics. The punishing demands of the Vampiric existence and the exacting requirements of the Masquerade have created a society of deceitful minds and sterile hearts. Whereas the family of man is grounded in the nurturing ties of empathy and abundance, the family of Caine is grounded in fear,

suspicion, and scarcity. In the mortal world, deception, duplicity and betrayal are aberrations. In Vampiric society they are the unwritten law that undergirds the Masquerade. They are the heart of Vampire politics. This section builds on the Status rules laid out in **The Players Guide** to aid Storytellers in establishing Chronicles based on Camarilla politics.

The Prince motioned the five Anarchs forward, saying "You may present yourselves for audience." His words dripped with false charm, but he scowled at the sight of them.

Dark thoughts settled onto his mind like a billowing black shroud as the quintet approached him. They brashly strode across the soft ermine rugs of his court, indifferent to the soil and filth on their battered boots that soiled everything they passed. They walked with the very sort of studied insouciance that the Prince despised. Their cockiness was utterly unwarranted, and yet it had to stand. For now.

Enduring the visit from these disrespectful hoodlums filled the Prince's mind with despair. He fought back the bleak melancholia, and with an effort, succeeded in replacing it with a wine-red rage. Rather than feeling oppressed by the brazen whelps, he felt searing anger. He longed to tear into the children, to rip out their hearts and feast on their fresh, young, virile juices. His son Lyle had told him they were formidable fighters, but they would be no match for the Prince in full bloom of anger. He felt himself rapidly losing control of his rage, and struggled to rein in the passions that now welled up in him. Only by reminding himself of all the status he stood to lose by such an unseemly display could he overcome his fury. He knew the Harpies were eagerly awaiting just such a moment. Waiting for him to lose control, just for an instant. To succumb to the Beast. Their wagging tongues would tear him down faster than they could slip a stake in his heart. So he kept his honest emotions firmly in check. And still he felt closer to the Beast.

The leader of the coterie stepped forward. Closer than she had permission to, the Prince noted, but too far away for him to complain without seeming petty in front of his court. The damnable court. The worm-tongued Harpies.

The Anarch paused for a moment, her lips slightly parted, as if she were about to speak. But she didn't speak.

Instead she paused, sizing him up. The Prince waited impatiently for her to start. He wanted to prompt her to begin, but knew it would be unseemly for him to speak first. It would make him look too eager, bringing him down to her level. He would seem less imperial before his court. And she knew that, so she prolonged the pause, going so far as to imitate the drawing of breath to speak.

The Prince yearned to scorch her with his tongue, to reprimand her in a voice like thunder. But he knew that if he opened his mouth to chastise her, she would begin speaking at once, and make his reprimand look foolish and petty. So the Prince waited, struggling to conceal his agitation. In that achingly long moment, he noted that the Anarch leader was very beautiful, exactly the sort of woman that once delighted him, so many worlds ago. She knew she was beautiful, and yet she dressed in insolent defiance of her beauty: all torn denim and ripped leather that exposed inappropriate flashes of soft, pale skin. Her dress, her demeanor, her very existence were an affront to all the Traditions.

As the first flickers of annoyance finally showed on the Prince's face, she began. Perfect timing, he noted darkly.

"My lord Prince, regent of all the city, master of all Kindred," she began. She knew her flattery too. Perfect to the letter, and as insincere as a harlot's kiss.

"We present our petition for pardon. We ask that Clifton Derrik of the Brujah be pardoned for violation of the Second Tradition, for hunting in your city without permission. For hunting on the Strip south of the Knightsbridge."

The Prince indulged in a slight smile of satisfaction. He felt his red-hot anger turn to a warm glow of satisfaction. "Alas, the area in contest has been ceded to Selene, and she has suffered material loss from the Brujah's rash act, and so he must be punished. I cannot intervene there." The girl looked crestfallen. The Prince added offhandedly, "Though he has the forgiveness of the Prince." There! Now the damnable Brujah could not accuse him of always seeking to punish their members more than those of other Clans.

The Anarch leader brightened considerably and said, "The generous, forgiving Prince will be relieved to know that Mistress Selene has granted complete clemency." She produced a sheet of crisp parchment. "Here's her mark."

The Prince's rage returned in full force as the Harpies that milled in the room murmured to themselves. What vicious double dealing had this crew been up to? Were they Selene's pawns?

"Very well," he said. "Punishment repealed. Now begone. And cleave to the Traditions."

"Yes, my Prince," she said. "Oh, one more matter. I crave a boon."

The Prince pondered this. Why did she wish to put herself into his debt? Was she that foolish? Or was she looking to end her Anarch ways and bend the knee to her betters?

"We request the right to hunt on the Strip from the north of Knightsbridge to the pier."

"Such impertinence!" the Prince snarled. "Never." They were fools to think he would let them into prime land he reserved for his progeny and favored courtiers. They would lose face just for asking such a foolish thing. "What could you possibly do for me that could be worth that?"

"Done," she said. "We have already served your progeny with a Life Boon. To secure clemency from Selene, we had

to provide protective services to her guests at her most recent party, where we defended her household from a Lupine attack. In the course of the party, we defended your offspring Lyle, and saved his life."

"Ridiculous! Even if such a thing were true, the debt was paid. You were to defend her guests!"

"It grieves me to dispute the word of the Prince," she replied with feigned sincerity, "but in truth, Lyle had not been invited to the party, and hence was not a guest. When we saved him, he incurred a debt. But since the Strip north of the bridge are not available, we'll have to return when we have another request."

"Wait! No! Ask now!" he demanded. Frantically, he considered actually giving up the Strip to them. It would cause great disruptions among the powerful members of the city, but it might be worth it. Having his progeny owe a Life Boon to such scum was unacceptable. It would let them get away with nearly anything!

"Your lordship is too kind," the leader replied. "But I must decline. Should we formulate a suitable arrangement, we'll tell you. Until then, our humble thanks for lifting Derrik's punishment." She bowed low, her false humility barely masking her derision.

She had trumped him and she knew it. He held his ageless face in a stoic mask of composure, but inside he was screaming great oaths to the gods that had long ago abandoned him.

The Prince's fiery rage turned to black despair once more. He choked down the taste of bitter bile. They had bested him. These upstart children had actually beaten him at his own game! Was this some silly child's pastime to them? A mere game? How dare they? Didn't they know the stakes involved?

Suddenly he felt too hemmed in: too cramped. It was as if he were again entombed beneath the imprisoning ground, in his dank, fetid womb of earth.

He was so careful! He was so powerful! How could it have come to this? How could these mere infants make a fool of him like this? How would he live it down? They would pay for the indignity.

Competition for status, glory and power are no abstraction to the Vampiric community. They are nothing less than issues of life and death. A Vampire with low status must content himself with second-rate hunting grounds. Offspring are the key to Vampiric survival, but a Vampire who has no status is not allowed to sire Get. A Vampire with no offspring is unprotected from witch-hunters, Diabolists, Lupine attacks, and internal political maneuvering within his Clan and the Camarilla. And if he ages without offspring, he will have no Kindred to tap for vitae when his own blood thins.

So, status is the key to survival, and the formula is simple. Political power means continued existence. Loss of power means extinction.

Intrigue and Combat

Ah, political intrigue. Breathes there a soul so dead she does not thrive on the idea of subtly maneuvering to gain the upper hand through her own high cunning and low guile? Who does not respond to the allure of learning someone else's rules, mastering them, and using them to triumph? From films to novels to the daily newspaper, political intrigue is a form of conflict rich with dramatic possibilities. And yet it rarely crops up in roleplaying

games, where the main staple of conflict is that old reliable standby, physical violence.

Combat is simple and straightforward. Two creatures tear at each other till one is incapable of continuing the fight. Skills, spells and Disciplines may jazz it up, but the basic premise is always the same: crush 'em into the dirt.

Obliterating an opponent in a roleplaying game may satisfy our primitive need for conquest, but it is an unsatisfactory mirror for our own experiences. Our lives are less like a rapid game of Rock-Paper-Scissors than an ongoing game of chess. Rather than singular, clear-cut battles that end in utter triumph or loss, we make moves and countermoves, achieve victories and suffer setbacks. Because of the thin veneer of civilization that overlays our actions, we must find approaches that accomplish our goals without wiping out the enemy or being eliminated ourselves. Cooperation and competition lock in a perpetual dance.

Political intrigue can be an immensely satisfying form of gaming. While it does not always provide the same low investment/high payoff blast of instant gratification combat does, it has a subtle charm of its own. And its seductive appeal often lasts long after the jubilant glow of combat has faded.

Because roleplaying games excel at scenes involving verbal sparring and clever dialogue, they are an ideal medium for scenarios rich with scheming, double-dealing and conspiracy. **Vampire** is an especially rich setting for political intrigue. With pressure to resolve generational conflicts, inter- and intra-clan rivalries and personal vendettas through civilized means, the Kindred of the Camarilla have become expert political manipulators.

A Civilization of Vampires: The Politics of Scarcity

Civilization is nothing else but the attempt to reduce force to being the last resort.

- Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*

Humanity builds civilizations for many reasons, including safety, strength and the exaltation and perfection of itself and its ideals. The Kindred build civilizations for all these reasons but one: they are not out to exalt their ideals. They have no illusions about the possibility of perfection. Though some hold the goal of Golconda as an attainable perfect state, reaching that state of bliss is not a goal of Vampire society in general.

Instead, the main purpose of the Camarilla is to keep themselves hidden from the world of humanity, their primary food source, and to carefully husband their scarce resources. If Vampires bred and fed with the reckless abandon of humans, the world's sources of fresh vitae would quickly become depleted. A planet of Vampires would destroy itself in a few short generations, with genocidal internecine warfare wiping out the entire undead species before starvation could claim them all.

All Kindred are acutely aware of this, and if any renegade builds his own Vampiric family without permission, the Justicars swiftly remind him of the Masquerade Tradition forbidding it. Few survive the reminder.

However, it is still possible for an ambitious Kindred to circumvent the Masquerade, and secretly produce an army of Blood Bound undead. The only thing preventing this major threat to the Camarilla is the political pressure forbidding it. The Masquerade is successful mainly because it is self-enforcing. Jealous Kindred would never let another Vampire engage in unrestrained breeding, even

though that Kindred may hate the same draconian laws that also forbid her from breeding.

For the good of the race, most Vampires must be prevented from breeding. As long as each Vampire thinks she may one day earn the right to breed, she will help to keep everyone else in line, just as everyone else helps keep her in line.

This is the fundamental difference between Kindred and kine, and is a prime source of political friction. For most of human existence, we have lived in a world of virtually limitless resources that can sustain as many children as people have cared to have, while Vampires simply do not have the resources to produce Progeny indiscriminately.

A World of Abundance and a World of Scarcity

To understand this phenomena, we must see the world through the eyes of kine and through the eyes of Kindred.

To each mortal, the world is full to overflowing with resources for her and her progeny. While each human may feel an animalistic, competitive need to zealously prevent others from gaining access to vital resources, her intellect and her heart tell her there remains plenty for all. People's highest faculties of rationality and empathy meet to produce the civilizing skills of cooperation, harmony and belonging.

To Kindred, the world is a cold, hostile, frightening place. They suffer under the unforgiving curse of Caine, and have no welcoming place on Earth. Their higher faculties of reason assure them that there is a scarcity of vital resources, and that any attempt at unrestrained breeding will extinguish the race.

They do not call the mortals in their hunting grounds their herds without reason. The metaphor is very real. They think of the whole world's human population as hunting grounds, grazing pastures and farmlands. They see themselves as caretakers of rich, abundant fields of a seemingly endless food source that must always remain greatly underharvested.

So while humans have a consciousness organically informed by a sense of belonging and abundance, Kindred have a consciousness informed by alienation and lack. Scarcity and fear of loss pervade every action Vampires make, and colors their dealing with one another and with the mortal world. Because their political and psychological influence on the institutions of the world of man is so subtle and so profound, the Vampires have infused the mortal population with a similar sense of scarcity.

This scarcity consciousness has infected the thinking of leaders of the mortal world, who are in the most direct contact with the Vampiric manipulators, and it filters down to the general population from there. Because it appeals to the animalistic part of man that wants to hoard resources and keep them from others, it has spawned war, persecution and genocide. This attitude can be characterized as starvation in the midst of plenty, and gorging while others die from lack. This is an artificial condition in humans, and the degree to which mortals follow it is the degree to which they have been influenced by Vampiric thinking.

This scarcity consciousness is strongest in the oldest, most powerful Vampires who have the most to lose. Unlike human leaders, who have the potential to become more generous as they gain more power, Kindred leaders invariably become less generous and more avaricious. As

they rise in power, they become responsible for preventing more and more Kindred from siring offspring. As their blood thins, their needs geometrically increase. Instead of requiring ten Vampires to suffer to meet their ravenous needs, they must now take a hundred. They need more and more Kindred blood to live, and see no end in sight. Some Kindred scholars have suggested that the Vampire's natural immortality should give him a natural outlook of infinite abundance, but a closer examination reveals that as Cainites age, they become more and more aware of the Thinning of the Blood. If each

successive generation is weaker than the last, the whole race could be doomed.

This is the real reason status is so important to the Vampires of the Camarilla. Lacking natural empathy and compassion, and with the hot fear of extinction looming over their line and their entire race, they had to codify stronger and more rigid social conventions to keep their young in line.

Their solution was to use the powerful Prestation system. If other Vampires, especially the young, are obligated to feel indebted to the one who provides them with some basic requirements, then the young will be less likely to break the Traditions. It makes the young eager to make and keep promises, since that obligates others to them. By the time a Vampire has accrued enough power to become a threat, he is held firmly in place by the bonds of debt to those above him. And those Vampires who do not play the game well enough to gain great status remain pitted against one another at the bottom of the vitae food chain, fighting with one another over scraps.

Because of the innate scarcity consciousness woven into the very fabric of the Vampiric existence, the race suffers from a tremendous shortage of the key human sentiments of understanding, trust, sympathy, and compassion. As a result, their lives are undergirded by suspicion, fear, paranoia and betrayal, all veiled behind an ill-fitting mask of high-minded integrity and honor.

This fear and suspicion is the true face of the Beast. With so little they can rely on, is it any wonder that so many Vampires fall prey to it?

Politics of Scarcity in the Game

As a Storyteller, you can add to the natural pathos and tragedy of the Vampiric existence by keeping this distinction strongly in mind when running Vampire NPCs. Though only a few Elder Vampire scholars really understand the phenomena of scarcity consciousness, all Vampires act on it. It colors every decision Vampiric leaders make, and has been at the heart of virtually every bad decision in Cainite history. Magnanimous gestures often turn out to be a cynical sham. Vampires give nothing away without regard to what they get in return. They keep track of boons owed them with a miser's zeal, and remember boons they owe with a smoldering loathing. Most political deals are made this way, and many strong alliances have been sundered because of an undying fear of lack. In the end, scarcity consciousness keeps the Vampiric community weak, divided, and more suspicious of one another than they are of outside threats. This scarcity and alienation is one face of the Beast that grows as the Vampires lose their humanity. It is also the basis of all Camarilla politics.

Mortal and Kindred societies impose restrictions on violence and death. Attacks and killing may only occur when sponsored by the formal leaders of the civilization. All unauthorized violence is punished harshly and swiftly.

Stripped of the freedom to skirmish like animals for territory, sustenance and progeny, civilized beings create official channels for controlling the flow of resources. But that doesn't stop both groups from seeking to subvert the official channels for a greater stake of territory, sustenance and progeny. Political intrigue is sublimated violence, and conspiracy is sublimated war.

In mortal society political systems often remain strong because the people who live under them have faith in them, and believe in the fairness the systems impart. Among Vampires, these political systems and alliances exist to be subverted. The Kindred know they may not lash out and kill their enemies, but they can gain power and status through duplicity, double-dealing and betrayal.

The Vampiric social order is good at recognizing, preventing and punishing outright violence, but is in difficult waters when it tries to stop political intrigue. The hand of corruption is upon every Kindred, and is not easily lifted.

Disloyalty is so common in the history of Vampires that the Camarilla leaders created a system that places a high premium on oaths and oathkeeping. The leaders strictly enforce oaths, but are far more guilty of outrageous dishonesty than the petty deceptions of the lower-status Kindred.

This is the main source of political tension among Vampires. Because the Elders have the power not only to make rules, but to often break them with impunity, the young

Vampires often feel little respect or reverence for their leaders. The Status rules heavily favor the old, and leave little room for the young to compete. When Anarchs do gain the upper hand, the Elders try to shift the rules. Anarchs rarely gain uncontested victories, but have done so more and more often in the last few centuries. Young Vampires have more opportunity for power now than at any time in the past.

These generational conflicts continue to tear at the Camarilla, and there is no peace in sight.

Political Intrigue in the Game: The Art of the Deal

All this angry contention and internecine strife is fertile fodder for your games. Players love to get their hands dirty with political machinations and score hard-won triumphs over crusty Elders. Well-fleshed out political systems are as fun to adventure through as ancient crypts crawling with monstrous dangers, and are often just as laden with traps, treasure and surprises.

Storytellers can keep all the political machinations in the background, and keep the players from having any real impact on their Clan and race, but many players jump at the chance to do some real political string pulling.

If you give your players fleshed-out, working models of political systems and let them manipulate those systems, they will worship you always. OK, maybe not worship, but they will greatly appreciate the effort you put into the game. You can give them the experience of learning to play the manipulator's game: exalting when their plans work out, and paying the price when their plots fail.

So the question is, how do you provide a consistent, workable political framework for the players? It must clear enough that the players can find a way in, but not so transparent that there are no surprises. It must be flexible enough to allow real manipulation, but not so flimsy that

the players gain complete control over it and always get their way.

The secret is in agreements: small deals and large compacts. Dealmaking is the heart and soul of political systems, and Vampires are no exception.

The Map

To make a framework for Camarilla dealmaking, map out the main political power flow in the city, complete with major alliances, rivalries, feuds, and temporary non-aggression pacts. You need to work out the goals of the Clans and the goals of their leaders, which may not be the same.

You need to know who is superior to whom, who owes whom, and who is plotting against whom. The **By Night** sourcebooks contain a wealth of information on the relationships between major Vampires in that area, and the Clan

connections. Use those books as a starting place to get a handle on the political landscape. Then chart the Status of each of the main figures in the city. This information should be generally available to the players, or at least accessible to inquiry.

As the game progresses, determine which NPC's schemes succeed and which fail. Chart the resulting balance of power, and let the players know about it. Their characters can hear about the changes in status in meetings with their Clan, or through rumors at interclan gatherings.

It is important that players see the system as a fluid model capable of change over time. This will make them more confident that their schemes and plans can affect their fellow Cainites.

The best times to report these shifting changes are the Clan meetings outlined in **The Players Guide**. These are all perfect opportunities for intrigue.

Player Plots

Once you have the overview of the political situation mapped out and properly capable of changing over time, you are ready to add the most crucial ingredient: player interaction. To open the incestuous inner world of Camarilla politics to the ambitions and tinkering of the players, you need the potential for dealmaking. Develop some goals, needs, resources and motivating factors for the key individuals.

This means you must know what the major NPCs need, what they want, what they say they want, what they'll do to get it, and who they already owe. Here is the format:

- Ultimate Goal: (What they need, or believe they need.)
- Immediate Goal: (What they want.)
- False Goal (if any: What they say they want.)
- Resources: (What they have to offer for it.)
- Debts: (Who they already owe, and who owes them.)

Ultimate Goal

The Ultimate Goal is the character's main, driving need, and is often an obsession. It is what drives her undead passion and fires her immortal heart. It may be a focused goal, like the destruction of a hated rival, rulership of his city's branch of his Clan, permission to found a family, or conquest of the Princehood. The goal may be unfocused, like the destruction of all enemies or acquisition of all available power, but Vampires always have an Ultimate Goal. Even the mad ones.

The player will not likely be in a position to offer others their Ultimate Goals, but if his character can learn their main goals, he can make intelligent offers. Those who want to make a career out of behind-the-scenes maneuvers or knowledge brokering can profit from knowing Ultimate Goals.

Immediate Goal

The Immediate Goal is the current objective in the Vampire's plan of attack. It is what she plans to do next. It may be a simple thing, like winning an invitation to a closed meeting of her superiors or learning some damaging gossip about a rival. It could be an important achievement, like gaining recognition from the Prince for superior loyalty, or winning a boon from an important Clan leader.

Learning the Immediate Goal is of prime importance to players. In the short term, it is far more important than learning the Ultimate Goal. When the player knows the Immediate Goal, he can find a way to meet it. Knowing another's needs and maneuvering into a position to meet them builds a very strong negotiating position.

No foe has to slavishly stick by their Immediate Goal. Sane Vampires will seriously consider any offer that builds power and is in line with the Vampire's Ultimate Goal.

False Goal

Not everyone has a False Goal. The more powerful and the more paranoid have them. Lesser Vampires have nothing to lose by being open with their needs, and will reveal them to anyone. But more powerful (and more ambitious) Vampires often have goals which threaten rivals (or friends) in and out of their Clan. They need to use misdirection to keep their enemies from knowing their true designs. So they create fraudulent Immediate Goals, and sometimes fraudulent Ultimate Goals.

Resources

Under Resources, record the assets available to the NPC. This includes the important things he has access to and can trade for what he wants. It includes physical things like weapons, sources of blood and hunting grounds; services like protection, Auspex or intercession with a superior; and intangibles like contacts and information. It can include anything he has or has access to, even if it is not something he will immediately offer.

Rank the Vampire's resources in the order of their value to her, from lowest to highest. She will offer the least of her resources in a bargain, and only consider parting with the important material under extreme circumstances. However, the two Kindred locked in negotiations may not know each other's real values, and may insult the other by offering far too little, or risk making a bad arrangement by offering far too much.

This information can come straight from the Traits section of the Rulebook. The Background Traits are the most useful for fleshing out this information. Allies, Contacts, Fame, Herd, Influence, Mentor, Resources, Retainers and Status all directly apply, and can be parlayed directly into deals.

Debts

Most Vampires are already ensnared in a web of boons owing and owed. Make a note of the important ones, because they will sometimes change the complexion of new political deals.

A large debt will generally preclude the Vampire taking action against the Kindred she owes. Because of the power

of Prestation, the debtor sees herself as slightly lower in status than the Vampire she owes a boon to, even though he may be below her in real status.

This prohibition is entirely self-motivated, as the Vampire is not actually prevented from betraying someone he is indebted to. Still, it is good policy, since the Vampire owed the debt may strike back by calling the boon due in a manner that is painful or difficult to achieve. In addition, the Justicars frown on killing as a matter of policy, but they loathe Vampires who kill for trivial reasons like getting rid of a debt. They rarely show any leniency in such cases.

Debts due the Vampire are less influential to his actions, but are still important. These function like resources, since they can be called upon or traded away (see below).

Ranking Boons

The Players Guide explains that boons can vary in size (The Scope of the Debt), but does not explain how to manage it.

There are actually five levels of boons, ranging from the trivial boon to the life boon. The life boon is given only when one Kindred saves the life of another. This debt is very rare, and very potent. Vampires who owe a life boon are often very subservient, if grudgingly so. There is a boon rumored to be greater than the life boon. This legendary debt is one owed to a Kindred who helps one attain the state of Golconda, a state reputedly more precious than life itself. To the main Vampire community, that boon is as much a myth as Golconda itself.

The ranking of the boon is very subjective, since the Camarilla does not conveniently catalog them on a one to five scale as the **Vampire** game does. It remains up to the two Vampires trying to make a deal to understand the level of assistance requested and rendered, and come to some agreement about it all. Generally, a Vampire may ask for a boon equivalent to the favor granted. Here are some rough guidelines for equivalents.

- 1 Trivial boon: Delivery, helping with a plan. Unsolicited information.
- 2 Helping carry out a plan. Important advice. Solicited information.
- 3 Aiding in battle. Helping the other out of trouble.
- 4 Direct intervention in a very dangerous situation. Saving the life of the Vampire's immediate kin.
- 5 Life Boon: Saving the life of the other Kindred.

Example:

For example, Toreador Arlan Minor may consider the cache of automatic machine guns brought in by his ghouls to be of trivial value, and his collection of Ralph Steadman sketches to be of supreme value, second only to his life. Brujah gang leader Ygrainne may prize her control over the local Chief of Police very highly, but consider her skills in brawling cheap, and offer them casually.

In making an arrangement between the two, Ygrainne may want the guns very badly. If Arlan offers her the guns in return for her attacking his oppressors, she may consider that a great bargain. On the other hand, if he asks her to pull strings to get the police to nose out of his art smuggling business, she may consider that less of a deal, though Arlan may not see the difference. If he needs to get the police off his back immediately, he may offer the sketches, thinking that she'll understand how much he values her services. She may consider the sketches to be trash, and may even be offended to be offered them. A

negotiator's lack of clarity into the other may damage the negotiations. Knowing a lot about the other may allow him to win great bargains.

Transferring Boons

Though it is not commonly known, boons are transferrable. A Vampire may transfer a boon owed to another, simply by informing the Vampire who owes him the boon.

For example, after negotiations broke down, the cruel Brujah Ygrainne has been building her own Clan Status by tormenting and ridiculing effete Toreador Arlan Minor at every possible occasion. Arlan has very little status among his fellow Toreador, who disdain his Poseur ways. They also do not wish to anger the contentious Brujah for one so insignificant, so they refuse to assist him. Unable to get assistance from his own Clan or obtain satisfaction from the Prince, Arlan investigates other avenues of recompense.

He learns Ygrainne owes a boon to the hideously deformed Nosferatu, Malchizadek, who once came to the Brujah's aid during a difficult battle with a savage Lupine. Ygrainne was not near death at the time, so she does not own the Nosferatu a Life Boon, but she does owe him a potent boon nonetheless, and she takes her debts very seriously. Ygrainne always defers to Malchizadek, and treats him with great respect while she waits for the day he calls the debt due.

In a private bargaining session, the Nosferatu asks Arlan for valuable inside information about the local Toreadors and their plans, and offers to expend the boon to compel Ygrainne to stop the harassment. Arlan does not wish to see the valuable boon spent for so little return, and holds out for a complete transfer of the unspent boon. Malchizadek ups the ante by asking for an eternal pipeline to inside information from the Toreador clan. Arlan accepts.

Results of Transferred Boons

In return for betraying his own Clan, Arlan gets the powerful boon intact. Malchizadek calls Ygrainne and her pack to a conference, tells them that he owes Arlan a boon, and says he is repaying it by transferring Ygrainne's boon to Arlan. The Brujah fumes, but can do nothing about it. Her own brood knows that she now owes Arlan a debt, and that Arlan has risen in status above her as a result. She cannot harass or even insult him without an irrevocable loss of status with her gang, Clan and all the Camarilla.

Arlan can call the debt due at any time by having Ygrainne perform any act short of dying for him. Unless his life were in jeopardy, it is likely that Arlan will never call it due anytime soon. Ygrainne could easily go back to tormenting him if he did.

Enforcement of Transferred Boons

Malchizadek is reasonably assured that Arlan will remain loyal to him despite the difficulty of the Toreador's treacherous position, because if Arlan refuses to divulge valuable information, he has broken his oath. Malchizadek can then exact private revenge by going to Ygrainne, telling her that the transfer of the boon is complete, and announcing that she is free to act as she pleases, including harassing Arlan in full.

Arlan has gotten relief from torment, and won greater status among the Brujah and his own people, who see the powerful, untamable Ygrainne defer to him. Ironically, he won this elevation among the Toreador in return for the

utter betrayal of his own Clan. This will inevitably weaken his people, as Malchizadek puts the inside information to good use, but that's the price the Toreador unknowingly pay for their strict adherence to the scarcity game. Had they stood up for him early on, it never would have happened.

Public Enforcement, Private Enforcement

At its heart, the whole political system of favor and boons is mostly self-enforcing. It is supposed to be maintained by the good intentions of the entire Vampire community. More often than not, it is propped up by fear of retaliation.

The enforcement of boons has caused more rifts in loyalty in the Camarilla than any other source. The entire Camarilla has been forced to take sides in private conflicts so often that many Kindred are in the uncomfortable position of having to fall in line behind both parties in a conflict. To keep the entire community of Vampires from being torn apart by this infighting, the Elders recommend that Kindred enforce their own boons, and only come before the Camarilla when they have tried all options.

Personal Revenge

A Vampire who tires of a deal he has made could just ignore it. If he does so, he will face the wrath of the other party in the deal. Oathbreaking is enforced the same way as status infractions. The offended party may sabotage the offender's plans, destroy holdings and poison his name without fear of reprisal from the Camarilla.

In addition, breaking oaths can result in an immediate loss of status (as described in **The Players Guide**). For a low-status Anarch, this may not seem important, since he has no status to lose. But the Harpies who confer status (all the Camarilla except the Anarchs) may withhold status even when the Anarch has earned it, as a punishment for his earlier actions.

Some Kindred have specialized forms of revenge. Some Nosferatu taint the information they provide, to make the offender look far more treacherous than he is. Certain Gangrel make pacts with Lupines or other elemental forces to attack the offender. The Malkavians have been rumored to be capable of transforming the life of the offender into a psychotic hell. Some Ventrue use their connections with the mortal world to harass the offender. (This is a very dangerous practice, as it can put forces in motion that can adversely affect the Masquerade. The ultimate betrayal is the turning over of a fellow Kindred to a witch-hunter, because it jeopardizes the safety of all.)

Campaign of Reprisal

If the aggrieved party cannot get satisfaction on his own, he may petition the entire Camarilla for redress, and attempt to direct the wrath of all Kindred toward the offender. If the offense is great enough, the Camarilla will respond with a coordinated Campaign of Reprisal. This is rare, since it can cause great splits between factions loyal to each party, and dangerously divide the Camarilla.

What usually happens is that a few old enemies use the Campaign of Reprisal as an chance to settle old scores, and a few opportunists take advantage of the Campaign of Reprisal to collect valuable goods, territory or services belonging to the offender.

If a Campaign of Reprisal seems inevitable, the offender often backs down, and yields to the wishes of the aggrieved party. If he does not feel he was at fault, he can still opt for

a mediated solution. This has the disadvantage of allowing the gossips of the Camarilla to probe into private affairs, and may be worse than yielding outright to the offended Kindred.

Factions: Boons and Betrayals

Once you know how to create the goals, resources, previous debts, and modes of enforcement, you can put them all to work in the game. These connections form the framework of Vampire politics. A myriad of political factions exist at all levels of Vampire society, propped up by debts owed and debts collected.

The boon system has created a race of beings who owe loyalty to leaders they do not respect and would often gladly tear down. Because most members of the Camarilla chafe under the loyalties they are forced to uphold, treachery and political backbiting are rampant between and within factions.

Unlike human political factions, which are often designed to promote inspirational leadership based on trust, Cainite political systems promote treacherous leadership based on fear. Betrayals are common in the Camarilla, as are reprisals for betrayal. One reprisal leads to another, which brings on yet another, and drags in more and more Kindred into the complex web of loyalty. This creates rivalries, feuds, inquisitions, wars and, some say, the Jyhad. Many current conflicts have origins that were forgotten centuries ago. All that remains are the reprisals. When two Elders tell the history of a disagreement, they are often so divergent that they seldom sound like the same incident. This madness inevitably spills over into the mortal world, where the petty feuds of two squabbling Cainites can cause the suffering and deaths of thousands.

The older and more powerful a Vampire gets, the more she becomes ensnared in political alliances and inevitable betrayals. The more allies she makes, the more enemies she gets. Sometimes it is impossible to appease one Kindred without betraying or at least slighting another.

But the Vampires must all line up behind one political faction or another. To do otherwise is to be alone and friendless in an increasingly dangerous world. When the player's Vampire allies with a faction, he agrees to take on all their causes, be bound up by conflicting loyalties, and agree to attack Kindred with whom he has no quarrel. To stay outside factions is to be vulnerable, and risk attack by those who are bound to a faction.

Anarchic Abstinence

This damned-if-you-do-and-damned-if-you-don't system is crippling to Neonates, and breaks their stubborn will. Some swallow their pride and accept it, hoping to one day master it, or at least use it to their advantage. But other Anarchs reject it outright. They refuse to be bound by it, and refuse to feel the sting of low status. They become steadfastly self-reliant, and take care of themselves without the aid of the Camarilla.

Their dealings with one another become surprisingly democratic, with Anarchs coming to the aid of other Anarchs not out of debt, but out of a sense of camaraderie and fellowship.

They do not ignore the status system, because they know the rest of the Camarilla is bound by it. The youths can use the status system to manipulate the Elders who are bound up within it. They must be careful not to overuse the system of boons, because they too risk being caught up

within it. Instead, they must walk a fine line between the two.

By staying outside the system, Anarchs are in a unique position to do great damage to it. Because their actions cannot be easily manipulated by the Elders, the Anarchs are wild cards. They can deliver great shocks to the Camarilla factions, and even have the potential to tear it all down.

The central war in the Vampire community is the battle of generations. The Elders are well-fed, and thus content to leave things as they are. They preserve and defend the status quo. The malnourished Anarchs are not willing to let things remain static, insisting that they are out to create a new order from the ashes of the old.

Those who benefit from the status quo see all attempts to establish a new status quo as mad ravings, nothing more than the attempted destruction of the established order.

Factions

A prince is always compelled to injure those who have made him the new ruler.

- Niccolo Machiavelli

The main sources of intrigue within the Camarilla are the many factions which vie with one another and their own members for strength, ego and dominance. These factions include the Prince, the Harpies, the Elders, the Clans, the Anarchs, the Mortal World and the Jyhad.

The Prince

Since men love as they please but fear when the Prince pleases, a wise prince should rely on what he controls, not on what he cannot control. He must only endeavor to escape being hated.

- Machiavelli

Most political intrigue in a city is initiated by the Prince. Since Princes have no clear hereditary title, and no claim to power other than the fact that they won the right to rule by undermining another Prince, they are often isolated, paranoid and overburdened with the thankless task of maintaining the Masquerade. As a result, Princes are prone to overreacting in the name of preserving their rule. They see threats where there are none, and lash out with undue force against all potential challengers. Princes have often accidentally galvanized resistance against themselves by persecuting popular figures and launching unprovoked preemptive strikes against any who might one day pose a threat. This has turned neutral Kindred into enemies, and real challengers into martyrs.

It's difficult to be a Prince, and few carry it off with equanimity. The older a Prince becomes, the more paranoid and insulated he grows, until he loses touch and ceases to be effective as an admirable leader to the people he rules.

As a direct result, Princes often spin webs of intrigue throughout their domains. They hire spies, seek out Kindred willing to betray others, and fight to keep their community divided and arrayed against itself. This creates disunity and weakens the Kindred to outside attacks.

If you have not already done so, make a determination about just how popular the local prince is, and how paranoid. How threatened does he feel? Are his fears justified by a strong opposition against him, or is he creating an opposition by unfairly persecuting others? How credible are the threats to his rule? Is any one potential challenger rapidly gaining ground?

Does the Prince wisely wait till a threat is proven before striking? Or is the Prince blindly lashing out? Or is he timidly afraid to make a stand against potential usurpers? Some Princes have a strong blind spot, and zealously make moves and countermoves against Kindred who pose no real danger, while ignoring a genuine threat? These two are not mutually exclusive. A Prince may well be repressing Anarchs who look like they hate him, but have no power to use against him. At the same time he may be turning a blind eye to, and unwittingly nurturing, some real rivals while they plot his overthrow.

The Harpies

The first opinion that is formed of a ruler's intelligence is based on the quality of men he has around him.

- Machiavelli

The Anarchs consider any Kindred who has any degree of status within the Camarilla to be a Harpy. This includes the Prince's court, Elders of the city and powerful who regularly advise and petition the Prince. Princes use the term Harpy to refer to anyone they believe is gossiping about them.

The official role of the Harpies is to help the Prince set policy by acting as his eyes and ears in the Cainite community. The unofficial (but crucial) role of the Harpies is to keep the elaborate Status system in place by reaching a broad consensus about who has gained status and who has lost it. They enforce the Status system by treating other Kindred in accordance with their perceived status. Usually the rest of the Camarilla follows their lead, and even youthful Anarchs join in by honoring (or resenting) those elevated to high status, and by disregarding those brought low.

As a result of their shared power, the Harpies are hardly neutral enforcers of oathbreaking. Instead, each individual has opportunities to undermine their personal enemies and build up their allies through whispering campaigns. The only stipulation is that they not make their favoritism too obvious, as that would hold them up to scorn.

The Elders

Men must either be pampered or crushed, because they can get revenge for small injustices, but not for grievous ones.

- Machiavelli

The Elders are a very potent source of Camarilla policy, and are at the heart of the political life of the Kindred. They issue the strongest directives, control the most followers and conduct the strongest reprisals. Most of their actions take place in the background, as opposed to Clan actions, which are often open and obvious.

Most of the power the Elders wield comes from a single source. They are unified around the central issue of control over their progeny. This gives them unprecedented power to act in concert and present a unified front. They would be an unstoppable force were it not for one issue: Clan loyalties.

Because Elders establish their power and build ranks of loyal retainers through their Clans, they must remain faithful to their people. This means the Elders will part company on crucial issues if their Clan is threatened in any way by the decision. Given the choice between having all Elders benefit and having just the Clan benefit, most Elders choose to support their Clan. This big exception to generational warfare has kept many an irreverent Anarch in existence to fight another day.

Powerful Elders are among the most intractable foes on Earth, and Ancillae warn their progeny against rash political attacks on the aged Vampires. The Elders have the hard-won lessons of many centuries of domination at their fingertips. They are masters at their game. However, sometimes as their Blood fades, their resolve fades as well, and takes with it passion, patience, ambition and even lucid thought. When their weaknesses show, the younger generations can strike and win.

This is the most direct extension of the Jyhad into the day-to-day life of the Camarilla.

The Clans

A Prince can never make himself safe against a hostile people: there are too many of them.

- Machiavelli.

The most direct political organizations in the Camarilla are the Clans. Of all groups of Kindred, they are the focus of the most group identity. They exert the most direct control over the lives of individual Cainites. The Clans have advanced structures for linking members together through ties of obligations. The most debts owed and boons owing in a Vampire's life are to and from other members of his Clan.

In addition, the Clans plot the most detailed day-to-day strategies. They have regular plotting sessions on many levels, and execute plans that affect all the members of their ranks, as well as many other non-Clan members. When the Clans work in concert, they have the power to topple Elders and Princes. When they are divided, they can scarcely control their own members.

Outside their Clan, they try to present a unified front, defending all their members. Inside the Clan they are treacherous and backbiting, as high status members resist power encroachment by rising stars.

The Anarchs

Liberty is the freedom of operation without intercession by a higher authority.

- John Stuart Mill, On Liberty

Anarchs are the victims of political intrigue far more often than they are the authors of it. As a disorganized, unruly mob with no focused agenda, they are often manipulated in the power games of the Elders.

These rebels do have some measure of power unique to their group, since they can opt out of the crippling Status system that hamstring all but the most powerful Ancillae and Elders. By rejecting the social pressure to conform, the more daring Anarchs know a freedom and political liberty that is the secret envy of their superiors.

There can be great power in refusing to play the games of the powerful. The politically connected Elders stack the deck against the young, and use the ambitious but powerless

Ancillae to keep the wayward Neonates in check. All Anarchs suffer under this political disenfranchisement, but some refuse to be humbled. They make all their deals as a one for one swap, with no boons owing or debts uncollected. By owing no one, they do not have to later pass up better deals or desist from actions that could be lucrative.

The Mortal World

A city used to freedom can be more easily ruled through its own citizens, provided you do not wish to destroy it.

- Machiavelli

Most Vampires see the world of mortals as a place to find sustenance, but some are adept at making pawns which can topple kings. Because mortals are so controllable by the force of Kindred vitae, and so susceptible to power games in general, links to the mortal world are essential for any would-be political manipulator.

The institutions of the kine offer ripe opportunities for control and domination. By pitting the resources of humanity against enemies, a Vampire can divide and conquer both. This is a tricky proposition, since it risks compromising the Masquerade.

To avoid this, most Kindred are content to use the outside world for information gathering and acquiring temporal power. They use this wealth against their foes only with great care. If an angry Vampire pits human institutions against the players, the Anarchs may be able to retaliate by accusing him of threatening the Masquerade.

Building Politically Manipulable Characters

The best way to create workable political characters is to use all the pre-existing design material you have. This will not only make your job easier, it will make the new political factors integrate with the game and your players' perceptions of the world.

The data in the character templates is your starting place for designing political systems and political intrigue. There's a wealth of information on each NPC that can be turned directly into political material. What drives the character? What are his blind spots? The more powerful Vampires tend to be closer to madness.

Use the Madness, Rage and Terror Derangements to determine blind spots. Is he Delusional? Does he Procrastinate? Does he show too much restraint? Play these personality quirks up as much as possible. Accent them at every occasion. The process of figuring out which derangement is in action is a lot of fun.

Once the characters figure out or find out the NPC's derangements, they can begin to manipulate him. They can feed his Delusions of Grandeur, and make him feel so important that he will always back them. A Vampire with the Moralistic Derangement can be manipulated by players claiming to champion his morality. Convincing a Vampire obsessed by the Vengeance Derangement that your enemies wronged him can trick him into an all-out assault.

Rebirth

In the long run we are all dead.

- John Maynard Keynes, *Tract on Monetary Reform*

As noted in **Vampire**, returning to human existence is never easy. Realize that, as with Golconda, a player whose character seeks to regain her humanity will usually (but not always) be retiring from your campaign. The player whose character achieves mortality (and survives) may wish to continue running the character. However, it is unlikely to be much fun unless you give that character certain abilities to compensate for the loss of their vampiric powers.

A better option is to retire the human character, and let the player start a new character. As the need arises, you can allow the player to run the old character. Of course, there is a danger that other Kindred may view the NPC as a threat

to the Masquerade. After all, what reason does the character have to remain secret about what he knows of the Kindred? Loyalty is a fleeting thing, and not to be trusted. It is unlikely that the now-human individual will be able to assume a

normal life, much less be of assistance to his still-Vampiric comrades.

There are four known ways for a character to regain one's humanity. Note that the character should actively seek, or at least desire, these methods for them to work.

Death of the Sire

If a Vampire kills the one who Sired her, then she can regain her mortality. Sometimes. As is noted in **Vampire**, sometimes the Vampire may have to kill her Sire's Sire. And her Sire's Sire's Sire. And so on.

The Storyteller is free to determine exactly how many Generations back the Kindred seeking humanity must go. She should perhaps not even decide until the character kills her Sire. Was it an easy kill? Did the Vampire seeking humanity simply gather 10 comrades and open fire with Uzis? If the kill was easy, then require the would-be mortal to proceed down the bloodline.

There do appear to be two constants, however. The first is the generation of one's Sire, while the second is whether a Blood Bond or strong Domination exists. Both of these factors tie into the difficulty of the killing. Obviously, if a Vampire is Blood Bound or Dominated, it will be much harder to kill her Sire. And if the master is of an older generation, then the victim has enough powers at his disposal to make a murder more difficult as well.

A character who regains her humanity in this fashion becomes fully mortal, but rarely keeps any Vampiric abilities. The character always loses the ability to regenerate and spend Blood Points. Occasionally the character keeps a point of Celerity, Fortitude, or Potency, but no other Disciplines. Thaumaturgy is also kept, but only if the Kindred was of Tremere blood. However, since the Tremere command their Clan members through the Blood Bond, and are scrupulously careful about picking out Neonates, Tremere rarely choose to regain mortality, and the Path of Blood is never retained.

If the human character maintains Vampiric abilities, Willpower is substituted for Blood when a cost must be paid.

Character Sacrifice

If a character sacrifices herself for another person, or for some great cause, then her death may be that of a mortal. If the sacrifice is for an individual, then the individual should be deserving of the Vampire's sacrifice. Sacrificing one's life to save a Prince, just so the other characters in the group (and the soon-to-arrive new character controlled by the sacrificing player) can be in his good graces, would not count. Sacrificing one's life to save a priest who seeks to help the Kindred would.

The cause should be one of great good, not just among Kindred, but among the world as a whole. Sacrificing one's life to prevent a magical rift into the land of Faerie would count; sacrificing one's life to kill the Prince of Chicago would not. Vampire hierarchy is so strongly organized that another Kindred would take the position, and secretly control the kine as effectively. In general, only individual Kindred will benefit from a Prince's death.

Such a means of restoring mortality should only be used if the player has expressed such a desire, or you feel that it would be in character for that particular Kindred to regain her mortality upon dying. If the player has not expressed an interest in regaining his humanity, his reaction to the character's deathbed conversion will be, "Ho-hum, I died a human. Can I create a new character now?" For all the dramatic impact this reaction has, you, the Storyteller, might as well not have bothered.

Always make sure that the dying character gets a final speech. If the player desired such a final redemption, such speeches can be high dramatic moments for all involved. Needless to say, this form of transformation is the end for the character. They don't become a Magus, they don't retire. They might become a Ghost, but that is left to the Storyteller.

Mystic Rituals

This is probably the (relatively) easiest and most survivable means of regaining one's mortality. It is known that several factions of Magi, including the practitioners of the Kabbalah, have access to rituals which can transform Kindred to kine. Such rituals usually require a willing victim, so wary Vampires do not have to worry about transforming back to human form in the middle of a fight.

These rituals seem to be an outgrowth of the Magi's research into life-extending spells. Of course, only the most powerful of sorcerers can perform these spells.

If a Vampire wishes to deal with the Magi and regain his humanity, the Storyteller should begin an entire Chronicle dealing with the quest for humanity. This should be treated in some ways like the quest for Golconda. First the characters will have to search to determine if such a thing is possible. Second, they must seek the Magus who can perform the ritual, and win her favor. Third, they must undergo the ritual itself, which usually involves a great deal of soul-searching and anguish.

The first thing a seeker of lost mortality must do is determine if such rituals exist. At least four levels of Magus Lore, or five of Occult Lore, will be necessary before a character can even begin to perform the necessary research. The character can perform research using the rules in **Vampire**. The Difficulty is almost always 9 or 10. In addition, the research should be played out. The Vampire will have to deal with booksellers, occultists, Elders, Princes or any number of individuals to get access to enough material to allow them a die roll for a given period of time.

This research will provide the character with an occult order, and possibly a specific Magus, that has the information they need. It will also provide them with a vague idea of where to begin looking for the order and/or the Magus.

The Storyteller should design at least one Story involving this search. Since the relationship between the Magi and the Kindred is usually strained, the character will receive very little encouragement and will undoubtedly have to contend with strong opposition. It will be very hard for the character to convince the Magus of her sincerity. Undoubtedly, other Kindred will hear of the character's quest. Some may try to manipulate her to gain some power over the Magus.

Once the character has contacted the appropriate order or specific Magi, and convinced them of her sincerity, she will have to bargain. Kindred rarely have anything the Magi need. The character may have to complete some mission to

win her transformation. The Magus may desire the destruction of a particularly despotic Prince who interferes with his operations in a given city. He may require the theft of a Tremere ritual.

Worst of all, they may require some future service. Often, the Magi leave themselves a loophole where they can reverse the transformation if their future request is not honored. Such reversals are invariably fatal.

Finally, the ritual is performed. No Magus guarantees success. Much like the quest for Golconda, the character must prove her worthiness to regain her mortality. Often, the character will have to confront her greatest fears, or tests which force her to make moral choices. These tests are part of the ritual, and the Magus has no control over them. The Magus still expects payment even if the character fails her personal tests.

A character who regains her humanity in this fashion becomes fully mortal, and almost always retains some Vampiric abilities. Sometimes, however, they may be reduced somewhat in strength. The ability to regenerate and spend Blood Points is always lost.

If the human character maintains Vampiric abilities, Willpower is substituted for Blood Points when a cost must be paid.

One example of such a transformation, and what abilities the Kindred retains in human form, can be seen in **A World of Darkness**, in the chapter dealing with Jordan and the Valley of Petra.

A character who becomes mortal through this method has the best chance of continuing in the Chronicle. She still has Disciplines allowing her to survive the Jyhad. However, as noted above, other Kindred will undoubtedly view the now-human character as a threat. She can easily reveal the secrets of the Kindred with no danger to herself. Elders, being a suspicious lot themselves, will believe the character to be as scheming and fundamentally disloyal as themselves. The now-human character will have new threats to plague her existence.

Achieving Golconda

Some Kindred believe that when one completes the final stage of Golconda, the candidate may choose to become human instead of gaining control of their Beast. Whether this option is available is left to the discretion of the Storyteller. In some cases this can give the character choosing the path of Golconda a new option, and a last chance to reconsider his fate.

If a character regains his humanity through Golconda, he can maintain all Vampiric disciplines, although he cannot spend Blood Points. As noted above, any Disciplines which require Blood use Willpower instead. Also, he is likely to meet with the same suspicion as magically transformed humans from common Kindred. However, the Inconnu will accept him as one of its own, whether they are kine or Kindred. The human character is now subject to all the restrictions of the Inconnu, but will also receive its protection.

For comments on a post-Golconda campaign with a character who has reached that stage, see the section on Golconda, below.

Other Means

As Storyteller, you may of course come up with other means of returning a character's mortality. Mystic potions, extended quests, radioactive bombardment, the bite of

Caine or alien vaccines may all do the trick if you so desire. Realize that when the characters regain their humanity, and the player continues to use that character, the tone of your Campaign will be significantly changed.

Golconda

With one wish we wake the will

within wisdom.

With one will we wish the wisdom

within waking.

- Dead Can Dance, *Song of Sophia*

You may not see many characters achieving Golconda in your Chronicles. The primary reason for this is that many players have no interest in achieving this exalted state. After all, if they wanted to play peaceful individuals who avoid interaction with humanity and most Vampires, they probably would not be playing **Vampire** in the first place.

Therefore, the first thing to do is make sure you do not have the rare player that immediately seeks Golconda upon completing their Embrace. Golconda is something characters with well-developed goals and desires should seek. Characters should not be seeking Golconda until they have been around quite a while. However, there is always the player that wants to be different.

First, remind the player that her character is probably unaware of Golconda, even if the player has read **Vampire**. Few Sires tell their Childer of this state of being. Hearing word of Golconda may take months of roleplaying before someone volunteers the information. Any character brash enough to come out and ask other Kindred would either get a hostile stare for breaching social etiquette, or brusque dismissals.

If you believe a player is going to have his character immediately seek Golconda, make sure the Embrace is as painful as possible. The character's Sire will have plenty of kine on hand for the Childer's first feeding. These kine should be closely affiliated with the character.

If a player informs you of his character's intent to seek Golconda after his initial creation, but before they have fallen prey to the Frenzies that drive the Kindred, put them in a situation where they end up submitting to Frenzy. Otherwise such a character will probably take great steps to avoid Frenzy situations.

The ultimate point of all this is: make sure the characters have plenty to show remorse for when they seek Golconda. Some Vampires may be content to feed on animal blood, and avoid the conflicts of Kindred society. The characters, however, will inevitably be drawn into conflict, feeding on humans when they must sustain their powers on short notice. Once they have crossed that line, you will not find it difficult to give them more and more to repent for.

Golconda Chronicles

Characters who have achieved Golconda will change the face of your Chronicle. In some cases, a character seeking Golconda means that the player has grown tired of their character, and wants to retire her after one last "great adventure." Others may wish to continue playing their characters after Golconda has been achieved.

If a player seeks to retire her character, then you can deal with the results of the quest for Golconda with relatively little difficulty. The character (or characters) can eventually complete the quest, with the aid of associates

who do not seek Golconda. The associates may be interested in learning the steps necessary for their own future use, which is why they choose to help. Remember, however, that ultimately the burden for achieving Golconda will fall directly on the shoulders of the character who wishes to achieve it.

Once the character(s) reaches Golconda, she retires. New characters are brought in, and a new Chronicle begins. You will almost certainly use a different route to Golconda if some of the associates make a later try. They may have learned much from watching their comrade, but it should not become automatic for them. Also, the characters who follow will not be at the Golconda character's Suspire, although the players may participate (see below).

If a player wishes her character to remain active after achieving Golconda, or you intend to write a new Chronicle revolving around characters who have all reached Golconda, realize first that you have a difficult task. As has been noted, the quest for Golconda is not something for a large group. It is a personal quest. As such, it is unlikely that every character in your Chronicle will reach it simultaneously.

If one or two characters reach Golconda, they should not be able to act as tour guides to lead the other player characters to that exalted state. The route that the characters use to reach Golconda should not be repeatable. The characters in Golconda can provide suggestions, aid and comfort. However, the characters who follow them will have to struggle to find their own route.

One option is to split your Chronicle in half. The characters who achieve Golconda will have to deal with the Inconnu and its behind-the-scenes manipulation. While the Inconnu is made up mostly of Fourth- and Fifth-Generation Kindred, they will accept Kindred of any Generation who reach Golconda. The problem is that they almost always expect one who has reached Golconda to join the Inconnu, and forbid their members from interfering in the Jyhad.

The other characters, those who did not reach Golconda, can act as unofficial assistants for the Golconda characters. To them will fall the duty of acting as their comrades' eyes, ears, and hands in the outside world.

A Chronicle can be done this way, but it will require patience on everyone's part. The Golconda characters will have to become much more subtle, usually remaining uninvolved during the gaming session once they have given orders to their agents. The Storyteller will have to find things for them to do.

The non-Golconda Players will have to get used to accepting the role of agents for a greater power. This is not uncommon in **Vampire**. What makes it harder is that they will have to accept other players as that greater power. The Golconda players will have to be careful not to become too commanding, lest your Chronicle fragment as the players draw into factions.

Also, such a Chronicle is dangerous in the extreme. As noted, the Inconnu forbid their members from participating in the Jyhad. Such a Chronicle will involve the player characters violating this edict, giving them a whole new set of enemies. Needless to say, you should only employ such a Chronicle if the players are willing have become extremely powerful.

Undoubtedly, you can think of other ways to run a Chronicle once characters achieve Golconda. Unfortunately, most of them lead to characters becoming

NPCs. If players wish to participate in a Golconda-oriented Chronicle, you will have your work cut out for you.

Achieving Golconda

So you have characters looking for Golconda. The first thing you will have to realize is that players must volunteer to look for it. You can drop hints through other Kindred that it exists. However, never create a Chronicle that sends the characters off looking for Golconda if the players do not request it.

Golconda is a personal quest, and should never be required to complete an unrelated Story. You should never create a Chronicle where the objective is, "One of our number must reach Golconda to defeat the Tremere's evil scheme."

You can, however, use many of the same quest elements involved in Golconda for such a story. The artifact that can defeat the Tremere ritual may be sealed in an Indian cavern where the characters will have to face their innermost fears and desires, much as they do during Golconda. Just make sure that, if you're going to use these quest elements, you leave something for the future. If a character meets his greatest fear during such a quest, you will lose much of the impact if you confront him with the same fear during the quest for Golconda.

Ideally, as Storyteller you should keep track of the major personal stories of each character in your Chronicle. Determine which victims they prey on, who they kill, what personal tragedies they face. This information will prove necessary if a player later seeks Golconda. Even if your players never seek Golconda, you can use this information to play upon their sense of personal horror at a later time.

If a player or players inform you they are going to seek Golconda, you should immediately go to these notes. If you haven't kept notes, try to remember specific actions of the characters in question. You should ask the players what they feel the characters' most personal moments are. It is better if you can surprise them with the family member whose brother either the character or the player have forgotten killing, but not absolutely necessary.

If characters do not express an interest, but you intend to convince them of Golconda's allure, you have come to the first stage of the quest for Golconda, described in **Vampire**. A character may grow tired of fighting the Beast, or may have reached a stage where he wishes to remove himself from Kindred society, and believe Golconda is the solution. You can use these elements by emphasizing them to characters who are already beginning to feel this way. This is the time to determine if the players truly are not interested in having their characters seek Golconda, before you begin that line of Stories.

The second stage of Golconda is seeking someone who can put them on the path. The more commonly encountered Elders rarely have an interest in providing clues to Golconda. After all, if a character retires into solitude, that is one less pawn for the Jyhad.

Elders of the Inconnu that are even remotely willing to provide this information are rare. They dwell in seclusion, and are difficult to track down. Players can spend entire Chapters travelling the globe finding such an Elder. Of course, characters may also have to deal with Elders who would thwart them, or the Kindred, Lupines or Magi ruling over the areas they must search for their mentor.

When an Elder is found, the characters will have to convince her of their sincerity. The Elder will almost certainly require the characters to repent for every evil deed they have ever committed, every life they have ever

taken. The Elder's knowledge of the characters' pasts may well appear omniscient. This is when the Storyteller will have to review his notes and discussions with the players seeking Golconda.

Of course, these acts of repentance may take months, years or even decades. You may feel a temptation to rush these situations, but don't. You will, however, want to work up Stories deriving from the various acts of repentance. Perhaps the mother of a victim is being bothered by police under the influence of a Prince, or the father of a Magus needs spell components that the characters have to obtain. Other situations may be staged by the Mentor to test the character's commitment. Will the character resort to violence when pushed and pushed and pushed? Which threats to which Virtues are likely to send the character into Frenzy? If you haven't already, realize now that the quest for Golconda is a long-term commitment on both the characters' parts and your own.

When repentance has finally been made, the character(s) must return to the Elder. It is at this, the third and final stage, that the Elder will help the character begin the Suspire. All who seek Golconda and have successfully repented must go into seclusion. The mentor will begin them on the way to their "visionquest," as they must relive their lives, facing their worst fears and fondest desires.

It is unlikely all characters will be seeking Golconda. They may either have been playing in a separate Chronicle, or accompanying the seekers for the thrill of adventure. These characters will not go into Suspire. However, the players should be involved. As Storyteller, use them to populate the dreams of the characters in Suspire.

Although actual combat rarely takes place in these visionquests, the Golconda characters must overcome moral dilemmas which appear. The other players can take the role of Princes offering them power, Magi offering them artifacts, or Lupines forcing them to choose between their own existence and the lives of their friends, innocents, or most effectively, their enemies. Many players enjoy the chance to step out of character and play a one-shot role where they can be evil, seductive, and charismatic without worrying about later consequences.

Also, remember the three criteria that are required of anyone seeking Golconda. The character's Humanity must remain at 7 or greater, his Conscience at 4 or greater, and he

must avoid all Frenzies by the use of Willpower, spending at least 15 points in so doing.

If a Golconda seeker ever fails a single challenge during the Suspire, then the visionquest has failed. For the character to ever again seek Golconda, he must go to great, even legendary steps. Almost none of those who have stumbled on the path to Golconda ever regain their footing. Most die grappling with their worst fears. A lucky few end up in permanent Frenzy, with the Beast in complete and total control. Mentors usually take it upon themselves to destroy such failures. Additionally, word of the character's failure will spread among the Inconnu, and none will accept her.

A story of one who failed to reach Golconda, but survived, relates a visionquest involving disgrace and exile, with the quester seeking throughout the astral plane for some way to redeem himself. The visionquest eventually led the seeker to stand guard over a hidden cave in the astral plane, where she was defeated by a great monster and returned to Earth.

It is up to you, the Storyteller, to determine what form the visionquest takes and whether a character who has

ascended to Golconda may choose to become human. Again, if a character chooses this option, he will almost certainly have to be retired by the player.

As noted above under **Golconda Chronicles**, the Inconnu will expect the character to join the sect. If the character wishes to retire, fine. If he chooses to remain active, perhaps using his comrades as assistants, he will be violating the tenets of the Inconnu and gain powerful enemies. Make sure that the characters realize what they are doing before they take this possibly lethal step.

Diablerie

The forbidden act of Diablerie, a violent part of so many Stories, can be equally effective as the basis for an entire Chronicle. It most commonly takes the form of the characters hunting down powerful Elders for their blood. However, it also takes the form of Elders who can no longer feed on humans hunting down Neonates or Neonates hunting down the characters if they are of a low enough Generation to increase the Neonates' power.

Characters as Cannibals

Most commonly it is the characters who become the dread diabolists, tracking down Elders for their vitæ. Although usually only comprising part of a Chronicle, some few Kindred (perhaps your characters) spend their entire existences going from victim to victim, continuing only for the rush such potent blood provides.

If this is the sort of Chronicle you hope to run, you need to take great care planning the defenses of the Elders. The characters will have to work closely together, meaning either they alternate drinking the final draught, or they discover the Ritual of the Bitter Rose (from **Awakening: Diablerie Mexico**) so all can benefit. Of course, if the latter is the option, then the characters can only hunt those of Fifth Generation or earlier.

Take great care in plotting out havens. After all, the sought-after Elders are powers in their own right, and expect any who come after them to be either as powerful or more so. Thus they plan accordingly. Mortal and immortal defenders, scientific and mystical traps, and the Elder herself should prove effective foes for the characters.

Should the characters prove successful in their hunting expeditions, they risk becoming outcasts with a price on their heads. Diablerie can be detected, though most of those who notice it will probably hope to use that information to their own advantage rather than announce it for all to hear. Soon the characters will find themselves hunted by those who wish to see their destruction and those who want to use them in personal Jyhads.

Additionally, what happens when one of the characters reaches an earlier generation than the others? Do they begin to stalk their comrade? No end of intra-party conflict can stem from this situation.

In any event, with this sort of Chronicle the Storyteller never has to think of ways to keep the characters occupied. They will find more than ample opportunity to get into trouble, and the Storyteller need but chuckle to herself as she thinks up new traps for them to trip.

Characters as Dinner

The characters face three types of Vampires who would like to suck them dry. First, and most infamous, are those Elders who need Kindred vitæ in order to survive. When one of these becomes active in your city, no Vampire is

safe. There is no set time when a Kindred must begin feeding of others of his kind, but generally those older than 500 years, with a Humanity under 5, had better look out. Some Cainites say those who have already been diabolists are at risk, especially those who slew someone within their own Clan or lineage.

The easiest way to handle this sort of Story is to have a Fifth-Generation terror rise from torpor and start offing Licks, with the exposed characters next in line. This generally turns into a high-power firefight (i.e. *Aliens*) with the characters trying to use their greater familiarity with the present day and its weapons to counteract the Elder's immense Disciplines and powers.

More devious, and with more potential Stories, is the secret drinker. Some old Kindred, preferably one the characters have come to trust (a Sire?), begins to find the blood of mortals does little to slake his thirst. He could breed and create new victims, but that would require using up what little vitæ remains in his system, as well as risking an all-destroying frenzy. Time to invite one or more of those trusting characters for a tea party.

The final form of these kinds of Diablerie Stories involves the secret feeder. Some well-established Cainite has been quietly feeding off Neonates for decades. Somehow the characters get wind of this situation - perhaps they are next on his list - and must decide whether to use the information for their own gain, announce it to everybody or whatever. In any case, they are likely to make a powerful enemy.

Since the enemies in these sort of Stories are so powerful, the characters should have some sort of blatant warning that something is wrong. Perhaps Kindred across the city are starting to disappear, or just ones from certain areas. Maybe they come across a drained body, or interrupt a mysterious figure ambushing another Kindred. In any case, don't just send them into combat with some ancient power - the game won't last very long.

Characters as Power

Also greatly feared are the individual or band of diabolists who hopes to rise in generation by slaying the characters. After all, if characters do it, why wouldn't others? This sort of Story should be handled with care, because the diabolists pick their target(s) carefully, hoping to get the blood with as little risk as possible. Nothing will upset the characters more than feeling they had no chance to avoid having some punk Neonate suck them dry.

Still, some clues should be available. Perhaps some Elder knows the diabolists are in town, and offers the characters this information in exchange for a favor. Maybe the characters notice themselves being followed, or see someone staking out their havens. This kind of Story can work well when it forces the player to think more about her character's environment - how is her haven protected, where does she go most nights, who is aware of her plans, etc.?

Eventually, however, the character(s) have to protect themselves. The diabolists have spent time planning their attack. They know at least some of their target's strengths and weaknesses. They are desperate (not as desperate as the character will soon be) and willing to do what it takes to accomplish their goals. While they will avoid killing the character in any way but by Diablerie, they will use every method available to immobilize her.

This sort of Story is best used when characters have either been flaunting all those points spent on Generation or have

committed Diablerie themselves. Not only is the punishment a fitting reminder of the risks of their existence, you can blame the attacks on the players ("Well, if you hadn't let it become known about your Generation, the diabolists would never have attacked you!"). Additionally, it will give the characters a whole new appreciation for those Caitiffs they have been picking on.

Characters as Pleasure

Finally, and most insidious, are those Kindred of about equal power to the characters who have developed a taste for Kindred blood and the Rebirth (the moment the victim of Diablerie reaches final death). They do not care about the power involved, and they do not need the vitæ for survival. Instead, they just love the thrill.

This is the only Diablerie Story which does not usually involve a great deal of violence. Since the victim and the diabolists are of approximately equal power, the attacker's best weapons are trust and betrayal. He must get the character into a position where she cannot escape and then sink his fangs into her.

Subterfuge and seduction are two ways to go about this. Getting the character to trust any NPC may be difficult, especially if she resides in a city like Chicago, but all the old tricks still fit. The diabolists can pretend to be forming a Blood Bond with the character, and then drain her when she least suspects it. Or perhaps romance (fueled by drinking alcohol-enriched mortal blood) flares up between the two. Then WHAM! Time for the character to struggle.

Using Diablerie Effectively

Diablerie Stories and Chronicles rank among the most symbolic of **Vampire** tales. Survival, the lust for power and addiction make up just the tip of the iceberg. Storytellers can fill every Scene of such a story with more metaphors than you can shake a stake at. Simultaneously, these are also among the most violent **Vampire** stories.

However, going too far with either aspect risks making the story trite and predictable. Establish before the Story begins just how much of both you will include and stick with it. Avoid the temptation to break from your original game plan unless it becomes obvious the players want more or less. Till then, make your game plan and keep to it.

The Battle for Immortality

Only slightly less violent (and symbolic) than Diablerie stories are those of the struggle to survive. In most Chronicles, the characters' night-to-night lives proceed with little threat, and those times they are threatened become the Stories. In the Battle for Immortality, the characters' every move is a struggle, and everything they do is part of a fight for survival.

This kind of Chronicle generally involves the characters on the run for some real or imagined misdeed. Perhaps a Justicar has declared a world-wide Blood Hunt on them to cover up his own treacheries. Maybe their Sire hunts them to keep them from revealing dark secrets to the world. Even a skilled hunter, dedicated to the characters' destruction, could send them packing.

With no established havens or feeding grounds, cut off from the civilized lands of the undead, hounded by Elder, Anarch and Lupine alike, the characters find every moment dangerous, and see foes behind every tree.

These sorts of Chronicles tend to be extremely high on excitement, as the characters find adventure everywhere

they go, and the Storyteller can send any sort of foe she can think up against them. However, these Stories also risk burning out the players. After all, they have little input in the shape of the Chronicle. They stay too busy reacting to ever become an active force.

For this kind of Story, the Storyteller must be careful to let the characters' actions have an effect on how the Chronicle

shapes up. Obviously they should be working to again become part of Kindred society, perhaps by clearing their names or slaying their Sire, but it should not be easy. They must be able to see the light at the end of the tunnel, however.

Chapter Five:

The Enemy

His dominion shall also be from one sea to the other: and from the flood unto the world's end. They that dwell in the wilderness shall kneel before him: his enemies shall lick the dust.

- 1662 Prayer Book

What's a good Story without a good enemy? Moriarty had his Holmes, Dracula his Van Helsing and Ahab his Moby Dick. While the characters in your Chronicle may have little cause to go head-to-head with a great white whale, anyone else is fair game. Even little children can be effective foes for Vampires (especially if they are innocent enough to have True Faith, are neutrals, and have the Prince of the city for an ancestor).

Still, just having an adversary to pound on is not enough. For a Story to get the most it can out of the villains, they must be fleshed out, livened up and made believable. With such three-dimensional foes, you and your players will remember your Stories as complete tales - something more than just a chance to practice brawling and weapon skills.

Creating a Good Bad Guy

Enemy creation begins the same place character, Story, Chronicle and setting creation do - the concept. Do you need a mighty Amazon, capable of mopping up the floor with an entire troupe of characters? How about a seductive manipulator, who uses his wily charms to set troupe members at odds with each, making them fulfill his own devious goals? Or what about the upstanding, highly moral Elder whose one main goal is ensuring no wet-nosed Neonates (like the characters) violate the Masquerade?

Such concept work can follow any form you desire, but the following is one method. First, come up with the villain's goal. Is it the accumulation of power? How about vengeance on a long-hated target? Making a certain someone fall in love with her? Looking through the lists of demeanors and archetypes can be one good way to come up with their goal.

Now determine the antagonist's role in the Story or Chronicle. Is she the main villain, the one everything revolves around? Is he some bit player, having little effect other than being an annoyance? Or is her role something which the players will determine through their characters' actions? If they treat her with compassion and understanding, might she become an ally, instead of the undying foe she is sure to be if they lash out at her?

Next, decide what place this foe has in society. Whether Prince, outcast or mortal hunter, the opponent's position in the world plays a great role in determining how much and in what ways he can effect the Story or Chronicle.

The fourth stage of this process involves deciding what weapons and tools the foe can use. Is she a master of martial arts, using a long Japanese spear to stake her foes?

Does he have billions in assets and armies of followers to do his every bidding? Are her Disciplines so advanced she can slay the characters with but a wink of her eye? Or are his only weapons his wits and determination - a combination which may well prove too much for many characters?

Determining the villain's own allies and enemies comes next. Her allies do more than just come to her aid when she is in danger (though they may not do that). They feed her information they hear on the streets, take her side in political maneuvering, and put pressure on her foes to do what she wants. On the other hand, her enemies may be the characters' sole hope to defeat her. Imagine their surprise when they hear a Justicar is investigating that member of the Primogen who has been screaming for their heads. Think how happy they will be when they find out a number of Anarchs have a score to pick with that Brujah gang leader. Of course, there is always the problem of eliminating the evil you know for the one you do not.

The antagonist's history should be determined at this point. After all, a Gangrel who has traveled across the world will be significantly different from one who has never left the wilderness where her Sire Embraced her. Was that Caitiff 10th generation when created or have there been a few episodes of Diablerie along the way? What kind of a human was he before the Embrace? Perhaps most importantly, who Sired her and why?

An antagonist's history can help a great deal when understanding his motivations, the next stage in the creation process. Does he lust for power? Hope to create a Vampire dynasty which will do his every bidding? Seek to overthrow those Kindred now in power and create an egalitarian utopia? The antagonist's nature can help a great deal in figuring out his motivations, but these motivations should be more specific.

Now that the Storyteller has all this information down, she can easily put numbers down on paper. **Vampire** gives guidelines for how many points certain foes should have, but there is no reason to stick rigidly to these. Feel free to create extremely powerful Neonates who walk down the streets as if they own them, or weak Elders who huddle in their havens when the Neonates do swagger.

The final stage in the antagonist creation process comes when you decide how to roleplay the enemy. Is she a confirmed romantic, a swaggering brute or an introverted wallflower? What kind of odd personal habits does he have - a nervous tic, a penchant for pinstripes or an endearing smile? This is the most likely aspect of the antagonist to evolve throughout the length of the Story as you figure out

what works and what doesn't, but if you begin with some notes in mind, then at least you have a direction in which to go.

Caring for the Enemy

While it is easy enough to send a stream of opponents at the characters for them to kill, detailed, interesting foes remain the heart of the Storyteller system. From the police detective who always seems to be there during feedings to the Primogen Elder with a permanent grudge or the werewolf pack which stalks the characters whenever they leave the city, good foes make good stories.

However, good enemies won't just play themselves. The handling of opponents can be both easier and harder than handling a character in continuous play. While the Storyteller has as many points to play with as desired and usually has a role, purpose and personality already in mind, it is impossible to put the same kind of work and time into making them whole as players put into their characters.

Thus the Storyteller needs to figure out what will happen to the antagonist over time. The characters interaction with this figure is not the only aspect of his existence, and the fact that other things go on should be reflected. Thus, let the characters hear about their immortal enemy showing up at the Toreador ball. Have others speak kindly about the Primogen member they suspect is a Diabolist. And, most importantly, have the antagonist grow through experience just as the characters do.

The Storyteller is lucky in this regard as many Vampires fall easily into a rut, staying almost exactly the same for decades at a time. Only the greatest of events shake them from the rigidity of their existences, and they almost never learn anything new. Few Vampires created before World War I ever learned to drive cars. And don't dare talk computers to any but the most recently made.

Still, the characters' enemies should be exceptions to this rule. While they should not develop as quickly as the characters (if you find they need to be more powerful, then just give them the points), they should not stay static. Think of the players' surprise when their characters' greatest foe suddenly shows he can possess them from afar. Imagine their shock when the enemy gang leader demonstrates an emerging knowledge of Thaumaturgy. And anticipate your own enjoyment of how they are going to have to scurry to change all their plans.

Of course, the antagonists do not just develop new powers. Their personalities, like everyone else's, change with the passage of time. The hunter, once so set on the path of vengeance, becomes sidetracked. Maybe a close brush with death makes her want to savor life instead of risking it (or even make her want to become immortal). Perhaps an encounter with the Sabbat has convinced her to only hunt the Camarilla, and in her fixation she has begun to lose her grip on sanity, becoming a babbling, raving murderess.

The same can happen to the Undead, though it may take longer. The Prince, who for so long has cared for nothing but keeping an iron hand on his city, falls in love. The Primogen Councillor, who has fought the characters at every turn, falls under the sway of one of the forces in the Jyhad, and suddenly becomes the characters' secret ally. Or an Anarch leader, after years of battling the establishment, sells out and joins the Camarilla, quickly becoming a power in its politics.

Vampires rank among the most static of creatures, changing less and less as the decades pass, but that is no reason to

allow the antagonists in your Chronicle to become stale. Everyone changes, everyone develops for better or worse, and reflecting this in your Stories can keep them fresh and exciting.

The Kindred

The most obvious and common foes in a **Vampire** Chronicle are the other Vampires. The Jyhad may be the most dramatic manifestation of Vampiric desires, but not everything has to tie into this great war (actually, it all ties in, but players should not realize that. But then again, players can read this book and find that out. So, ipso facto, that statement must be false. Or is it?).

In any case, the Damned want for many things. Power, respect, prime feeding grounds, material goods, followers, fun, Golconda, learning, art or even just wanting to be left alone can lead to innumerable conflicts with the characters as desires clash.

The Camarilla

In most Chronicles, the Camarilla makes up the dominant organization of Vampires. It controls the local community of Vampires with a combination of Traditions and internal and external agents. Just as people who fudge on their income tax respond with recrimination when someone else breaks the law, so do Vampires who quietly bend the Traditions respond to those who get caught (and don't have the power to quiet it up).

Thus you have the basic conflict of Anarchs against Elders. The Neonates want to get away with the same things members of the Primogen can. However, this is only the most basic battle. Every Camarilla Vampire has her own agenda to fulfill, and, with just a little imagination, it is easy to make the characters come into conflict with it.

For instance, rogue childer may start stalking the streets of your city, seeking the vitae of those characters whose Backgrounds include a few points of Generation. Various manipulators want the characters to do their bidding. They maneuver the characters into aiding them in increasing their power, dealing with their enemies or even just for the sake of manipulating them. Territorial disputes crop up with Cainites the characters would have preferred not to mess with, and unless they sooth some ruffled feathers quickly they should seek out some place to go into torpor.

The very fact that the Camarilla is an umbrella organization, providing a place for all Kindred who might hope to join, means there can be no end to the diversity of antagonists available. Any figure from myth, fiction or your imagination can show up in its cities, providing the characters with no end of surprises. The following templates are just some of the possible enemies the characters can make within this great assemblage.

Paranoid Prince

Quote: *"I have made my judgement. You shall not question it."*

Concept: How does one become Prince in the first place? It certainly does not follow any patterns of birth or marriage as it does among the kine. Only rarely (very rarely) is a Prince elected. Thus most Neonates seem to feel becoming Prince requires power and strength, and lots of both.

The Paranoid Prince has these qualities, but he knows that is not why he got the job. He saw the behind-the-scenes maneuverings of powerful Elders. He felt the influence of unseen forces, but has yet to determine why they brought him to reign. Until he finds out, then everyone is suspect. Should he find out, then everyone is condemned.

The Paranoid Prince does have some trusted advisors, but he watches even these with hawk's eyes. His allies are those Elders who side with him on important matters, and his retainers are Vampires and Ghouls he has created to help him rule the city. Should any of these get out of hand, however, one can be sure they will soon disappear.

Roleplaying Hints: Your paranoia remains slightly below the surface of your emotions, only rarely bubbling over the top. Usually you look at everyone with a piercing gaze you hope will keep them from questioning you. Should your suspicions about someone (you have suspicions about everyone) prove valid, you become merciless. However, if you can use this victim to discover who is the true power behind your throne, then that will be his misfortune.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Director

Generation: 7th

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 6, Firearms 2, Melee 4

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 4, Finance 3, Law 2, Linguistics 2, Politics 6, City Secrets 5, Kindred Lore 5

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Dominate 6, Fortitude 4, Potence 1, Presence 5

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

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

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 20/5

Primogen Councilor

Quote: "You may do as you like, but I will not be responsible for the consequences"

Concept: Some Primogens serve as the Prince's advisors. Others are *de facto* rulers of the city with the Prince serving as their main enforcer. The Primogen Councilor serves with a coterie of Elders who are a mixture of both. The Prince may be the single most powerful Kindred any Neonate of the city is likely to see, but a united Primogen can easily countermand her orders. Thus all the Elders carry out a careful dance of politics, taking care not to step on another's toes and making no move to take responsibility for something unless it will work.

Thus the Primogen Councilor does his best to keep everyone on friendly terms, making sure Elders and Neonates alike feel they can confide in him. However, he is more than willing to turn on anyone at a moment's notice should that prove advantageous. His two allies are fellow members of the Primogen, while his mentor is a very powerful member of his Clan.

Roleplaying Hints: You listen carefully and you watch carefully. Make sure the characters feel they can trust you. Never commit yourself to any course of action, and position yourself so you can take the credit if it works or pass the blame if it fails.

Nature: Conformist

Demeanor: Confidant

Generation: 8th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 2, Brawl 2, Dodge 3, Empathy 3, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 5, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Music 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 5, Finance 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Occult 3, Politics 4, City Secrets 4, Kindred Lore 4

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Dominate 4, Fortitude 1, Presence 2, Thaumaturgy 5 (Movement of Mind 5, Lure of Flames 4, Taste of Blood 3, Conjuring 2)

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 4, Influence 2, Mentor 5, Resources 4, Retainers 3, Status 4

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 15/3

Brujah Bully

Quote: "OK, so you're not a shit-faced, rat-sucking, butt-kissing, Justicar-toy Blood Doll. I'm still gonna kick your ass up between your teeth."

Concept: The Brujah Bully fits all the vilest stereotypes of the Clan. Violent, sadistic and thickheaded, many have a hard time distinguishing their regular frenzies from normal behavior. Even other Anarchs hate having to deal with this

one, but they know exclusion from their plans and meetings will only mean another fight with the Bully.

There is nothing subtle about the Bully. Combat-centered, few Elders would be willing to take this one on in a straight fight. Additionally, the Bully never runs alone. The allies and retainers are members of a gang committed to brutality in all its forms. If the Bully does not want to waste time with you, expect the entire heavily-armed gang to jump in.

Roleplaying Hints: You live for one thing, and one thing only - breaking heads. Still, you pretend to be a committed Anarch, using their movement as a cover for your own sadism. Go along with plans to fight the Elders, but bust them up as soon as you can over some imagined slight, and then go at it with whomever you like.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Rebel

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 5, Streetwise 3

Skills: Drive 4, Firearms 3, Melee 4, Music 1, Security 2
Knowledges: Investigation 2, Law 1, Area Knowledge 3, City Secrets 2
Disciplines: Celerity 4, Potence 5, Presence 3
Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Resources 1, Status 1
Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 1, Courage 4
Humanity: 3
Willpower: 5
Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Gangrel Protector

Quote: *"If you insist (growl) in continuing your present course (snort), I shall have no option (growl) but to destroy you."*

Concept: The Gangrel Protector cares for something, and cares for it as deeply as any being possibly can. Whether it be animals, a certain place, children or anything else, you can be sure anyone who threatens this treasure will meet death in all its fury.

A combat monster, the Gangrel Protector will take no pity on a foe, but will go to the ends of the Earth to protect what it believes it must. Characters might stumble across the objects guarded by accident, but claims of ignorance will not save them. Or, if you prefer a less violent story, the characters might become what the Gangrel protects. While this may appear an advantage at first glance, soon the Gangrel might be protecting them to the point where they are not allowed to leave their havens, and the Gangrel brings them dead animals to feed from.

Roleplaying Hints: You know your course of action is right, and nothing can sway you from it. You would give your existence for what it is you guard, and will not listen to those who question your commitment or attempt to turn you from your duty. The only trace remaining of those who have tried to violate your wards are the animal features which resulted from the frenzies when you slew them.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Caregiver

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Knowledges: Medicine 3, Area Knowledge 5

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

Backgrounds: Herd 2, Mentor 2, Status 1

Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 1, Courage 5

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 7

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Malkavian Psychotic

Quote: *"It is a beautiful night to die. But then, aren't they all?"*

Concept: That wild look in the eyes, the hair flying out in all directions, the graveyard dirt under the fingernails -all these point to the truth of the Malkavian Psychotic's existence. Who knows the truth of our existence? Who could possibly understand the depths of the agony? Who can know

the purpose behind this immortality? Well, the Malkavian Psychotic does, and the purpose is to extinguish the characters.

Violence is not the Psychotic's main, or even most effective, weapon. After all, being psychotic does not necessarily mean one wants to be at risk. Maneuvering others to do your dirty work can be more pleasurable, especially when it puts them and their target at risk. The only constant in this insanity is the Psychotic's desire to have a personal hand in the culmination of your plots, even if it only means hovering by in astral form.

Roleplaying Hints: You live for the torments you can put others through. Torture and brutalization are old hat with you. You take any means available to fulfill your fiendish desires and, while you may appear friendly enough when first met, very quickly unnerve others with your mad appearance and crazed laughter.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Talents: Acting 3, Dodge 2, Empathy 2, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Etiquette 5, Firearms 4, Melee 1, Stealth 1

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Occult 2, City Secrets 2

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 4

Backgrounds: Resources 4, Retainers 1

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 3, Courage 2

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 9

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Nosferatu Sewer Rat

Quote: "..."

Concept: A member of a Clan notorious for its silence, the Nosferatu Sewer Rat is legendary for her taciturnity. Always watching from the shadows, making no noise which would draw attention, she learns much, even about those who do not believe she exists. In combat she can be an effective foe, but that is not her main role as an antagonist.

She is a spy of unparalleled ability. With the advantage of Obfuscate, she can both watch in secret and escape with ease. Battling her is frustrating at best, as one can only react to her invisible attacks and hope for the best.

Over the long run, she can be an especially effective foe for instilling extreme paranoia in the characters. Most obviously, one can never be sure when she is spying on you and when she isn't. Additionally, her contacts, led by her ghoul retainer, are street people -the kind many Vampires would never give a second glance. Finally, her powers over the animals mean the characters can never be sure if that black cat in the alley is just licking its paw or watching them for its mistress.

Roleplaying Hints: You watch and you wait, staying as quiet as a church mouse (even if you are as ugly as a sewer rat). You feel uncomfortable dealing with others because of your appearance, so you stay in hiding and are extremely reticent to deal even with those you consider your friends. Your enemies, however, get the full brunt of your pent-up frustrations.

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Curmudgeon

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Melee 1, Security 3, Stealth 5, Survival 2

Knowledges: Investigation 3, Linguistics 1, Area Knowledge 4, City Secrets 4

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Celerity 1, Obfuscate 5, Potence 2

Backgrounds: Contacts 2, Retainers 1

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 1

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 6

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Toreador Degenerate

Quote: "Oh please. Why don't you seek out a dark coffin somewhere if you are so intent on embarrassing yourself further?"

Concept: No one is as good as the Toreador Degenerate. She is far more intelligent, sophisticated, attractive, cultured and urbane than anyone (at least in her own mind). It should take no time at all for her to make enemies of the characters, commenting snidely on their dress, habits, personalities and anything else you can think of. Attempts to deal with this overbearing, highly obnoxious person violently will be met with disdain and snide comments from all corners.

The Toreador Degenerate's main strength lies in her friends and allies. While these friends and allies may not like her, they desperately want her to like them. They believe strongly in her myth of superiority and will do anything to stay on her good side. Most of these allies are Ancillæ, but there may well be one or two Elders (or even the Prince) among them.

Her second main weapon is gossip. A master at spreading lies and rumors, she can turn any Kindred from a respected member of society to a despised enemy of all. And if you do seek revenge, beware her well-armed ghoul attendants.

Roleplaying Hints: You are far superior to those others of your type, and you know it well. None can measure up to your standards, and you let them know it. Put down all the characters' accomplishments in the most demeaning of ways, informing them that what they devoted tears and blood to deserves nothing more than your laughter.

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 2, Dodge 1, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Etiquette 5, Firearms 2, Melee 1, Music 4, Painting 4

Knowledges: Linguistics 4, Occult 1, Politics 3, Art History 5, City Secrets 3, Literature 5

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Dominate 2, Presence 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 4, Fame 1, Influence 1, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 3

Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 1

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Tremere Warlock

Quote: "Is it power you want? You know not what that word means. Should you open yourself to but a fraction of the might I command, you would be snuffed from this dimension like a taper in a tornado."

Concept: The Tremere Warlock serves his Clan with fanatical devotion, offering it his heart and soul. He has struggled for ages to get to his place within the Tremere structure, and will struggle for ages more just to move one inch higher. But struggle he will.

Just because the Tremere Warlock is Blood Bound to his Clan does not mean he has abandoned his own schemes. In his efforts to climb the eternal Clan ladder of success, he will use anyone and go to any extremes. If the characters happen to come between him and what he wants, or can be used as a vehicle to fulfilling his desires, so much the worse for them.

Roleplaying Hints: You strive to keep others from realizing the extent of your devotion to the Clan, but will not deny that you serve its will. However, you do your best to ensure others that doing your masters' bidding does not mean you have to hurt them. When it does, oh well.

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Architect

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Etiquette 3, Melee 1, Security 1

Knowledges: Investigation 4, Linguistics 4, Medicine 3, Occult 5, Politics 3, City Secrets 3, Kindred Lore 2, Magus Lore 2

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Dominate 3, Necromancy 1, Thaumaturgy 4 (Taste of Blood 4, Weather Control 4, Lure Of Flames 3)

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 2, Resources 3, Retainers 2, Status 2

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

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Rituals: Devil's Touch, Communicate with Kindred Sire, Deflection of Wooden Doom, Principle Focus of Vitæ Infusion, Mourning Life Curse, Pavis of Foul Presence, Splinter Servant

Ventrué Manipulator

Quote: *"Listen. I have what you want and you have what I want. I see no reason why we cannot come to some mutually agreeable solution."*

Concept: The Ventrué Manipulator has become a common feature in many Chronicles - so familiar, in fact, that few characters trust them anymore. However, this manipulator has a few key differences. First of all, friendliness is the main weapon in her arsenal. There is no reason why the characters should have to do something against their will when the manipulator can convince them it is what they want to do.

Second, this Ventrué deals with the Anarchs and the Establishment equally. It may even take the characters a few encounters with the Manipulator to realize she is a Ventrué due to her friends outside the establishment. Finally, she is completely capable in combat and if the characters become a hindrance to her plans for power, they may well pay the final price.

Roleplaying Hints: Your friendliness is not just an act-you prefer to like others and have them like you. However, power is your main goal, and nothing can be allowed to get in your way. Were you Prince, your rule would be an iron hand in a velvet glove; until then, make the characters believe your rulership would be paradise itself.

Nature: Autocrat

Demeanor: Architect

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Subterfuge 1

Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Security 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Computer 2, Finance 1, Investigation 4, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Politics 4, Area Knowledge 3, City Secrets 4, Kindred Lore 3

Disciplines: Dominate 5, Fortitude 3, Presence 4, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 4, Influence 1, Resources 3, Status 2

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

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 7

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Caitiff Diabolist

Quote: *"You thought because I was of the Clanless that I was nothing, or less than nothing. But now we both know the truth. Prepare for your end."*

Concept: The Caitiff Diabolist has been beaten on, ignored and abused. Other Kindred have taken advantage of the precarious existence of the Clanless, and the

Diabolist is no stranger to pain and suffering. But now the Caitiff will be the giver, not the receiver.

Through all the abuse the Diabolist has taken, some good has come (good for the Diabolist, anyway). The Caitiff has access to far more Disciplines than other Kindred of equivalent age, and there seems to be no end to his bag of tricks. Additionally, mercy is a foreign quality, so the victims should expect nothing more than their deaths.

Roleplaying Hints: You have experienced the Rebirth once, and will do anything to enjoy it again. Any other Vampire is fair game, for all have taken advantage of you in the past. Now you have the ability to make them pay, and that is what you shall do.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Martyr

Generation: 12th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Firearms 4, Melee 2, Security 2, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 2, Occult 1, Area Knowledge 3, City Secrets 2, Kindred Lore 1

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 3, Obfuscate 2, Potence 3, Presence 2, Protean 2, Thaumaturgy 2 (Taste of Blood 1)

Backgrounds: Ally 1, Contacts 2, Resources 2

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 6

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 11/1

The Sabbat

Feared beyond reason by Camarilla Neonates, the Sabbat gladly plays the role of the evil bogeyman, with no horror being too vile for it to perpetrate. Prime enemies for the characters, these monsters lack all humanity and revel in their inhuman nature. They burst into frenzies with but a moment's notice, seeming not to care what havoc they wreak.

Of course, to the Sabbat, its way is the right one, and everyone else follows the fool's path. Members of the Sabbat crave absolute freedom above everything else, striving with all their might to prove they can do anything they desire. At the same time, they possess a supernaturally strong loyalty to one another, and to Camarilla Vampires it appears as if every member of a Pack has been Blood Bound to each other.

It is this supernatural tie which keeps the Sabbat from erupting in writhing spasms of violent anarchy. Not only do individual packs have their internal connections, but individual members will have their own bonds with other Sabbat. Thus the entire Sect has one giant web of loyalty spun throughout it, keeping its members from destroying each other out of hand.

The Sabbat appears set on the destruction of the Camarilla and, once that goal has been fulfilled, enslaving the human race. Even Anarchs fear its brand of freedom, and join with the hated Elders in battling this hated scourge. Everything about the Sabbat, from its wild abandon, grotesque love of

combat to its horrendous, flesh-rending Disciplines, only serves to strengthen this revulsion.

However, members of the Sabbat seem capable of their own kind of virtues. They possess an intense loyalty to one another. Indeed, among more knowledgeable members of the Camarilla, rumors fly regarding Sabbat mystics, who spend their unives in quests after knowledge about the history of the Kindred. Others talk about honorable Sabbat leaders who strive desperately to keep the Vampiric world from going up in smoke. Some members of the Camarilla even whisper that greatest of heresies - that there may be much the Camarilla can learn from its eternal enemies.

Sabbat Pack Leader

Quote: *"You have your choice. Join us or die."*

Concept: The Sabbat Pack Leader was created years ago during the Sabbat takeover of a city. Most of the members of her original pack met their Final Deaths during those battles, but she joined a new group. As the years past and the pack suffered normal (for the Sabbat) attrition, she decided the time had come to seize control. This she did, slaying the previous pack leader in the process.

Now she and her pack have become nomads, travelling between Sabbat-controlled cities and making frequent excursions into Camarilla territory. She herself has become an extremely capable fighter, but is also highly skilled in the diplomatic arena as well as various disciplines. Her allies are fellow members of her pack, all almost as capable as she in combat.

Roleplaying Hints: You exist solely for the freedom your Vampiric form offers. Those who get in your way or interfere with this freedom deserve nothing short of horrible deaths. However, those who would make good members of the Sabbat should be given the chance to prove themselves. Remember, the good of the Sect comes first.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Gallant

Generation: 9th

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 2, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Drive 4, Firearms 4, Melee 4, Security 2, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Knowledges: Occult 3, Sabbat Lore 4

Disciplines: Celerity 2, Fortitude 3, Presence 4, Protean 3, Vicissitude 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Status 3

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

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 14/2

Notes: The Discipline of Vicissitude allows a Vampire to shape and change the body's form, though the changes are not limited to the Vicissitude practitioner alone. The first level allows the Vampire to actually change aspects of her appearance, which is the way this character developed a 5 Appearance. The second level allows the character to shape her or another's skin in any way she likes. The third level allows the Vampire to mold bones in the same way.

The Inconnu

The characters who have the Inconnu as their enemies might as well hang it up. Ticking off someone powerful enough to remain out of the direct maneuverings Jyhad has never been a wise idea. However, just because the characters haven't a chance does not mean you should avoid using these ancient powers as their enemies.

First of all, only rarely do members of the Inconnu become directly involved in conflict. Doing so not only exposes them to danger but also means they risk coming under the sway of one faction in the great war. After all, taking action against the Prince means they aid those who want her out of power, who are, in turn, no doubt under the control of someone else. The only truly safe course lies in doing nothing, the very tack so many of the Inconnu take.

However, even these Monitors, who watch over certain areas or organizations, have weapons at their disposal. Should you interfere with a Monitor's activities, or slaya favored member of the kine, be prepared for the worst. First the little things begin going against you. Then your other foes begin to gain near-supernatural knowledge of your activities. Next those you once called your allies begin to turn against you. Finally you wake up one night to discover a Sixth-Generation

Hittite named Magog hovering over your bed, flaming stake in hand.

For all their power, members of the Inconnu should be used sparingly in a Chronicle, and even more sparingly as an enemy. Only the rarest of events could cause one of these Cainites to take a personal interest in any Neonate or Coterie of Neonates. Even when the characters do upset such a creature, they should have ample chances to make amends for their crimes.

For instance, an irritated Monitor might give them an assignment, such as gathering information on some target the Inconnu cannot approach. Perhaps she has them begin the journey to Golconda, setting them up in situations which cause them to feel remorse (and if they do not feel remorse, she slays them out of hand). Or maybe she puts some restriction upon them, like forbidding them to feed on the innocent.

Using a member of the Inconnu as an enemy can be a great opportunity for roleplaying, as characters who try to fight her will find themselves in truly dire straits. However, by using their wits and whatever may be left of their Humanity, they may still come out alright.

Inconnu Monitor

Quote: *"Go away."*

Concept: The Inconnu Monitor, commonly found wherever the Kindred play their games, should be an enigmatic figure at best, and an invisible terror at worst. While most Inconnu maintain a non-interventionist posture, acting only when threatened, some become involved in affairs on a regular, if covert, basis.

Thus the Inconnu Monitor has developed substantial abilities of observation and deduction, but also has more than enough experience in combat and other stress-filled situations. Allies and contacts have come to his aid through the passage of time, and no few of these rank among the other members of the Inconnu. Of course, these is no reason others would not be spies in either the Sabbat or the Camarilla, Lupines, Magi or even Mummies.

Roleplaying Hints: Your main goal is to remain aware of potentially threatening events and individuals under your jurisdiction. To this end you will go to any extreme, including sneaking into meeting places, Dominating Licks into telling all and then making them forget the meeting, and anything else you deem as necessary.

While normally quiet and removed, should something become a direct threat to you, you will spare no effort in ensuring its suppression. Additionally, despite having reined your passions in to a great degree, you have yet to achieve Golconda. Thus you remain capable of frenzies, and if aggravated beyond your tolerance, will respond with all the powers at your command.

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Traditionalist

Generation: 6th

Physical: Strength 7, Dexterity 5, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligence 6, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 6, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 5, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Music 3

Knowledges: Investigation 7, Law 3, Linguistics 6, Medicine 5, Occult 6, Politics 6, Science 4, Area Knowledge 5, City Secrets 6, Kindred Lore 6

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 7, Celerity 4, Dominate 6, Fortitude 4, Obeah 4, Potence 3, Presence 6, Protean 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 7, Resources 3, Status 5

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

Humanity: 9

Willpower: 10

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 30/6

Independents

Not all Vampire Clans belong to one of the three Sects. While most do fall under their aegis, others carry out their existences without alliances, going through each night unencumbered by their wars of their Kindred (or so they believe). Thus Ravnos wander the wilds of the planet in search of pleasure, Giovannis do the same in the wilds of the boardrooms, and Setites and Assamites carry out their own plots and schemes.

So just when the characters think themselves safe from the manipulations of the Camarilla and the Sabbat - Boom Baby! - there's a whole new ball game to play. Suddenly the world twists and turns as a Ravnos warps the very fabric of reality. The characters' minds scream with pain as the Setites lead

them quickly into temptation. Their very souls wail as the Giovanni pry them from their bodies. And in the dark, an Assamite waits to strike.

These Clans, as well as the Bloodlines which follow, are the wild cards in **Vampire**. Never predictable, always mysterious, their objects and actions often seem to follow no reason or pattern. That Assamite trailing you might have been hired by the Prince, an Anarch gang, an Elder, or just be watching you in case she someday is hired to kill you.

These independents can create a great change of pace in a Story, allowing characters to develop a greater sense of what goes on in your Gothic-Punk world. The fact that a

Setite even operates out of a Camarilla-controlled city means something -maybe the Prince has become lax, been bribed or even corrupted by the Followers of Set. Whatever the reason an Independent has come to town, you can be sure it means bad news for the characters.

Ravnos Con Artist

Quote: *"I have just what you need. It's in this alley right over here."*

Concept: The Ravnos con artist lives for the scam. If given an opportunity to steal a baby's glass eye, you can be sure the opportunity (and the glass eye) will be seized. However, the best cons come from trickery, especially when someone's greed can be used in the game.

Thus the con artist has become a student of Vampiric motivations, watching carefully what people do and why they do it. This Ravnos may not be the best fighter, but allies are always around (your own family) and you can escape most problems with the help of your wits, Chimerstry and speed.

Roleplaying Hints: Watch the characters carefully. See what it is they want, and then offer it to them. Once they are ready to take it, pull the switch and get away while your laughter yet rings in their ears.

You generally prefer to pull scams against the pompous and overinflated, but if they are not available, anyone will do.

Just be ready when they take offense to your innocent games (especially when you steal their havens while they sleep).

Nature: Jester

Demeanor: Rebel

Generation: 10th

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 4, Athletics 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Empathy 4, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Melee 2, Music 3, Security 2, Stealth 4, Sleight of Hand 4, Survival 2

Knowledges: Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Occult 3

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

Backgrounds: Allies 2, Resources 2, Retainers 4

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 8

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 13/1

Minor Bloodlines

Although the 13 major Clans comprise the vast majority of Kindred society, there are other families of Vampires scattered throughout the world. Unable to rival the Clans in either numbers or raw power, these families - or 'bloodlines' as they are referred to - remain formidable forces to be reckoned with.

Usually a branch of an established Clan, their major differences come from their Disciplines and weaknesses. Many boast Disciplines wholly unique to themselves, while others stress their special outlook on existence. For instance, some Kindred speak longingly of a bloodline

dedicated solely to the practice of love in all its forms. Others talk with awe and loathing of a now-extinct bloodline which set itself up as the protectors of the human race.

Bloodlines have formed from many sources - begun by one powerful Kindred who then Sired and passed on the changes, created by cabals of wizards or established by one Cainite who has never passed on the Gift. Lacking an Antediluvian founder, the members of these bloodlines often believe themselves above the Jyhad, much to the amusement of other Vampires.

Gargoyles

In the early days of the Middle Ages, the newly founded Tremere line was in grave danger. Hounded from all sides by agents of the Inconnu, even the power of the recently created Circle of Seven did not seem enough to save the line from extinction. Though they were individually mighty, they simply did not have the hordes of lesser shock troops that they needed to fend off their enemies.

It is rumored to have been the Clan founder himself who thought of a solution. Capturing several other Vampires and mystic creatures, including a Gangrel and a Nosferatu, Tremere and his Circle used their extensive alchemical knowledge to synthesize a race of new Vampires, ones which would serve the Tremere. Deep beneath the Carpathians, the first Gargoyle rose from the steaming ichor of their cauldron. In a mocking parody of the Bible, they commanded it, "Go forth and multiply."

And go forth it did, rapidly creating swarms of Progeny from the terrified peasantry and leading them against the Inconnu. It was largely due to the terrible strength of the Gargoyles that the line of Tremere survived their first great battles.

For centuries the Gargoyles served the Tremere with great loyalty, despite the numerous abuses heaped on them by their masters. Finally, the ill-treatment grew too great for even their dull spirits to tolerate. During the late Middle Ages, the Gargoyles broke away from the Tremere; some scattered into the wilds of Europe, some flocked to the great cities such as Paris, while others offered their services as mercenaries and sentinels to any Kindred or Magus who could pay their price in gold and vitæ.

Appearance: Gargoyles are grotesque and repulsive, much like Nosferatu, and generally have a "demonic" appearance. They begin with small bat-like wings which grow as they advance in the Discipline of Visceratika. Each level they have gained in that Discipline allows them to fly at an additional five mph. Also, as they age, their skin becomes more rocklike and various strange protrusions appear on their bodies.

Haven: Gargoyles greatly prefer interior or underground areas with lots of stone and earth to manipulate. Abandoned buildings (particularly tall ones, where they can sit at night), warehouses, sewers, caves and the like are ideal.

Background: Gargoyles reproduce rarely, and only for their own twisted reasons. As Gargoyles are a composite and artificial race, once a victim is chosen, his own mind becomes sublimated in the wash of magic and memories already ingrained in the Sire's vitæ, and he almost forgets his prior life. Gargoyles can come from any background.

Character Creation: Gargoyles are not really suitable for playing, but make ideal sentries, guards and mercenaries. Physical Attributes and Talents are primary.

Weaknesses: Gargoyles have an appearance of zero, much like the Nosferatu from whence they are partially derived. Also, as a race created to be slaves, their Willpower is treated as two lower when resisting Domination or Magi mind-control spells.

Disciplines: Fortitude, Potence, Visceratika

Quote: "You intrude on master's property. I count to 10 - you leave or I feed the earth with your entrails. One 10."

Visceratika

Level One:

Whispers of the Chamber: By making a Perception + Alertness roll against a difficulty of 6, the Gargoyle is able to detect others within an enclosed area of about the size of a large apartment, even if the intruders are out of sight, in darkness or protected by Obfuscate. If the target is actively seeking to avoid being detected, she gets an opposed roll of Self-Control + Stealth with a 6 difficulty.

Level Two:

Skin of the Chameleon: By spending a blood point, the Gargoyle's skin takes on the texture and color of its surroundings, adding five to the dice pool for Stealth as long as it moves slowly (half speed or less).

Level Three:

Voices of the Castle: As Whispers of the Chamber, above, but affecting an entire building or physical structure.

Level Four:

Bond With Terra: Similar to the Protean power Meld with Earth, this power also allows the character to melt into stone, brick or asphalt. However, this power does not allow the character to actually sink deep into the protective surroundings. Instead, the character seeps just below the surface, and a faint outline of her form can be seen above where she rests.

Level Five:

Stonestrength: The Gargoyle's flesh hardens and pain is deadened, giving the character one extra Stamina point for the purposes of resisting wounds, subtracting one from all wound penalties, and halving the damage received from fire.

Level Six:

Rockheart: The Gargoyle's innards become rocklike. Any weapons which pierce the body (including bullets) do half damage, and staking is effectively impossible unless the attacker's Strength + Potence is at least 7.

Dark Statue: By remaining completely still, the character can avoid the effects of direct sunlight. However, should the character move or even twitch for any reason, the full effects of sunlight begin. Not moving for a day requires a Stamina + Fortitude against a difficulty of 9. Note that the character must have Fortitude to make this roll and must still roll to avoid frenzying at the sight of the sun.

Level Seven:

Crawling Chamber: By spending three blood points, the Gargoyle may animate approximately a 10' by 10' volume of stone, giving it a base sentience and allowing it to ooze, reshape itself and even attack foes. Statues and the like may be animated as well. The Gargoyle rolls its Manipulation + Empathy against a difficulty of 8 to achieve this end.

Levels Eight through Ten:

There are no known Gargoyles beyond the Sixth Generation.

Blood Brothers

The Sabbat continually seeks new ways to overthrow the Camarilla, and many of their efforts involve the creation of Vampiric shock troops. The Sabbat is also renowned for its creative uses of the Blood Bond. Recently, a conclave of Sabbat Tremere and Tzimisce gathered in a certain unnamed stronghold in Eastern Europe for a bizarre experiment. Their devilish plan: to refine the Blood Bond to new heights, thus creating a pack of Vampiric warriors who would for all practical purposes think and act as one. With the Tremere using their Blood magic and the Tzimisce employing their flesh-altering powers, they would create an army of invincible servants.

A band of captured Caitiffs provided the first test subjects. And the second. And so on. Finally, after a number of grotesque failures, a pack of fanatically loyal soldiers, with their own unique abilities related to their bond, crouched before them. This was the origin of the Sabbat's special weapon, the bloodline known ironically as the Blood Brothers.

Appearance: Blood Brothers usually look a little strange, as their reshaping and blood exchanges often leave them a bit misshapen. They generally shave their heads and prefer to wear simple T-shirts, jeans and boots.

Haven: Blood Brothers often live in Sabbat communal havens or in secret bases under the cities of the Camarilla, where they can venture out to wreak havoc.

Background: Blood Brothers are chosen by the Tremere and Tzimisce for their tough-mindedness and skill at keeping themselves alive. Individuality is not a prized quality. Many Blood Brothers come from military or criminal backgrounds, and members of street gangs seem especially prevalent.

Character Conception: Most Blood Brothers come from criminal or gang concepts. Physical Attributes and Talents are primary.

Organization: Blood Brothers are bound in tightly-formed packs, or "circles," of between three and seven individuals. Usually all are equal, but the Brother with the highest generation is the nominal leader; they are virtually a communal being anyway, so questions of leadership are nearly irrelevant.

Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Sanguinus

Weaknesses: All Blood Brothers feel each others' pain. If one is damaged, all the rest take the same wound penalty to their actions for the next round (only). If more than one is hit, the highest penalty is taken. They are also all Blood Bound to each other.

Quote: (in unison) "DIE!"

Sanguinus

Level One:

Brother's Blood: By spending a blood point, any Blood Brother can heal a wound level of anyone in his circle without actually having to allow the target to drink his blood. This can be done at a distance, but only one level can be healed in a turn.

Level Two:

Borrow Organs: The donor and recipient must each spend a blood point and the donor must concentrate. The next round, one of the donor's exterior organs - eyes, arms, ears, legs, whatever - will vanish from the donor and

reappear on the recipient's body, allowing for increased senses, extra dice for multiple attacks, or anything else appropriate. Internal

organs - the brain, the heart, etc. - cannot be donated, nor can Disciplines be given away. Only the donor must have this power for it to be used.

Level Three:

Coordinate Attacks: By spending a blood point each, all the Brothers in the circle can enter into a group mind link, allowing them to function as one entity. This allows them to share perceptions, tactics and even knowledge for as long as they maintain the bond. There are several aspects to this power:

- Powers such as Dominate, etc. attack against the highest Willpower of the entire circle, and must score one additional success for every member of the circle. If the power succeeds anyway, a mental 'circuit breaker' activates, severing the targeted Brother from the link, so only she is Dominated, etc.

- A dice pool of one extra die per person is set up; any of the Brothers can draw on this pool per round, although each die used by an individual subtracts from the total in the pool for that round (i.e., if there are five Brothers in the circle, there are five total extra dice available in the pool per round, not five per Vampire per round).

- Surprise attacks, etc. almost never work while in the bond; assume that if ANY of the Brothers could see an attack coming, all in the circle will know. Otherwise, reduce all Perception difficulties by three.

- By staying out of combat and concentrating, a Brother can give an Ability to another. Thus, a wounded Brother with Brawl 5 could rest while at the same time concentrating on her circle-mate who is fighting with Brawl 2; while the other Brother is concentrating, the Vampire in combat fights with Brawl 5.

- Any other logical advantages of being linked, such as tactical advantages and the like, may be given to the circle. Group acrobatics, etc. are quite common.

A Brother does not have to have Sanguinus at this level to enter into the bond as long as someone in his circle does. However, if he does not have at least a three Sanguinus, then he will be subordinate in the link to others of his circle. He will subtract one from all advantages listed (if five dice are available in a pool, the character could only use a maximum of four, Perception difficulties reduced by only two, etc.); the Brothers who control the bond are going to divert all the most useful sensory information to themselves. Additionally, because the character is not attuned to the level of interaction involved, he loses one die in his own pool to compensate for the competing sensory input.

Level Four:

Concentrate Generation: With this power, the Blood Brother may draw upon the vitae of her circle to increase her own generation. She may take one generation level from each member of her circle to add to her own. The 'donating' Brother must be willing or this power fails. Additionally, the donating Blood Brother effectively becomes one generation younger. If this would take the Blood Brother below 13th generation, she can only spend a Blood Point every other turn and can only have nine blood points in her pool. The generation can be given back later.

Level Five:

Coagulate Entity: With this grotesque power, all the Blood Brothers may unite, physically as well as mentally. All the Brothers spend three blood points and join hands, spending a round in concentration. On the next round, they will meld together into a composite entity, an enormous blob of flesh, entrails and stringy muscle tissue covered in eyes and mouths. The Generation of the creature will be that of the earliest Generation, reduced by one for every Brother who forms the entity. The creature will have a Strength, Stamina and Perception equal to the highest rating in the circle, +1 for every member, and all other attributes will be equal to those of the Blood Brother with the highest rating. All physical actions will receive one extra die in their dice pool for every Blood Brother in the circle, usually used to take multiple actions (extra limbs, extra fangs, etc.). Only one Brother in the circle needs to have the discipline at this level, but any Brothers who don't have Level 5 will be automatically subordinated to the will of the Brothers who do possess Level 5 while in this form.

Levels Six through Ten:

There are no Blood Brothers above the Eighth Generation.

Baali

This line of Vampires originated in Mesopotamia; it was once much more extensive and powerful, but was decimated by a coalition of several other Clans who found the Baali's rituals vile even by Kindred standards. Since then, the line has existed in anonymity for millennia; most other Kindred believe them to be a legend, and Baali usually pose as Caitiffs around other Kindred. They have slowly spread over Europe and into the Americas, and some have joined the Sabbat.

Baali are devil-worshippers. They are more committed to utter evil than the most psychotic Malkavian or brutal Sabbat Bishop. They firmly believe in the eventual ascension of utter darkness and that Vampires are the chosen minions of the Powers that Wait on earth. They do not wish to maintain a Masquerade from their chosen prey, or even for Vampiric supremacy like the Sabbat - they wish to summon their great lords back into the world, to turn the planet into a demon-ridden hell.

Appearance: Baali are almost studiously nondescript, but those with high Presence seem to give off an aura of evil. They can be of any race and either sex.

Haven: Baali usually maintain Havens far away from Kindred or kine, such as in abandoned houses or farms - the better to practice their rites.

Background: Baali only choose to Embrace humans who are intelligent, driven and completely callous. Most of their Progeny are interested in the occult even in life, and all Baali practice it once Embraced.

Character Conception: Most Baali are between 25 and 45 when Embraced, although some are Chosen at a much older age. Many come from a Dilettante or Professor background. All Baali have an Occult score of at least 1; Mental Attributes and Talents are primary.

Organization: Baali usually form small, coven-like groups ('flocks') of between three and six Vampires. The most powerful sorcerer of the flock is the leader, ruling with an iron fist.

Weakness: Baali are affected by religious symbols, just like the traditional movie Vampire, and take double damage from Faith.

Quote: *"Your struggles are futile. What is to be will be. Accept your place in the fires eternal."*

Disciplines: Obfuscate, Presence, Daimoinon

Daimoinon

Level One:

Sense the Sin: By making a Perception + Empathy roll against a difficulty of the target's Self-Control + 4, the Baali can sense the subject's greatest character flaw - be it a low Virtue, a weak Will, a Derangement, or whatever.

Level Two:

Fear of the Void Below: The Baali must first use Sense the Sin (above) to discern the tragic flaw of the target. She must then speak to the target, telling him of his inevitable damnation and lack of any hope for redemption. If the Baali makes a Wits + Intimidation resisted roll against the target's Courage + 4, the victim will fly into a Terror frenzy; if the Baali scores three or more successes, the target will collapse in a useless panic.

Level Three:

Flames of the Netherworld: The Baali may hurl blasts of flame which do one die of damage per blood point spent; the Baali must roll Dexterity + Occult, with a difficulty dependent on range, to hit.

Level Four:

Psychomachia: The Baali is able to summon the Beast in an individual. After using Sense the Sin (above) to discern weakness, the Baali can actually coax the Beast to the surface. The victim must roll against his greatest weakness (i.e. lowest Virtue) with a difficulty of 8 or fly into a frenzy; any Derangements possessed by the victim will be in evidence.

Level Five:

Curse: By making an Intelligence + Occult roll against the target's Willpower, the Baali may cast a curse on the target. One of the target's Traits, chosen by the Baali, will drop to zero for a duration depending on the number of successes:

One Success - One night

Two Successes - One week

Three Successes - One month

Four Successes - One year

Five Successes - Permanent

Level Six:

Ignore the Searing Flames: Fire no longer affects the character.

Level Seven:

Summon the Herald of Hell: This power requires a one-hour ritual, three blood points' expenditure and a human sacrifice. The Baali may then summon a lesser demon from Hell to do her bidding. Demons vary greatly in abilities and form, but will usually be built on something approximating the following statistics: Attributes: 10/7/3, Abilities: 15 points worth, Willpower: 8, Disciplines: 10 points worth, as well as a Fortitude of at least 3 and the ability to heal like a Lupine. Form can vary wildly - some demons are beautiful seductresses, others reptilian horrors. The demon may be summoned without the hour-long ritual or the sacrifice, but the Baali must spend six blood points and the demon will be uncontrolled - it may well decide to drag the Baali down to Hell with it for her temerity.

Level Eight:

Great Curse: This curse is more subtle than the Level Three power, and affects a much wider area. With this curse, the Baali afflicts an entire city or province with a feeling of gloom, despair and malaise. The more successes rolled on the Baali's Intelligence + Occult against a difficulty of 9, the greater the effect. Crime and violence soar, petty angers become seething hatreds, the economy takes a downward spiral, marriages break up over trivial causes, and the world just becomes a nastier place in general. Even Kindred organizations become more fractious and less efficient - thus, this power is ideal for undermining Camarilla power structures in a city. A successful use of Auspex 9 or above will

enable the user to determine that there is a malevolent outside aura on the region affected; otherwise, the populace will simply assume that the times, they are a-changin' - for the worse.

Level Nine:

Call the Great Beast: This ritual takes four hours to cast and requires the sacrifice of 50 victims (Kindred or kine) with at least 4 Humanity each. One of the Great Demon Lords of the Netherworld will thereupon erupt from Hades; the details of this are up to the Storyteller, but it is safe to say that such entities are more powerful than any Vampire, and that the world is in serious trouble. This is presented more as a plot device than a way for sadistic Storytellers to waste the Troupe.

Ghouls

Ghouls, while nowhere near as powerful as their Vampiric masters, have a number of advantages over their lords. The most obvious of these advantages is the ability to go about during the day with no fear of the sun. Other advantages include their ability to sleep as they please, mix in human society with less risk of frenzy and the fact that many Kindred underestimate their strength, believing them to be but lowly servitors.

While that role may fit some ghouls, others have become powers in their own right, and provide the Storyteller with ample enemies. Additionally, there is no reason why a player could not run a ghoul as a character, especially if you are using the troupe-style of play discussed in Chapter One.

Note that ghouls do have some significant disadvantages. After three months, most have been Blood Bound to their masters, and now will suppress their own desires for the Vampire's - part of the reason they are often seen as little more than slaves.

Their powers also suffer limitations. Except for the Potence they gain from first becoming a ghoul, they can learn no Disciplines which their feeder does not have. Second, they are limited in how far they can advance in those Disciplines based on the Generation of their most recent "host," as illustrated in the following chart.

Generation - Maximum Discipline Level

Eighth and Younger - One

Seventh - Two

Sixth - Three

Fifth - Four

Fourth - Five

Also, increasing Disciplines is much more difficult for ghouls than it is for Vampires. Just gaining a new Discipline requires 25 experience points and, if the ghoul has an old-enough host to allow progress beyond the first

level, each additional point requires the Discipline's current level x 20 in experience.

Finally, ghouls' bodies can hold no more blood than an average human's can. They have a blood pool of 10, and imbibing blood above what they can contain causes a level of damage per point. That blood is not available for increasing Physical Attributes or healing wounds. Thus a ghoul must be drained of blood before taking in more. Each point of blood taken acts as a wound level, though those effects are cured by the drinking of Vampiric blood. No ghoul can spend more than one blood point per turn.

If the ghoul loses more than five blood points at any time, he is in danger. If he loses more than seven, then he will die unless he can make a Stamina + Fortitude roll against the number of blood points lost (8 or 9). Obviously, if 10 points are taken, the ghoul dies and will become a Vampire if fed any Kindred blood. In this event, the ghoul keeps any Disciplines already held, but from then on progresses as does a normal Vampire.

As long as ghouls do imbibe Vampiric blood, they can prevent aging. They remain susceptible to death by other causes, including violence, starvation or disease. They must also fear the results of missing their feedings, for if they go without their blood, they resume aging according to the following chart.

Real Age - Aging

Less than 100 years - normal

100-250 years - 10x normal (each day counts as 10)

250 or more years - instantly crumble to dust

If a player wishes to create a ghoul character for your Chronicle, a good number of points to use during character creation would be 6/4/3 for Attributes, 11/7/4 for Abilities, 5 for Backgrounds, 7 for Virtues, a Potence of 1 and 8 Freebie points to be spent as do Vampires. This format is used best in conjunction with troupe-style play. For antagonists, the two ghouls presented below give a good indication as to how this class of Undead can be used.

Ghoul Retainer

Quote: "Yes master. Very good master. Will there be anything else?"

Concept: The Ghoul Retainer has been a faithful servant for decades. She lives for nothing but the drinking of her master's blood and serving his every whim. She is not the most combat-efficient ghoul, though she does sometimes act as her master's bodyguard. Otherwise she works as chauffeur, courier, butler, maid, travel agent, accountant and anything else the Vampire desires.

This character may be weak as an antagonist in her own right, but gives her master more freedom. Thus if you upset her boss, rest assured that she shall be after you as well. She has learned a great deal about the Undead through the years and that, coupled with the undying devotion brought on by her Blood Bond, makes her a most dangerous foe.

Roleplaying Hints: Your master is your life. If he says "Jump," you do not have to ask how high - you already know. Thus, unless you must take action, sink into the background and let your master deal with others.

Nature: Jobsworth

Demeanor: Conformist

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Streetwise 1

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Drive 4, Etiquette 4, Firearms 4, Melee 3, Repair 3, Security 2

Knowledge: Computer 2, Finance 2, Investigation 2, Law 1, Medicine 3, Occult 3, Science 2, Area Knowledge 3, Kindred Lore 2

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 2, Presence 1

Backgrounds: Contacts 1, Mentor 2, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 5

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 10/1

Independent Ghoul

Quote: *"Don't worry. I'll only take a little bit at first."*

Concept: The Independent Ghoul is bound to no Vampire. He takes vitae whenever and however he can. Sometimes he trades favors for blood, offering hideouts to Anarchs, assassinations for Elders and money to anyone. Other times he simply takes what he wants, killing and draining a Vampire of all the blood he can wring from the corpse.

Since this ghoul has no one host, his immortality is precarious at best. However, he can draw from a wider number of available Disciplines, and can live as he wants. He has become capable in a number of areas, and can fight as well as most Neonates. Additionally, since he appears human to Aura Readings and other sensory input, most Kindred tend to underestimate him.

Roleplaying Hints: You have one goal -satisfying your addiction to immortality. You have no desire to become a Vampire, having seen what kind of paranoid, precarious existence they lead. However, yours isn't much better.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4, Dodge 1, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Security 2, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Knowledge: Investigation 3, Medicine 1, Occult 3, Area Knowledge 2, Kindred Lore 1

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate 1, Potence 1, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Ally 1, Contacts 2, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 7

Blood Pool Max/Per Turn 10/1

Werewolves

Cainites and Lupines have been at war for as long as either group can remember. Some Vampires more familiar with Kindred Lore even blame them for the destruction of the Second City. For eons their wars with the Undead have stretched across the world, becoming most intense at those places where civilization and the wilds met.

For years it appeared to the Vampires as though they had the upper hand. As decades past, civilization spread and the wilderness died out. However, almost 100 years ago, Cainites began noticing a resurgence in Lupine aggressiveness. Areas which had never before suffered the wrath of the Garou began feeling their rage. Places where Vampires and Werewolves had been in conflict found themselves overwhelmed by swarms of the shapeshifters.

Theories for this revived ferocity abound, especially among Gangrels, and range from population pressures put on them by decreasing amounts of wilderness to threats to their holy areas (or Caerns) to the eruption of the Krakatoa volcano. Most of these theories have been discounted, and the perpetually paranoid Kindred continue to look for the power manipulating the Werewolves.

Those Vampires who have to deal with Lupines have learned a good deal about these opponents, however. Some Princes have labeled nearby Werewolf Caerns off limits, threatening to destroy any Kindred who disturb them.

Additionally, Gangrels have noted how Lupines become more effective fighters the angrier they become, increasing the speed of their attacks as the battle goes on. They have also noted the command of spirits held by some Werewolves. Another power which has caused comment among the Undead include the way all Lupines seem able to heal almost as quickly as they are injured.

Humans seem to have an especially hard time battling werewolves. When the Garou take their half-wolf, half-man form, some mortals go mad, fleeing in terror. Others drop to the ground in agony. Very few attack the Lupine or otherwise act as though they can control themselves.

Finally, rumors abound about Lupines who could disappear and reappear at will, control the weather, fight with claws and fangs of silver, and even cause earthquakes at will. Thus, while even one Werewolf is usually more than enough for one Vampire, a pack of them, fighting in conjunction, can bring down the strongest of coterie.

Garou Pack Leader

Quote: *"You carrion scum curse Gaia with your very existence. Prepare to feed her with your bones."*

Concept: The Garou Pack Leader is a commander without compare. A tactician, strategist and motivator of renown, she can inspire those who follow her to great heights of heroism. Alone she is more than a match for any Neonate and most Ancillae. With her pack behind her, Methuselahs quake at the prospect of fighting her.

However, she has her goals and sticks closely to them. She does not necessarily have to kill every Vampire she meets (though that is the most likely outcome of a meeting with her). Even those she plans on killing may be kept alive a little longer as she pumps them for information.

Roleplaying Hints: You care first for your mission, then for your pack and finally for yourself. Your mission may be the elimination of a toxic waste dump, the recovery of a tribal artifact or a raid on the death-causing Kindred of a city, and its success comes before anything else. Let nothing sway you.

Nature: Visionary

Demeanor: Cavalier

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Leadership 5

Skills: Animal Ken 5, Stealth 5, Survival 4

Knowledges: Occult 3, Area Knowledge 4, Lupine Lore 4

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Auspex 1, Celerity 5, Fortitude 5, Potence 5, Presence 2, Protean 4,

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Resources 2

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

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 8

Notes: If you like, you can remove the Pack Leader's Celerity and give her 10 points of Rage. She can spend as many of these points a turn as she likes, getting to take an extra action (with her full dice pool) for each one. She regains Rage whenever anything bad happens to her - she gets hit, she misses, a friend gets hurt, her back itches where she can't scratch, etc.

Magi

Vampires and magi coexist in an uneasy, often-violated truce. Most Kindred have very little to do with mortal spellcasters, but the sorcerers keep coming after them. Reports exist of magi who kept Vampires captive for decades,

draining them of blood bit by bit, cutting off parts of the Kindred and then allowing the victim just enough vitae to regenerate, all for the sake of their diabolical research.

While it would seem most Cainites should have little to fear from any mortal, the average magus has spent decades honing his craft, and is the equal of most Ancillas. Some magi have existed for centuries and, while their minds seem to be slowly slipping away, are still a match for any Elder. Anyway, even if a Vampire could defeat a magus, most (though certainly not all) magi work in groups, sharing their research and facilities.

Even if the Undead could marshal their forces to destroy these mortal powers, they would have a hard time tracking down their foes. Some magi houses only exist in this reality for a few hours a day, varying their times seemingly at will. Others shroud their homes from detection, and not even the most accomplished users of Auspex can track them down.

Vampires can take some comfort from the fact that they are not the only group receiving unwanted attention from magi. The Lupines seem to be an even more frequent foe of the practitioners of magic, and some Kindred have had the pleasure of finding themselves in a three-way fight between themselves, a magus and a werewolf.

Recently, some sort of upheaval has been noticed among the magi. While the occult practices have always been many and varied, including Voodoo, the Qabala, alchemy, spirit mastery and others, new forms have shown up and old ones invigorated. The most powerful magi have always followed the Hermetic tradition, but now even they seem afraid.

Vampires who have regular contact with them tell tales of mysterious deaths among the sorcerers, the appearance of mighty magi none where familiar with and mighty mystical battles fought in hidden grottoes. While some blame the Tremere, others whisper that even that Vampiric Clan has begun battling ancient enemies.

Hermetic Magus

Quote: *"Why don't you make this easy on both of us? If you would just give me one of your fangs, no one will be hurt. Oh yes, while you're at it, would you mind terribly just inserting this acuminated bit of timber through your left ventricle? Thank you ever so much."*

Concept: The Hermetic Magus has studied her forbidden arts for decades. She has practiced fire magic with its most accomplished devotees, toured the bottom of the ocean with the masters of Neptune's Might, gazed at the stars for nights on end and already vivisected more than one Vampire.

Now she seeks the secrets of immortality. With little to go on, she goes after those things which are immortal - like the characters. Not only are Vampiric parts like fangs useful in magic, but perhaps the Vampire's very body will yield up the information she needs. If it doesn't, well, she will tell the characters' departed spirits she is sorry.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the consummate researcher, with no emotions towards your lab equipment and test creatures (like the characters). As far as you are concerned, they exist only for your benefit. Of course, you would never mistreat them. Unless you are studying pain, you will take great care to carve them up painlessly.

Nature: Plotter

Demeanor: Architect

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Etiquette 1, Firearms 1, Repair 2

Knowledges: Computer 3, Investigation 5, Linguistics 5, Medicine 5, Occult 5, Science 4, Alchemy 5, Anthropology 3, Archeology 2, Astrology 4, Faerie Lore 2, Kindred Lore 2, Lupine Lore 2, Magus Lore 4

Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 5, Dominate 5, Obfuscate 3, Presence 4, Thaumaturgy 5 (Lure of Flames 5, Weather Control 5, Movement of Mind 4, Spirit Thaumaturgy 4, Neptune's Might 3, Elemental Mastery 3, Conjuring 2)

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

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Humanity: 6

Willpower: 10

Faeries

Older Cainites remember a time when Faeries ran free on this planet, going where they liked, doing whatever they would. Now Faeries are as rare as honest politicians (well, maybe not that rare). Those same Cainites who remember those long ago times speak of a great cataclysm which split our realm from Arcadia, the birthplace of the fey races.

Some Faeries live here permanently, making their homes in out-of-the-way places where humans are unlikely to bother them. Others manage to sneak their way into our realm for their own purposes. Some of these get trapped here and quickly wither away and die. Some come to steal children to take back to Arcadia with them and some have been discovered living for years as humans.

No Kindred claims to understand why Faeries come to steal children. The most popular theories have to do with

the nature of Arcadia as a place of magic wholly lacking in reality. Some believe the Faeries need the children to provide an anchor of true creativity for their actions, for otherwise they would be caught in eternal loops of their own actions, unable to break old patterns.

The few Kindred that have ventured into Arcadia have never returned. Most believe them to be deceased, while others think they have joined with the Unseelie court of Arcadia, doing battle with the noble Seelie. Some also believe the Tremere actively support the Unseelie, but then everyone believes the worst of that Clan.

Faerie powers vary widely. Illusions and insight, entropy and energy, levity and levitation all seem to exist side by side. Even the results of drinking Faerie blood are not constant. Sometimes the Kindred will be filled with great power and other times the drinker will become lost in a land of hallucinations. Sometimes it acts as poison and other times as water.

Faerie Kidnapper

Quote: "Hee hee hee. You mean you really don't know how you got here? Hee hee hee."

Concept: The Faerie Kidnapper has come to our reality in hopes of capturing the characters. Whether he needs them as warriors in a great battle, prizes in a scavenger hunt or attractions at a new zoo, he will hunt them and his other prey down and bring them back to Arcadia with him.

An expert at illusion and deception, the Faerie Kidnapper will bring his targets back with him by hook or by crook. He will use promises, lies, mind control or brute force to accomplish his goals. He has specific requirements regarding anyone he will bring back to Arcadia (they must be bound, willing, laughing or whatever), but once they meet the requirement they will find themselves in a new realm.

Roleplaying Hints: Your type of logic is quite foreign to anyone you are likely to meet on this plane, just as theirs is likely to be alien to you. Laugh at totally inappropriate events, burst into tears for no apparent reasons and completely befuddle your targets.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Jester

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Melee 3, Music 5, Security 3, Stealth 5

Knowledges: Linguistics 2, Occult 4, Faerie Lore 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Chimerstry 5, Obfuscate 3, Presence 2, Protean 5

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

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 9

Ghosts

The spirits of the Netherworld interact with our plane with unnerving regularity. Some have been stuck here, tied to the Earth by past misdeeds, the suddenness of their deaths or by the spells of others. They haunt their locations, some seeking freedom to go beyond and others wanting only to stay as they are.

They have little effect on the physical plane, spending most of their energies on the Spirit world. Many Vampires have come into contact with these beings, controlling them via spells, rituals and disciplines. Some ghosts have been known to laugh at these Kindred, saying such manipulators are merely pawns in a game of mighty spirits anyway.

Most ghosts have powers relating to manipulations of the mind or emotions, while others, generally referred to as poltergeists, have some small effect on the material plane. However, while ghosts are the most common spirits Vampires encounter, they are not the only kind.

Some Cainites theorize that every part of the Earth has its own counterpart in the spirit plane, and that there are spirits who are the reflection of beings and objects in our plane. Other Elders believe there exist numerous spirit realms, and that almost anything which can be imagined could be found in one of these domains.

In any case, records and legends do exist of a wide variety of spirits which have passed onto our plane. Research documents refer to beings which possessed animals, trees and even army vehicles. Some spirits stayed in one place for ages before being discovered, while others made so much impact upon entering our plane that their presence was noticed at once.

Spirit of Vengeance

Quote: "It is your fault I am stuck here. Your doing. Your creation. Now the books will be balanced."

Concept: The Spirit of Vengeance has been stuck on the material plane by the actions of the characters or beings they mistake the characters for. Perhaps the characters accidentally slew its mortal form, or else it found itself unable to live without the Kiss and, when the characters began feeding elsewhere, it committed suicide.

Now it exists only to cause the characters the sort of pain it suffered. It can manipulate minor items via its Movement of the Mind or try to Dominate the characters into killing themselves. However, it is more likely to try and drag out the agony, possessing donors in the middle of a Kiss and having them attack the characters at their most vulnerable, spraypainting messages to reporters which leads them to the characters' havens or anything else you can think of. At first the characters may find this little more than an annoyance, but as it continues, the acts of revenge will become more dangerous and the characters' patience taxed to the fullest.

Roleplaying Hints: Your existence has been ruined by the characters. Now nothing will stop you from making them pay. It is rare that you will converse with your tormentors, and if you do, it will be to gloat or lie.

Nature: Fanatic

Demeanor: Fanatic

Physical: Strength 0, Dexterity 4, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Talents: Acting 1, Alertness 1, Empathy 5, Intimidation 2, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Stealth 3

Knowledges: Occult 3, Spirit Lore 2

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Dominate 5, Obfuscate 2, Thaumaturgy 2 (Movement of the Mind 1)

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 8

Notes: The spirit is both noncorporeal, meaning it cannot be hurt, and offensively Empathic, meaning it can broadcast emotions to its intended victims. Broadcasting emotions requires that the spirit be in near proximity to the victim and make a Manipulation + Empathy roll against the target's Willpower. The more successes, the more intense the emotion.

Others

More beings haunt this Gothic-Punk Earth than can easily be imagined. Humans have been involved in trying to penetrate the occult for as long as they have existed on the planet. Thus almost any sort of antagonist you can imagine can stalk your Chronicle. We offer some suggestions below, but feel free to come up with your own, be they space fiends, mutants, giant apes or whatever.

Mummies

Not the bandage-wrapped monstrosities of cinema, the Mummies are ancient beings (many from ancient Egypt) who reincarnate into their old bodies upon death. Thus they have kept the same forms throughout history, dying and returning time and time again. Thus they usually appear as Coptics of either sex, dressed in whatever garb fits the era and place where they live.

Many possess mighty magics developed over centuries of practice and almost all have vast personal fortunes only the immortal could possess. Those few Vampires who have had contact with these mysterious figures talk of an ancient, globe-spanning battle involving the Followers of Set, demons and other powerful beings.

Mummy Occultist

Quote: *"You do not understand the evil which you serve. I grieve for your soul and ask your forgiveness for what I am about to do to you."*

Concept: The mummy has existed for millennia, growing more and more powerful with each passing year. During its numerous deaths it has spent a great deal of time travelling the worlds of the spirits, and is almost as familiar with them as it is of the Earth. It understands the depths of the Jyhad, and plays its role willingly.

Somehow the characters have become involved in the great war the Mummies fight. Without even knowing it, they are a threat to that which the Mummy desires, and now it will either try to exterminate them or convert them to its side. Its main weapons are its magic and long life -through time it has developed some exceptional abilities and gained the help of numerous spirits.

Roleplaying Hints: You have lived forever and seen it all. Despite this, you have not become disenchanted with your existence. You still see yourself as a major player in this great battle of immortal beings, and play your role with vigor and skill.

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Director

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 7, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 2, Leadership 4

Skills: Etiquette 4, Firearms 1, Melee 4

Knowledges: Finance 3, Investigation 4, Linguistics 4, Medicine 4, Occult 5, Science 3, Area Knowledge 3, History 4, Kindred Lore 2, Spirit Lore 2

Disciplines: Thaumaturgy 4 (Spirit Thaumaturgy 4, Elemental Mastery 3, Path of Conjuring 3)

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Influence 2, Resources 5, Retainers 2

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

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 10

Demons

Much discussion continues among the Undead as to whether such a thing as demons even exist, but none can deny that there are incredibly powerful malevolent beings which exist outside of our plane. Some call these beings demons, some call them spirits and a demented few call them gods.

It would seem Vampires would be the last to have anything to fear from such creatures of darkness, but this is not necessarily so. More than one of the Kindred has met her end in conflict with a Demon, and others have dealt with them only to come out the worse for the bargain. Some Cainites laughingly tell of having sold their nonexistent souls to demons, though others shudder at the thought.

Some demons have evidenced a particular interest in the Undead, though the reason for this remains unclear. Whatever their purpose, however, they are invariably friendly to Kindred unless they feel crossed, in which case their rage is truly horrible to behold.

Quote: *"Oh, that? Just the fine print - those boring little details so it'll hold up. Ipso facto, quid pro quo, you know. Congratulations - you did the right thing"*

Concept: The ultimate goal of the Demon is to steal souls to take with it to Hell. Even Kindred have their uses (so little the blood-drinkers really know) and the Demon will recruit them just as it would mortals. Indeed, Kindred are so much easier to tempt, for there are so many things they want: power in the Camarilla, vengeance on their many enemies, knowledge and Disciplines, or simply to be mortal again. All of these things can be arranged - for a price

While the Demon knows violence will not bring about its desires, if frustrated, it may resort to such. If so angered, it can call on the powers of Hell itself to accomplish its desires.

Roleplaying Hints: You remember the Other Place with longing and loathing, the bright shining land of your creation before the plunge that twisted your form and immured you in an abyss beyond light and time. You will aid your fellows in expanding the mouth of that abyss out into His hated creation, to corrupt His puppets to the will of your Master until all are damned and screaming.

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Visionary

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 4, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 7, Appearance 0 (5)

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 4, Acting 5, Brawl 4, Empathy 3, Intimidation 6, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Etiquette 4, Melee 5, Stealth 2

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Investigation 3, Law 6, Linguistics 5, Occult 7, Politics 3, Science 2

Disciplines: Auspex 6, Celerity 1, Dominate 6, Fortitude 5, Necromancy 5, Obfuscate 4, Potence 3, Presence 6, Protean 2, Serpents 6, Thaumaturgy 4 (Lure of Flames 4, Path of Corruption 4, Movement of the Mind 3)

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Influence 2, Mentor 6, Retainers 4

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

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 8

Witch-Hunters

Witch-hunters are such important foes of the characters as to have already warranted their own sourcebook, **The Hunters Hunted**. Little more need be said here except to reiterate that they can have any motive, follow any method and go to any extremes to fulfill their goals. The following template is just one example of the hundreds of different kinds of hunters which exist.

Mad Scientist

Quote: *"So, the electrical shocks to your temple did little. Let us see what happens when we increase the power to 5,000 volts and set fire to various parts of your body at the same time."*

Concept: The Mad Scientist lives for knowledge and nothing else. Somehow he heard about the Kindred, and now goes to any extreme to study this mystery of mysteries. While not exactly a physical threat to the characters, he has developed some kind of weapon which proves more than effective against them. Perhaps it is a laser which does aggravated damage, an aerosol virus which has no effect on humans but remains dormant on

their skin, mixes with their blood when spilled and paralyzes Vampires when drunk, or an acid spray of such virulence as to cripple even Kindred.

However, the Mad Scientist will not use these potent weapons to slay Vampires indiscriminately. While he may extinguish a Vampire if threatened, he would infinitely prefer to get one into his laboratory for study, experimentation and eventual vivisection and dissection. If the characters fall into

his clutches they may have some hope of escape, but they had best do so quickly.

Roleplaying Hints: You are dedicated to your research and believe anyone who cannot understand this is a fool. You would prefer that your subjects voluntarily strap themselves down on your cutting table, but since they persist in their irrational resistance, you must use the tools you have available.

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Visionary

Physical: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1

Social: Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 2, Intelligence 5, Wits 2

Talents: Alertness 1, Leadership 2

Skills: Drive 1, Firearms 1, Repair 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 2, Computer 5, Investigation 4, Linguistics 3, Medicine 5, Occult 1, Science 5

Backgrounds: Ally 2, Contacts 4, Fame 1, Resources 4, Retainers 2

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Humanity: 4

Willpower: 9

Chapter Six:

The Ways

Whatever was required to be done, the Circumlocution Office was beforehand with all the public departments in the art of perceiving - HOW NOT TO DO IT.

- Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*

New Drana Systems

There can be no way to come up with a system for every situation the Storyteller may face, but the following are some suggestions. Some, like combat and humanity loss, are variations on systems already provided, while others, like interrogation and flight, are altogether new. Feel free to pick and choose which you want to use and when you want to use them; that is what they are provided for.

Multiple Actions

You can perform multiple actions in a turn (such as running and shooting a gun), but unless you have Celerity, you have to divide up your dice.

To split your dice pool between two different actions, take the dice from your initial action (probably the one you are best at) and divide that pool among all the actions you wish to perform. However, you cannot use more dice on the second and subsequent actions than you have in the appropriate ability for that action. Thus if you wished to dodge as well as fire your pistol, you could only roll as many dice on your dodge roll as you have Dodge skill, though you may opt to use less.

If you want to move while taking other actions in a turn (such as firing your gun), you may do so simply by taking away one die from the number you are rolling for every yard you move. Movement is already considered in the rules for dodging, so no extra penalty is accrued to characters who are diving for cover.

Characters with multiple actions within a turn take their first action in their normal order of initiative (unless they delay). They may take no more than one action at this time. After all characters have completed their first (or only) action, characters with more actions may take their second action, again in order of initiative. After everyone has taken their second action, play proceeds with the third and subsequent actions taken in order of initiative, as above. While characters may delay their action, they must take it before the rest of the characters move on to their next action, or it is lost.

For example: Jaeger, with a two Celerity, faces off against two of the Prince's ghouls. He announces that he will punch each once and dodge, all with full dice pool. Ghoul A must cover two yards before attacking with her stake, while Ghoul B, will split his dice pool so he can dodge and attack with his stake. The players determine initiative and arrive at the following order: A, Jaeger, and B. A moves in, and will have two less dice for her action. Jaeger launches an

attack at B, who dodges. Now that all participants have taken an action, the sequence starts over. A attacks, Jaeger dodges and B attacks. Now only Jaeger has an action left, and he punches B's lights out.

Narrative Combat

There are many occasions where someone will use violence to solve a situation, but you as the Storyteller either won't want to deal with it, or won't want to encourage it. There are other times when you want a simpler, more roleplaying-oriented combat system. If this is the case, then narrative combat is for you. This may sound good, but it might not be your cup of tea. If you like full-fledged, balls-to-the-wall combat, then go to the Advanced Combat section of this chapter for details on how to give it a preeminent place in your roleplaying. Only use this system if you are looking for something else entirely. There are certain situations (and troupes) for which one or the other will work better. Pick and choose on a case-by-case (or even scene-by-scene) basis.

These combat rules are very simple, but they require intense roleplaying. In order to make them work, the Storyteller needs to use a lot of imagination and a great deal of common sense. More importantly, the players need to give the Storyteller as much trust during combat as they do during any other sort of dramatic resolution. Remember, rules are never necessary to make a story seem real - only imagination is required.

In order to encourage roleplaying, the Storyteller is encouraged to award Willpower points whenever characters take actions especially appropriate to their personalities, such as a Conformist who follows orders to the letter, or a Caregiver who risks life and limb to rescue another character. This should not be allowed to get out of control, but only to encourage the narrative aspects of the combat.

Note: The basics of this system are the same as the basics to the Advanced system; thus, reading this will help you understand the Advanced system. Merging the two would not be a difficult chore.

Initiative: The Storyteller needs to decide who will make this roll first, and in what order everyone will follow, thus determining who shall strike first (or she can simply declare that everything is pretty much simultaneous). Certain rolls, such as Perception + Streetwise or Wits + Alertness, might be called for. Assuming you are using turns at all (you don't need to), this order could simply repeat itself each turn.

Attack Roll: Whoever wishes to attack another character must make an attack roll depending on the style of combat being entered; this can vary from action to action.

- Fisticuffs -Dexterity + Brawl
- Shooting a gun -Perception + Firearms
- Using other weapons - Dexterity + Melee

The difficulty is determined by the Storyteller, and is strictly a judgment call, based on factors such as the visibility, the gun being used, and other circumstances.

Other actions are often taken during combat as well, and usually require some sort of roll. Integrating the two types of action is fairly simple and is the responsibility of the Storyteller.

Dodge: If people have enough warning, they can attempt to dodge. They simply make a Dexterity + Dodge roll, and the Storyteller determines the difficulty based on factors such as the distance to the nearest cover, the amount of room to move in and how encumbered the character is. Each success obtained on a dodge roll reduces the number of successes obtained on the attacker's roll; if the number of successes is thus reduced to zero or less, then no wound was received whatsoever.

Damage: There is no roll for damage - the number of successes rolled for an attack is added to the damage factor of the weapon (given below) to indicate the total damage inflicted. This is the number of health levels the target loses.

Weapon - Damage

- Pistol - 3
- SMG - 4
- Rifle/Assault Rifle - 5
- Shotgun - 6

However, the target is given a chance to reduce this potential damage by rolling Stamina + 2 against a difficulty of the weapon's damage factor + 3; each success reduces the damage by one.

Well, that's it - the rest is all bells and whistles and you get to add it in yourself. Use your powers of description to make the scene as vivid as possible, and leave yourself as open to creative actions taken by the character as you can. If they want to swing down on the chandelier, give them a chance to do so. Remember, narrative combat is whatever you make of it.

Advanced Combat

Advanced combat is neither a complete slugfest nor a number-crunching calculator frenzy. We have attempted to capture the drama of violent conflict while not downplaying the grim reality of what is going on. We have made every effort to create a system true to the dynamics and limitations of real combat, while still allowing for the unique elements that Vampires bring to it.

The object of combat is to harm someone else (or at the very least, restrain him). Therefore the object of almost all combat actions is to inflict harm. The rolls made in combat are used to determine whether or not an attack has succeeded, and the number of successes determines how much damage has been caused.

Almost all combat turns are around six seconds long in real time, though they will take somewhat longer than that to

resolve. You need to work to keep the combat fast-paced; if it gets too bogged down it loses much of its dramatic impact.

Types of Combat

There are three types of combat, all of which use the same basic system, yet have some minor differences. They are the firefight, the melee and the brawl. Each has its own section which details some of the options and complications of that form of combat, but the framework they all use is described below.

As with all action scenes, combat turns begin with an initiative roll. However, because combat can sometimes get a little sticky, it is divided into three stages to make it easier to keep track of things. They are the Initiative, Attack and Resolution stage.

Stage One: Initiative:

This stage is used to organize the turn, and is where characters must declare their actions. When characters are in a situation where combat is likely to ensue, the Storyteller must be sure to describe what is happening, and what is possible and likely to happen so the players can fully understand their options.

Declarations: There are a number of different actions which characters can take -anything from leaping behind a wall to trying to shout a warning. The player must declare what he is doing in as much detail the Storyteller requires. Within the context of the combat system the actions are described as maneuvers, and include such things as Dodge, Fire Weapon, Run, Leap and Crawl. It is at this point which everyone needs to decide what weapon to use, if any. If a weapon must be drawn, it may affect the difficulty of the Initiative roll.

Initiative Roll: Initiative rolls are made using Wits + Alertness against a difficulty set by the Storyteller, who judges it according to the circumstances.

However, the number of dice which can be rolled may be increased or reduced because of the Initiative factor of the weapon or maneuver. Some actions simply take longer than others, and some of the more bulky weapons take a relatively long amount of time to draw and aim. Those who already have their weapons oriented toward their target at the beginning of the turn (if, for instance, they were shooting at it last turn) can ignore the initiative factor if it would hurt them.

If your dice pool for initiative is reduced to 0 (or less) by the initiative factor, then you go after everyone who had any successes on their rolls. Subtract the initiative factor from the total before figuring in wound levels -if they leave you with no dice to roll, then you cannot act with that weapon or attack.

Who goes first: The character with the most successes goes first, with those characters who rolled less successes taking their actions in descending order of successes. Any who gain no successes at all on this roll go last. Those who botch do not get to take an action at all.

The first person describes to the Storyteller what she is doing, and resolves the action in the manner described in Stage Two. Only when that character is done do you go on to the person with the next highest number of successes. People who have the same number of successes take their actions at the same time.

| Initiative | Difficulties |
|-------------------|--|
| Difficulty | Situation |
| 2 | Waiting in ambush for target |
| 3 | Weapon is ready |
| 4 | Weapon is in hand (but not aimed) |
| 5 | Target is very close by |
| 6 | Standard difficulty |
| 7 | Weapon must be drawn from hip-holster |
| 8 | Weapon is in sock, scabbard, pants leg, etc. |
| 9 | Weapon must be drawn from bag |
| 10 | Character in total surprise |

Stage Two: Attack

The attack is the meat of the combat turn. It is where the success or failure of an attack is determined, as well as something of its potential impact on the target. The more successes on an attack roll, the more damage inflicted -the relationship is direct.

The Roll: There are three different types of attack rolls; which one to use is determined by the type of combat you are engaged in.

- For firearms combat, you roll Perception + Firearms
- For melee combat, you roll Dexterity + Melee
- For brawling, you roll Dexterity + Brawl

The difficulty is determined by the Storyteller, who bases it on the circumstances around the roll. The difficulty is partially based on the Storyteller's whimsy; it is upon her imagination and vision that everything must be based.

If no successes are obtained then the character has failed his attack and no damage is inflicted. If a botch is obtained

then not only does he fail, but something nasty happens; the Storyteller needs to make up something awful.

However, if you are using weapons, the number of dice you roll might be modified by the Accuracy Factor of the weapon. If your dice pool for the attack is reduced to 0 (or less) by the Accuracy Factor, then you may only attack by using Willpower. Subtract the initiative factor from the total before figuring in wound levels -if they leave you with no dice to roll, then you cannot act with that weapon or method of attack.

Dodge: If your opponent gained the initiative, you still have the option to dodge at any point. In fact players may announce at any time that they are using their action (or part of it, by dividing their dice pool) to make a dodge, simply by declaring "Dodge!" In some situations a dodge many not be allowed, such as in confined quarters or in cases where you have been completely startled.

After a turn in which a dodge is performed, a character's initiative difficulty should be increased by 2

| Accuracy | Difficulties |
|-------------------|---|
| Difficulty | Situation |
| 2 | Weapon is touching target |
| 3 | Gun muzzle is inches from target/Target's back is turned |
| 4 | Standard for point blank range/Target is not paying attention |
| 5 | Point blank, visibility is reduced/Target is easy to reach |
| 6 | Point blank, visibility is severely reduced/ Target is open |
| 7 | Standard for close range/Standard difficulty with cautious target |
| 8 | Standard for medium range/Target is moving swiftly |
| 9 | Standard for long range/Target is difficult to reach |
| 10 | Target is tiny, or is nearly completely concealed by cover |

Stage Three: Resolution

This is the stage in which the practical outcomes of attacks are determined, and the Storyteller describes what has

occurred in the turn. It is a mixture of game and story, for though the dice never lie, the Storyteller must interpret what luck has decreed.

Damage: The amount of wounds which have been inflicted on the target is determined by adding the number of successes obtained to the damage score of the weapon. The resulting number is called the damage total and indicates how many health levels the target loses.

Soak: The target is allowed to make a roll in order to see how many wound levels might be avoided. Not every injury actually causes as much damage as it is capable of. The victim rolls Stamina + 2, with the difficulty based on the general deadliness of the weapon + 3, or in the case of guns, the caliber of ammunition that is being used; this number is listed separately for each weapon as the Impact Factor.

The character may also add a number of dice to this roll equivalent to any dodge successes which have been obtained. A successful dodge not only makes it more likely you will not be hit, but makes it less likely that you will be hit in a vital area. (Vampires may also add their Fortitude as well.)

General Complications

· **Delaying an Action:** Characters who gain initiative can voluntarily decide to delay their action until later in the

turn. At any time they can decide to step in and take their action - even during another character's action (for example, if they wanted to dodge someone else's blow), as long as it was before the dice were rolled. Unless the two actions directly conflict, the Storyteller should first resolve whatever action is being performed at the moment, just to keep things as simple as possible.

· **Multiple Opponents:** Characters in melee or hand-to-hand combat with more than one foe lose one die from their Initiative roll for every opponent fighting them that turn.

Firefight

A firefight is any type of armed combat that is engaged using projectile weapons - things like Uzis and sawed-off shotguns. You normally need to be within sight of your opponent in order to engage in a firefight.

Characters can take more than one action within a turn by splitting their dice pool (or using Celerity). However there is a practical maximum on the number of bullets that a gun can fire, as noted in the weapon's rate.

Expanded Weapons Chart

Firearms Chart by Type

Revolver

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-----|-----|
| Smith&WessonM640 | .38 | -1 | +1 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | P |
| Smith&WessonM686 | .357 | -2 | +1 | 30 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 6 | J |
| Colt Anaconda | .44 | -2 | +2 | 50 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 | J |
| Colt Python | .357 | -2 | +1 | 30 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 6 | J |
| Ruger Redhawk | .44 | -2 | +2 | 65 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 | J |

Light Pistols

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|--------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|------|-----|
| Glock 17 | 9mm | -2 | +1 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 7+1 | J |
| Walther PPK | .380ACP | -2 | +1 | 15 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 7+1 | P |
| Heckler&KochP7M13 | 9mm | -2 | +1 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 13+1 | P |
| SigSauer P226 | 9mm | -2 | +1 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 15+1 | J |
| HammerliM280Target | .22LR | -1 | +2 | 30 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 5 | J |

Heavy Pistol

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|------|-----|
| M1911 | .45ACP | -3 | +2 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7+1 | J |
| Glock 22 | .40S&W | -2 | +1 | 25 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 15+1 | J |
| SigSauer P220 | .45ACP | -3 | +2 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7+1 | J |
| Glock 20 | 10mm | -3 | +2 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 15+1 | J |
| Heckler&KochP7M10 | .40S&W | -2 | +1 | 25 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 10+1 | P |

The "Big Boys"

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-----|-----|
| DesertEagle | .50AE | -4 | +2 | 30 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 7 | J |
| Cassull | .454 | -3 | +2 | 40 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | J |
| Linebaugh | .475 | -3 | +2 | 40 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 6 | J |

Light Submachine Guns

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|--------|-----|
| IngramMAC-10* | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 18 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 30 | J |
| Mini-Uzi * | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 25 | 4 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 20/30 | T |
| Heckler&KochMP-5* | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 40 | 4 | 21 | 3 | 5 | 30 | T |
| Skorpion | .32ACP | -1 | 0 | 20 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 2 | 15/20 | J |
| TEC9 | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 20 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 20/32 | T |
| Spectre * | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 25 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 30/50 | T |
| Calico 950 * | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 25 | 4 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 50/100 | |
| TEC22 * | .22LR | -1 | -1 | 20 | 2 | 15 | 3 | 1 | 30 | J |

Heavy Submachine Guns

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|--------|-----|
| Uzi * | 9mm | -3 | 0 | 50 | 4 | 21 | 5 | 2 | 25/32 | T |
| Heckler&KochMP-5* | 10mm | -3 | 0 | 45 | 5 | 15 | 6 | 2 | 30 | T |
| Thompson M1928 * | .45ACP | -3 | 0 | 50 | 5 | 15 | 6 | 2 | 20/100 | T |

Machine Pistols

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|---------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-------|-----|
| Glock18* | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 20 | 3 | 19 | 4 | 1 | 17/19 | J |
| Beretta 93R * | 9mm | -2 | 0 | 20 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 1 | 15/21 | J |
| Steckin * | 9x18mm | -2 | 0 | 18 | 3 | 15 | 4 | 1 | 18 | J |
| Heckler&KochVP-70z* | 9mm | -2 | +1 | 20/30 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 18 | J |

Firearms Chart by Type

Rifles

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|----------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-------|-----|
| Remington M700 | .30-06 | -4 | +4 | 300 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 5 | N |
| Ruger 10/22 | .22LR | -3 | +3 | 100 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 10/50 | N |
| Browning BAR | .30-06 | -4 | +3 | 275 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 4 | N |
| Remington M740 | .223 | -4 | +3 | 275 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | N |
| WeatherbyMarkV | .460WM | -4 | +3 | 300 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 3 | N |

Assault Rifles

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-----------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-------|-----|
| SteyrAUG* | .223 | -4 | +2 | 200 | 5 | 21 | 5 | 3 | 30/42 | N |
| M16 * | .223 | -4 | +2 | 200 | 5 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 20/30 | N |
| Famas * | .223 | -4 | +2 | 200 | 5 | 25 | 5 | 3 | 25 | T |
| AK-74 * | 5.45mm | -4 | +1 | 200 | 5 | 20 | 5 | 3 | 30 | N |
| SA-80 * | .223 | -4 | +2 | 200 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 3 | 30 | T |
| Mini-14 * | .223 | -4 | +2 | 200 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 3 | 5/30 | T |

Battle Rifles

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-----|-----|
| M-14 * | 7.62mm | -4 | +3 | 275 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 20 | N |
| AK-47 * | 7.62x39mm | -4 | +3 | 250 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 30 | N |
| Heckler&KochG3* | 7.62mm | -4 | +3 | 300 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 20 | N |
| Fn FAL * | 7.62mm | -4 | +3 | 275 | 6 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 20 | N |

Pump-Action Shotguns

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|---------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-----|-----|
| IthacaM37(Stakeout) | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 15 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | T |
| Remington 870 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 8 | N |
| Mossberg M500 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | N |

Automatic Shotguns

| Name | Caliber | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Im | Recoil | Cap | Con |
|-------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|----|--------|-------|-----|
| Fianchi Law 12 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 8 | T |
| BenelliM-3Super90 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 7 | T |
| SPAS 12 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 8 | N |
| Remington 1100 | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 8 | N |
| USAS 12 * | 12gauge | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 10/20 | N |

* indicates the gun is capable of three-round bursts

Firearms Chart

| Weapon | Init | Accur | Range | Dam | Rate | Impact | Recoil | Clip | Con |
|----------------|------|-------|-------|-----|------|--------|--------|------|-----|
| Revolver,Lt. | -1 | +1 | 15 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 6 | P |
| Revolver,Hv. | -2 | +2 | 20 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 6 | J |
| Pistol,Lt. | -2 | +1 | 20 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 17+1 | P |
| Pistol,Hv. | -3 | +2 | 25 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 7+1 | J |
| Rifle | -4 | +4 | 200 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5+1 | N |
| SMG,Small* | -2 | 0 | 25 | 4 | 18 | 5 | 2 | 30+1 | J |
| SMG,Large* | -3 | 0 | 50 | 5 | 21 | 6 | 2 | 30+1 | T |
| AssaultRifle* | -4 | +2 | 150 | 6 | 21 | 7 | 3 | 42+1 | N |
| Shotgun | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5+1 | T |
| Shotgun,S-auto | -4 | +3 | 20 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 8+1 | T |

* indicates that the gun is capable of three-round bursts, full auto and sweeps.

Rate: The maximum number of bullets the gun can fire in a single turn.

Clip: The number of bullets that can be held in one clip or in the barrel. The +1 indicates that a bullet can be held in the chamber, making the gun ready to fire.

Conceal: P = can be hidden in pocket, J = can be hidden inside jacket, T = can be hidden inside a trenchcoat, N = cannot be hidden on one's person at all.

Range: This is the practical range of the gun in yards. You may fire up to double the listed range, but it is considered to be a long-range shot. Close range refers to any target within 25 percent of the gun's range (thus a light pistol has a close range of 5 yards) and medium range includes the distance between close and the range listed on the chart.

Initiative Factor: The number of dice you add or subtract from your dice pool on initiative rolls.

Accuracy Factor: The number of dice you add or subtract from your dice pool on attack rolls.

Damage: The number you add to your success to determine how much damage is caused.

Impact: The difficulty of the target's Stamina roll to soak the damage inflicted. This is based on the size of ammunition used by the weapon. The Firearms Chart presents the standard damage for that weapon; if the Storyteller decides the weapon is a .22 caliber or .44 automag the Impact should be adjusted.

Recoil: The cumulative penalty on your dice pool in attacks for multiple shots.

Init: The Initiative Factor. The number of dice added to or subtracted from a dice pool on the user's initiative roll.

Accur: The Accuracy Factor. The number of dice added to or subtracted from a dice pool on the user's attack roll.

Range: The practical range of the gun in yards.

Damage: The number added to attack roll successes to figure out amount of damage done.

Rate: The maximum number of bullets a gun can fire in a turn

Impact: The difficulty of the target's Stamina roll in soaking the damage.

Recoil: The cumulative penalty on dice pools for multiple shots.

Capacity: The number of bullets the gun can hold

Concealment: P = can be hidden in a pocket; J = can be hidden in a jacket; T = can be hidden in a trench coat; N = cannot be hidden on your person

Complications:

Point Blank Range: The standard difficulty is 4. The damage score is also +3.

Close Range: The standard difficulty is 7, and can be adjusted depending on such factors as the size of the target, the amount of cover it has and outside factors such as wind and visibility.

Medium Range: The standard difficulty is 8, or can be more, again depending on conditions.

Long Range: The standard difficulty is 9, or can be as high as 10 depending on circumstances.

Reloading: This takes at least one full turn, unless your gun uses clips, in which case it is possible that a new clip (if handy) can be loaded quickly enough to enable you to shoot on the same turn. Roll Firearms + Wits against a difficulty of 6; if three or more successes are obtained then the gun can be shot on the same turn - however the Accuracy Factor is reduced by 3 and the action takes place after all other actions have been completed.

Armor: The armor rating is actually the number of extra dice that can be rolled on the soak roll when wounds are calculated.

Two Weapons: You can use two weapons at the same time by having one in each hand (if the weapons normally require two hands, you need a Strength rating of at least 4). You still have to divide up your dice pool as standard, but

are able to bypass the recoil rules limiting the number and reducing the efficiency of the shots that are taken.

•**Dodge:** Dodging in firefights is a bit different from other forms of combat. The difficulty for the roll is strictly determined by how close cover is, for the dodge roll incorporates diving for cover as the means to avoid getting shot. Even if your opponent gains the initiative (gets off the first shot) you still have the option to dodge, thereby gaining the potential to get out of the field of fire. You can declare a dodge anytime before an opponent rolls the dice simply by announcing "Dodge!" and then making a dodge roll. However, if you have already used all your dice for the turn, you may not dodge. In some situations, declaring a Dodge will not be allowed by the Storyteller because it does not make sense (e.g. an ambush).

To dodge, you roll Dexterity + Dodge. The difficulty is dependent on the availability of nearby cover. Each success takes away one of your opponent's successes. You can even take away successes from different opponents, though this means splitting your successes between them.

Remember that a Dodge involves finding some sort of cover from which to avoid the bullets aimed at you. This will probably have a detrimental effect on your intended action that round, as you give it up in favor of self preservation. After a dodge attempt, you usually end up behind some sort of cover or, at the very least, lying on the ground (if there was no cover to be found).

You can also Dodge while already behind cover. This assumes that you are ducking back and forth behind the cover, only exposing parts of your body for brief moments while shooting and then pulling back behind protection. The

cover makes the difficulty higher for shooting the character while a successful Dodge will take away a number of the successes gained. This can be a very potent defensive maneuver.

The availability of nearby cover determines the difficulty of the Dodge.

Difficulty - Terrain

8 - Flat and featureless, no cover (you dive to the ground or crouch and run at angles).

7 - Partial cover within running distance (three yards).

6 - Full cover within running distance (three yards).

4 - Full cover within diving distance (one yard).

2 - By moving back half a step, you are back under full cover.

Options:

•**Full Auto:** The full auto option is the most damaging attack a firearm is capable of. It involves unloading the full contents of a gun's ammunition clip within a very short span of time. However, the gun becomes a bucking bronco, difficult to control and even harder to aim.

You get seven additional dice to roll on the attack and the Impact of the gun increases by 2; thus you are that much more likely to hit and cause damage. However, the difficulty is raised by 2 (to a maximum of 10) due to the aiming problems.

Whenever you use the full-auto option, the entire clip of the weapon is used up, and you cannot take any other action that turn using that weapon (except to swing it as a club or use the attached bayonet). However, some rare weapons have especially large clips which allow two turns of full-auto fire instead of just one.

You need a Firearms score of at least 1 to employ this option properly; those with no skill have an automatic difficulty of 10.

•**Spray:** When on full auto you can decide to spray across a number of different targets instead of focusing on only one. This is a tricky procedure; it is possible you will not do your full damage on the targets, some bullets being wasted on the spaces between the targets.

You make your roll and figure damage as per the full automatic rules. However, the difficulty of the attack is based on the size of the area being sprayed. Thus the difficulty becomes 3+ the number of yards across being sprayed, modified at Storyteller's discretion by the amount of cover available, visibility and other factors.

If the attack succeeds, you then choose who you would like to be your first target, and assign a certain amount of your damage to that target - anything from 1-10. You must then roll a single die. If the result is equal to or less than the number you have chosen, then the number rolled + the gun's damage factor is the actual damage inflicted, while the number rolled is the amount of damage lost from your pool. If you roll greater than the damage chosen, then no damage at all is inflicted on that particular target, and the damage points you "risked" are lost from your pool.

If, after all potential targets are gone, you still have potential damage points to assign, then they are wasted and not used. If the targets are too far apart from one another, the Storyteller may determine that a certain amount of the damage score is "lost" as you step between targets.

All dodge rolls made against a spray have their difficulty increased by 2.

•**Three-Round Burst:** The semi-auto option is the middle ground between the full-auto and the one-shot options, and has some of the strengths and weaknesses of both. A burst, unlike a spray, can only be aimed at one target.

You gain three additional dice to your attack roll and the Impact increases by 1. However, the difficulty is one higher than it would be otherwise on all three-round bursts, due to the recoil.

•**Multiple Shots:** If you want to take more than one shot per round (other than the burst or full-auto options), then you must divide your dice pool into two or more actions. However, for every additional action you take after the first, the difficulty is raised by an amount equal to the recoil factor of the gun. Ten is, of course, the maximum the difficulty can be raised to.

This penalty is cumulative. Thus you would subtract twice the recoil factor on your third shot, and three times on your fourth. It is not usually wise to blindly take off potshots, as the recoil always catches up with you. Using these rolls, it is permissible to take two or more three-round bursts in a single turn.

•**Cover:** Characters will often use cover to help protect them against enemy fire. Targets hiding behind cover are harder to hit, simply because there is less of them to see. Cover causes the difficulties of those shooting at you to increase by an amount determined by how much of your body is still out in the open. However, though it acts to protect you, it can also hamper you from returning fire, and in some rare instances it can completely prevent you from doing so. This restriction is indicated by an increase of your own difficulty by an amount between 1-3, depending on how restrained you are. For instance,

ducking out from around a corner to shoot may increase your difficulty by one, while watching a shoot out through cracks in a battered wall will prevent you from firing back at all.

Cover - Difficulty

Lying flat +1

Running +2

Behind pole +3

Behind wall +4

Only head exposed +5

• **Aiming:** You get to add your Perception rating to your Perception + Firearms dice pool twice if you spend time aiming. However, it takes one turn for each die you add, to the maximum of your Perception - it takes time and patience to aim. Additionally, the target may not be moving at a speed faster than a walk. You can aim for fewer rounds than your Perception rating, but you can only add one die for each round spent aiming - you may not reach your full potential if you don't aim long enough. Shotguns and SMGs cannot be aimed.

If the gun has a scope, then you get to add +2 to your Dice Pool in addition to the die you add to your Dice Pool for your Perception after one round of aiming. After the +3

you add in the first round (+2 for the scope and +1 for your Perception), you add one die for each successive round up to your Perception + 2 as outlined above.

Melee

Melee refers to fighting with weapons - anything from broken bottles to silver axes. You need to be within one or two yards in order to engage an opponent in a melee. This system describes combat without guns but with hand-held weapons of any sort.

Options

• **Parry:** Instead of making a dodge, a player can elect to parry instead, which means using your weapon to block the blow. You roll Dexterity + Melee (plus the parry bonus) against a difficulty of your opponents Melee + 4. Every success reduces your opponent's attack successes in melee or hand-to-hand combat by one.

• **Dodge:** A character can actively dodge instead of trying to match her opponent head-to-head. Instead of Dexterity + Brawl, you roll a Dexterity + Dodge (difficulty being the opponent's Dexterity + 3). Every success takes away one of the opponent's successes. Normally you will want to divide your roll in order to get a dodge roll, but sometimes that will be your sole action.

| Weapons Chart | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----------------|----------|-------------|---------|
| Weapon | Initiative | Accuracy | Damage | Parry Bonus | Conceal |
| Sap | -1 | 0 | -1 | Strength | P |
| Club | 0 | +1 | 0 | Strength +1 | T |
| Knife | 0 | +2 | +1 | Strength +1 | J |
| Foil | +3 | +3 | +1 | Strength +2 | T |
| Saber | +2 | +1 | +2 | Strength +4 | T |
| Axe | 0 | -1 | 0 | Strength +4 | N |
| Stake | 0 | +2 | +2 | Strength +2 | T |
| Initiative Factor: The number of dice you add or subtract from your dice pool on initiative rolls. Accuracy Factor: The number of dice you add or subtract from your dice pool on attack rolls. Damage: The number you add to your success to determine how much damage is caused. Parry Bonus: The number of extra dice you get on a parry roll. Conceal: P = can be hidden in pocket, J = can be hidden inside jacket, T = can be hidden inside a trench coat, N = cannot be hidden on your person at all. | | | | | |
| Maneuvers Table | | | | | |
| Maneuver | Initiative | Roll | Accuracy | Damage | |
| Bite | -2 | Dexterity+Brawl | +2 | Strength +1 | |
| Grapple | -1 | Strength+Brawl | 0 | Special | |
| Body Slam | 0 | Strength+Brawl | +1 | Special | |
| Dodge | - | Dexterity+Dodge | - | 0 | |
| Immobilize | -1 | Dexterity+Brawl | -1 | Special | |
| Kick | 0 | Dexterity+Brawl | -1 | Strength +1 | |
| Punch | 0 | Dexterity+Brawl | 0 | Strength | |
| Claw | 0 | Dexterity+Brawl | 0 | Strength+2 | |

You can declare a dodge at any time before an opponent rolls the dice simply by announcing "Dodge!" and declaring the number of dice from your dice pool you will employ. If you have already used all the dice from your dice pool, then you can no longer dodge. In some situations, declaring a dodge will not be allowed by the Storyteller because it does not make sense (e.g. a surprise attack).

Complications

- **Immobilization:** If a target is immobilized (e.g. someone is holding them down), but is still struggling, then the difficulty for the attack roll is lowered by two. However, if the target is completely immobilized (e.g. is tied up or has a stake through the heart), then no roll is required and the attack roll is an automatic success.

Brawl

A brawl describes a hand-to-hand battle, fighting with bare hands and claws - combat without weapons. You need to be within touching distance to engage in a brawl. Brawl is very different from the other two forms of combat in that instead of being organized around weapons used, it is organized around maneuvers taken.

The following are the different maneuvers available to combatants engaged in brawl combat. Just below the maneuvers table there is a list of descriptions for each maneuver, going into more detail about how each works.

Maneuver Descriptions

- **Bite:** With savage fury you lock your jaws onto an opponent, fangs digging into tender flesh. You may subsequently drain your victim's blood.

- **Grapple:** You grab your foe, hoping to either immobilize him or get a better shot at biting into a vein. If you score more successes than your opponent's Strength, you can knock her down. Next round you will have the advantage of having the target immobilized. Add the successes you rolled

above your opponent's Strength to your Strength dice for damage determination. Any character struck by this attack loses her attacks for the current turn.

Characters who do not wish to harm their target must reduce the number of Strength dice they use before attacking. Thus, if you are holding back, you are less likely to succeed. If your opponent rolls more successes than you in grappling, she has knocked you down and you will be stunned for one round. For every success you roll less than your opponent's Strength, she rolls one die for damage purposes. When determining damage done to you, do not add in your opponent's Strength; she was merely defending herself, not actively attempting to injure you. If you miss this attack altogether (by failing your Strength + Brawl roll), you are knocked down. You will need to spend an action to get to your feet.

- **Body Slam:** You charge forward, hurling your weight into your opponent in an attempt to damage him. It is possible to damage yourself with this attack, as bodies were not meant to be used as battering rams. You will need three successes to unbalance your opponent. You do one point of damage to yourself for every success less than three that you roll. If you succeed, your opponent is off balance, and the difficulty of the rest of his actions for this round will be increased by two. Also, if another Body Slam is done to the same target in this round, she will fall to the ground and be stunned. Strength is the basis for damage, plus as many dice as the number of successes you scored over your opponent's Strength from the attack roll. Your opponent may not attack this round if this attack is

successful. If you do not roll at least three successes, this maneuver has failed. Your opponent may attack you as if you had no dice left to roll this turn, even if you still have dice remaining.

- **Dodge:** You leap and spin and jump and dive; this savage dance of combat hopefully keeps you from harm. While this maneuver inflicts no damage, every success you roll reduces your opponent's number of successes by one for purposes of attacking and damaging you.

- **Immobilize:** Full nelsons, arm locks, figure-four leg locks or anything else you can think of. The idea is to exert pressure on some part of your opponent's body in order to keep him from moving. Normally this maneuver does no damage. Each success you roll more than your opponent reduces the number of dice he may use on his next action by one. However, it is possible to allocate dice from your pool as damage dice, with a difficulty equal to the opponent's Stamina +3. If you reduce an opponent's number of available dice to zero, you have successfully immobilized him. You will need only one success every round to keep your hold on her. Only two characters may grapple a person-sized target in any one turn.

- **Kick:** You lash out with your foot at the enemy, hoping to hit a vulnerable spot and not break your toes.

- **Punch:** You ball up your hand into a tight fist and swing it with all your might. With luck you'll hit your opponent hard in his soft parts.

- **Claw:** Those Kindred skilled enough in Protean wield the Wolf's Claws, which can cause aggravated wounds. The same rules apply for Lupines battling the characters.

Humanity Loss

It is often difficult to properly gauge the severity of a particular transgression for which Humanity rolls have to be made. One way this can be done is to break the roll down based on how moral the character has been and the severity of the vile deed.

The difficulty is equal to the difference between the character's Humanity and the Humanity level necessary to commit the crime, +5. Example: A character with a Humanity of 6 commits a murder (the level of Humanity at which this act is acceptable is 2). The character rolls against a difficulty of 9 (6-2=4; 4+5=9). If the target number is 11 or higher then the character automatically loses a Humanity point as the Beast inches closer to the surface.

If the Storyteller feels automatic Humanity loss is too harsh, then he may assign a number of extra successes that must be achieved. The number of extra successes needed is equal to ([Difficulty over 10]-10). Example: A veritable saint of a Kindred (Humanity 9) commits murder (level of Humanity at which this is acceptable is 2); the difficulty is 12 and thus she would need three successes.

Interrogation

The purpose of interrogation is to make your subject reveal information he ordinarily would not. These rules cover two types of interrogation. Physical intimidation (i.e. torture) involves inflicting pain (or pleasure) until the subject can take no more and breaks down. This requires a contested roll of the torturer's Wits + Interrogation (target equals victim's Willpower) versus the victim's Stamina + Self-Control (target is usually high (8 or so). This can be a long and arduous process, as the interrogator must accumulate successes equal to the victim's Wits + 4 before any information can be gained. After the subject's will has been

broken, the rolls continue each turn that the interrogator poses a new question to the subject; each success gains the interrogator more precise and correct information for an answer, while a botch means that the interrogator must start the contest all over again.

Although torture/physicality seems fairly effective, it has no real place in our modern world (although it fits quite nicely into the Gothic-Punk world of Vampire). In circumstances where it would not be wise to physically harm the subject, more subtle methods must be used. This often requires that the subject be physically isolated in unfamiliar surroundings. After isolating the subject, there are many methods to use; a few examples and their appropriate rolls follow.

Good Cop: Amicable, soothing personality -explains that you should talk for your own good. Roll Charisma + Subterfuge (or possibly Empathy).

Bad Cop: Hard-nosed, abrasive personality -explains that you're gonna swing either way; maybe it'll just be quicker if you talk now. Roll Manipulation + Intimidation.

Silent Psycho: Sits and stares, never utters a word. Roll Stamina + Intimidation.

The subject resists with his or her Wits + Self-Control. The target number for both rolls is determined by the Storyteller, but should reflect the Natures of those involved. The interrogator must accumulate successes equal to the subject's Wits + 4 before he can ask questions as in the physical interrogation section above. At this delicate stage any botches on the interrogator's part cause the subject to completely clam up (will not break except under Domination); however, if the subject botches, he will spill his guts about anything and everything. This is a time-consuming method - assume it normally takes a number of hours equal to the victim's Stamina + Wits before the first roll can be made; a new roll can be made every half hour thereafter.

Flight

Some Kindred gain the ability to fly through various means (Form of the Bat, Thaumaturgical flight) and this can greatly increase mobility. Flight through wings or other means requires room and constant motion on the part of the Kindred. This method allows the flier greater speed and mobility than Thaumaturgical flight at the cost of the ability to hover motionlessly. The flier can also develop the secondary Talent of Flight; this greatly enhances his maneuverability. The flier can move as fast as the form assumed could normally move, although speed could be enhanced through the use of Celerity. Attacks made in flight use the flier's Dexterity + Flight regardless of whether the attack is melee or ranged.

Thaumaturgical flight is a product of Willpower and Wits. The Thaumaturgist can only move as fast as he or she could normally run, but does gain a greater degree of control. To levitate themselves, Thaumaturgists typically roll Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6), but manipulation thereafter becomes more complicated. Hovering is no problem, but rising, moving, changing direction, etc. all require control rolls to be able to accomplish that action. Rising requires a roll of Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). Moving and changing direction are a function of Wits + (appropriate ability). For example, if a Vampire using Thaumaturgical flight were to charge into a fight, he or she would roll Wits + Brawl. A Vampire using Thaumaturgical flight wishing to change direction and move around a corner would roll Wits + Athletics. As Thaumaturgical flight relies heavily on concentration, all the caster's other

rolls suffer a two-dice penalty due to this level of distraction.

Aerial combats are a function of natural ability, not carefully practiced maneuvers. Movement is not restricted by the plane of the earth; thus, combat in midair involve a lot of diving, wheeling and jockeying for position. In combat between fliers, both opponents roll Wits + Flight (difficulty +1). Fliers in animal form can only use attacks appropriate to the animal (bats can bite, but remember that Kindred with the ability to shapechange most likely have the ability to form claws for aggravated damage), but Thaumaturgists can use any appropriate weapon.

Hunting

While Vampires have no real need to eat mortal food, there are those Kindred who possess this skill from mortal days. Oftentimes, Kindred must provide for retainers and other kine while on the move. This does get a bit more difficult, as an animal's senses often tell it when something isn't right and a Kindred nearby definitely isn't right. Roll Wits + Survival (usually against a 7) to locate and catch game. Some sort of missile weapon is needed; otherwise, some incredibly inventive method must be thought of, and the difficulty increases to 9 or even 10. If you wish to roleplay hunting without weapons then make it very free with lots of dice rolling as characters climb trees (Dexterity + Athletics), stalk prey (Dexterity + Stealth), wait in the darkness (Stamina + Survival), or leap from the branches onto an animal's back (Dexterity + Athletics with a difficulty of the animal's Dexterity + 4). Animals may, of course, dodge out of the way (animal's Dexterity + Dodge) or detect Kindred by scent (animal's Perception + Alertness; the difficulty is two lower if the character wears perfume/cologne/hairspray); the possibilities are endless. Trapping, etc., can also easily come into play.

Hedge Magic

Not everyone who uses magic has become so accomplished as to use Thaumaturgy. There are individuals who use minor spells and charms in everyday life, and some who use these spells in conflict with the Undead. The Hunters Hunted presented the basic system, as well as a number of different spells.

Hedge magic requires the magician learn the new Ability of Casting, with the skills of Duration, Extent and Ritual also being helpful. These can only be bought with Freebie Points as they are not Talents, Skills or Knowledge, but a combination of all three. They cost as much to buy and increase as do normal Abilities. Learning these skills during play costs three experience points; however, it would require Storyteller permission (and probably a special Story) for someone who has no sorcerous abilities to learn these skills.

Each spell must also be learned separately, as if it were an Ability, and can increase just like any other. Additionally, while a character can become as good in a spell as his generation will allow, spells are rated for the Attribute a character must possess in order to be able to cast it. Thus a character with a Perception of 3 cannot cast a Perception 4 spell.

Casting a particular spell requires the character roll Casting + her level with the spell itself against a difficulty of the spell's Attribute rating + 4. All spells have an instant duration (though casting the spell requires one turn) and only cover the area directly around the caster. In order to manipulate the spells for greater potency, the caster must use the other abilities. To extend its range requires a roll of

Extend + (spell) while to increase its time requires Duration + (spell). Difficulty remains the spell's Attribute

level + 4, while success varies based on the following tables.

| | Duration | Extend |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| One success | Two turns | 10-foot radius from caster |
| Two successes | One scene | Line of sight |
| Three Successes | 24 hours | 100-foot radius from caster |
| Four successes | One week | One-mile radius from caster |
| Five successes | One month | Same city |

The other ability is Ritual, which allows the character to cast Thaumaturgical rituals. Not only is Ritual the basis for the success roll, but a character cannot learn a ritual unless he has at least as many levels of Ritual as the Spell. Thus learning Splinter Servant (Level Four Ritual) requires at least four levels of Ritual. Note that without massive study, no human can learn any ritual higher than level five.

Learning spells follows a similar pattern, but requires the character have a mental attribute to match the appropriate level of the spell. Thus there are Perception spells, Intelligence spells and Wits spells.

Sample Spells:

Warning Sirens (Perception Four): This spell allows a character to sense when she is in danger. It will not pinpoint what form the danger will take, but will give the character enough of a warning to allow him to dodge.

Vistas of the Mind (Intelligence Three): With this spell, the caster can incorporate and utilize great amounts of data, effectively adding one die to any roll involving the use of a knowledge.

Flash (Level Five): A burst of light fills the area around the caster, blinding those who can see and sending Vampires into frenzy. While it does not cause physical damage to the Kindred, they must make a Courage roll against a difficulty of 6 to not frenzy. Kindred and humans alike will be blinded for a number of turns equal to the number of successes in casting.

Note that these are just some examples of spells. There are certainly many more, and the Storyteller should feel free to come up with her own.

Car Chases

The great car chase, with autos careening down desolate streets at speeds even Elders with Celerity cannot match, seems an inevitable part of most Chronicles. This system expands on the Pursuit system given in Vampire, but provides more room for narrative involvement.

The first stage of the car chase is the initial take-off where both characters speed-shift, weave into or out of traffic and basically try to close the gap/put distance between themselves and their pursuers. Both the pursued and the pursuer make Wits + Drive rolls against a standard difficulty of 5; the character getting the most successes carries them over to the next stage.

The second stage, the actual chase, requires the characters make Dexterity + Drive rolls against a difficulty determined by the terrain and traffic. Conditions on the right side of the chart require four-wheel drive or similar vehicles. If one of the characters does not have such a car, increase her difficulties by 3.

Conditions - Terrain

Open, level road - 2

Outlying area/Flat fields - 3

Suburbs/Winding dirt road - 4

Normal urban street/Rough offroad - 5

Midtown (weekday night)/Rocky terrain - 6

Downtown (weekend night)/4WD-only terrain - 7

The Strip on a warm Friday night/Rock quarry - 8

Aside from choosing the terrain, the Storyteller also needs to determine what effect different vehicles have. The easiest way to handle this is to decide which attribute is more important - speed or handling. If the situation calls for speed to be more important, take the difference between the two vehicles' maximum speeds, divide it by 10 and give that many dice to the driver of the faster one. The same can be done with maneuverability, though there is no need to divide by 10. The Storyteller may want to modify these rolls and difficulties if the vehicle is in an environment it is not suited.

Crime

While most crimes are best resolved through roleplaying and not dice rolling, the situation can be resolved with a resisted roll involving the criminal and the investigator. Remember, some of the best criminals make mistakes and even Sherlock Holmes erred in his work from time to time.

Embezzling

Embezzling involves unlawfully appropriating money with which you have been entrusted. One of the more common white collar crimes, this can truly mess up the characters' plans when they discover their accountants have taken all their resources. Successfully stealing the money requires five successes on an extended Wits + Finances roll against a difficulty based on the organization stolen from. Any botches mean the crime has been so ineptly carried out as to be discovered before any money has been taken.

Company - Difficulty

Giant Brokerage House - 9

Large Bank - 8

Large Charity* - 7

Medium-sized law firm** - 6

Roleplaying game designers*** - 2

* May cause a Humanity loss

** May cause a Humanity gain

*** Requires a Perception + Finance roll against a difficulty of 10 to discover any cash at all

Sooner or later an investigator or auditor will go over the books. The Storyteller may wish to keep embezzling to pure roleplaying, but rolls can make this aspect easier.

Successfully covering up the embezzling involves encasing one's actions in the normal flow of business and requires a simple Intelligence + Bureaucracy roll against the same difficulty as taking the money. The number of successes achieved on this roll equal the number of successes an investigator must exceed on a Wits + Finance roll to discover the embezzling, as well as the number of successes needed on a Wits + Bureaucracy roll to trace the culprit. Both rolls have a difficulty of the embezzler's Intelligence + Bureaucracy, and neither are extended rolls.

Note that Computer Knowledge can take the place of Finance and/or Bureaucracy if the Storyteller feels it is appropriate.

Fencing

Selling stolen goods requires both contacts and patience. This can be handled with roleplaying or dice rolls, depending on the Storyteller and players' wishes. Generally fences buy common goods for anywhere from 10 to 50 percent of their real worth. More exotic items require a character roll Charisma + Streetwise against a difficulty of 7 (generally), with one success indicating an interested buyer within the month, while more both increase the number of interested purchasers and the speed with which they respond.

Roleplaying is crucial to the next stage since criminals look out for themselves and go to extremes to avoid being caught. Fences only meet under their own terms and conditions, and one never knows if they have been sold out to the police or an old enemy. Also, remember to play up the shady aspect of the buy itself, using places the characters associate with danger and treachery for the meetings.

After meeting the characters, the fence looks over the goods and appraises their value and authenticity; roll her Intelligence + Finance with a difficulty based on the rarity of the item. At this point she makes her bid (10 percent to someone she does not know for something which may take a while to sell to 50 percent to friends with a quick seller).

The fine art of haggling comes into play at this point, although the characters generally get the short end of the stick of they push too far. **The Players Guide** includes rules for haggling, but this aspect should always be roleplayed out in addition to any die rolls.

Demolitions

Explosions won't kill the Kindred as often as they do mortals, but a Vampire catching the full brunt from 50 pounds of C-4 has next to no chance of avoiding decapitation. The problem for the person using the explosives is to make sure they have the intended effect, and so the Demolitions Skill covers far more than just making bombs. Far more important is the ability to place and shape the explosives properly for best results.

When a character with Demolitions wishes to place an explosive correctly, he rolls Intelligence + Demolitions against a difficulty of 6, with each success adding one to the blast power. Using any kind of trigger other than simple fuses or radio detonators requires the user make a Wits + Demolitions roll against a difficulty of 7. Botching either of these rolls can have spectacular results.

If a character is trying to demolish a structure and has time and access to it, he can make a Perception + Demolitions roll against a difficulty of 6 to pick out the key supports. Destroying a third of these brings down the house.

Escapology

Escapology is considered a Secondary Ability, but those without it must add three to all their difficulties in attempting escapes. The following chart lists the difficulty and number of successes involved in escaping from

| Item | Successes Needed | Difficulty |
|---|------------------|------------|
| Chinese Finger Puzzle | 2 | 6 |
| Police Handcuffs | 3 | 7 |
| Prison Manacles | 4 | 8 |
| Straitjacket | 3 | 6 |
| Box Prison (cabinets, coffins, etc.) | 4 | 7 |

different bonds.

The character must roll separately for each type of bond, and being bound by one kind (locked in a coffin) will make it more difficult to escape from others (handcuffs). Generally the difficulty increases by 2 or 3. Also note that especially well-made items can also increase the difficulty by 1 or 2.

No one can explain exactly how this ability works since no one practiced in it speaks willingly, so suffice it to say it involves aspects of contortion, dislocation, flexing, muscle control, lockpicking skills, etc. It may more correctly be called the ability of an exceptional person to remain unfettered and unbound.

Example: A certain Mr. Weiss finds himself handcuffed twice, manacled at the ankles and thrown to the bottom of a rather deep well. He immediately goes to work extricating himself from this predicament - he rolls Dexterity + Escapology as he works on the first set of cuffs. Since he has two on, the Storyteller increases the difficulty to 8, but with nine dice to work with, Weiss manages four successes. The second set only has a difficulty of 7, but Weiss makes exactly three successes, barely twisting his wrists out.

With his wrists free he proceeds to snake his way out of the manacles and must roll against a 9 since the Storyteller rules they are well made. The first turn he only gets one success and must try again. His second attempt results in a botch, causing him to lose his sole success and wrench his knee in the process. The Storyteller rules future attempts require the expenditure of a Willpower point. Weiss marks it off and makes three successes exactly, finally freeing himself to figure a way out of the well.

Mortality

Often Kindred must pass themselves off as just another member of the kine. Those Kindred with a high Humanity have a relatively easier time of this since they maintain control over the Beast within. Conversely, the more bestial, low-Humanity Kindred who gave the Beast within a free reign suffer greatly when trying to do the same.

In order to perform actions such as breathing, bringing blood to the surface for skin color and even bleeding when cut should make a Self-Control + Acting (or Masquerade) roll against a difficulty of 10 - the Kindred in question's Humanity. Every success on this roll indicates an increasing level of camouflage, with one success allowing the character to fit easily into a crowd and five meaning the character fools almost all Kindred.

Someone who knows what to look for must make a Perception + Occult roll against the target's Humanity to determine whether someone is a Vampire or not. If the searcher knows what he is looking for and his target tries to masquerade as a mortal, the two make resisted rolls until one garners three additional successes, at which point the searcher either discovers the target is a Vampire or becomes convinced of his humanity.

Piloting

Sometimes cars and motorcycles do not get characters where they want to go. Additionally, the ability to drive a car has little to do with piloting planes, boats and dirigibles. These vehicles require Pilot or Boat Handling for the characters to use them effectively.

In order to arrive exactly where you want (there are no road signs in the air), roll Intelligence + Piloting (or Boat Handling) against a difficulty of 6 if you have time to plot a course; otherwise roll Wits + Navigation against a difficulty of 8. The Storyteller might also require extra successes if the destination is out of the way or concealed.

A botch on these rolls draws the character off course by at least half the time of the trip. Thus if the character botches an eight-hour trip, it takes a total of 12 hours to get there after a botch (unless the Storyteller decides to have the character run out of fuel and land in the middle of a Sabbat celebration).

Pilot and Boat Handling can also take the place of Drive in pursuit and stunt driving rolls when another kind of vehicle is used.

Riding

Animals have never fully trusted the Undead, but that has never prevented the Kindred from harnessing beasts as they do humans. Kindred with any powers of Animalism or with two or more dots in Animal Ken have no problem mounting horses and other riding animals. Those without these Traits must make a Humanity roll against a difficulty of 6 to avoid having the animal shy away or even buck and kick to keep from being ridden.

Once the character has gotten aboard the animal, getting it to follow her commands requires an initial Wits + Athletics roll against its Willpower. Once the character makes this roll, the horse will willingly follow the character's commands unless faced with an obstacle, in which case the character needs to make Wits + Athletics rolls against difficulties set by the Storyteller (getting it to cross a stream may be a difficulty of 4, while having it gallop into a burning house requires 10s). Ride can be taken as a Secondary Skill, in which case the character can exchange it for Athletics.

Shooting a gun while on a horse requires a Perception + Athletics (or Ride) roll, though the character cannot add in more points of Athletics than she has Firearms. Additionally, the difficulty of all shots should increase by at least one depending on speed and terrain. Finally, unless the animal is used to combat or the gun is silenced, the character needs to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to keep it from bucking - botches mean a nasty spill.

Melee or brawling combat while on an animal follows a similar pattern. The roll is Dexterity + Athletics (or Ride) with the maximum number of points Athletics can add equal to the rider's Melee. However, the difficulty rarely increases during combat from horseback. Indeed, in most cases it decreases thanks to the attackers height advantage (subject to Storyteller approval). Also, if the character

charges and has a weapon suitable for such an attack (such as a lance), she may use the animal's Strength instead of her own when determining damage.

Expanded Hunt Chart

The hunt is one of the activities paramount in **Vampire: The Masquerade**. If Kindred want to survive, they must feed. Sometimes you may not wish to play through the entire hunting scene; in that case, the chart below may be used instead of the chart in the rulebook. The character may make one roll every hour, and each success gained on the represents a vessel from whom the Vampire may take vitæ.

All hunters do not hunt the same. There are a few ways in which Vampires may hunt for vitæ. These methods are called **The Prey Method**, **The Don Juan Method** and the **Dominate Method**.

The Prey Method - This method involves stalking your victim, catching him alone and drinking your fill. This method is best used in the Barrens where no one is around to hamper your hunt. Every roll using The Prey Method takes one hour of searching. Roll: Perception + Streetwise.

Prey Method Area Difficulty

Area - Difficulty

- Slums - 5
- Lower Class - 6
- Nightclub - 9
- Downtown - 6
- Warehouse District - 6
- Parks - 6
- Upper Class - 9
- Barrens - 4

The Don Juan Method - Using The Don Juan Method, the character simply "romances" the blood from her prey. This usually involves approaching the victim, saying a few witty lines and getting him to follow you to a secluded place. Every roll using The Don Juan Method takes two hours of searching. Roll: Manipulation + Subterfuge (or Seduction)

Don Juan Method

Area - Difficulty

- Slums - 8
- Lower Class - 7
- Nightclub - 6
- Downtown - 7
- Warehouse District - 8
- Parks - 7
- Upper Class - 8
- Barrens - 9

The Dominate Method - Using this method, the character employs his Dominate Discipline in order to "attract" his victims. There is no chart for The Dominate Method. Simply reduce all rolls by 3 if the Vampire is using this method.

Botching the Hunt

Victim is a Lupine.

Vampire is seen by someone.

Victim is a hemophiliac.

Victim is a Magus.

Victim enjoys the Kiss.

Victim wants to become Vampire.

Victim searches out the character later.

Victim is an over-enthusiastic Blood Doll.

Vampire drinks too much blood.

Victim is a neutral.

Victim is a Hunter.

Victim has True Faith.

Adjustments to Roll

+1 die for every 30 minutes spent looking for victims.

+1 Difficulty for every hour after 10 p.m.

+2 Difficulty if the character is a Ventrue.

+3 Difficulty if the character is a Nosferatu (if seen).

+1 Difficulty for every point of Appearance under 2 (if seen).

-1 Difficulty on a weekend.

-1 Difficulty for every hour before 10 p.m.

-1 Difficulty for each point of Appearance over 3 (if seen).

-1 Difficulty if the Vampire has Presence

-3 Difficulty if there is a major event in city (holiday, sporting events etc.)

-4 Difficulty if there is a civil disorder in locale.

The Art of Storytelling

by Mark Rein-Hagen

It seems that a myth itself, as well as the symbols it brings into play, never quite disappears from the present world of the psyche; it only changes its aspect and changes its operations.

Mircea Eliade, *Myths, Dreams and Mysteries*

I will never forget my first experience as a Storyteller, not if I live a thousand years. I was a little snot-nosed kid, who, having roleplayed for over a year already, was beginning to feel confident in his abilities. So confident, in fact, that I though running a game would be no problem at all. Therefore one rainy afternoon I gathered together my mother, father and sister and had them create characters - all of whom were to be secret agents in the employ of the CIA.

Character creation went well enough; such structured activities usually do. But when we began the story everything began to go wrong. First of all my father insisted that he be given the exact parameters of the mission, their exact objective and what they could and could not do in the pursuit of that objective. After much haggling I finally had to write it all down: "Objective: Recover the Department of Treasury master \$100 bill plates, taking no longer than 48 hours from this moment." Keep it simple, I thought; that way he won't be able to twist my words.

My father didn't mean any harm, he just took his game playing seriously. He played to win, and understanding the winning conditions is the only way to do that.

He then proceeded to construct a plan which completely sabotaged the story I had so laboriously prepared. They were supposed to enter an underwater complex through an open airlock after a pair of guards went on swim patrol, sneak past the complex security, remove the stolen plates, encounter the mad scientist who was behind the whole thing, and in the process rescue a certain British agent known only as 007.

Gathering together nearly 10 pounds of plastic explosive the characters swam immediately to the complex, attached it to the side of the bulkhead, backed off a bit, and set it off (before the patrol could get out of the airlock). The whole base was flooded with water and everyone inside was killed. The characters then swam inside (past the drowned body of James Bond!) picked up the plates, and left.

The story was over in 10 minutes. They had "won" but in the process everyone had lost out. I was stunned and then enraged, "You didn't do it right," I yelled, desperately trying to think of some way to salvage the story. My father, however, was sincerely puzzled. The team had accomplished what I had wanted them to do, so why was I angry? At the time I didn't know how to reply to his oh so logical question, all I could shout was "you don't get it, you don't get it!"

I didn't try to be a Storyteller again for another year and a half. I had been burned by my experience, and the memory of it affects my storytelling to this day. Though I didn't know what to say to my father then, now I have a better idea how to explain to him what went wrong, and that's what I want to relate to you now.

What my father did not understand, and what I did not tell him, was that storytelling is about stories and roleplaying, not missions and objectives. A character should be concerned with the mission, but the player should be concerned with the character. The Storyteller should be concerned with making and keeping the character at the center of the story. It is as simple as that. But though the concept is straightforward, applying it is not.

I never really made this clear to him however, not before the story began and not since. He was operating under the premise, largely unconsciously, that this was a game, and that you play a game to win. This is a premise many of us operate

under; the game element of what we do is often central to our enjoyment of it.

However much we may enjoy winning, however, we must never sacrifice the story to the game. I should never have allowed things to progress as far as I did in the mission without bringing the story back into it. All I needed to do was add a plot twist, such as a perimeter guard already out on patrol, and it would have become a story again, but I didn't, for a variety of reasons.

My first mistake was to let myself start thinking of the players as enemies. Though I didn't want them to fail, I did think of them as my opponents, and my job as putting obstacles in their way. In a way, I was playing to win as well. Moreover, even when I was thinking in terms of opposite sides, I was letting them (my father at least) run all over me. I didn't establish myself in the beginning as the final authority, and in the process of trying to reestablish some sort of control I set myself up as the antagonist, as the enemy. As soon as I did that, the story became less important than the game, and the only test left was how fair I would be in judging the efficacy of their efforts.

My second mistake was to believe that my job was to stay in control. I tried to tell the story rather than letting the story tell itself. I wanted to be in charge because I thought that was what my job was; the thought of being a "game master" had gone to my head. Achieving mastery over the

game was my motivation, and I thought that meant achieving mastery over the characters and story.

My third mistake was to have designed the story without the characters in mind, and with a complete plot already in place. I had expectations for the story which were unrealistic, even silly, and was angry when the characters decided to bypass all my careful plans. Born and raised on dungeon crawling, I knew no other way to roleplay than the presentation of a static setting and story. My experiences had warped what I knew of storytelling. In terms of what I thought about the story, the characters were annoyances when they should have been major players in it.

What I didn't realize is that as the Storyteller you have the responsibility to create the dream, and to bring the players into it. But once you have created the dream, you must stand back and let the characters take it over, and to become the engine that drives it. They must sit at the center of the story, not you.

Always let the Players decide what to do in setting the course of the plot. It not only makes them feel as if their characters really have control, but it saves you a lot of work. Always give them the opportunity to decide what they want to do, and how they want to go about it. Your job then becomes both incorporating these desires and plans, and placing entertaining hindrances in the way. Your job is reactive - a process of adapting and embellishing.

However, in order to do this well you need to set the scene well, to establish the basis of the Chronicle in luscious, exciting detail so the players know and care enough to take significant action in relation to that environment. You must first create a world so detailed and complete that the players can direct the story productively.

Your ultimate aim as the Storyteller is not to tell any of the Story yourself, but to guide the players into telling it for themselves. You should be the guide, not the path itself.

What I should have done is to have designed the entire setting and then created a complete story and timeline of what would occur within that setting if the characters were not involved. I would decide what would happen if they did nothing, and then change those events as they influenced the story's progress.

It takes a lot of energy to keep a story going, especially if you are doing it on your own. The energy required to sustain a story is immense, and it is impossible for a Storyteller to do it alone. The players need to be part of the process as they are the ones who add the fuel that allows the story to move, and only if they are directing the story can they supply this energy.

Some players actually suck away energy from a story, with their very demeanor making everyone else feel more lethargic. These individuals I call vampires, for they take the emotions and energy of others without ever giving anything back. They are cynical, hostile, arrogant and selfish - though perhaps in subtle ways. These players demand excitement in a story but do nothing to create it themselves. Vampires are the death of any story (and paradoxically, the life of this game).

The best test as to whether or not you are doing a good job or not is to see what happens when you sit back and say nothing. If they players are still roleplaying among themselves - planning, squabbling, plotting, commiserating - then you are doing something right. If when you stop interacting with the players the story stops cold, then you know something is going very wrong, and you need to start to do things differently.

I do not pass that test as often as I would like too. In some way that first experience scarred me, and left me with a number of bad habits. After losing control that one time, I am now obsessed with always keeping control. After having players escape my preplanned plot, I seem to be all the more eager to manipulate them into it. I seem to keep making the same mistakes over and over again, and I have noticed others doing the same.

You may think I am joking, but I assure you that I am not - just ask anyone who has ever played with me. They might say that the Chronicle was imaginative or perhaps even exciting, but if you press them they will always have to agree that there was something missing, that they just never quite got "into it," that they never had an "experience."

I think that this problem revolves around my inability to keep my own imagination in check long enough to let the players get theirs in gear. I barrage players with so much story material it becomes difficult for them to create any of their own. In short, I don't give my players enough room.

A deadly flaw by any standard. One I have never fully managed to overcome, despite years of trying.

Moreover, I still have problems with being consistent enough to make the world seem real. I go for the glory, the immediate payback, instead of building a story slowly. I am more interested in making the story exciting than in making it realistic. I try to focus on evoking a complex, elaborate world, but always the drama seems to come before the details. Players are always catching me in inconsistencies, and a story can be ruined by that.

What it all boils down to, I think, is that I try to control and dominate the story too much, that I don't give the players enough room to direct and guide it themselves due, perhaps, to that still lingering fear of losing control. A fatal flaw that can perhaps be traced to that first bad experience, a flaw many others share with me. It is something I must fight to overcome every time I play, and it is something you should think about as well.

If you walk away from something, sometimes you find yourself closer to your goal. Walk away from needing control over your stories, and give that power to the characters. Give your players some breathing room, and let them breath some life into your Chronicle.

PAX!

Benefit of the Doubt

by Sam Chupp

"You know, in a way, I envy you. I've watched you, every minute. So beautiful, so powerful. Every night, since Remember Marcia? You don't remember Marcia? The one, like me, the one who followed you, the one who dared to ask you to dance. You thought it a cute joke to turn her over to those Hunters, to save yourself. She was my one true love, who loved me despite my horrible Curse, and I'll never forget her. What's wrong? Yes. I guess you're beginning to see the Light. I can stay here a little longer, but then I'll have to be off.

Did I tell you that I found her found her after the Hunters had staked her? She cried blood for me, even though she couldn't move just as you can't. I reached out to her. I wanted to be with her, but I couldn't force myself to stay. But you know, in a way, I envy you you're going to see the glory she saw. I saw it reflected in her eyes, you know. I

keep that memory close to my heart. I have to go now. Please say hello to her when you see her if you can see in Hell. Of course, I doubt she'll be able to see you. Her eyes were the first to burn."

How long do your players spend on their characters? I've seen players spend days at a time defining, detailing, thinking, writing and developing their characters into three-dimensional creatures not easily definable by a set of stats on a **Vampire** record sheet. It's gratifying to see them work so hard. They have hopes and dreams for their characters: they want to survive, they want revenge.

How much time do you spend on *your* characters? Do you jot down a few statistics, or lift them directly out of one of the supplements? Or do you create them, give them life? Too often Storyteller characters get the short end of the stick. How can they stand up to the players' characters then?

Is your Prince wooden and boring? How about the Anarchs in your game; do they rebel, do they cause trouble for no good reason, do they shake the world? What happens while your players sleep every day? What is going on outside the bubble of your player's lives? Do *your* characters have hopes, dreams, desires? Or do they "turn off" like the audio-animatrons in an amusement park ride after the players interact with them?

In order for you to have full, rich stories, you need to spend at least half as much time on your characters as your players do on theirs. This means giving *your* characters personalities of their own, and giving the players the sense that "offstage" a whole world is out there moving, seething, and changing while they do what they do. If things aren't drastically different, for example, when the players return from another place or city to their home city, then something is wrong. In the volatile world of the Kindred, things can totally change overnight.

One easy way to ensure you have fully-developed characters is to use characters from previous stories (both player's and Storyteller's) and evolve them to fit the current scenario. For example, in many of the adventures we publish there is mention of a street-smart reporter/private investigator/cop who may or may not know about the Kindred. You could easily take this character and revive him for each new story that you run. Characters who have been run by players before often mines of good stories and it gratifies the players who ran them to know their characters live on, even if they can no longer play them. Many players create characters and never get a chance to play them, or are forced to leave the story halfway through. Take these characters and make them your own.

Your stories need characters with driving goals, obsessions and contradictions. This makes them unpredictable, and keeps the players alert to the fact that nothing should be taken for granted. Just because the Prince is friendly to you once or is grateful that you helped him one time doesn't mean that he'll be forever grateful or friendly. There are always ulterior forces at work in the background in **Vampire**, and those forces can cause former allies to become bitter enemies, and vice versa.

Don't forget to give your characters all the advantages you give your players. Give them the benefit of the doubt, the lucky break, the turn for the worse. Have them fall in love, become jealous, angry, or happy. Have them make vital discoveries about their own mysteries. Most of all, don't let them stagnate. Have them change, for better or worse. Make it a rule, if you want, to change a Storyteller

character's Demeanor once for every five stories she appears in.

They are, however, Storyteller characters and you need to use them like the tools they are. Use them as plot devices, to get a story moving again or to segue into a new story. When you are playing *your* characters, adopt a specific voice, way of speaking, etc., which conveys to your players who they are talking to. Then it's exciting to surprise them by simply speaking in character and forcing them to remember to whom they are talking.

Having three-dimensional, well-developed Storyteller characters means that the players can no longer simply act and expect that no equal (and often opposite) reaction will follow. People they have wronged will seek to get revenge or will go crying to their protectors for aid. People they have helped will show up when they themselves need help. People they've never seen before will develop ideas and perspectives on them that may get them marked for extermination or approval.

What your characters do will have consequences, for they cannot gain power without offending or coming into conflict with some Kindred somewhere. The players will stop treating *your* characters like two-dimensional puppets and start treating them like real threats, characters with real purpose and meaning.

Be good to *your* characters. They're the only thing between you and a group of hungry Vampires.

Entertainer

by Steve Crow

I am the Entertainer,

I've had to pay my price,

The things I did not know at first,

I learned by doing twice.

- Billy Joel, *The Entertainer*

If you're going to be a Storyteller, you've got to face facts. If you want to be a good Storyteller, you've got to be willing to put in a lot of work.

We're not talking about sitting down and rolling up hundreds of creature hit points, or making sure there are enough monsters and treasure to fill your 300-room dungeon. We're also not talking about how many 5th rank whatsits

equal a 10th rank warrior. If you're designing an adventure of this sort, you've already given up any creative effort. The only work you'll be doing is exercising your wrist with all that die rolling.

To be a good Storyteller, you've got to work with your brain. Your profession is now that of an entertainer.

The players are the actors. However, they are also the audience. You are the director, the scriptwriter, the producer, the supporting cast, and the costume and background designer. A good amount of the time you're going to be center stage in the theater the players are attending.

Some games (**Vampire** primary among them) can let you, the Storyteller, sit back and watch the players perform for each other. However, these times are rarer than one might hope. Even if players are merely interacting with each other, you should probably be there as an NPC. After a while, player characters will come to know each other's mannerisms. It's up to you to throw in the NPC no one can

anticipate. When the player characters start to do so, bring in another. Always keep them guessing.

You've got to be willing to entertain. Players will follow your lead. The more exorbitantly you portray a character, the more they play theirs. Each NPC who has a speaking role should be presented differently. Can you snarl like a street bum Nosferatu? Waddle and sneer like an overweight Ventrue? Smile knowingly and act superior like a Tremere?

And that's the easy part. Can you play Tremere characters differently? If they all stereotypically sneer and act haughty, then the players will soon grow bored. All your Tremere characters will soon blend into one. The last thing you want to hear are players saying, "Was that Garwood Marshall or Abraham DuSable who gave us that book last week?"

Chicago by Night makes this easier. The characters are well-defined, with lots of mannerisms and personality you can convey. But some of you may not be playing in Chicago all the rest of your days. Not every game can provide you with that much detail.

When you put together an adventure in any game system, look at the individuals you will be using as NPCs. Pick out the two or three main characters. They're the ones that, if they were in a movie, would be listed in the credits after the player character actors. Home in on two or three mannerisms for each one. Pick at least one physical and one speech or mental mannerism you can portray. Realize, however, that you are going to want to go out on a limb. Don't feel self-conscious. Be prepared to alter your voice, your walk and your body posture.

When your player characters are engaging in non-combat interaction with your NPCs, don't sit down behind your Storyteller screen. Get up, move around, face the person or persons you're speaking to. You can't convey much when all

the players see are the pretty green stone patterns on the screen.

Now that you know how to present the major NPCs, look at the minor ones. No gamemaster is expected to roleplay an entire street gang in the middle of a brawl. However, try to pick out one or two things that individual gang members might do during the battle. Have one spit in a player character's face. Have another curse loudly. Give another an affection for exaggerated Bruce Lee martial arts moves. Toss these in from time to time and your players will look at fights as more than die-rolling exercises.

It is an unfortunate fact that subtlety rarely works when playing NPCs. Since a Storyteller is supposed to stay in the background when acting as an arbitrator of the rules, players often can't distinguish you from the NPCs. If you're playing a sly, subtle character, exaggerate. It may not be realistic, but it will make a deeper impression on your players.

Also, take a look at your setting, and do the same thing for each location that you do for each NPC. If it's a location of major importance, study it carefully. You are obviously not going to portray a building. However, picture the location, the "set," in your mind. Make sure the location has several distinguishing features that you can convey. In a horror game, smells and odors are good at conveying a particular mood.

For minor locations, do the same thing as for minor characters. Toss in something quick that will make an impression. It should be something short, yet unique to

that location. If one deserted house has thick cobwebs, the next might be suspiciously clean, and the next might have dead spiders lying on the floor.

Remember: when describing locations, keep the verbiage somewhat limited. Try to avoid the "40' north-south, 20' east-west, 3 chairs and a chest" descriptions. Make each visit to a setting unique. On the other hand, don't overload the players' senses with data. They'll remember one or two unique details better than 15 minor points.

Setting the Stage at the Theatre of the Mind

By Daniel Greenberg

This is a very dangerous and uncertain world.

- John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Once the **Vampire** game is launched and the Chronicle solidly under sail, Storytellers often pause to survey the way they have come, and to peer into the uncharted waters ahead. This is always a good point to assess the game. It gives you a clear vantage point to see what is working well, what needs to be addressed and where you want the game to go.

This assessment takes many forms, but the questions I like to ask once a Chronicle is well under way sound something like this: What stories am I trying to tell here? What stories do the players respond to? What can I bring out unique to this game system? What can I bring out unique to my Chronicle? What are my players and I looking for? What is our myth? With the **Vampire** game, the questions take on a sharper aspect. What stories are we trying to tell with these bleak tales? What's the point to these frightening, melancholic forays into the shadowed corners of the human heart? And in the darkest moments, where can we Storytellers go to find renewal among these tragic creatures of parasitism and despair? Here are some of the answers I have found.

Our stories are often tales of darkness. Of corruption. Of ugly, unspeakable deeds done on moonless nights. Of the harsh glare of neon reflected in puddles of black blood. These exhilarating excursions to the brink of madness ironically provide uplift and inspiration to the players. In **The Players Guide** I addressed the appeal and rewards that these dark games have for players. Now I'll do the same for Storytellers. Players often experience a paradoxical purging and cleansing sensation from playing the doomed, tragic undead. They have a golden opportunity to grapple with their own inner demons, and gain insight into and power over their own hidden motivations.

So what about the Storyteller? What are the masters of the game looking for here, and what can they expect to find? Rather than immersing herself in the psyche of one Gothic-horror character, the Storyteller must create a rich tapestry in which she plays all the forces in a Gothic-horror world. This gives her the unique opportunity to be more than just an actor on the microcosmic stage. She **is** the stage.

Roleplaying takes place in the Theatre of the Mind, the shared universe prepared, updated and hosted by the Storyteller. The players are the ensemble acting company populating the space, but the Storyteller must set the stage before they appear, and act as stage manager, dramaturge and director as the unscripted, unrehearsed, spontaneous drama unfolds.

To provide the players with an experience suitably rich in darkness, fear, oppression and horror, the Storyteller must populate his stage with suitably frightening situations and creatures. Heroes are made by the quality of their villains. Protagonists can only rise as high as the antagonist stoops low. In movies this is often accomplished by having the irredeemably evil villains kill the hero's girlfriend or best pal or dog or all three. But we require more than that.

Our myths are pallid, uninspiring and ultimately unsatisfying if they are nothing but passion plays of vengeance. The overall menace must be extraordinary. It must reek of the very foulest iniquity. The players have got to reel with the impact when they learn the full extent of the villainy. Simple wickedness is not enough. Pawns of the real Enemy can be merely nasty bad guys, but the overarching scope of the Enemy's crimes must be pervaded with a rich mire of corruption and horror. Only then will the players' triumphs actually be meaningful. But where do we find sufficient corruption? Where can the Storyteller go for inspiration and guiding principles? As always, your source is the world. All the primary building blocks you need to set your stage are there, in the actions of real people in the real world.

Look around you for the worst examples of villainy, and incorporate them. What are they? Adolf Hitler? Saddam Hussein? Ah, dear Storyteller, there are far richer veins of evil to mine than those. Far fouler than naked aggression is aggression clothed in the rich new robes of the emperor. So what do we look for to find these examples? The secret is betrayal. Rank, malignant betrayal.

The real villains in our world are not petty tyrants with thugs and guns and clumsy, fumble-fingered power plays. The real horrors are the leaders who hide behind noble purposes as they betray our trust: those who rule in our name, but not with our permission, and silently betray the shining promises they make. The greater our trust and faith in them, the greater the possibility for rank betrayal, and true horror.

Despite rosy pronouncements and optimistic forecasts, there is a bleak pall hanging over much of the world. Humanity towers over the earth like a noble colossus, but its mighty form casts a long and poisonous shadow over the land. In that shadow, starvation, war, genocide and corruption blight a world of abundance and plenty. Self-serving leaders exploit public trust on a regular basis. Hidden powers lurk in the background, uninvited, unelected and unwanted. Minor functionaries usurp constitutional powers on an alarmingly regular basis, committing outrageous acts of betrayal against the promise of democracy. Bureaucrats hidden in basement offices steal constitutional power from well-intentioned, cowardly, gullible, forgetful or senile leaders. Hidden forces wage covert wars overseas, smuggling drugs, corrupting elections, assassinating foreign leaders and suppressing democratic dissent with our money but without our consent. They cover their tracks, and rely on our elected leaders to be too steeped in denial or too fearful to challenge them.

The reports we receive of their conduct of these shadowy manipulators are fragmented, incomplete, censored and subject to a barrage of official denials. In these dangerous covert wars, we citizens are arrayed against forces we cannot name or accurately locate, let alone effectively stand against. We are unknowing, unaware and virtually blind as we struggle in the dark to find our way and uncover answers about matters done in our name to people

in other countries. And we fear that if it can happen overseas, it can happen here.

From proof of stolen election materials in Watergate to proof of illegal predations by the Iran-Contra gang to new evidence of stolen Presidential elections and Presidential assassinations, it is clear that it can happen here, and does. It never was morning in America. It's been the pre-dawn Hour of the Wolf for a long time. The thought of an American *coup d'etat* is truly frightening, more so than all the mournful tales of vampiric horror we can weave.

So here we have the great horror that can illuminate our games. This is the horror the Anarchs face every day. The terror of not knowing who the greater enemy is - the scowling leader of a rival Clan or the smiling Elder of your own. All the worst elements of the shadow government of America are present in the Camarilla, but are magnified to the Nth degree. The treachery, covert wars, double-dealing and assassinations are even more common among the undead.

The secret deals made in sumptuous boardrooms and fetid alleys at the middle and high levels of the Camarilla leave the young Vampire isolated in a frightening world. Shadowy cabals of powerful Elders plot with Methuselahs above, Ancillae below and Elders of rival Clans to suppress the young and keep their lofty positions intact. They grasp at power for the sake of power. They hoard vitae for the sake of continuing their unlife forever, at all costs. At the bottom of their undead hearts, their greatest loyalty is not to a cause or even their people, but to conserving their own position and power.

There is no one they will not betray in their mad quest for fresh blood and their own eternal survival. They have no real interest in the younger Vampires except as pawns, soldiers, workers and food. They profess great loyalty to their young, but always weigh the amount of sustenance the young Kindred could provide against the resistance he could muster in defending himself. The Elders work to keep the trust of the young until they decide to attack that particular Neonate.

This puts the Neonates in a double bind. To gain power in the Camarilla, the young Vampire must be absorbed into it, and then become part of the problem. They must participate in the system of oppression of the young that they once suffered under and despised. But if they do not play, they are forced to remain outside the Camarilla, and have no chance to come to real power. As long as they remain outside the interlocking web of deceit that is the Camarilla, they are forever vulnerable to attack.

This is the way it has always been, even though it is possible for the Vampire community to function without the age-old Jyhad. They would clearly be better off if they could make peace with their own kind. But this would mean that the Elders would have to release some of the power for which they betrayed so many. And once they have tasted power, they are unwilling to give it up. Should any young Vampire suggest changing this deadly system, she'll be met with resistance and scorn. If she persists, and begins to gain the power necessary to make changes, she will be mercilessly destroyed.

The secret to breaking this vicious deadlock lies with the Anarchs. Only the unrestrained young are free to choose their own path outside the Camarilla and build power. That frightens the decrepit leaders who have hoarded control of the Vampiric world. This mirrors the real struggle of our world: the battle of new and fresh forces against the old and stagnant.

Storytellers can set the stage with many layers of rough, impersonal, and sometimes invisible forces of greed, depravity, and unexamined fear. By building a labyrinthine web of trust, betrayal and counter-betrayal the players can enter, become trapped, and struggle to extricate themselves from the craven plots of those stronger than they. This gives them a chance to experience futility, terror and perhaps ultimate victory against overwhelming odds.

On the surface, the **Vampire** Chronicle revolves on promises made and promises broken, and foul secrets growing in the dark. So out of all this anguish, where do we find any solace, meaning or catharsis? The answers are in the triumph of the human heart, or the inhuman heart, as the case may be: the triumph of individual will over dark, overwhelming forces. There is renewal here for players and Storyteller alike as they all emerge from the underworld of corruption, denial and dread.

By using the worst of our world as a backdrop and setting for your stories, you as a Storyteller can immerse yourself in it, understand it, integrate it and perhaps gain insight into it. Only when we open our eyes to corruption can we be truly effective against it.

This is the same process many players go through in examining their own beliefs and motivations through the safety of a game, and gaining a greater control over them as a result. You can do this too, but on a far greater level. Storytellers can learn to comprehend much more than personal motivations. They can gain invaluable insight into governmental systems and the motivations of official and unofficial leaders. It is precisely this sort of insight that allows citizens to gain greater influence and control over the systems that govern them. There is power in being a Storyteller, and unique perspective. Use it, and you can learn about real power.

Above and Beyond the Call of Duty

by Travis Lamar Williams

Sleep with one eye open,

Gripping your pillow tight.

Exit Light.

Enter Night.

Take My Hand.

We're off to Never Never Land!

- Metallica, *Enter Sandman*

There are limits to roleplaying. In this expanding hobby there are things better off left alone. Or are there? Most of us would like to call ourselves "mature roleplayers," but are we? Granted, **Vampire** was not created as a means of psychotherapy by any stretch of the imagination. Rather, it was created to help us to peer at the beast within us all and grow from it.

But the mind is a strange thing. There are no absolutes in psychotherapy, just extremely good speculations. We don't really know what will happen if we choose to tamper with our psyche. One thing is certain: artful simulations of traumatic experiences will surely shed light on our understanding of ourselves as well as others. This information will come in useful somehow. Or will it? Perhaps, perhaps not.

I Am Legend

Normally when you play Vampire you create an alter ego with whom you journey into the violent, grisly Gothic-Punk world. Instead of relying on this alter ego I suggest you urge your players to create themselves as the enigmatic Kindred. Before you decide to undertake this challenge, be forewarned: this could be the most chilling experience you have taken part in as a roleplayer. Some of the members in your troupe may not like to try this. The reason is simple. Some of us would rather flee in terror than to face our own inner beast. This is understandable. Becoming one of the Kindred is not so attractive when it is your players who have become monsters.

First and foremost, when your troupe has decided to create themselves in Vampire they must agree to be honest about themselves. Admit it, we all have flaws that we would rather not have others see. Everyone is imperfect; it is a fact of life. Inform your players that unless they are willing to be truthful about how they recreate themselves then they might as well create someone altogether different. However, if they do decide to go through with this, follow the steps below to make the most believable you.

Step One: Conceptualization

Like normal character creation, your players need to sit back and reflect on who they are. What are their goals in life? Stress the fact that this should have nothing to do with Vampire. Vampires are not real. They are simply figments of our imagination. Most of your players will have dreams of becoming successful in whatever it is that they do, getting married, finding someone to love, raising a family, or perhaps just graduating. Unfortunately, these dreams will most likely be destroyed due to their new condition.

Write nothing down at this time. This should just be a time for your players to really think about themselves as a whole. To focus on who they are. Or who they believe themselves to be.

Step Two: Natures And Demeanors

More often than not those persons within your troupe are friends, and associate with one another outside the game. If this is indeed the case then step two shall be one of fun, as well as controversy. No one knows yourself better than you. You can hide your true personality behind a veil of false actions, but with time this becomes harder and harder. To reflect this observation let the player choose his Nature. Scan through the basic rulebook as well as The Players Guide for an appropriate Nature. If one cannot be found, allow the player to describe his overall Nature and then decide how he will regain Willpower.

The players' demeanors, however, are not solely up to them. When the time has come for the players to select their Demeanors, have the troupe vote on each other's, and don't discourage debates. This does not mean encourage chaos, but everyone must support their vote. The players must accept the majority vote. This is not a time for players to take potshots at one another; rather it is a time for the players to see exactly what others think of their general personality. The players should not take these opinions in the wrong way. Their Demeanors are how they choose to express themselves. If they do not like what their troupe has chosen for them, perhaps they should consider why their troupe selected this unbearable Demeanor.

Step Three: Attributes

The assignment of attributes should be one of the easiest parts of creating themselves. Most players will know their limits and respect them. Do not have the players spend points on any of the Traits. Instead, merely have them assign points as the troupe believes fit. If one player can benchpress 400 lbs., then give her a 4 Strength.

Unfortunately, here is where you will meet some opposition. Conflict will be inevitable in any saga; therefore many players are in the habit of making their characters "combat ready." This will manifest itself in unusually high physical statistics. Inform your players that although they will more than likely get in their share of fights, a more accurate portrayal of attributes will best suit them.

Step Four: Abilities

Once again your players will want to lean towards the tried and tested formulas for survival -high Firearms and Brawl scores. Athletics and Alertness will also be at unusual highs. Once again, you must assure the troupe that honesty will pay off in the end. With any luck they will live absurdly long lives. There will be plenty of time later to excel in what they must master in order to survive.

Step Five: Advantages

At this point in time inform the players that they need not worry about their Disciplines. They are not Vampires so they need not concern themselves with them. However, Backgrounds and Virtues must be purchased now. If they have a well-paying job at a tanning salon, make them purchase the Resources Background. It will not matter that after they are Embraced they will effectively lose this Background. They are creating themselves, not Vampire wanna-bes.

Virtues are something that the players may do in private. How much Self-Control, Courage or Conscience someone possesses is personal. Virtues tend to be very private, and if the player really is intent on being honest about how he views himself, he may not wish this information to be common knowledge. As a Storyteller you should respect this and not pressure anyone to make their Virtues public.

Step Six: Humanity and Willpower

Yet another subject which might be touchy is your players' Humanity and Willpower. The best way to determine Humanity is to examine the Hierarchy of Sins (page 130 in Vampire) and decide at what point the sins really start to disturb them. We do not assume to rate all of these sins as more heinous than one another; this method is simply used for the ease of game play.

Willpower is really not as personal as Humanity, but is nonetheless important. Try and make the best guess at how much Willpower you possess by comparing yourself to the Willpower chart on page 109 of Vampire. Choose the word which best describes your Willpower and work towards this number.

Step Seven: Smoothing Out The Edges

After coming this far creating themselves in Vampire, the players will have undoubtedly learned more about themselves, as well as about others within the troupe. Allow no one to spend freebie points until after the Prelude has ended. This will simulate the drastic change from a "common" mortal to one of the Kindred.

Everyone has their favorite Clan. The Clans are merely representations of the myriad outlooks of life. Simply by observing others you can almost classify them as one of the many types of Vampires. Instead of allowing the players to select which Clan shall Embrace them, allow the other players in the troupe to vote on the Clan the players would attract. In secret, have everyone write down each others' names as well as the Clan of Vampire they envision them becoming. They must write down everyone except themselves. Take them up and tally the votes. Do not reveal what has been decided until after the Prelude (in the event of a tie, break the tie with your vote). No one has complete control over their own destiny; why should they start now?

Final Step: The Prelude

After everyone has completed the steps above, it will be time to begin the Prelude. How to get everyone together? Easy - they're friends; perhaps they are going to a party. Perhaps they might have come together for a nice roleplaying session. A trip to the mall? The possibilities are endless. Unfortunately, the end result will be the same. After the many chases down dark alleys and the pitiful reliance on superstition, the troupe shall irrevocably emerge from the Prelude as members of the Damned.

The Prelude should be one of suspense and terror. The troupe will come to find that those things that go bump in the night are very real, and not just some old wives' tale. The terror the players will feel will be all the more real because now they not only identify with their character, but everyone's character. Not only that, but the character must now conquer what most people never truly confront. Themselves. Do not attempt to play this alternate style of roleplay if you do not wish to confront some of your deepest, darkest fears.

My God What Have I Done!?

Most players will become Vampires unwillingly. To become immortal might sound fine at first, but it is doubtful that any of your players will welcome the sacrifices that must be made after they have been Embraced. They must now separate from those they love and care for to join the society of the Damned.

The consequences for not separating from the mortal world could be grave. Not just for the player, but those around her. At any time the Beast could rear its head and demand to be appeased. Only when they have gazed into the shock-filled eyes of their bloodless young child will they finally realize what it is that they have wrought on those they love. The truth shall be unavoidable; they have become the hunters of men, monsters of legend, drinkers of blood. Beasts in every sense of the word.

Coming to grips with their new existence shall be the least of their problems. Thrust into a world of intrigue, deception and bitter rivalries, the Troupe will be hard-pressed to simply survive. Then again, what's the rush? Now they have an eternity, right?

The Sound of Music: Songs for a Gothic-Punk World

by Rob Hatch

Did you keep a watch for the dead man's wind

Did you see the woman with the comb in her hand

Wailing away on the wall on the strand

As you danced to the Turkish song of the damned

- The Pogues, *Turkish Song of the Damned*

The world of Vampire is a Gothic-Punk milieu, and it is crucial to evoke that mood of looming shadows, spired buildings overlooking grungy streets, and ominous foreboding. In doing this, music is essential, but the music must be appropriate to the game atmosphere. Whatever one may think of Van Halen or Tom Petty, they are not particularly effective in creating the proper atmosphere for Vampire (though if they work for you, more power to you).

The following songs are either Gothic, Punk or both, and I have found them useful as background music and inspiration. Although you may well have entirely different tastes in music, if you feel the urge, give a couple of these songs a

listen. They may well assist you in creating that delicate mood of isolation, inner struggle and bleakness necessary to a **Vampire Chronicle**.

She's Lost Control (Joy Division) - the classic Gothic-Punk song from one of the darkest albums (*Unknown Pleasures*) in modern music history, this song is ideal when the player faces frenzy, particularly frenzy from one of the character's tragic weaknesses, when she has no Willpower left and the Beast is rising fast.

Bela Lugosi's Dead (Bauhaus) - So obvious it's a cliché, but you can't not put a song whose chorus is "Undead, undead, undead" on the list. Probably the classic **Vampire** song, although I still like "She's Lost Control" better.

She's In Parties (Bauhaus) - Toreador having a bash? Turn on this one. The moody, elegant/grungy music and the depressing lyrics convey the ultimate futility of the undead haute couture and their desperate quest for beauty in a decaying world.

Inside the Termite Mound (Killing Joke) - One of the best "The city is a stagnant, industrialized hell" songs ever written, this song is ideal for groups of Kindred walking around the deserted, rusting industrial parks, crumbling slums, faceless corporations and stagnant malls of a Gothic-Punk city. After hearing this, Kindred might well not care about their feeding habits anymore. From *Extremities, Dirt and Various Repressed Emotions*.

Blood & Family (Liers in Wait) - Liers in Wait is a local death-rock band native to Atlanta, so you may not be able to find this in your area, but if you can find the album (*Spear of Destiny*), snatch it up. "Blood & Family" is an all-out musical assault, a mixture of metal, grunge and techno music ideal for Sabbat havens and the like.

I Remember Nothing (Joy Division) - Another cut from *Unknown Pleasures*, this song is best reserved for when the characters have lost something important (a friend, their self-worth, a crucial fight, or the last vestiges of Humanity) and are wallowing in a nihilistic stew of meaninglessness. Possibly the most depressing song I have ever heard - the bass sounds like the countdown to Doomsday and the glass shattering at the beginning and end of the song evoke a sense of desolation and futility like nothing else.

Vacancy (Scratch Acid) - Probably containing the best drumming I have ever heard, this song about slow, creeping insanity merges a razor-edged garage-style guitar over a dark and sweeping keyboard. Perfect background music for capturing the gradual disintegration of Vampire society - the lies they tell themselves in order not to face the terrible truth they subconsciously know exists.

Police Truck (Dead Kennedys) - Wanna get your Anarchs good and mad and ready to stake and bake the Prince, the Primogen, the Elders, the Inquisition, the Lupines and the Methuselahs behind the whole mess? If this song doesn't motivate your Troupe to get up and kick some Fifth-Generation butt, they really are walking dead. From *Fresh Fruit for Rotting Vegetables*.

Lucretia My Reflection (Sisters of Mercy) - If your city has a dance club catering to Anarchs, this one'll be playing inside. Every 15 minutes. The throbbing dance beat screams night life and easy blood while also conveying the ultimately mechanical and meaningless aspects of the whole scene. For all I know, Andrew Eldritch is a Vampire - he sure looks like one. From *Floodland*, an all-around great album for this genre.

Love Will Tear Us Apart (Joy Division) - A poignant, dirgey cry of desperation and need, this song is both beautiful and depressing, and makes good background music for failed relationships and the like, such as when a Kindred's mortal lover discovers her true nature. From *Substance*.

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age (Holst) - From Holst's symphony *The Planets*, very few pieces of music are as shockingly gloomy as this. With this slow, crawling soundtrack in the background, the players will truly feel Damned.

A Forest (The Cure) - So they wanna go Lupine hunting out in the great outdoors? Not after they hear this one. The throbbing bass and lost, reverberating vocals will paint a rather unpleasant picture of the wilderness ("Suddenly I stop/But I know it's too late/Lost in a forest - all alone"). From *Seventeen Seconds*.

Three Imaginary Boys (The Cure) - Eerie. From their first album (*Boys Don't Cry*), this song evokes pictures of leering, deserted houses and silent churches covered with gargoyles. Robert Smith's voice, crooning in the middle of the gloomy strumming like a demented child, ends on a plaintive "Can you help me?"

Fight Fire with Fire (Metallica) - From the classic thrash album *Ride the Lightning*, this song is fast as hell and a must for gory combat or Diablerie ("Do unto others/as they've done to you/but what the hell is this world coming to?")

Three Days (Jane's Addiction) - When the long dark night of the soul is finally over, when the crisis of the Vampire's humanity has passed - for better or worse, or when Golconda is finally attained, play this. Great for coming down off really hard and tense scenes - this song isn't necessarily happy, but it evokes the peace of resignation nicely. From *Ritual de lo Habitual*.

The Last Beat of My Heart (Siouxsie & the Banshees) - A relaxing yet still haunting song, this is a good first song to play in a session, right when the players are waking up and watching the sun go down and the shadows lengthen. From *Peepshow*.

Kerosene (Big Black) - Another industrial wasteland/Anarch song, it also conveys the stagnation of Vampiric life and futility of struggle ("Nothing to do/But sit around at home/Sit around at home and stare at the walls/Stare at each other and wait till we die"). Good for conveying a mood of senseless violence, such as when two factions who should be working together are manipulated into conflict. From *Atomizer*.

Danse Macabre (Saint-Saens) - Another classic **Vampire** song, the slow, plaintive beginning, gradually

picking up into a whirling crescendo, is ideal for Nosferatu gatherings and Toreador balls alike; the cockcrow at the end will also remind your players of their eternal enemy, the sun.

Cracked (Jesus & Mary Chain) - THE song to play at Malkavian clan gatherings, this song from *Barbed Wire Kisses* features a crunching drone in the middle of a feedback whine like ground glass and ominous vocals that break into a reverberating insane wail at the end.

Shadowplay (Joy Division) - Yet another song from *Unknown Pleasures*, the dirgey bass drone carries this song into gloomy realms of locked doors and unfriendly, staring buildings. Good for building a mood of lurking doom.

The Three Shadows (Part 2) (Bauhaus) - If you can ignore Peter Murphy's comical mispronunciation of the word "Oedipus," this is a really twisted and scary song. Ideal for really eerie and vile parts of the city, as well as when the characters meet an Elder of the Sabbat face to face. From *The Sky's Gone Out*.

I Don't Want to Push It (Sonic Youth) - Desperate and brittle, this is the one to play when the characters are falling in over their head and are starting to freak out; Sonic Youth is one of the weirdest bands around in terms of playing style, and is guaranteed to keep your players on edge. From *Sonic Death*.

Body Count (Ice-T) - The ultimate Anarch song next to "Police Truck." The unrelenting lyrics and speed-metal guitar will whip your Troupe into a frenzy of combat and bloodsucking, hopefully directed at the Elders this song castigates. From *O.G. Original Gangster*.

Trapped Under Ice (Metallica) - Combining manic emotion with a sense of hopelessness and impending doom, this song will frustrate your players to no end if they are staked, in torpor or otherwise imprisoned. From *Ride the Lightning*.

Day of the Lords (Joy Division) - This one is from *Unknown Pleasures* as well (hell, just play the whole album - it's that good). Slow, droning and ominous, this one epitomizes Gehenna, the Jyhad, and the return of the Antediluvians. Good to play when the characters finally realize to their horror that they've been manipulated by a Methusaleh all along, and now she's thirsty

Headhunter (Front 242) - A song from one of the best techno bands around today, Front 242's "Headhunter" will get the characters into predatory mode. Almost cyberpunkish, the mechanical, fluid rhythm lets the characters merge into the crowds of the Rack looking for that special someone ("One: you lock the target/Two: you bait the line/Three: you slowly spread the net/And four: you catch the man").

Paranoid (Black Sabbath) - One of the first heavy metal songs ever written, and in my opinion the best. The crunchy riff and whining distorted guitar is ideal for an Anarch adventure, the despairing, suicidal lyrics about the loss of humanity are suitable for any Chronicle. The line: "Happiness I cannot feel/And love to me is so unreal" perfectly captures the tragedy of Kindred existence. From the album of the same name.

Tin Omen (Skinny Puppy) - A great song for Vampiric battles in an urban hell-zone, this song combines techno/industrial grunge and a classic punk bass beat. The insectoid, screeching vocals are also sinister and unnerving.

Will We Survive? (Swans) - Like most Swans songs, deep, sweeping and utterly hellish - if you were to peer over a bottomless abyss, this song is what would be floating up out of the depths. Good for building tension - something always seems about ready to happen, but not quite. From *White Light from the Mouth of Infinity*.

Marian (Sisters of Mercy) - From the Sisters' first album (*First and Last and Always*), Marian is a moody dirge about emotional collapse and lost love - themes running through many a **Vampire Chronicle**.

The Drowning Man (The Cure) - A stark song devoid of hope, the flat, sorrowful vocals and wall-of-sound ending depict a world slowly sliding into oblivion, which is, perhaps, what will inevitably happen to the Kindred in the long run. A good song to end an adventure with, just to remind them what they are - Vampires, bloodsucking parasites will almost no chance to avoid the Beast. From *Faith*.

The Subtle Weaver

by Stewart Wieck

A noiseless patient spider, I mark'd where on a little promontory it stood isolated, Mark'd how to explore the vacant vast surrounding, It launched forth filament, filament, out of itself, Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them.

- Walt Whitman, *A Noiseless Patient Spider*

From the perspective of the Storyteller, a player and his single little character can seem awfully one-dimensional. Certainly by working within such a solitary frame of reference, the player can forge a powerful bond with this new aspect of his personality, but the permutations and possibilities available to a player cannot come close to rivaling the frame of reference of a Storyteller.

I have said before, and will say again here, that the single most important duty of the Storyteller is to entertain the players. To be effective in this, the Storyteller must use all of the weapons in his arsenal. The greatest of these weapons is his perspective, or the sense of scope and size he can lend to a Chronicle. This is something beyond the power of one poor player with his one poor character.

A player can know the rules better than the Storyteller, be a better roleplayer than the Storyteller, and even have a character central to the action of the Chronicle, but a player cannot give a Chronicle the ability to be anything other than what the Storyteller allows it to become. It's the Storyteller who establishes the ceiling for the potential of the Chronicle, and it's up to the players to live up to the potential.

Telling a good story is obviously important in a storytelling game. That is, after all, what these games are about. The hallmark of the outstanding Storyteller, though, is maintaining the larger story - what we call in *Vampire: The Masquerade* the "Chronicle" - on a continuing basis. It is the Chronicle that allows the events of the stories to resonate within the players. In the *Star Wars* trilogy of movies, Luke's study under Obi-wan Kenobi is a story, but this story acquires immense power when it is woven into the larger tapestry of the Chronicle of *Star Wars*. The fact that Luke must use his new skills with the Force to eventually battle another pupil of Obi-wan's, who also happens to be Luke's father, is the powerful result of a well-planned Chronicle.

The depth of the action in a Chronicle provides contrast for all of the stories that form it. Only with a sense of the scale of the world and the events that take place within it can players fully enjoy the new personas they have created. In other words, there is nothing for them to explore if your world is flat and static. Remember, the character is the only tool that a player has to participate in a storytelling game, so the more you can do to support the character and the player's concept

of it, the greater the involvement of the player in the game and hence the greater the enjoyment the player experiences.

While the strategy of providing a sense of scale for your world may seem like a simple tactic, it can truly become the foundation of the primary goal of the Storyteller -to entertain the player. A Chronicle with a careful attention to detail creates continuity that substantiates the illusion of reality for the players. Such a Chronicle also provides connections, real or perceived, between the characters and other events in the Chronicle. When there are events going on behind scenes that proceed whether or not the characters are involved, then the players, through their characters, suddenly gain a sense of themselves as part of a real world and not just a game.

Finally, the players will develop an appreciation for the amount of time you invest in their Chronicle when they begin to see how events they thought at first to be completely unrelated slowly begin to merge into one big story with one big theme. They thought at first that Luke would simply rescue Princess Leia from the Death Star. Little did they know that the two were actually siblings battling a father who had been corrupted by a Dark Force that had driven their breed of warrior, the Jedi Knight, into near-extinction.

Each and every thread you weave into the tapestry will create a picture that is brighter, more colorful, and more engaging. In the intrigue-ridden world of Vampire: The Masquerade, such a beautiful tapestry is amazingly simple to construct. Just look at the number of different levels of

action presented in Chicago by Night alone. Almost every single Kindred can justify all of the events of his stratum of knowledge and lower in terms of events that he can explain. Some Neonate may hate the Elders of the city because they will tolerate him to live, but little does he know he has been put in this situation by a Sire who himself hates the Elders. But the Sire is in turn directed to create trouble for the Elders by another Kindred involved in the politics of the city anxious to gain a greater position of power. But this Kindred is really only interested in acquiring that position of power because a different Elder needs another supporter in the upper echelon of the city. But that Elder only needs more support in the city so he can keep the Prince in line for a Methuselah who wants to remain hidden for many more years. In this game, nothing is ever as it seems.

However, beware the trap of looking only at the big picture. This is a mistake that has befallen me personally on a number of occasions. Remember that a Chronicle with scope is only a tool for creating good stories that will entertain the players. Don't let it overwhelm the Chronicle by allowing stories that only fit the tight weave of the tapestry. And it may seem silly to suggest that it can happen, but don't let the best patterns be wasted. Let your Chronicle unfold naturally by revealing all of the secrets you have woven. These secrets may seem capable of supplying energy for any number of little stories, but each little story will diminish the power of the big one and at some point they will even make the big story obsolete by robbing it of all its thunder.

In the end, my best advice for a Storyteller intent on doing her best is to create a Chronicle with depth. Create more than just characters and places and events. Establish connections between all of these things that go far below the level you expose the characters to at the beginning. Each story of the Chronicle can then become a process of unveiling these hidden secrets. Undoubtedly, this will delight the players, for these connections will help the theme of your Chronicle move them more deeply.

Appendix:

Enchanted Items for Vampire

Many Kindred view themselves as creatures of magic, supernatural beings brought into existence by forces science can never comprehend. They point to the affinity many Vampires have with occult artifacts to buttress their position. While these items are rare, they do crop up from time to time - usually at the moment they will most aid the characters (or completely mess them up).

Monocle of Clarity - This device, created by the Tremere for the purpose of unmasking Nosferatu spies, appears as a heavy glass monocle framed in gold and silver filigree. By peering through its lens and concentrating, as well as spending a blood point, the gazer effectively has the equivalent of Auspex 7 for the purpose of seeing through Obfuscate and Chimerstry only. On a roll of Perception + Occult against a difficulty assigned by the Storyteller, the user might also be able to see hidden doors, spirits, et al. On any botch with this item, the user has seen **something** something beings of this cosmos were not meant to see, and loses a die's worth of Willpower.

Argent Baton - This potent weapon appears to be a rod about two feet long, plated with silver. In truth, the entire baton is made from silver and inscribed with mystic runes. The device only works at night (no real restriction for most Kindred) and there must be at least a sliver of a moon in the sky; under these conditions, by spending a point of Willpower, the baton becomes imbued with a silvery gleam up and down its length. The baton may then be used as a melee weapon against Lupines, inflicting a number of aggravated

damage dice equivalent to the Strength of the wielder +3. By spending two points of Willpower, the wielder may actually fire a beam of the silvery light at a Lupine, inflicting three dice of aggravated damage at a range of up to 100 yards on a successful roll of Dexterity + Occult with a difficulty of 7. This weapon is essentially useless (except as a club) against any creature but Lupines.

Powder of Rigidity - Made from a variety of ingredients and specifically including the blood of a Gangrel, this powder usually comes in tubes, each tube containing one dose; usually around 1 - 10 tubes will be found. When blown on an individual capable of transformation (Gangrel or other Kindred with Protean, Lupines, Magi), the powder prevents them from exercising their ability to shapeshift. Thus, Lupines

will revert to human or wolf form (depending on their natural form), Protean and Vicissitude users will be unable to use any powers of those discipline, Magi's shapechanging spells will fail, etc. To hit with the powder

requires a roll of Stamina + Firearms, and the victim must be within a range of two yards for every point of Stamina the wielder possesses. To resist the effects, the victim must roll their Self-Control with a difficulty of 9, accumulating more successes than the wielder rolled to hit. The effects of the powder last approximately four hours.

Rowan Ring - This weapon appears to be a simple band of polished wood, worn around the finger. When a command is spoken, the ring expands, sharpens and elongates into a wooden stake extending from the hand of the wielder like an Indian punch dagger. The wielder may then attack with her Brawling or Melee skill, whichever is higher. To activate the device, the wielder must spend a blood point (or Willpower, if the user is a Vampire).

This item is exceedingly useful in missions of assassination, where one must get into a haven without any obvious weapons, and is occasionally given to trusted Neonates by Assamite Elders.

Tapestry of the Blood - This is a legendary item, and has only appeared in a few records of the Kindred. No one knows precisely where the item is located, though the Tremere would pay much to find out. The tapestry is a huge and ornate wall hanging, woven in scintillating hues by obviously expert hands, and adorned with patterns that seem to change as one looks at them. To properly use the item, it must be saturated with at least 10 blood points. It will then show a variety of scenes in its weavings; tales vary as to precisely what can be viewed there, but accounts have stated things as different as the Great Flood, the near future, the founding of the Second City, the secret weaknesses of a mighty Methuselah, and Gehenna.

All the visions, however, relate directly to the Kindred, past, present or future. There is so much to see in the tapestry that gazing into its depths requires a full night and a roll of Perception + Occult; the more successes gained, the more useful or relevant the information acquired. A botch may either give misleading information or lead to the discovery of a horrible truth about the Kindred, resulting in a Derangement.

Elixir of Distillation - a viscous bluish liquid, this item is much in favor by Anarchs. When tossed on an enemy Vampire (roll of Dexterity + Athletics to hit), it will reduce that Cainite's Generation (and all affiliated abilities) by one for every success rolled. All Traits which require a Generation minimum (such as Abilities and Disciplines above 5) will likewise be reduced to the maximum possible

for the new Generation. Dropping below the 13th Generation reduces one's blood pool to nine, but has no other effects. The effects last one hour per success, though some Kindred claim to have encountered a dark, scintillating blue version of the elixir which permanently reduced its victim to a younger generation.

Ring of the Inscrutable Eye - a ring with an Egyptian motif scarab on it, there is a gem in the shape of an eye in the midst of the beetle's carapace. The workmanship of the ring is incredibly ancient, and the ring will feel cold to even a Kindred's flesh. When concentrating on a specific Vampire, there is a 30% chance (1 through 3 on a die) that his location and activities can be determined by a roll of Perception + Occult against a difficulty of 8; the more successes gained, the more exact the information gained.

Whenever checking for a new Vampire to locate with the ring, the 30% chance must be rolled first, but if this roll is successful, then that particular Kindred is always susceptible

to location by the ring, while if it is unsuccessful, then that particular Kindred may never be located through the use of this ring. Note that if a 0 is rolled on the initial roll to see if the wearer can detect a given Vampire, the wearer instead sees a clear vision of herself at the present time.

Two blood points must be spent to activate the ring. There is only one of these rings known to exist. It is unknown why only certain Kindred may be viewed with the ring.

Cloak of the Abalone - made by the Tremere specifically for use against the Toreador, this cloak is dull brown on the outside, but when lifted and the interior displayed, a gorgeous cascade of colors in all shades of the rainbow will be displayed, and lights, patterns and the like will whirl and dance around the wearer. This display is incredibly beautiful, and Toreador who view it must check as per their Clan weakness or be transfixed with rapture.

Bloodstones - found mainly among the Sabbat, these simple, clear crystals let the Kindred who bathed it with a point of her own blood keep track of it wherever it may be. Often placed secretly on enemies or new members of the Sabbat, few members of the Camarilla know of their existence or how to keep them from working.

Waxen Poetica - feared by all who have encountered these little wax tablets, the Waxen Poetica have caused the horrid destruction of more than one of the undead. When washed in a point of blood, the user can spend a Willpower point and throw it at a foe. Upon hitting that foe, the wax latches on and begins to spread across its victim's body. Extremely hot, it begins to cause damage once it has covered at least half of the body (usually after three turns). For every succeeding turn it causes an additional die of aggravated damage, which may be soaked normally. Thus by the 10th turn after it has hit someone, the wax causes seven dice of damage. The wax cannot be removed unless the Storyteller botches its damage roll, in which case it stops growing and begins to cool to the point where the character can peel it off. Note that after six turns it completely covers its victim, prohibiting action and smothering mortals.

Appendix Two:

Lists for the Storyteller

Archetypes

Archetypes have become one of the most popular optional rules in **Vampire**. The following compilation lists those published to date as well as their source. **V** = **Vampire** and **PG** = **The Players Guide**.

Architect (**V**)
 Autocrat (**PG**)
 Autist (**PG**)
 Avant-Garde (**PG**)
 Bon Vivant (**V**)
 Bravo (**V**)
 Caregiver (**V**)
 Cavalier (**V**)
 Child (**V**)
 Competitor (**PG**)
 Confidant (**PG**)
 Conformist (**V**)
 Conniver (**V**)
 Critic (**PG**)
 Curmudgeon (**V**)
 Deviant (**V**)
 Director (**V**)
 Fanatic (**V**)
 Gallant (**V**)
 Jester (**V**)
 Jobsworth (**PG**)
 Judge (**V**)
 Honest-Abe (**PG**)
 Loner (**V**)
 Martyr (**V**)
 Masochist (**PG**)
 Mediator (**PG**)
 Optimist (**PG**)
 Pedagogue (**PG**)
 Penitent (**PG**)
 Perfectionist (**PG**)
 Plotter (**V**)
 Poltroon (**PG**)
 Praise-Seeker (**PG**)
 Rebel (**V**)
 Simpleton (**PG**)
 Slob (**PG**)
 Survivor (**V**)
 Sycophant (**PG**)
 Traditionalist (**V**)

Visionary (V)

Abilities

Primary Talents

Acting
Alertness
Athletics
Brawl
Dodge
Empathy
Intimidation
Leadership
Streetwise
Subterfuge

Primary Skills

Animal Ken
Drive
Etiquette
Firearms
Melee
Music
Repair
Security
Stealth
Survival

Primary Knowledges

Bureaucracy
Computer
Finance
Investigation
Law
Linguistics
Medicine
Occult
Politics
Science

Secondary Talents

Artistic Expression
Diplomacy
Intrigue
Mimicry
Poetic Expression
Search
Seduction
Sense Deception
Scan

Scrounging
Singing
Instruction
Ventriloquism

Secondary Skills

Acrobatics
Animal Training
Archery
Artillery
Blacksmith
Boat Handling
Brewing/Distilling
Bribery
Camouflage
Carousing
Carpentry
Climbing
Cooking
Dancing
Debate
Demolitions
Disguise
Escapology
Falconry
Fast-Talk
Fast-Draw
First Aid
Fishing
Forgery
Gambling
Game playing
Gunsmithing
Haggling
Heavy Weapons
Herbalism
Hunting
Hypnotism
Interrogation
Jeweler
Journalism
Leather working
Lip Reading
Lock Picking
Martial Arts Weapons
Masquerade
Mechanic
Meditation
Orienteering
Parachuting

Photography
Pickpocket
Pilot
Police Procedure
Pottery
Psychoanalysis
Public Speaking
Research
Ride
Scuba
Sign Language
Skiing
Sleight-of-Hand
Speed-Reading
Style
Swimming
Throwing
Tracking
Traps
Melee

Secondary Knowledges

Accounting
Alchemy
Anthropology
Area Knowledge
Archaeology
Architecture
Art History
Astrology
Astronomy
Biology
Chemistry
Criminology
Cryptography
Economics
Electronics
Engineering
Faerie Lore
Forensics
Geology
Heraldry
History
Kindred Lore
City Secrets
Literature
Lupine Lore
Magus Lore
Mathematics
Metallurgy

Meteorology
Naturalist
Physics
Psychology
Spirit Lore
Theology
Toxicology

Disciplines

At the heart and soul of every Vampire lie the Disciplines, those mighty powers of the Undead which help keep them separate from humanity. The following list includes all the Disciplines published to date and their source. V = **Vampire**, PG = **The Players Guide**, HH = **The Hunters Hunted**, and SH = **The Storytellers Handbook**

Animalism (V)

Level Power

- 1 Song of the Beast
- 2 Call of the Wild
- 3 Sweet Whispers
- 4 Sharing of Whispers
- 5 The Roving Beast
- 6 Species Speech, Shepherd's Innocence, Animal Succulence, Shared Soul
- 7 Conquer the Beast, Master's Voice
- 8 Twin Spirits, Mass Summons
- 9 Flesh Bond
- 10 Army of Beasts

Auspex (V)

- 1 Heightened Senses
- 2 Aura Perception
- 3 The Spirit's Touch
- 4 Telepathy
- 5 Astral Projection
- 6 Telepathic Communication, Clairvoyance, The Dreaming, Eagle's Sight, Prediction, Sense Emotion
- 7 Soul Scan, Spirit Link
- 8 Psychic Assault, Omniscience
- 9 Precognition
- 10 Pulse of the Canaille

Bardo (HH)

- 1 Restore Humanitas
- 2 Banishing Sign of Thoth
- 3 Gift of Apis
- 4 Pillar of Osiris
- 5 Paradox
- 6 Boon of Anubis
- 7 Bring Forth the Dawn

- 8 Mummification Ritual
- 9 Ra's Blessing
- 10 Rebirth

Chimerstry (PG)

- 1 Ignis Fatuus
- 2 Fata Morgana
- 3 Apparition
- 4 Permanency
- 5 Horrid Reality
- 6 Fatuus Mastery, Mass Reality
- 7 Far Fatuus
- 8 Pseudo Blindness
- 9 Sensory Deprivation
- 10 Reality

Daimoinon (SE)

- 1 Sense the Sin
- 2 Fear of the Void Below
- 3 Flames of the Netherworld
- 4 Psychomachia
- 5 Curse
- 6 Ignore the Searing Flames
- 7 Summon the Herald of Hell
- 8 Great Curse
- 9 Call the Great Beast

Dominate (V)

- 1 Command
- 2 Mesmerize
- 3 The Forgetful Mind
- 4 Conditioning
- 5 Possession
- 6 Obedience, Loyalty, Rationalize, Tranquillity
- 7 Mob Rule
- 8 Far Mastery
- 9 Best Intentions
- 10 Puppet Master

Necromancy (PG)

- 1 Insight
- 2 Summon Spirit
- 3 Compel
- 4 Haunting
- 5 Soul Stealing
- 6 Zombie
- 7 Torment
- 8 Soul Exchange
- 9 Possession

- 10 Death Pact

Obeah (PG)

- 1 Panacea
- 2 Anesthetic Touch
- 3 Neutral Guard
- 4 Treat the Sick Mind
- 5 Unburdening of the Bestial Soul
- 6 Renewed Vigor, Pain for Pleasure
- 7 Repulsion
- 8 Vitæ Block
- 9 Spirit Marionette
- 10 Resurrection

Obfuscate (V)

- 1 Cloak of Shadows
- 2 Vanish
- 3 One Thousand Faces
- 4 Unseen Presence
- 5 Cloaking the Gathering
- 6 Mind blank, Soul Mask, Conceal
- 7 Cache ,Cloak
- 8 Old Friends
- 9 Create Name
- 10 Memories Fading Glimpse

Presence (V)

- 1 Awe
- 2 Entrancement
- 3 Compulsion by Attraction
- 4 Summon
- 5 Majesty
- 6 Love, Enrage
- 7 Mind Numb, Mask Empathy
- 8 Invoke Frenzy
- 9 Heart of the City
- 10 Dream World

Protean (V)

- 1 Gleam of Red Eyes
- 2 Wolf's Claws
- 3 Earth Meld
- 4 Shadow of the Beast
- 5 Mist
- 6 Flesh of Marble, Earth Control
- 7 Homunculus, Form of the Ghost
- 8 Movement of the Slowed Body
- 9 Dual Form
- 10 Body of the Sun

Quietus (PG)

- 1 Silence of Death
- 2 Weakness
- 3 Diseased
- 4 Blood Agony
- 5 Taste of Death
- 6 Blood Sweat, Blood Empathy
- 7 Leech
- Foul Blood
- 8 Blood Clot
- 9 Erosion
- 10 Immaculate Vitæ

Sanguinus (SH)

- 1 Brother's Blood
- 2 Borrow Organs
- 3 Coordinate Attacks
- 4 Concentrate Generation
- 5 Coagulate Entity
- 6-10 There are no Blood Brothers above the Eighth Generation.

Serpentis (PG)

- 1 The Eyes of the Serpent
- 2 The Tongue of the Serpent
- 3 Mummify
- 4 Form of the Serpent
- 5 The Heart of Darkness
- 6 Temptation, Obsession
- 7 Phobia
- 8 Corruption
- 9 Form of Corruption
- 10 Mark of Damnation

Thaumaturgy (V)

The Taste of Blood (V)

The Lure of Flames (V)

Movement of Mind (V)

Weather Control (V)

Path of Conjuring (PG)

Neptune's Might (PG)

- 1 Eyes of the Sea
- 2 Jail of Water
- 3 Dehydrate
- 4 Flowing Wall
- 5 Blood to Water

Spirit Thaumaturgy (PG)

- 1 Evil Eye

- 2 Spirit Eyes
- 3 Spirit Slave
- 4 Fetishes
- 5 Journey

Elemental Mastery (PG)

- 1 Elemental Strength
- 2 Wooden tongues
- 3 Animate the Unmoving
- 4 Elemental Form
- 5 Summon Elemental

Corruption (PG)

- 1 Contradict
- 2 Disfiguration
- 3 Change Mind
- 4 Cripple
- 5 Corrupt Soul

Visceratika (SH)

- 1 Whispers of the Chamber
- 2 Skin of the Chameleon
- 3 Voices of the Castle
- 4 Bond with Terra
- 5 Stonestrength
- 6 Rockheart, Dark Statue
- 7 Crawling Chamber
- 8-10 There are no known Gargoyles beyond the Sixth Generation

Thaumaturgy Rituals

Thaumaturgists find rituals an extremely effective way of handling many situations. Through the years they have created hundreds, though many die with their creator, never to be passed along. The following are some of those which have stood the test of time. The listing also includes the sourcebook where the ritual can be found. V = Vampire, CN = Chicago by Night, MN = Milwaukee by Night, PG = The Players Guide, HH = The Hunters Hunted, DM = Awakening: Diablerie Mexico.

Level One

- Defense of the Sacred Haven (V)
- Wake with Morning's Freshness (V)
- Communicate with Kindred Sire (V)
- Deflection of Wooden Doom (V)
- Devil's Touch (V)
- Purity of Flesh (PG)
- The Rite of Introduction (PG)
- Engaging the Vessel of Transference (PG)
- Rebirth of Mortal Vanity (PG)
- Incantation of the Shepherd (PG)

Level Two

Calling the Restless Spirit (CN)
Learning the Mind Enslumbered (CN)
Blood Walk (PG)
Ward Versus Ghouls (PG)
Donning the Mask of Shadows (PG)
Principle Focus of Vitae Infusion (PG)
Mourning Life Curse (PG)

Level Three

Eyes of the Past (CN)
Illusion of Peaceful Death (CN)
Gentle Mind (CN)
Ritual of Darkness (MN)
The Watcher (MN)
Bladed Hands (MN)
Illusion of Perfection (MN)
Haunted House (MN)
Ward Versus Lupine (PG)
Pavis of Foul Presence (PG)
Shaft of Belated Quiescence (PG)
Flesh of Fiery Touch (PG)
Noncorporeal Passage (PG)

Level Four

Innocence of the Child's Heart (CN)
Rending Sweet Earth (CN)
Protean Curse (CN)
Puissant Shield (DM)
Ward Versus Kindred (PG)
Binding the Beast (PG)
Heart of Stone (PG)
Splinter Servant (PG)
Bone of Lies (PG)
Invigorate Vitæ (HH)
Geas (HH)

Level Five

Curse of Clytaemnestra (MN)
Quenching the Lambent Flame (DM)
Escape to a True Friend (PG)
Ward Versus Spirit (PG)
Blood Contract (PG)
Stone Slumber (PG)
One Mind of the Covens (PG)
Sway Beast (HH)

Level Six

Raise the Dead (PG)
Ritual of Holding (PG)
Utter Destruction of Bonds (PG)

Level Seven

Divorcing the Soul (PG)

Level Eight

Chain of the Blood Line (PG)
Bone of the Kindred (PG)

Level Nine

Weapon of the Kindred Soul (PG)

Level Ten

Invulnerable Weakness (PG)

Merits and Flaws

Psychological

Merits

Code of Honor 1 pt.
Higher Purpose 1 pt.
Beserker 2 pt.
Dual Nature 2 pt.
Flaws
Intolerance 1 pt.
Over-confident 1 pt.
Mind Phobia 1 pt.
Prey Exclusion 1 pt.
Speech Impediment 1 pt.
Shy 1 pt.

Compulsion 1 pt.
Soft Hearted 1 pt.
Nightmares 1 pt.
Dark Secret 1 pt.
Low Self-image 1 pt.
Short Fuse 2 pt.
Vengeance 2 pt.
Hatred 3 pt.
Severe Phobia 3 pt.
Driving Goal 3 pt.

Mental

Merits

Common Sense 1 pt.
Concentration 1 pt.
Lightning Calculator 1 pt.
Time Sense 1 pt.
Light Sleeper 2 pt.
Eidetic Memory 2 pt.
Iron Will 3 pt.
Calm Heart 3 pt.
Self-Confident 5 pt.

Flaws

Deep Sleeper 1 pt.
Confused 2 pt.
Amnesia 2 pt.

Weak Willed 2 pt.
Absent Minded 3 pt.

Perception

Merits

Acute Hearing 1 pt.
Acute Sense of Smell 1 pt.
Acute Sense of Taste 1 pt.
Acute Vision 1 pt.

Flaws

Color Blindness 1 pt.
Hard of Hearing 1 pt.
Bad Sight 2 pt.
One Eye 2 pt.
Deaf 4 pt.
Blind 6 pt.

Aptitudes

Merits

Crack Driver 1 pt.
Mechanical Aptitude 1 pt.
Computer Aptitude 1 pt.
Pitiable 1 pt.
Eat Food 1 pt.
Ambidextrous 1 pt.
Natural Linguist 2 pt.
Daredevil 3 pt.
Fast Learner 3 pt.

Flaws

Illiterate 1 pt.
Inept 5 pt.
Unskilled 5 pt.
Uneducated 5 pt.

Supernatural

Merits

Inoffensive To Animals. 1 pt.
True Love 1 pt.
Danger Sense 2 pt.
Clairaudience 2 pt.
Faerie Affinity 2 pt.
Magic Resistance 2 pt.
Occult Library 2 pt.
Unbondable 3 pt.
Werewolf Companion 3 pt.
Luck 3 pt.
Spirit Mentor 3 pt.
Destiny 4 pt.
Charmed Existence 5 pt.

Guardian Angel 6 pt.
True Faith 7 pt.

Flaws

Cursed 1 -5 pts.
Taint Of Corruption 1 pt.
Repulsed By Garlic 1 pt.
Magic Susceptibility 2 pt.
Repelled By Crosses 3 pt.
Can't Cross Running Water 3 pt.
Haunted 3 pt.
Dark Fate 5 pt.
Light Sensitive 5 pt.

Kindred Ties

Merits

Special Gift 1 -3 pts.
Boon 1 -3 pts.
Prestigious Sire 1 pt.
Reputation 2 pt.
Pawn 3 pt.
Clan Friendship 3 pt.

Flaws

Enemy 1 -5 pts.
Sire's Resentment 1 pt.
Twisted Upbringing 1 pt.
Infamous Sire 1 pt.
Insane Sire 1 pt.
Mistaken Identity 1 pt.
Diabolic Sire 2 pt.
Clan Enmity 2 pt.
Notoriety 3 pt.

Mortal Society

Merits

Mansion 2 pt.
Nightclub 2 pt.
Media Ties 2 pt.
Police Ties 3 pt.
Political Ties 3 pt.
Underworld Ties 3 pt.
Corporate Ties 3 pt.
Judicial Ties 2 pt.
Church Ties 3 pt.
Corporation CEO 5 pt.

Flaws

Anachronism 2 pt.
Ward 3 pt.
Hunted 4 pt.

Physical

Merits

Double-Jointed 1 pt.

"Baby Face" 2 pt.

Misplaced Heart 2 pt.

Efficient Digestion 3 pt.

Huge Size 4 pt.

Flaws

Allergic 1 -3 pts.

Short 1 pt.

Disfigured 2 pt.

Monstrous 2 pt.

Selective Digestion 2 pt.

Permanent Wound 3 pt.

Thin Blooded 3 pt.

Child 3 pt.

Lame 3 pt.

Deformity 3 pt.

One Arm 3 pt.

Mute 4 pt.

Paraplegic 6 pt.

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