20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE



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THE MASQUERADE

A
BEAST
I
AM
LEST
A
BEAST
I
BECOME

A Storytelling Game of Personal Horror


TROY BRADSHAW
©91

For twenty years, you've been reading and listening to us talk about **Vampire: The Masquerade.** This time, we thought it was the community's turn to talk. We approached a number of rabid **Vampire** fans from all over the world (some of which have since come to work for us), and asked them to tell us how this game touched their lives.

This, then, is the real story of **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

My passion for vampires and roleplaying personal horror stories collided when I was given [the] 2nd Edition **Vampire: The Masquerade** for my 16th birthday.

Vampire: The Masquerade managed to enhance my imagination far beyond any other RPG: I got so involved that I led the largest Spanish WoD online community, where creativity and dreams were shared by hundreds of people.

In my opinion and experience, **Vampire: The Masquerade** has made history in vampire mythology, but more importantly, it has been a great source for inspiration, friendships, feelings, and love.

Lorenzo Melchor (London, UK)

Make no mistake, the book you hold in your hands is a beast, at once beguiling and delightfully dangerous. It will seduce you into a life of dreaming as it did to me twenty years ago. I owe **Vampire: The Masquerade**, and its creators, much of my livelihood. I know that reads a tad gauche, but it's true. White Wolf's storytelling game of blood-drinking immortals inspired me to build for its players a community and produce a successful trading card game. Vampire has left an indelible mark on my creative work and given me a career in the game industry, for which I am eternally grateful.

Matthew Burke
Founder, Camarilla Fan Club

My first contact with **Vampire** was five years ago and it was one [of] the first RPG[s] I played. The group ended up being cancelled but later on I was invited by a friend to play in a **Vampire** LARP game. That was three years ago and today I can say that some of my closest friends are because of this game. It's a hobby that never gets old and the reason why I have met many wonderful people all over the world and shared awesome time[s], laughter and good moments with them.

Maja Zaccara (San Paulo, Brazil)
Assistant Head Coordinator, One World by Night

In 1993, I stood in front of the White Wolf booth at GenCon as Enzo Giovanni trying to get, by hook or by crook, as much Pentex stock as possible — all in the hope of landing my first hobby game gig writing for my favorite intellectual property. Eighteen years and one design career later, **Vampire** is still the absolute standard of what's exciting and cool in gaming. Without **Vampire**, tens of thousands of gamers would have never learned that there is a far greater world to imagine than that of hack and slash.

Shawn "Enzo" Carnes
Executive Director of Janitorial, Pentex Corporation

1992: I wear social stigma like a crown of shit. "Masquerade," the green marble book whispers. I embrace the Eldritch leather chrysalis. Suddenly sex, drugs and rock'n roleplaying is more than just a play on words. I breathe free.

1995: The Umeå bomb-squad descends on Elysium, robotic camera spots Anarch firebomb. Moral panic ensues. They call us "The Army of The Abandoned" and I see how powerful we are. "This game will change the world!"

2011: Looking in the mirror, I understand. The Masquerade didn't change the world. It changed us.

Martin Elricsson (Stockholm, Sweden)

Vampires. Always in the collective imagination as charismatic and seductive people… and so it was. When I discovered **Vampire: The Masquerade** it stunned me: so rich of shades, poetry, adventure, intrigues. It was as a treasure to discover. And it made me feel as a child, it made me meet a lot of people playing together, year by year. Grouping friends around a table, rolling [dice], acting as [vampire] Actors in a LARP: well... it's really wonderful! It brought me a lot of new friends. Did it change my life? Yes, sure! [I'm] positive.

Caterina "Lara" Casapieri (Milan, Italy)
National Coordinator, Camarilla Italia

In 1995, I'd fallen in with some friends I'd met over a local BBS, who were big D&D players. They introduced me to **Vampire: The Masquerade**, which blew my mind. I realized everything had changed when I got pissed off after my character had gotten diablerized by another player's character. This was a new medium for telling stories. Everything snowballed from there. I'm now forced [to] realize that I've been playing these games for more than half my life. I wouldn't be who I am now without them. I am honored and excited to help celebrate this 20th anniversary with so many other fans.

Ian A. A. Watson
Webmaster, Wolf-Spoor.org Fan Site

Back in the 90s, my little cousin invited me to watch *Kindred: The Embraced* at my uncle's. Little did I know how much **Vampire: The Masquerade** would positively influence my life.

I joined a WoD online community, which I helped to develop and turn into the biggest one in Spanish. Amongst other things, I improved my organizational, leadership, and mediation skills, quite impressive for a mild Asperger like me.

More importantly, I have met those who are nowadays my best friends. I have met the love of my life. The 20th Anniversary is a life celebration for every fan.

Dhaunae De Vir (London, UK)

I realized I was gay in high school, but felt isolated and afraid to tell my conservative father. **Vampire** provided escape into a world that understood the stress I felt, pretending to be something I wasn't. (I joked that I lived *Homosexual: The Masquerade*.) Eventually, I came out to my dad and, eventually, he accepted me.

Vampire taught me ambition and courage. As an adult, I've achieved my dream of becoming a game designer and I'm out in the industry. The world is growing more accepting, but I hope this new edition will find those who still need to masquerade.

Link Hughes
Systems Designer, World of Darkness

Vampire: the Masquerade has turned out to be a factor in some of my life-determining points over the last 20 years. From meeting my first long-term girlfriend at a Camarilla session to picking up my love for DJing again because of a Camarilla benefit (and eventually turning DJing into my full-time profession), lots of good memories are attached to **V:tM**. I can't begin to list the number of life-long friends I made through the game, how it taught me RPGs could be about more than a dungeon bash, and of course, the hours and hours of fun I had with it.

David "DJ Hive" Benoy (Belgium)
VampireParty.com

Vampire: the Masquerade has given me the possibility to meet people from all over the world who love to embrace their childhood with a grown up version of "[playing h]ouse." It has been a wonderful experience filled with fun and good times, both in character and out of character as we trek across the country, exploring archeological sites through a darker story.

Talia Hanselman (Israel)
Admissions Coordinator, One World by Night

When I was first asked to write a blurb about how **Vampire: The Masquerade** changed my life my initial thought was "How am I supposed to sum up my whole life in 100 words". From **The Eternal Struggle** to **The Masquerade**, **Laws of the Night** and **Mind's Eye Theatre**, this world has been an integral part of my life since the mid-nineties. What started as a game around a table quickly became a hobby, a lifestyle and culminated in a career and a move from Sweden to the US where I met my wife and formed a family. The first 20 years of **Vampire** has given me the best and most defining moments of my life, and I hope that over the next 20 years I can be part of creating equally amazing experiences for you all.

Jon "Swede" Selin
Lead Game Designer, World of Darkness

I became a gamer instead of being a "gamer's girlfriend" because of **Vampire**. In 1996, I watched a Camarilla LARP in Austin, TX and bought my first RPG book the next day. Friends I made that night are part of my life today and I have met other people around the world because of this game. Most importantly, nine years later, I was invited to join the company, then was given the opportunity to be a White Wolf writer. That night, this game, changed the course of my life. For that, I will always be grateful.

Kelley Barnes
Camarilla Club Director (2005-2010)
Freelance Writer

Vampire: the Masquerade has played a big part in my life throughout the years. In 1991 it captured my imagination when I was in high school. In 1995, while I was in college, I played in and ran some of the greatest **Vampire** games. In 1999 I met the woman who would become my wife when she joined a **Vampire** game I was running. In 2003 I joined the online White Wolf community and it wasn't long before word spread that I could make custom character sheets. Vampire has and will always be a great influence in my life.

Chris "Mr. Gone" Leland (Seymour, Indiana)

[…] 20 years later, **Vampire** is still relevant to us. It isn't often that a game of pretend creates the opportunity to forge lifelong commitments, but I look at **Vampire** and see that's *exactly* what it did. The fact that our group of fans continues to grow and expand shows that the respite we craved 20 years ago is still needed, still valuable, today. So thank you, **Vampire**, for all the memories, the opportunities, the laughs and tears. Thank you White Wolf, for giving us another opportunity to revisit it, in such an amazing format. Happy 20th Birthday **Vampire**.

Ric Connely
Chairman of the USA Board of Directors,
The Camarilla Fan Club

I first discovered **Vampire: The Masquerade** in college and have not looked back, except in fond memory of all of the friends I have made and the places I have traveled through what went from a counterculture to a culture all of its own. As the 20th Anniversary approaches, it hardly feels like that long for those of us who are still a part of this world we have grown up with, shared with friends, and developed into something deserving of such jubilant celebration. I know I speak for not just myself, but all of the friends I have made when I give a sincere thanks to everyone out there who made all of this possible and that we look forward to 20 more years in this endless night.

Robert Crosby
Head Coordinator, One World by Night

I started playing **Vampire** in 1993 and was amazed! The freedom of character and story really appealed to me. There is great potential in creating a world that challenges, not only the characters, but the players. Instead of the characters being secondary to the story, the story is a direct result of the players' actions. I take great pride in turning perceived realities on their head so that the players never really know what's next. The greatest reward is when the players finish a story and look like they just walked through a hurricane and they say "WOW!"

David Martin
Alpha, The Wrecking Crew

This book has taken me into some weird, beautiful places since I picked it up twenty years ago. Not only that, but it changed my mundane reality into a playfield of dark imagination. It taught me how by our creative will alone we shape the world. It was, and still remains, the philosopher's stone for an urban alchemist. No other game has had such a lasting impact on my life, friendships and professional career.

Teemu Vilen
Content Director, World of Darkness

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the **Vampire**, World of Darkness, and White Wolf communities. It is because of you that this book exists. Thank you.

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Eddy's Dedication

To Michelle. Without you, I would not have **Vampire**. Without **Vampire**, I would not have you.

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Check out White Wolf online at http://www.white-wolf.com

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BOOK ONE - THE RIDDLE

Introduction 5
Chapter One: A World of Darkness 13
Chapter Two: Sects and Clans 37

BOOK TWO - THE BECOMING

Chapter Three: Character and Traits 77
Chapter Four: Disciplines 127
Chapter Five: Rules 245
Chapter Six: Systems and Drama 257
Chapter Seven: Morality 309

BOOK THREE - THE PERMUTATIONS

Chapter Eight: Storytelling 345
Chapter Nine: The Others 369
Chapter Ten: Bloodlines 393
Appendix 479



to w.h.,

from your most devoted servant:

Many years have passed and I fervently hope that time will have dulled somewhat the distressing memories you carry. I dare to send you this in a spirit of supplication; while your forgiveness is too much to ask, I crave at least your understanding. I owe you some kind of explanation for the events which so shattered your blameless life.

Although I exhibited precious little Menschwert before you and your companions, the flame of Humanitas still burns in my breast, albeit erratically. Time and nature both struggle to extinguish it, thus completing my descent into the Inferno of madness and bestiality. I must guard my soul well – as well as any priest – for any lapse in vigilance lets in the Beast, with results which you yourself have seen.

I know it is impossible to atone; an eternity of pious prayer is too short a time. However, as a mark of penitence, I offer you the enclosed document, the act of which makes me a traitor to my own kind. I pray you may find something in its pages to help you understand the torment I inflicted upon you, and by understanding, perhaps, dispel some little amount of the pain. The tone, I fear, is somewhat dry; a soldier has little need for pleasing tricks of poesy to beguile a reader. I have merely set down that which I know, as well as I may.

I owe you a debt which can never be discharged. If at any time I may be of service to you or your family, I am at your command.

Semper Servus,





BOOK ONE: THE RIDDLE

I cried tears of love as I,
with sharp things,
sacrificed that which was the first part of my joy,
my brother.

And the Blood of Abel covered the altar
and smelled sweet as it burned.

But my Father said,
"Cursed are you, Caine,
who killed your brother.
As I was cast out so shall you be."



Introduction

"No one holds command over me. No man. No god. No Prince. What is a claim of age for ones who are immortal? What is a claim of power for ones who deny death? Call your damnable hunt. We shall see who I drag screaming to hell with me."

- Günter Dörn, *Das Ungeheuer Darin*

Let's face it: If you're reading this book, you almost certainly have a history with **Vampire**, and with White Wolf's Storyteller games in general. We're not going to spend word count on "What is roleplaying?" or other elementary principles of the hobby — this is stuff you already know, and if you don't, there are tons of websites where you can get that information. Instead, we're going to spend more space in **Vampire: The Masquerade – 20th Anniversary Edition** on all of the stuff that's usable to you — all of the rules and setting that form the core of the **Vampire** experience, plus expanded Disciplines, scores of bloodlines (past and present), tweaked rules based on feedback from the **Vampire** community, and bits and pieces from here and there that should prove useful. Sure, we'll go over the central concepts of **Vampire**, but after that, we're going to be in high gear.

What This Book Is

A Classic Experience: Call to mind the first time you picked up **Vampire**, when you first became immersed in the World of Darkness. A quick poll around the office showed that none of us could stop thinking about the game, constantly connecting the dots between real-world events and the intricate undead conspiracy. This edition aims to tap into what made us fall in love with **Vampire** in the first place. Whether your fondest memories of the game are a day or a decade old, we want to take you back to the time when the shadows loomed long and the vast potential of the terrifying, *thrilling* world of the Kindred first beckoned. We won't be chasing metaplot through a library of supplements or advancing any storylines. We want the pure, undiluted essence of **Vampire**.

A Zeitgeist: Vampire exploded into hobby games in 1991, and it very much evinced the gothic and punk subcultures from which it drew, with their own roots from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s. Remember the classic archetypes and breathe new life into them: skinheads, goths, street preachers, metalheads, punks, wild-eyed poets, gangsters, urban primitives, dapper mods, eerie pagans, and every icon who made for a memorable character in this snapshot of time.

A World of Darkness: Vampire evoked at once an urban alienation and neo-mystic sense of belonging. It was high society and the low life. It was angst and monstrosity and sketchy drugs and a dangerous flirtation

with a femme fatale who dragged you into a Damned immortality of blasphemous power... and the urges of the implacable Beast. Gargoyles and gothic architecture. Soaring skyscrapers and dilapidated tenements. Cops and junkies. Corrupt senators and seductive bohemian artistes. Razorblades and torn fishnets. Leather jackets, a broken rosary, and a stolen revolver with the serial number filed off. Herein are the horrifying, Byzantine, lurid backdrops against which all of the dramas of the Kindred play out, and we're going to revel in their decadent opulence and trenchant squalor.

A Thank You: This year is the 20th anniversary of **Vampire**, and we certainly wouldn't be here without the loyalty and enthusiasm of the people who played the game in its various incarnations throughout the years. Metaphorically, this book is White Wolf at a bar with the long-time players and we're sharing a drink, telling stories, and remembering why we became friends in the first place. Tell us about your character.

Oh Yeah, The Metric System

The reality is that most of us who have worked on **Vampire** are Americans, and we write what we know. But we have a lot of very passionate European fans. Time and again through the process of writing **Vampire: The Masquerade – 20th Anniversary Edition**, we were asked "Can you *please* stop using your stupid Imperial system and put everything into metric?"

Well, we did both. Where there's an Imperial measurement, we tried to put the metric equivalent nearby, so it's one less thing you have to worry about when you're in the middle of diablerizing the Prince of Stockholm. But this isn't a math class — rather than have scores of "62.35 liter" comments littering things up, we rounded them to the nearest manageable number. The conversions aren't exact, and they aren't meant to be; like a lot of things in Storyteller games, the rules are a little vague so there's room for your story at the table.

Live-Action

Although **Vampire** started off as a game that takes place around a tabletop, over the past twenty years a massive and thriving community of live-action role-play (or "LARP") has taken the game in whole new directions. Many such troupes use our **Mind's Eye Theatre** rules for their games or a variation of these tabletop rules, but there are plenty of others that use custom rules while keeping the **Vampire** setting to create their own modern gothic chronicles. There are even organizations like The Camarilla and One World By Night that connect troupes in different cities into massive chronicles covering the entire globe. Other LARP games have come and gone, each with their own communities, but the appeal of dressing up as one of the Kindred and acting out the machinations of the undead has been consistent throughout most of **Vampire**'s history. In fact, if you're reading this, odds are good that even if you haven't played in a **Vampire** LARP, you've likely heard of them. Why has the appeal of dressing up and pretending to be a vampire lasted so long?

Many other LARPs involving imagining a fantasy world, a historical setting, or a place set in the far future. These games are fun in their own right, but they require more costuming and props to communicate the setting to everyone and get them on the same page. Because World of Darkness games take place in our modern world, today, there's less of a leap needed to get everyone imagining what's going on. It also means a lower barrier to entry. A fresh player can show up in a T-shirt and jeans and play a young, rebellious Brujah without breaking the flow for the other players. He can look up something on his phone or talk about recent news while remaining in character. It's easier to integrate our world into the World of Darkness, which makes it easier to jump in and start playing.

On the other hand, dressing up in an elaborate costume *is* lots of fun, and vampires can do that just as well. That Brujah in the T-shirt can argue politics with a Ventrue in a frock coat, while they are overheard by a Nosferatu dressed in an elaborate cloak and mask, and it all makes sense. The clash of styles and history resonates with the ancient-but-modern culture of vampires as a whole, instead of detracting from it. And the blend doesn't even have to be historical — vampires from a wide variety of cultures and languages can plot and scheme against each other with equal aplomb.






Finally, the eternal political tension in **Vampire** means that there's always someone to piss off, and there's always someone else that can capitalize from that. Many LARPs are either full-on open warfare between the players or completely team-oriented against outside forces, but **Vampire** creates a constant churn of loyalties, an ever-shifting web of intrigue and favor that encourages conflict without constantly breaking out into bloodshed. Tonight's social outcast might be tomorrow night's Prince, which means that players always have someone new to talk to, and someone else new to snub.

Safeguards

Despite the wide variety of live-action games out there, there are some rules common between them to ensure that live-action is safe and enjoyable for all participants and bystanders.

• **No Touching:** All combat and physical interaction is generally handled through the rules. Players must never strike, grapple, or otherwise touch anyone during the game — some games allow some consensual touching in specific instances, but you can never go wrong by not touching in the first place. It is the Storyteller's responsibility to call a time-out if one or more players get overly rambunctious.

• **No Weapons:** Props such as hats, period dress, and canes are great in a live-action game. Weapons aren't. No knives, no swords, and nothing that even remotely resembles a firearm should be carried – law enforcement generally doesn't take "but we were playing a game" as a good excuse. Even bringing fake swords, squirt guns, or foam-rubber weapons can lead to confusion and panicked phone calls from outsiders. If your character must carry a weapon, take an index card and write "Gun" or "Sword" or whatever on it; during combat challenges, present the card to the Storyteller, who will adjudicate its use in play.

• **Play in a Designated Area:** Live-action is meant to be played in a home or other pre-designated spot. Don't involve bystanders in the game, and make sure everyone in the area, or who passes through the area, understands exactly what you're doing. Even though the concept of a live-action game is a lot more mainstream now than it was when **Vampire** started, a game can look suspicious, disturbing, or even frightening to those who aren't aware of what's going on. Always be polite to people outside the game.

• **Know When to Stop:** If the Storyteller calls for a time-out or other break in the action, stop immediately. The Storyteller is still the final arbiter of all events in the game. Likewise, when the game is over for the night, use it as a good opportunity to take out your fangs and have dinner and drinks with the other players to swap war stories (and maybe engage in a little braggadocio).

• **It's Only a Game**: Live-action is for having fun. If a rival wins, if a character dies, if a plan goes awry, it's not the end of the world. Sometimes folks like to get together outside the game and talk about it, and there's nothing wrong with that. But calling your clanmate up at four in the morning to ask for her assistance in your Primogen bid is taking things too far. Remember, everyone's doing this to have fun.

Live-action can be one of the richest and most satisfying storytelling experiences, if handled maturely and responsibly. Many of us have been playing it for years, and have made a lot of life-long friends through playing undead bastards out to screw each other over. Here's to twenty more years of costumes, dental adhesive, and political overthrows!

What is a Vampire?

In **Vampire**, players assume the personas of vampires — the immortal bloodsuckers of the horror genre — and guide these characters through a world virtually identical to our own. But these aren't quite the vampires you might know from *Dracula* or *Twilight*. The vampires that exist now — or Kindred, or Cainites, as they commonly call themselves — are both similar to and different from what we might expect. In many ways, vampires resemble the familiar monsters of myth,

cinema, folklore, and fiction. However — as many an intrepid vampire-hunter has learned to his sorrow — not all of the stories about vampires are true.

• **Vampires are immortal.** True. While they can be killed (a very difficult process), they do not age or die from natural causes. They don't need food such as humans eat, and they don't need to breathe.

• **Vampires are living dead and must sustain themselves with the blood of the living.** True. A vampire is clinically dead — its heart doesn't beat, it doesn't breathe, its skin is cold, it doesn't age — and yet it thinks, and walks, and plans, and speaks… and hunts and kills. To sustain its artificial immortality, the vampire must periodically consume blood, preferably human blood. Some penitent vampires eke out an existence from animal blood, and some ancient vampires must hunt and kill others of their kind to nourish themselves, but most vampires consume the blood of humanity. *Our* blood.

Vampires drain their prey of blood through the use of retractable fangs, which Cainites develop as soon as they first become undead. Each vampire can also mystically lick closed the wounds made by their fangs, thus concealing the evidence of their feeding.

Blood is all-important to the Kindred, for it is both the crux of their existence and the seat of their power. Mortal food, mortal air, mortal love — all of these things are meaningless to a vampire. Blood is the Kindred's only passion, and without it, they will quickly wither and fall dormant. Moreover, each vampire can use its stolen blood to perform amazing feats of healing, strength, and other supernatural abilities.

• **Anyone who dies from a vampire's bite rises to become a vampire.** False. If this were true, the world would be overrun with vampires (and not just in our media). Vampires do feed on human blood, and they do sometimes kill their prey — but most humans who die from a vampire's attack simply perish. To return as undead, the victim must be drained of blood and subsequently be fed a bit of the attacking vampire's blood. This process, called the Embrace, causes the mystical transformation from human to undead.

• **Vampires are monsters — demonic spirits embodied in corpses.** False… and true. Vampires are not demons *per se*, but a combination of tragic factors draws them inexorably toward wicked deeds. In the beginning, the newly-created vampire thinks and acts much as she did while living. She doesn't immediately turn



into an evil, sadistic monster. However, the vampire soon discovers her overpowering hunger for blood, and realizes that her existence depends on feeding on humanity. In many ways, the vampire's mindset changes — she adopts a set of attitudes less suited to a communal omnivore and more befitting a solitary predator.

At first reluctant to kill, the vampire is finally forced into murder by circumstance or need — and killing becomes easier as the years pass. Realizing that she herself is untrustworthy, she ceases to trust others. Realizing that she is different, she walls herself away from the mortal world. Realizing that her existence depends on secrecy and control, she becomes a manipulator. And things only degenerate as the years turn to decades and then centuries, and the vampire kills over and over, watching the people she loved age and die. Human life, so short and cheap in comparison to hers, becomes of less and less value, until the mortal "herd" around her means no more to her than a swarm of annoying insects. Vampire elders are among the most jaded, unfeeling, and paranoid — in short, monstrous — beings the world has ever known. Maybe they are not demons exactly — but at that point, who can tell the difference?

• **Vampires are burned by sunlight.** True. Vampires must avoid the sun or die, though a few can bear sunlight's touch for more than a very short period of time. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it extremely difficult to remain awake during the day, even within sheltered areas.

• **Vampires are repulsed by garlic and running water.** False. These are myths, and only a very small fraction of vampires are even inconvenienced by them.

• **Vampires are repulsed by crosses and other holy symbols.** This is generally false. However, if the wielder of the symbol has great faith in the power it represents, a vampire may suffer ill effects from the brandishing of the symbol.

• **Vampires die from a stake through the heart.** False. However, a wooden stake — or arrow, crossbow bolt, etc. — through the heart will paralyze the monster until it is removed.

• **Vampires have the strength of 10 men; they can command wolves and bats; they can hypnotize the living and heal even the most grievous wounds.** True and false. The power of a vampire increases with age. Young, newly created vampires are often just a little more powerful than humans. But as a vampire grows in age and understanding, she learns to use her blood to evoke secret supernatural powers, which vampires call Disciplines. Elders' powers can often rival those of the fictional Lestat or Dracula, and the true ancients — the Methuselahs and Antediluvians who have stalked the nights for thousands of years — often possess literally godlike power.

• **Vampires have sex.** True. It's a great way to feed, but carnal pleasures don't mean as much to the Kindred. Feeding, which vampires call "the Kiss," is an incredibly intoxicating and erotic experience for Cainites and their victims. Sex is great, but nothing truly replaces the ecstasy of feeding for a vampire.

The Embrace

Vampires are created through a process called the Embrace. Some vampire Clans Embrace more casually than others, but the Embrace is almost never given lightly. After all, any new vampire is a potential competitor for food and power. A potential childe is often stalked for weeks or even years by a watchful sire, who greedily evaluates whether the mortal would indeed make a good addition to the society of the Kindred.

The Embrace is similar to normal vampiric feeding as the vampire drains her chosen prey of blood. However, upon complete exsanguination, the vampire returns a bit of her own immortal blood to the drained mortal. Only a tiny bit — a drop or two — is necessary to turn the mortal into a new vampire. This process can even be performed on a dead human, provided the body is still warm.

Once the blood is returned, the mortal "awakens" and begins drinking of his own accord. But, though animate, the mortal is still dead; his heart does not beat, nor does he breathe. Over the next week or two, the mortal's body undergoes a series of subtle transformations; he learns to use the Blood in his body, and he is taught the special powers of his Clan. He is now a vampire.

The Hunt

When all is said and done, the most fundamental difference between humans and vampires lies in their methods of sustenance. Vampires may not subsist on mortal food; instead, they must maintain their eternal lives through the consumption of blood — fresh human blood.

Vampires acquire their sustenance in many fashions. Some cultivate "herds" of willing mortals, who cherish the ecstasy of the vampire's Kiss. Some creep into houses by night, feeding from sleeping humans. Some stalk the mortals' playgrounds — the nightclubs, bars, and theaters — enticing mortals into illicit liaisons



and disguising their predation as acts of passion. And yet others take their nourishment in the most ancient fashion — stalking, attacking, and incapacitating (or even killing) mortals who wander too far into lonely nocturnal alleys and empty lots.

The Nocturnal World of the Vampire

Vampires value power for its own sake and for the security it brings, and they find it ridiculously easy to acquire mundane goods, riches, and influence. A mesmerizing glance and a few words provide a cunning vampire with access to all the wealth, power, and servants he could desire. Some powerful vampires are capable of implanting posthypnotic suggestions or commands in mortals' minds, then causing the mortals to forget the vampire's presence. In this way, vampires can easily acquire legions of unwitting slaves. More than a few "public servants" and corporate barons secretly answer to vampire masters.

Though there are exceptions, vampires tend to remain close to the cities. The city provides countless opportunities for predation, liaisons, and politicking — and the wilderness often proves dangerous. The wilds are the home of the Lupines, the werewolves, who are the Kindred's ancestral enemies and desire nothing more than to destroy vampires outright.

The Jyhad

Some vampires seek to have nothing to do with their kind, choosing instead to exist and hunt in solitude. However, the civilization of the undead is a manipulative and poisonous dance, and few vampires are left entirely untouched. Since the nights of antiquity, Cainites have struggled for supremacy, in an ancient and many-layered struggle known as the Jyhad. Leaders, cultures, nations, and armies have all been pawns in the secret war, and vampiric conspiracies have influenced much (though by no means all) of human history. Few things are as they seem in the vampires' nocturnal world: A political coup, economic crash, or social trend may be merely the surface manifestation of a centuries-old struggle. Vampire elders command from the shadows, manipulating mortals and other vampires alike — and the elders are often manipulated in turn. Indeed, most combatants may not even realize for whom they fight, or why.

Reputedly begun millennia ago, the Jyhad rages even today. Though skyscrapers take the place of castles, machine-guns and missiles replace swords and torches, and stock portfolios substitute for vaults of gold, the game remains the same. Kindred battles Kindred, Clan

battles Clan, Sect battles Sect, as they have for eons. Vampiric feuds begun during the nights of Charlemagne play themselves out on the streets of New York City; an insult whispered in the court of the Sun King may find itself answered by a corporate takeover in Sao Paolo. The ever-swelling cities provide countless opportunities for feeding, powermongering — and war.

Increasingly, vampires speak of Gehenna — the long-prophesied night of apocalypse when the most ancient vampires, the mythical Antediluvians, will rise from their hidden lairs to devour all the younger vampires. This Gehenna, so the Kindred say, will presage the end of the world, as vampires and mortals alike are consumed in an inexorable tide of blood. Some vampires strive to prevent Gehenna, some fatalistically await it, and still others consider it a myth. Those who believe in Gehenna, however, insist that the end time comes soon.

How to Use This Book

This book is divided into several chapters, each of which is designed to explore and explain a specific area of the game. Remember, though, that in a storytelling game, the most important "chapter" is your imagination. Never let anything in this book be a substitute for your own creativity.

Chapter One: A World of Darkness describes the Kindred and the world in which they hunt.

Chapter Two: Sects and Clans describes the 13 great "Clans" of Kindred and the organizations to which they hold allegiance.

Chapter Three: Character and Traits gives step-by-step instructions for creating vampire characters as well as a description of the Traits that make them up.

Chapter Four: Disciplines delineates the wide variety of mystical powers of the undead.

Chapter Five: Rules provides the basic means of resolving the characters' various actions.

Chapter Six: Systems and Drama describes a plethora of ways to simulate everything from gentle seduction to brutal combat.

Chapter Seven: Morality describes Humanity and the various Paths of Enlightenment that more alien and inhuman vampires adhere to.

Chapter Eight: Storytelling tells Storytellers how to build entertaining stories in which to involve the characters.

Chapter Nine: The Others gives notes on the Kindred's (few) friends and (many) enemies.

Chapter Ten: Bloodlines details a wide range of minor bloodlines, Clan variations, and some of the strains of vampire thought lost to the mists of time.

Finally, the **Appendix** provides addenda and miscellaneous rules.

Source Material

Vampire not only pays homage to a long-standing and thriving genre, but has itself inspired countless vampire novels and movies over the past two decades. You can't throw a rock and not hit a young adult series or a television show featuring vampires, but below are a few of the most important influences on the creation of **Vampire**.

Inspirational literature is almost too daunting to consider. Some of the most cited inspirations: *Dracula*, by Bram Stoker; *Interview with the Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, and *The Queen of the Damned*, by Anne Rice; *Lost Souls*, by Poppy Z. Brite; Brian Lumley's *Necroscope* series; *The Hunger*, by Whitley Streiber; and *I Am Legend*, by Richard Matheson. The vampire plays a role in the romantic poetry of Byron, Shelley, and Baudelaire, and the Internet has thousands of sites of old myths and legends of vampires from around the world.

There are also a ton of vampire movies as well. Bela Lugosi's *Dracula* and Murnau's silent *Nosferatu* are the granddaddies of the genre. Other good (or at least amusing) films include *The Hunger*, *Near Dark*, *Vamp*, *The Lost Boys*, *Salem's Lot*, the Cristopher Lee Hammer Horror films, and the anime flick *Vampire Hunter D*. Coppola's *Dracula* is not the best in terms of plot, but does have lush cinematography. And for television, you can't go wrong with shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, and *True Blood*.



Chapter One: A World of Darkness

"The Children of Seth will always hate us again and again, for we are their predators. We are their Masters and they know this, deep in their soul."

- The Book of Nod

The world of **Vampire** is a dark reflection of our own. The shadows loom longer here, and the night is more reluctant to yield to day. Corruption runs rampant, from the government through private corporations and into the various subcultures that revel in these culturally bankrupt times.

It is a world of contrasts, of haves versus have-nots. It all looks very much like the real world, as seen through an extremely stylized filter that turns up the contrasts between dark and light. The technology is the same as ours right now, but the people who use it are different — darker, in personality and motive — and that changes how the world functions.

In this world, vampires exist, and they are very much an extension of the tarnished aesthetic that shapes the World of Darkness. Whatever their origins, or whatever they *believe* to be their origins, vampires are an outgrowth of the people who populate this desperate environment. Vampires exist in the World of Darkness because they are the monsters among us, the products of a world so dark that only something truly horrible and captivating can challenge the depths into which the living residents of the world have plunged it.

In this setting, you will tell tales of morality and depravity, of redemption and damnation. When you play **Vampire**, you enter this World of Darkness. Will you leave it a better place when your time is done? Or will you take the path so many others have, leaving more blight, ruin, and sorrow as your legacy?

Gothic-Punk

The *Gothic* aspect of the setting is very much in the literary tradition of the word. Gothic literature paints a world of anachronisms, barbarism, decay, madness, and a romanticized history that never existed. In the ultramodern context of **Vampire**, we see it in the churches whose spires soar skyward, in the avarice and treachery of the wealthy who enjoy great comfort, in the crumbling architecture of the cities and the way nature reclaims the places forgotten or abandoned by men. A tenement erected at the turn of the 20th century, fronted by dingy, fluted columns and infested with squatters, is a neo-gothic rookery. A merciless millionaire's estate on the edge of town is a modern castle, as is his lavish penthouse in the bustling district where

mortals go to dance and drug away their cares. A mad priest offers succor to those members of his flock tormented by "monsters," the ivy-choked cemetery where velvet-clad sensualists recite poetry and seduce the shades of the departed, the graffiti-tagged warehouse docks where the skinheads torment their victims: All of these and more are hallmarks of the modern gothic experience.

Punk, on the other hand, refers to the context in which people experience their world. It's about anger, about getting in someone's face and saying "No more." It's about refusing to be ignored and stepping on some motherfucker's toes to get your point across. As a result, conflict is everywhere, from the gang wars that plague the streets to the self-serving movements in the back rooms of governments and corporations. It runs in scale from the clash of cultures where domains overlap to the desperate, personal struggle of a mother who can't afford to feed her crying child or the struggle between a junkie and his drug of choice. Rebellion is everywhere, and just living another day to spit in the face of what the long-shadowed World of Darkness has to offer is an act of defiance. Everyone opposes something, and the punk element of the setting is the dramatic fulfillment of that opposition.

Ultimately, you will decide the details the Gothic-Punk ambience of your vampire stories. The setting may pale in importance to the narrative events of your chronicle, or the city and its components may become like a character themselves. Whatever the case, your vampires are a product of their environment, and every scene you and your troupe describe reflects this.

Theme and Mood

Over the course of playing a **Vampire** chronicle, you will explore a wide variety of story situations, interesting characters, and challenges. In almost every case, these interactions will illustrate the theme of the chronicle that the Storyteller wishes to convey, and will involve the mood of impending reckoning. That generalization leaves room for creative interpretation, however, and each of your stories will be the truly unique result of theme, mood, and storytelling.

Themes

Some themes are inherently part of the **Vampire** experience, and the Storyteller will either expand on those or introduce his own into the mix. Here are the core themes of the game, to better illustrate the setting.

A Beast I Am, Lest a Beast I Become: Vampire lets you play the monster and makes you morally accountable for it. All of the protagonists are vampires: blood-drinking monsters who dwell in the shadows at the edge of society and subculture. Vampires have tremendous power, but that power comes paired with the Curse of Caine, which carries a Biblical gravity. Players have an emotional stake in these characters, and when we play the game, we see their dark side and watch them wrestle with morality. This timeless riddle implies that all vampires must fall eventually, but when and under what circumstances? These questions are at the root of the chronicles that we play.

The Masquerade: It's the very foundation of **Vampire**. Once the character is Embraced, they are drawn behind the curtain, and everything they know is changed. The Kindred try to keep the curtain closed, convincing their prey that monsters do not, in fact, hide among them. Inevitably, cracks appear in the façade and the Damned are revealed for who they are. What happens when this occurs? For more information about the Masquerade as a concept, see p. 22.

The Sins of the Father: People rarely choose to become vampires. In most cases, a sire Embraces them without much regard for whether or not the individual wants to commit to an unlife of predation, scheming, and horror. Likewise, the childe acquires the sire's Clan, and thus his powers, weaknesses, and often predilections. This is all a great allegory for the Biblical idea of Original Sin, and deeply tied to the prevailing religious origin than many vampires attribute to the state of vampirism. God cursed Caine for murdering Abel and, as descendants of that first vampire, all

Kindred bear the stain of that primeval sin. This accountability, decided for each Cainite by the actions of her sire, pervades the vampire condition.

A War of Ages: Elder Kindred hate younger vampires because they fear new generations will take away the domains they've fought for decades or even centuries to establish. Younger Kindred resent their elders for the ways they selfishly lord over their domains and refuse to allow the young to make a place for themselves. It's like waiting for a promotion that will never come because the person in the position above you is never going to die or retire — and you need your job to stay alive. Kindred history is characterized by the haves versus the have-nots, most often in the form of the elders versus the neonates. The Anarch Revolt and the subsequent Inquisition were the apex of this struggle in history, but it plays out every night on more localized scales of Kindred community and influences the way all vampires interact in the World of Darkness.

Inherent Conflict: Sect versus Sect. Clan versus Clan. Rebels versus the status quo. The Man versus the Beast. Everybody's against everybody in the World of Darkness, and there's never enough to go around. These conflicts color the other themes of the game, and what your sire has made you — in terms of Kindred, Clan, Sect, and outlook — automatically buys you a panoply of enemies.

Conspiracy: Wheels turn within wheels. The Kindred as a race are skilled manipulators and deceivers, the better to enact their schemes while maintaining a veneer of deniability. A neonate striking out against a hated elder might actually do so at the behest of that elder's rival, who incited the turbulent vampire with a clever ruse. Indeed, some Kindred wonder if the whole of the Jyhad is the machination of the Antediluvians, and whether any vampire truly has free will.

Apocalypse: These are the End Times. The judgment of the Kindred, Gehenna, is coming. We don't know when, we don't know how, and we don't even know what it'll be, but all of the grim portents of our kind indicate that we're careening toward our reckoning. Do we rage against the dying of the light, or do we fiddle while our contemporary Gothic-Punk Rome burns? Are all these elders really so vituperative over petty politics with the Biblical Rapture at the threshold? What will happen to the mortal world when the Kindred judgment is nigh?

Mood

Vampire stories can be complex and subtle tapestries that can evoke a variety of moods in individual chronicles. There are some, though, that are common to the World of Darkness.

Sensual: It might be a pang of desire, or it might be an undeniable physical lust, but becoming a vampire is a sexual consummation, as is the act of feeding. We're dead, sexy things and we'll never grow old, and we have a license from our maker to indulge our every erotic urge.

Mysterious: Fog and shadows shroud the landscape. This is the mood of *Casablanca* and *The Maltese Falcon*, of Hitchcock and J. J. Abrams. The imagination is aroused by the things that remain nebulous and hidden, and even the vampires that stalk the night don't know everything that happens in the shadows.

Dangerous: Nonstop action, full of intensity. The World of Darkness is a dangerous place, and death is always just around the corner. Just when you catch your breath, two guys kick in the door with guns in their hands. The life of the vampire is filled with drama and suspense.

Eerie: There is an oppressive weight in the air, a sense of great evil that hangs over everything. Everything has a strange, unreal quality to it. The World of Darkness is full of the bizarre, and the vampires are not the only monsters around.

The Kindred

For the Kindred, cities are urban collections of territories and domains that stand as illuminated points against the greater backdrop of the wilderness and the places in between their safety. For vampires, the paradigm is almost medieval. The cities are their homes, and everything that's not a city represents some sort of danger. Outside the city are packs of savage Lupines, vast fallow areas where there is no blood to be found, and the unquantifiable strangenesses endemic to a World of Darkness. Modern technology eases those dangers somewhat, but most Kindred are effectively trapped in cities, where they gild their cages with elaborate games of prestige, social status, and vendetta.

To that end, much of **Vampire** takes place in urban environments. Why should the Kindred risk starvation in the untamed wild when those badlands confer no status upon their masters, and when a frenzied werewolf may well come rampaging across the landscape, leaving dismemberment in his wake? Truly, vampires are uniquely acclimated to city domains, and the cities are the places that hold the most of their most precious resource in vitae.

The Embrace

Upon the Embrace, the fledgling's senses sharpen, displaying to her a richness of visual colors, auditory distinction, tactile fineness, and olfactory alertness that mortals senses are too limited to discern. The most important of all, however is taste — taste becomes the new Kindred's primary sense, and with it she engages the pursuit of a single taste to the exclusion of all others: vitae. Mortal blood. The mortal dies, and in her places rises a member of the undead, a Kindred. With this unholy rebirth comes a host of new potential, from the mystical powers known as Disciplines that Kindred possess to the quintessential vampiric ability to use blood for a variety of supernal purposes.

Thereafter, nothing is the same for the fledgling. She's no longer mortal, but a new member of an elaborate society of the Damned, who have their own complicated codes of behavior, their own customs, and seemingly endless rules and protocols that dictate who is subservient to whom and under what circumstances. Even for those who rebel against the system — Anarchs, ungovernable Autarkis, and any number of other rogues — a pecking order must exist. The only place it doesn't is when only one vampire claims the domain… and if that vampire just performed the Embrace, well, there's no longer only one vampire there.

The trappings of the fledgling's mortal life can no longer support her. In the short term, the new vampire now requires blood to sustain herself, and surrounding oneself with vessels of sustenance whom one loves will inevitably result in bloody ruin. In the long term, while the new vampire will remain deathless, unchanged by time, those around her will age, wither, and die. The easiest course, most sires agree, is simply to turn one's back on the mortal life that no longer offers anything but tragedy and a reminder of the damned state of the undead.

A Beautiful Corpse

Once a vampire is Embraced, her looks are frozen in time. Her skin will be unnaturally cold to the touch and become paler as she ages, but she will look the same in a thousand years as she does on the night of her Embrace. However, her body does not *work* like it used to. As mentioned previously, nearly all Kindred are unable to eat food after the Embrace, vomiting it up almost immediately — only blood will sustain them. Over time, most of the vampire's bodily fluids will be replaced by blood — the Kindred sweats a thin sheen of blood when nervous, cries tears of blood when sad, and makes a god-awful mess during sex.

Blood has other, unique uses for vampires. Besides needing it for sustenance, Cainites can mentally direct the blood to various parts of her body, "spending" it to perform a variety of feats. She can heal herself, mending scrapes, cuts, and slashes in moments. She can also enhance her physical capabilities, making herself stronger, hardier, or more agile for a short period of time, and fuel the mystical powers at her command. Her blood can also create new vampires through the Embrace, and enslave the minds of mortals and even other Kindred. Some vampires can also spend blood to appear human once again: make their skin rosy and warm, mimic breathing, and even allow her to have sex once again (although intercourse pales in comparison to the ecstasy of the Kiss).

The Beast

Of course, there's a downside as well. Inside every vampire lurks an impassioned, hungry creature that is the opposite of the Man. It is the Beast, and the Beast knows only three activities: kill, feast, sleep. It is the roiling, inchoate desire every Kindred feels to slay her prey rather than taking just enough. It is the inevitable urge to be what the vampire is — a predator who

doesn't answer to the will of men or hide from their numbers. When the Beast takes control over a vampire, she is said to enter a state of frenzy, directing the Cainite into a response of fight or flight.

But the Beast isn't a simple animal soul; it can be sophisticated. It knows that the war against the Man is one that, given time, it will inevitably win. Thus, in young vampires, the Beast is often a savvy creature, willing to take small victories here and there because in the long term, they lead the Kindred down the path of greater degradation and subservience to the Beast. Tonight the Kindred destroys property, tomorrow she kills with reticence, the night after that she kills with relish. By the time the Man has eroded and the Beast holds sway, there is little rational consciousness left to the Cainite in question. Kill, feast, sleep is all that remains in a vampire dominated entirely by her Beast.

The Aristocracy of the Dead

The Kindred who believes he'll forever be the toughest motherfucker in the place just because he drinks blood and can't die is in for a rude awakening. Thousands upon thousands of other vampires are competing with him for that top-dog status. Vampires are powerful creatures, certainly, but those powerful creatures have put in place hierarchies of their own, and none of them have "share my jealously hoarded power with some newly Embraced whelp" at the top of their agendas.

The elders have it all sewn up, it would seem. They claim domains that they have held for decades, if not centuries. The social hierarchies, no matter the Sect, are occupied by cagey vampires who didn't rise to the top by being companionable. The highest echelon of Kindred authority in almost any city is a spider's web of tenured intrigues, vicious rivalries, and outright hatreds that can boil over into physical violence and even Final Death.

Add to this the fact that these entrenched elders are masters of manipulation and misdirection, and many young vampires feel — not incorrectly — that they are pawns. They are moved in a game played by hoary old monsters, and their every movement may not even be their own. Does the brash young Brujah really hate the Toreador ancilla who snubbed her at a party? Or did the Ventrue elder encourage his great-grandchilde to hustle the inexperienced Brujah sire into introducing his progeny too soon into Kindred society in the hopes that the Toreador would make a move? These are the



games the elder Kindred play with one another. These are the wheels within wheels in the spiteful war of ages known as the Jyhad.

The Jyhad

What sets vampires at each other's throats? What motivates them to construct the elaborate social systems that allow them to stubbornly maintain their veneer of humanity? What is the origin of the endless games of brinksmanship in which vampires contest one another?

In a single word, it is the Jyhad.

Vampires are inherently solitary creatures, lone predators whose urges are selfish and destructive. When one vampire meets another for the first time, neither of them can ignore the fact that the other is a rival for the limited resources that he exerts himself night after night to cultivate. Whether an individual is a mighty Sabbat Bishop or a lone Gangrel who subsists by not being noticed, each Kindred on a primal level knows that for every new vampire spawned, unlife becomes more and more difficult, more and more dangerous.

In these modern nights of sophisticated Sects, long-standing Clan politics, and the histories of cities that define the fates of the Kindred who dwell there, this primitive urge to hoard all available blood all for oneself finds outlet in conspiracy and gamesmanship. What one Kindred wants, another hoards, another has plans to steal, and still another can distract them all and seize a momentary advantage.

It is ironic that Cainites turn to a mortal political figure to summarize the perilous philosophies of the Jyhad, and, indeed, if Kindred interactions can be described in terms of human perspective, the appropriate word is Machiavellian. "A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise," Machiavelli advises, and "If an injury has to be done to a [rival] it should be so severe that his vengeance need not be feared."

Such perspectives are the bylaws of the Kindred's eternal war against one another, and with centuries or millennia behind the individual feuds in the Jyhad, it is no wonder that the Damned play their cards so close to their chest. These are no mere territory struggles among short-lived mortal tyrants. These are the conflicts that drive history.

The Modern Advantage

Although it may seem like the elders have all of the best domains, young Kindred do have a certain advantage. They haven't been dead as long as their elders, and remain closer to the mortals from whom they only recently parted.

This means they still have a connection to mortal trends, and in nights when even children have technology at their disposal, young Kindred do, too. Elders' age and stasis make them reluctant to engage with these new — and, frankly, frightening — technologies. Thus, the speed at which information travels is the neonate's most valuable asset.

From social media to web-based archives of city history to data clouds that house all of the public records of civic transactions (including the name on the deed of the Tremere chantry…), the ability to seemingly reach into the ether and pluck out vital information is an aptitude that confounds many elders. Consider that a given elder may have once held sway over scriptoria of monks who diligently copied manuscripts by hand over the span of years, or even one who watched the printing press slowly transform the western world. The speed at which information disseminates is a modern horror that can cause even the most stalwart elder to blanch. Flash mob at the graveyard, which just happens to be a craggy old Malkavian's favored haven? "No problem," says the confident young vampire, smartphone in hand. There has even been talk of vampires making their own social network.

Just know what you're getting yourselves into, whelps.

Social Distinctions

Various castes, appellations, and divisions distinguish the Kindred. Most vampires belong to more than one of the following groups, and movement between them can be as liquid as a neonate's ambition or as calcified as an elder's habits. It all depends upon the domain and the circumstances. Note that these are allegiances or classifications, not jobs. Titles and offices a Kindred may possess are something altogether different (see p. 24).

Age

One of the ways that Kindred determine the social pecking order is through a combination of age and Generation (an indication of how far the vampire is removed from Caine, the original vampire). Newly-Embraced Cainites must prove themselves to older, more established vampires in order to gain any sort of

recognition or standing. There is a small degree of mobility, but a vampire primarily gains respect through the passage of time and the attrition of his enemies.

Fledgling: A fledgling is a newly-Embraced vampire who has not yet been introduced to Kindred society and formally emancipated from her sire. To this end, a sire is responsible for the actions of his childe until he deems her able enough to handle Cainite culture on her own. Some Clans shelter their fledglings for years or decades, like the Tremere, while others, like many Gangrel and Brujah, figure that once you're a vampire, you're on your own — tough shit if you can't hack it. The Sabbat — who sometimes call their hastily-Embraced fledglings "shovelheads" due to their bizarre Embrace rituals — are usually much more pragmatic: If the fledgling survives and does something worthwhile, she's not a shovelhead anymore.

Neonate: A neonate is a young vampire, one who has not been Kindred very long. The main difference between a neonate and a fledgling is that the neonate has been emancipated from her sire and otherwise is seen as an "adult" in vampire society. The line between fledgling and neonate is incredibly subjective, but usually once Kindred society stops thinking of a vampire as her sire's appendage and more on her own merits and actions, then she's become a neonate.

Ancilla: Those Kindred who have a few decades or centuries under their belts generally fall into the loose, subjective category known as the ancillae. They have paid their dues, understand (mostly) how Kindred society works, and have probably accomplished *something*. Ancilla is the rank between neonate and elder, implying some degree of achievement in what local Kindred society deems appropriate. Of course, what counts as "achievement" can vary wildly from Sect to Sect. A Camarilla ancilla would be considered soft and effete by the Sabbat, while a Sabbat ancilla would probably be described as a raging maniac by Camarilla standards.

Elder: What constitutes an "elder" is similarly subjective, but it generally corresponds to a rough age distinction of anywhere from 200 to 1000 years of being Kindred, with appreciable claims to domain and a variety of other assets to bring to bear in the Jyhad. Typically, elders of Europe are much older than those across the Atlantic Ocean. Elders are typically the oldest active vampires in undead society.

Methuselah: When a vampire reaches a particular age, somewhere between 1000 and 2000 years of undeath, a profound change invariably overtakes him. It has long been debated whether this change is mystical or biological. Regardless, by the time a vampire reaches this age, the weight of millennia sets in, as well as an increased paranoia. Those who are weak or take risks do not survive to this age — only the most indomitable attain the station of Methuselah.

As a means of self-preservation, Methuselahs retreat from the world. The constant struggle of facing the young who seek power through the blood of their elders grows numbing. Eventually one of the hungry whelps will get lucky. Thus the only option is to retreat fully from society, and go into torpor. Some Methuselahs remain involved in power struggles and the Jyhad of the Kindred, but do so from a position of complete anonymity. Still others do so from the cold sleep of torpor, moving their minions with mental commands, dream-visions, or centuries of conditioning. The fear of Jyhad, that no Kindred may truly call his actions his own, stems from the inexorable dread spawned by the terrible potential of the Methuselahs.

Antediluvian: Literally "before the flood," the Antediluvians are believed to be those vampires of the Third Generation (see p. 29) who are descended from Caine's original childer. Rumored to be the last vampires "with mastery over life and death," the Antediluvians are almost certainly in the grip of millennial torpor, assuming they still exist at all. If these Biblical monsters still dwell on earth, they cannot possibly still resemble humans in anything more than physical form. They have been vampires for so long that their urges and desires are wholly alien to human sensibilities, and even to those vampires who have been Kindred for "only" a thousand years or fewer. Some Kindred philosophies prophesy that the Antediluvians will rise from their unquiet slumber and devour their wayward childer during an apocalypse known as Gehenna. Radical — perhaps suicidal — believers in this prophecy advocate destroying the sleeping monsters where they lie, if they can be discovered and destroyed at all.

Clans and Sects

A Kindred's Clan is her lineage, the vampiric "family" into which she was Embraced. The Clans are distinguished by their Antediluvian founders. Kindred society generally acknowledges 13 Clans tonight, though some may have been lost to history, some may exist in secrecy, and some may never have been known. Some Clans are highly organized, while others are utterly decentralized. The only constant when speaking of Clans is that each has a unique ultimate progenitor, a set of

mystical aptitudes known as Disciplines, and a pervasive flaw.

Those without a Clan are known as Caitiff. These individuals are undeniably vampires, but they display no inherited characteristics from their sires (if, indeed, they know who their sires are at all). Caitiff are frequently shunned in Kindred society, as much for their lack of pedigree as their ignorance of vampiric social structures.

A Sect is an artificial organization of vampires, usually composed of multiple Clans that form a league or compact. In most cases, one's Clan has immense influence on one's Sect, but exceptions do occur. Some Clans belong to no Sect at all, and in most cases, Caitiff may be found among any of the Sects.

The interplay of Clan and Sect realities shapes much of a Kindred's nightly experiences: A Camarilla Ventrue's understanding of her city is radically different from a Sabbat Tzimisce's perspective.

Clans

The way Clans function varies. Some are closely knit, almost fraternal organizations with distinct agendas and focused hierarchies. Others are little more than a predilection toward certain Disciplines and an exploitable flaw in the blood. Ultimately, what Clan means to each vampire is unique, and some Kindred may be very proud of their Clan while others don't give it much thought. Ultimately, though, each Clan tends towards certain common behaviors, perceptions, or roles in Kindred society.

The **Assamites** are silent masters of assassination, killing for hire and collecting blood for rituals to bring them closer to their progenitor.

The **Brujah** were once philosopher-kings of an ancient civilization, but are now rebels and rogues with a fearsome inclination toward frenzy.

The **Followers of Set** venerate a chthonic God while seeking out the world's secret places and protecting ancient artifacts.

The **Gangrel** are bestial and untamed, often coming to resemble the animals over which they demonstrate mastery.

The **Giovanni** are an insular family of vampires who practice the art of commanding the dead while commanding global finances, as they have since the Renaissance.

The **Lasombra** are proud nobles who command the very essence of darkness and shadow — to the point of worshiping it, some say.

The **Malkavians** are a Clan fractured by madness, each member irrevocably suffering under the yoke of insanity.

The **Nosferatu** are hideously disfigured by the Embrace, so they keep to the sewers shadows and traffic in the secrets they collect.

The **Ravnos** are nomads and tricksters who can force the mind to see what isn't there, though they are slaves to the vices they indulge in.

The **Toreador** enjoy every sensual pleasure the world has to offer, idolizing physical beauty and the adoration of their thralls.

The **Tremere** wield the supernatural power of their sorcerous past, though they became vampires through treachery and artifice.

The **Tzimisce** are eldritch Old World lords who have little in common with the mortal world and can manipulate flesh and bone at a whim.

The **Ventrue** observe the noblesse oblige of vampire society, though their entitlement and greed encourages them to seek ever more at the expense of others.

The **Caitiff** have no inherent Clan society, support, or even characteristics; they are like orphans among the great families of vampires.

Sects

Sect — a vampire's political and philosophical affiliation — is ostensibly a matter of choice. If a Cainite dwells in a Sabbat city, however, she's almost certainly a Sabbat member whether she wants to be or not, and a vampire in a Camarilla-held city had better have an exquisite explanation if he chooses not to honor the word of the Prince.

Each Sect has a dogma and an objective its members seek to attain. Being broadly distributed organizations populated by creatures as selfish as vampires makes a Sect's nature in each city a unique thing. Some Sect-dominated cities might be paragons of their organization's virtues, while other pay only lip service to Sect creeds. For more information on the Camarilla, the Sabbat, the Anarchs, and the Independents, see Chapter Two, starting on p. 38. For more information on the Traditions, see p. 22.

The **Camarilla** holds up the Traditions as the highest authority, with a figure known as the Prince acting as the ultimate authority to both interpret and enforce those laws in each domain. First and foremost, the Camarilla sees its role as maintaining the Masquerade, but in domains with accomplished Kindred, the conflicts between them regularly bring the rest of the Traditions into consideration as well. The Camarilla considers itself a well-heeled Sect of genteel vampires, and the term Kindred originates with it, in the idea that all members of the Camarilla are peers in the same august organization. Of course, the social hierarchy of the Camarilla is an elaborate construct, and vicious interpersonal politics and ancient grudges shape the nightly affairs of the "Ivory Tower."

The **Sabbat** holds an apocalyptic outlook, believing that the time for Gehenna is nigh, and the Ancients will soon rise from their graves and devour their errant get. It has little regard for the Traditions other than immediate self-preservation, and its domains are hellish urban warzones where people may well have seen vampire activity but simply chalk it up to the weirdness and horror of the World of Darkness. The Masquerade (or "The Silence of the Blood," as they call it) is tenuous in Sabbat domains, and much of its poor relationship with the Camarilla owes to its recklessness and shortsighted brand of fiery fanaticism. The Sabbat believes that ultimately, vampires must assert their place over the mortal world instead of hiding from it, if they are to survive the fangs of their creators. Part fanatical death worshippers, part millennial doomsday cult, the "Sword of Caine" is neither subtle nor tolerant.

The **Anarch Movement** is localized and sporadic, without any real central organization outside the individual cities where it establishes itself. In fact, the Camarilla considers the "Anarchs" under its own purview. The central tenet of the Anarchs is that rule by elders is an outmoded concept, and that Kindred domains should be governed by merit, with a fundamental respect for the individual Kindred. Effectively, the Movement seeks to redistribute the power in domains from the hands of the old elite into a more equitable arrangement. While this may seem modern and reasonable, that's not how Kindred society works in most domains, and those who already benefit from consolidated power find the idea laughable at best and treasonous at worst. As well, many Anarchs style themselves as revolutionaries, willing to do whatever it takes to strip power from the corrupt old guard who hoard it. These are no utopian domains of happy Kindred-kine



relationships. These are petty kingdoms ruled by individual undead lords of whatever territory they can seize.

The **Inconnu** is an enigmatic elder Sect about which little is known. Indeed, it seems less of a cogent Sect and more of a confederation of Kindred who seek the state of Golconda, a sort of redemptive transcendence of Damnation. The Sect rarely has more than one or two Kindred in any given domain, and territory acquisitions don't appear to be part of its agenda. A few territories belong to prominent Inconnu, and thus the Sect may be said to be dominant in that domain, but in most cases of Inconnu presence, a "Monitor" takes up residence in another Sect's domain to watch its affairs and pursue her own salvation. What the Sect formally wants — if anything — remains unknown, and speculation runs rampant as to their origin. Some believe that they are little more than a cult of would-be gods while others suspect that they are the remnants of an ancient Roman conspiracy that pre-dates the modern idea of Sects.

The **Tal'Mahe'Ra** is a bizarre paranoid conspiracy of a Sect that spends little time in contact with the other factions of Kindred society. Very little is known about the "True Black Hand," and some Kindred consider stories of its existence apocryphal. Its stronghold lies in the Underworld, the realm of the dead occupied by ghosts of things long lost to the modern world. Its mission seems to be one of shepherding and protecting the world toward an end only it understands. Their vision is similar to the First City as described in the *Book of Nod*. The Sect holds no cities in the physical world as its domains, though it maintains estates and other odd nexuses where it breeds ghoul servants and sends its agents forth into the world.

The **Independent** Clans often function like small-scale Sects themselves, with specific agendas in mind, though this is not always the case.

Autarkis

Not every Kindred belongs to a Sect, nor swears fealty to a Clan, Prince, Bishop, or other such entity. These Autarkis often lead solitary unlives not unlike hermits or outcasts. The lot of the Autarkis is unique in every case — what drove her into self-rule, and why does the local Sect allow an individual to flout its primacy? In some cases, an Autarkis is beneath notice, as with a Nosferatu who keeps to his warrens on the outskirts of town or an irretrievably damaged Malkavian who dwells in the Barrens. In other cases, the Autarkis is simply too powerful or otherwise ungovernable for the local Sect to bring under its sway. These latter are often terrifying, warlike when prodded, and nearly legendary in the domain. If you're such a badass that you can thumb your nose at every pack of Templars or Archon strike team the local Kindred call in to force you to toe the line, you'd make a fine Autarkis.

The Traditions

Vampires observe a set of customs that exists somewhere between being coded into their undead natures and a social contract that's ratified every night among the courts of the Damned. Not every vampire affords the idea of the Traditions the respect they deserve — the Sabbat in particular make bold claims about the flaws of the Traditions and the weak wills of those who hide behind them — but in practice, most vampires observe the Traditions to some extent. This is most true of the Masquerade, for as bold as the Sabbat or Anarchs may be, even they don't have the concentrated might to stand against a world of mortals who learn the secret that the undead walk among them.

Interpreting and enforcing the Traditions is the privilege and responsibility of the Kindred Prince. In some domains, particularly those of non-Camarilla Sects, both the titles and the Traditions themselves may vary, but the core principle is found everywhere: That an undead authority makes the rules and woe to any who feel that they don't have to heed them.

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

This is the most important Tradition, for its observance protects the race of Caine from discovery by a mortal world that would unite against them in fear and hatred. Many Princes and other Kindred authorities spend a great deal of time using their influence or wealth to cover up breaches of the Masquerade, for the greater good of the Damned who may not even understand the peril in which they place themselves when they breach it. The Camarilla tends to err on the side of the pragmatic, cultivating its power from the shadows, but the Sabbat longs for a time when the Masquerade is no longer necessary, when mortals are little more than blood-thralls born into the shackles of their vampiric masters.

The Second Tradition: The Domain

Of all the Traditions, Princes often employ the widest range of interpretations when it comes to the Second

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

Thou shall not reveal thy true nature to those not of the Blood.
Doing such shall renounce thy claims of Blood.

The Second Tradition: The Domain

Thy domain is thine own concern.
All others owe thee respect while in it.
None may challenge thy word while in thy domain.

The Third Tradition: The Progeny

Thou shall only Sire another with the permission of thine Elder.
If thou createst another without thine Elder's leave, both thou and thy Progeny shall be slain.

The Fourth Tradition: The Accounting

Those thou create are thine own children.
Until thy Progeny shall be Released, thou shall command them in all things.
Their sins are thine to endure.

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

Honor one another's domain.
When thou comest to a foreign city, thou shall present thyself to the one who ruleth there.
Without the word of acceptance, thou art nothing.

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

Thou art forbidden to destroy another of thy kind.
The right of destruction belongeth only to thine Elder.
Only the Eldest among thee shall call the Blood Hunt.

Tradition. Some Princes maintain that the Second Tradition applies only to those of their station, that a given city is entirely a Prince's domain and that everyone in it owes him fealty and perhaps tribute. Other Princes are much more liberal, granting each (acknowledged) Kindred in her domain the power of sovereignty over their own territory. Most Princes fall somewhere in the middle, acknowledging that each Kindred makes his own fortune and has a right to authority in areas accepted as his, but not complete autonomy.

The Third Tradition: The Progeny

Many if not most Princes require that prospective sires seek their permission before performing the Embrace to create fledglings. However, some domains interpret "thine elder" to signify either the elder of one's own Clan, or even one's own sire. Note that such liberal domains are often the ones with the greatest Kindred populations, and often ones that come closest to jeopardizing the Masquerade due to Kindred overpopulation.

The Fourth Tradition: The Accounting

This Tradition imposes a twofold rule. First, a sire effectively owns her progeny until such a time as she deems them fit to face Kindred society on their own. Second, a wayward childe brings trouble upon his sire's head, for the sire is responsible for the actions and consequences of her childe until the point at which she is emancipated. This Tradition is simultaneously at the center of some Kindred's policy of making their childer earn their freedom through a long and arduous process, and other Kindred's policy of, "Fuck it; you're a vampire now. Don't ruin it for the rest of us or I'll tear your heart out myself. Good luck."

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

A Prince has the right to dictate who may stay in his domain and who must leave or suffer punishment. This Tradition also imposes the responsibility on a traveling or relocating Kindred to present herself to the local Kindred authority and make herself known and accountable for any missteps. Again, this Tradition's enforcement falls to the whim of individual Princes. Some are iron-fisted dictators who demand to know the comings and goings of all the Kindred in their cities, while others don't mind so much as everyone heeds the other Traditions and doesn't disturb the social order.

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

The Blood Hunt — the Lextalionis — is the Princely decree that declares another vampire *persona non grata*. The right of Princes (or "elders," depending upon the interpretation of the Tradition) to call the Blood Hunt effectively forfeits the hunted Kindred's unlife; it is the ultimate punishment levied for the most grievous of crimes. Indeed, it is used so sparing and so severely in most domains that many Princes will even pardon those Kindred who perform diablerie on a vampire under the Lextalionis.

Domains of the Dead

A city's Kindred society and even its mortal character depend a great deal upon which Sect holds sway there, or if any Sect holds sway at all. Camarilla domains such as Chicago, London, and Paris look and feel a great deal differently from Sabbat strongholds such as Mexico City, Detroit, and Montreal, which likewise have a different cast than Anarch cities like Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Francisco.

Individual Kindred define these domains, of course, but simply learning which titles a city employs for its high-status vampires can offer a wealth of insight to the observer. For instance, if a Kindred learns that Detroit has an Archbishop, he's pretty well assured that the city belongs to the Sabbat, while discovering that all of London is Prince Mithras' domain lets the vampire know that the city is one of Camarilla allegiance.

The following titles describe the Sect alignment and duties of that title. Note that not every domain has a member of every given title. Indeed, some domains have many members with a given title, while in others, certain powerful Kindred may hold numerous titles, or there might be so few competent Kindred that each vampire must attend to multiple responsibilities.

Prince (Camarilla)

The preeminent vampire of a Camarilla city and probably the most numerous position of ultimate authority among Western Kindred, Princes are the rulers of given cities. Some Princes are tyrants or absolute monarchs of the Damned while others are politically feeble puppets propped up by more powerful supporters, but the position of Prince is one acknowledged and even (grudgingly) respected by all vampires, even those not of the Camarilla.

A Prince's duties and privileges are many, but the most important is the interpretation and enforcement of the Traditions, particularly the Masquerade. Beyond that, a Prince has any individual powers he can claim and uphold, such as declaring Elysium, calling a Blood Hunt, adjudicating disputes between residents of his domain, the right to claim a blood-tribute, and potentially even the right to name, ignore, or even disband the Primogen.

Kindred of any age can in theory be Princes, but in reality, praxis — the right of Princes to rule — goes only so far as the Kindred members of a domain respect and allow it. A weak or young Prince might be ineffectual or even a laughingstock, while just speaking the name of the aforementioned Mithras or Prince Lodin of Chicago might be enough to cause a shiver of fear down the spines of those cities' vampires.

The role of Prince is a complex and varied one and much has been said about it, but ultimately, a Prince is master of the domain.

Archbishop (Sabbat)

With many of the same powers as the Prince, the Archbishop is the closest analog the Sabbat has to that position. An Archbishop is different, though, in that the Sabbat is less concerned with enforcing the Traditions and more concerned with waging its holy war against the Antediluvians and everyone else. Thus, the Archbishop is part spiritual leader and part warlord, advancing the Sword of Caine's agenda and establishing Cainite primacy. This last is a difficult task to undertake, as it's not simply a question of turning a Sabbat city into a living hell and declaring that vampires rule; the fundamentals of the Masquerade and the sheer weight of the mortal population means that is a war to be waged in stages. Too many Sabbat fail to understand this, especially among the young, and lose faith in their leadership because they're too impatient to play out the long-game Jyhad. This subversion of ignorance is perhaps the Archbishop's greatest challenge to overcome.

Baron (Anarch Movement)

Much of Anarch philosophy decries the tyranny of Princes, but despite their name, the Anarchs often recognize that leadership in a domain is necessary. Thus, the Baron: a Prince in all but name and reputation. Many Barons take great pains to avoid Camarilla-style autocracy, but power can corrupt even the most zealous freedom fighter. A Baron forever straddles a fine line between being a wise leader and a power-mad autocrat, and the impractical nature of revolutionary ideology dooms many of them when the nightly affairs of the domain need attention.

Other Titles

Camarilla

Harpy: Harpies are the opinion leaders and the trend-setters to whom other Kindred look when it comes to matters of taste, style, philosophy, or politics. A Harpy's word influences the domain's attitudes and can be a powerful supporter of the status quo or a force for insidious change. Harpies are rarely appointed directly (and Kindred rarely trust those who are). Instead, a Harpy paradoxically becomes so by acting as a Harpy. The Harpy's role is often intertwined with domain politics, and it is a bold or foolish Prince who neglects those vampires who represent the cutting edge of popular opinion in her domain.

Keeper of Elysium: This is a largely honorific title, though it has many practical responsibilities. The Keeper of Elysium assures that the customs of Elysium are observed, and is a caretaker of sites declared Elysium by a Prince.

Scourge: In this time, which many elders believe to be the Time of Thin Blood, the Scourge is responsible for destroying those vampires of 14th and higher Generation. This is a position most often found in paranoid domains where elders believe that fighting the symptoms of the Final Nights will stave off the coming of Gehenna.

Sheriff: The Sheriff is the Prince's right-hand Kindred, responsible for the physical enforcement of Princely decree. Some Sheriffs are diligent masters-at-arms while others are thuggish, bloody fuckheads who abuse their authority to torment those beneath their station. A Sheriff may appoint **Hounds** to assist him (or the Prince may appoint them, in the interests of curtailing a Sheriff's overt power).

Primogen: Primogen is a flexible title. In some domains, a Primogen is simply the eldest and most influential Kindred of a given Clan. In others, a Primogen is a member of a council of advisors to the Prince. In some domains, Princes appoint the Primogen (and they may even appoint multiple Primogen of the same Clan, to keep that Clan divided) while in other cities, Primogen arise from among the most powerful members of that Clan or as a result of popular Clan politics.



This is perhaps the most difficult of Camarilla titles for a new Kindred to understand.

Justicar: These are the judges appointed by the Inner Circle to be the Camarilla's eyes, hands and, if necessary, fists. It is the Justicars who decide the punishment for those who have violated the Traditions on a widespread level. A Justicar serves for 13 years, and her actions may be challenged only by another Justicar.

Archon: Each Justicar selects a number of minions, known as Archons, to act in his name as suits his purposes. Archons are typically chosen from the upper ranks of ancillae and occasionally elders of lesser station. Justicars occasionally choose Archons to carry out specific missions, and prefer political savvy, insight, and skill over standing and clout. An Archon's position typically lasts for as long as a Justicar wishes to retain her, but no longer than the Justicar's tenure.

Alastor: If the Archons and Justicars are the law enforcement agencies of the Camarilla, the Alastors are the secret police. Moving unseen and unnoticed through the Camarilla, they serve a variety of purposes at the Inner Circle's command. Mostly, however, the Alastors hunt the most dangerous criminals to the Camarilla — those on the so-called "Red List." While the anonymous existence of the Alastors can be a difficult one, it does have its rewards, specifically a more-or-less universal immunity to prosecution from local Princes.

The Inner Circle: The true hub of the Camarilla, this group meets once every 13 years to plan out the business and direction of vampire society — as much as any group can presume to dictate the doings of a race of immortal predators. Every Clan is permitted one representative, usually the eldest member of the Clan, as only the eldest may cast the Clan's vote.

Sabbat

Ductus: Leaders of individual packs, Ducti attend to the operation matters of their charges, resembling gang leaders or chiefs of small tribes. The title of Ductus is largely honorific, according recognition to the most accomplished member of a pack. Some authority accompanies the title, but the Ductus who throws his weight around is likely to find his ass dumped unceremoniously in a trash bin, if not staked out to welcome the next sunrise.

Pack Priest: Priests bear the responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of their packs. Second in command to the Ductus, the Pack Priest officiates all the rituals observed by the pack, and often creates a few for the sole use of the pack. All packs have at least one Pack

Priest, though some rare and large packs have two. In the event that the Ductus is eliminated, the Pack Priest becomes a temporary leader until a new leader can be appointed by the Bishop, Archbishop, or (in autonomous packs) the pack itself.

Templar: Also known as Paladins, the Templars are an elite force of bodyguards appointed by a Bishop or greater leader. Templars serve a variety of duties, always in a martial capacity. Most Archbishops keep a cadre of Paladins in their retinues to handle delicate matters best solved by a judicious application of violence.

Bishop: Bishops are those immediately below the Archbishop in Sabbat domains, with the same high-level duties but much narrower scope. A Bishop may be in charge of a single aspect of Cainite unlife in the domain, or she may be a more general spiritual leader, inquisitor against diabolism, military general, or any other specific aspect of Sabbat agenda. Some Sabbat domains have no Archbishop, but are instead ruled by a council of Bishops.

Priscus: Superficially, a Priscus is similar to a Primogen, but is never appointed by an Archbishop or Bishop; Prisci rise to the rank over time and according to no specific criteria. A Priscus, politically, is an advisor to the local Sabbat authority figures, with no formal role in Sect politics but great practical influence.

Cardinal: Cardinals oversee Sabbat affairs in large geographical regions. As the superiors of the Archbishops, Cardinals coordinate the Sabbat in their cities and direct them in the Jyhad. Further, it is their direct duty to bring any cities within their territory under the Sabbat's sway. Most Sabbat see their Cardinals no more than once per year, if at all, as the duties of the office keep them in constant communication with Bishops, Archbishops, Prisci, and the Regent herself.

Regent: The Regent is the ultimate authority over all of the Sabbat, ruling the Sect from the Sabbat stronghold in Mexico City. Each of the Archbishops or councils of Bishops is ultimately accountable to the Regent.

The Mythology of the Damned

Exactly what causes the state of vampirism is a source of much debate among the Damned. Even though most Kindred agree on their point of origin, the idea itself is inherently unverifiable, and the points of contention even within the accepted dogma are numerous enough to fuel any number of holy wars.

First Vampire, First Murderer

And the Lord said unto him, "Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.

— Genesis 4:15

With these words, many vampires trace their origins back to Biblical times. Caine, son of Adam and brother of Abel, slew his sibling in sacrifice to God, and in so doing was cast out, becoming the first vampire as God withdrew His grace from the exile.

Thereupon, the tale diverges any number of times, but most Kindred scholars, eschatologists, priests, and speculators agree on this first point.

Caine, as the First Vampire, wandered the Land of Nod, where he eventually passed on his curse, Embracing those who would become known as the Second Generation. Their names are lost or vaguely known — the names most commonly agreed upon are Enoch, Irad, and Zillah — and they eventually begat the Third Generation, who would become the progenitors of what Kindred understand tonight as Clans. The chronology of Caine's life, curse, and subsequent travails are recorded in the *Book of Nod*, a document as close to a "vampire Bible" as the Kindred are apt to come. The book itself is as much myth as fact: Any number of editions of varying reliability have surfaced in the millennia since Abel's death, from crude clay tablets to the most widely accepted version, collected by the renegade Aristotle de Laurent and disseminated by his protégés and allies. Even Aristotle's version is suspect, as it contains Kindred apocrypha from a variety of sources, and the whole thing itself cannot possibly be original. Still, as an item of faith, it commands the hearts and minds of many Kindred, from fiery Sabbat priests to spiritual Camarilla disciples and devout Anarchs.

Long have the Kindred sought Caine himself, though the First Vampire hasn't been reliably sighted outside the Biblical times that provided his origin. Still, unverifiable Caine sightings have shown up throughout time, as Kindred seek for any symbol of faith to anchor their despair or dread. Likewise, fragments of the *Book of Nod* occasionally surface in various domains or among ruins that just happen to find their way back into Kindred possession.

The whole matter of Caine and the *Book of Nod* is a powder keg each time it rises to prominence in a given city. The Camarilla generally believes the myth of Caine to be just that: a parable with perhaps some basis in truth, but largely symbolic. The Sabbat takes the whole matter quite literally, and their faith in doomsday prophecies (many of which originate with the *Book of Nod* itself) causes no end of strife. The matter of Caine is indeed a religion among vampires, fraught with all of the zealotry, intolerance, devotion, pride, and fear that accompany all matters of faith.

How is it, then, that some foundation of the tale of Caine survives and even thrives among all Kindred? The answer is simple: The potency of a Kindred's vitae reflects her distance in Embrace genealogy from the First Vampire.

Generation

Among vampires, the notion of Generation is a concept that describes how distant one is from the First Vampire. When a Kindred Embraces, her childe rises from death one Generation higher than she — one more Generation removed from Caine. The Clan founders comprised the Third Generation, their progeny became the Fourth Generation, their childer became the Fifth Generation, and so on and so forth up through the distant Thirteenth Generation prevalent in the modern nights.

This explanation creates confusion of its own, however. "Third Generation" ostensibly means that these Antediluvians were three Generations away from Caine, but the prevailing mythology names only two. If Caine himself isn't "zero Generation," what is he one Generation removed from?

Generation determines a great deal about Kindred potential. Mastery of certain Disciplines relies upon a certain threshold of Generation, for example, as does the ability to store vast quantities of blood within the vampire's body. Some ancient Kindred need to feed only when the desire takes them, so great are their reserves of vitae.

Diablerie: The Amaranth

Along with advanced Generation comes a price, however. Generation equals raw power potential, and those of higher Generation seek the power of their elders. By slaking one's thirst on the heart's blood of a vampire of lower Generation — drinking the vampire's soul in a transgression known as diablerie — a Kindred can lower her own Generation.

Naturally, the elders hate and fear diablerie (though it would surprise many neonates and ancillae to discover how many elders attained their own Generational potency by destroying their own sires and elders). Also known as Amaranth, diablerie is the greatest crime a Kindred can commit against another vampire.

… At least in some circumstances. In others, diablerie is not only permitted but encouraged. For example, a Prince who declares a Blood Hunt often decrees that those who diablerize the outcast will be pardoned. Further, in the Sabbat and in certain Anarch domains, diablerie is an acceptable (and even honored) method of promotion and advancement. After all, if a vampire lets himself be diablerized, well, he must have been too weak to use that power effectively.

Understanding the Generations

Although Generation conceptually has only a finite number of gradations, the significance of the Generations is more important than a mere ordinal number. Certain Generations correspond to certain social distinctions of the Damned, and a Kindred's Generation may mark her for a vast and terrible destiny or as the harbinger of a dread fate.

Second Generation

The most widely acknowledged version of the *Book of Nod* claims the number of second Generation Kindred is three. In its chronicles, Caine Embraced these unknowable Ancients to dwell with him in his great city of Enoch and give him succor. Given to the "Antediluvian" moniker of the Third Generation, those Kindred who delve into such mysteries assume that the Second Generation was slain either during the Deluge or in the kinslayer times following the Flood. As one might expect, all those of age are reluctant to speak of their sires and the great strife that overcame them all. Undoubtedly, some know more than they are revealing.

Were any of the Second Generation still in existence today, they would be impossibly powerful beings. Some Clans claim that their progenitors are in fact members of the Second Generation rather than the Third Generation, as is commonly assumed of Clan founders. These claims are viewed as everything from prideful boasts to foulest heresy by those who place great stock in matters regarding Kindred origin.

Third Generation

Numerous terrifying tales of the Third Generation exist, though the names of only two, Lucian and Mekhet, are widely known. Tonight, they are referred to as the Antediluvians, and they are the founders of the 13 great Clans. If any survive, they remain hidden, intentionally obscured by the depredations of the Jyhad. They may still exist, collectively or in some fraction of their original number, but now instead of openly warring as the *Book of Nod* recounts, they move in a deeper struggle. Indeed, Jyhad seems to be their primary engagement, as they jealously thwart whatever moves their opponents make.

The actions of the Antediluvians range from something as petty as the acquisition of a piece of artwork to grand schemes involving nations, and almost none are classifiable as the movements of Ancients while they're happening, so subtle are these inhuman master vampires. Those of the Third Generation must by this point be wholly *other*, split between those who would share the world with mortals and those who would remake the world so that it quivers beneath their gaze. Alternatively, some among the Third Generation may have reached Golconda or seek to help others of their kind attain this state. Of course, they, too, must play at Jyhad with the other ancients who do not wish this to come to pass.

Those of the Third Generation are terrible beings, with abilities and powers only guessed at by their lessers, having been Kindred for eons longer than they held mortal perspectives. Some say they can die the Final Death only if they choose or are slain by one of equal power. Is this, perhaps, the Jyhad — a maneuvering to see who shall be the last of their kind?

Fourth and Fifth Generations

These vampires are known as the Methuselahs, and they are nearly as powerful and secretive as the Antediluvians. Those of the Fourth and Fifth Generations are most often the most powerful allies, agents, or pawns in the Jyhad, as their power perhaps nears the prestige of the Third Generation. As a result, their numbers have dwindled throughout millennia of conflict with each other and greater, darker entities. Few of this Generation remain active. Some may seek refuge among the Inconnu or Tal'Mahe'Ra to avoid the Jyhad and diablerie. The Inner Circle of the Camarilla is said to consist of multiple Methuselahs. Some critics believe that the true purpose of the Sects is to blunt the efforts of the Third Generation to manipulate the younger Generations. Although the power of blood of Caine falls off greatly this many Generations removed, those of the Fourth Generation are still extremely powerful, godlike in the eyes of a mortal or fledgling vampire.

Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Generations

Vampires of these Generations are the ones most commonly described as elders, and they remain deeply involved in Kindred society. Their movements dominate the actions of the most populous Sects (at least to hear them tell it), and their numbers comprise the majority of local authorities. Those who remain in positions of visibility tend to be important figures: leaders of Clans or bloodlines, Princes, Primogen, Bishops, Archbishops, Anarch Barons, and the most notable Autarkis. Many of the Princes of European cities tend to be of the Sixth Generation. Princes of American cities tend to be of the Seventh or Eighth Generations.

Colloquially, the members of the Eighth Generation seem to be the last Kindred described as elders by those even older than they. Perhaps it is because the majority of them were created before the modern age, and that is evident in their manner and bearing. Then again, perhaps it is very dry sarcasm directed toward everyone below the rank of an irascible Methuselah.

Ninth and Tenth Generations

Although they are occasionally called elders, these Kindred just as often move with members of the younger Generations, especially in the New World. Members of these Generations are frequently called ancillae, though this is often based on age and accomplishment more than Generation. Most were created in the modern era, and thus are somewhat alien in temperament to the older Kindred. In more ways than one, they bridge the gap between the neonates and the true elders.

Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Generations

The most recent Generations of Kindred are often called neonates. Most of the Kindred in the modern nights belong to these Generations — they may outnumber the elder Generations by four-to-one or more. Born within recent memory, the Kindred of these Generations are products of societies that have received the benefits of, and been victims of, rapid change. Most tellingly, these are the young Kindred who are most adept with modern technology. They are not only unfazed

by but actually accustomed to information traveling at the speed of digital data, and would find a handwritten message dispatched on horseback to a superstitious peasant village 500 miles away unspeakably quaint and inefficient. These are the Kindred of the information generation, the ones using social media and computers and changing what it means to be a vampire.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Generations

There are exceedingly few Kindred of these Generations, and none beyond. Indeed, those of the 15th Generation have failed to sire any progeny. Their blood is far too thin, and they are too removed from Caine, to be able to pass on the curse. Rumors persist about vampires siring not childer but *children* and other things never before wondered at in the *Book of Nod*. But the *Book of Nod* is definitely clear about one thing: The rise of the Thin-Blooded is one of the signs of the End Times, and Gehenna is nigh.

Gehenna

As vampires tell it, the time of Gehenna is the end of the world, at least for their race. The skies will rain blood and purge their numbers from the world. The slumbering Antediluvians will rouse themselves from their primordial slumber and devour their childer. Caine himself will return and demand an accounting of his degenerate race, and God himself will strike the Kindred from the face of Creation into hell itself.

All Kindred fear Gehenna, whether they consciously believe in it or not. The reason is plain: Few of them believed in vampires before they became Kindred, and the dawning horror that there is more in the world than the mortal imagination can fathom can certainly prove frightfully true even to the vain Cainite frame of mind.

Gehenna is not a question of if, but when. Only the most stubborn of Kindred could possibly ignore the litany of prophecies that spell out the conclusion of the End Times. The End is here. When is the End of the End?

Golconda

The constant pressure of paranoia, apocalypse, Jyhad, and the existential horror of subsisting on human blood is too much for some Kindred. Indeed, given eternity, who would want to spend it in the state of terror that surrounds the Kindred on any given night? In order to ease themselves out of the Jyhad and the predatory state of being, some vampires pursue the path of Golconda. According to rumor, Golconda is an enlightened state somehow "beyond" vampirism, wherein the Kindred no longer must worry about the Beast or its base hungers.

Golconda's fabled state may eclipse its truth. Few Kindred know anyone who claims to have achieved Golconda, and fewer still have actually reached its lofty heights. None can say exactly what Golconda is, and it remains a matter of faith or an objective of philosophy more so than actual practice. Are those who have reached Golconda saints who have transcended what it means to be a vampire, or have they somehow managed to free themselves from the burdens of vampirism? Is the vampire in Golconda beatific, or is she a monster without even those moral underpinnings that challenge the rest of the Cainite race?

Those who have attained Golconda offer no answers.

Other Denizens of the World of Darkness

Vampires aren't the only supernatural creatures to stalk the shadows of the World of Darkness. The darkness belongs to many other mysterious and horrific entities, some of whom also prey on mortals, while others exist among them or even protect them… sometimes. If any generality can be made about these others, though, it's that the Kindred don't know much about them. The converse is equally true, and any interaction between the race of Caine and the other monsters who prowl the night is going to be tentative and suspicious, if not downright hostile and violent.

For more information on these antagonists, see Chapter Nine.

Hunters

What remains of the Inquisition — the post-medieval "hammer of witches" endowed by the Church with the means and authority to stamp out heresy and diabolism — still exists tonight, albeit in a much changed format. Tonight, the Inquisition and other vampire hunters hunt the creatures of the night with firearms as well as faith, and with an uncanny insight that makes underestimating these individuals very dangerous. Government agencies also keep an eye on the movements of the undead, and even unaffiliated groups have a keen interest in the supernatural occupants of the world they share. These agents are all mortal — at least, so

the Kindred hope — though some possess knacks or abilities that can only be described as supernatural.

Werewolves

One of the reasons the Kindred keep to their urban domains is that the wilderness beyond the glow of the city lights harbors the Lupines. These savage creatures appear to be mad with rage, changing into their wolf-form seemingly at will and lashing out violently when someone rouses their ire. Some even believe they can step wholly out of the world and into a realm of moon-shadow, where vampires may not follow. They wage an ages-old war with the Damned that few Kindred understand tonight, though they certainly comprehend the catastrophic violence the wolf-men are able to inflict. Indeed, even a young Lupine seems to be at least a match for an entire coterie or pack of vampires, so wild are they in combat, and so resilient. A few bold groups of vampires hunt Lupines for thrill or duty, but when the prey is something that has the ability to strike down even a potent elder, wiser Kindred choose the path of avoidance.

Magi

As Shakespeare once said, "there are more things in heaven and earth… than are dreamt of in your philosophy." So it is with the magi, exceptionally gifted mortals who have the ability to simply *will* their desires into being. In simplest terms, the magi wield "magick," but there is more to it than that: They possess a cosmic understanding and acumen that eludes even the sorcerous Tremere and the seekers of secrets among the Followers of Set. As Kindred understand it, the magi are mortal and thus comparatively fragile, but few wish to put to the test the incomprehensible wiles of an enlightened witch who has the power to slay a Cainite with a thought or who can summon a gout of holy fire to scorch a vampire to cinders from within. The magi seem to have various orders and schools of magick among themselves, but these distinctions are largely irrelevant to vampires, who feel that the witches see them as a sort of commodity to be collected or as a mystery to be dissected and mastered.

The Wild Ones

Nature spirits, faeries, the Good Folk, the Others. Whatever the local term for them is, they are the alien outsiders who have claimed dominion over the strange corners of the world since before Man was sophisticat-



ed enough to sense their passing. They are a strange confederation of legends, possessed of inscrutable goals and unknowable desires. A Kindred who crosses paths with one may depart with only a vague sense of good fortune, while the next time he earns the attention of the fae, he may lose his very identity. If any general statement may be made about the Others, they seem to belong to two different courts of philosophy, but neither of them has any consideration for vampires, so dealings depend entirely on each creature's caprices. Fortunately, the faeries have no overarching interest in vampiric affairs. If, by some tragedy, they take an interest, the vampires may well find themselves victims of cruel jokes or deadly vendettas.

Ghosts

Vampires aren't the only denizens of the World of Darkness to persist beyond the event of death. There is a Veil between the worlds of the living and dead, and any number of ghosts, spirits, shades, wraiths, and other remnants of the unquiet departed attend to their unresolved matters this side of it. Some Kindred comprehend the mysteries of wraiths, such as the necromantic Giovanni and perhaps a few macabre Tremere or enigmatic members of the True Black Hand, but even these vampires deal with the restless dead on their own terms rather than those of the ghosts themselves. Sages, scholars, and eschatologists among the race of Caine believe that the ghosts have a complex and immortal empire of their own beyond the Veil, and that those with whom the Kindred come in contact are those somehow exiled from the realms of the Underworld. Certainly, Cainites kill enough of their vessels to create no few ghosts of their own, and it's often a cold confrontation with reality when one discovers that he's haunted by the shade of his last bloody conquest.

And Everything Else

Demons. Devils. Mummies. Shapeshifters. Golems. Creations of abused science or perverted natural law. These and more might occupy some tenebrous corner of the World of Darkness, wielding powers heretofore unseen by the Kindred or perhaps known only to cults or secret societies. Whatever nightmare form a horror takes, it's probably out there, seething, hating both the world of the living and the shadow world of the Damned. Tread carefully, Kindred.

Lexicon

The Kindred have their own dialect of specialized words and phrases. Vampires have a tremendous capacity for double-talk; what they say often means something other than or in addition to its literal interpretation. Certain words have evolved new connotations among the Damned, while others are unique to vampires and their society. The Kindred, set in their ways as they are, are loath to adopt new manners of speech or slang, and one can often determine a rough estimation of a vampire's age by listening to the individual words she chooses.

Common Parlance

These words are in common use among all echelons of Kindred society.

Anarch: 1) A member of the Anarch Movement. 2) Any Kindred rebel who opposes the tyranny of elders.

Anarch Movement, The: The Sect within the Camarilla comprised of Anarchs who want to reform or overthrow the rule of the elders.

Barrens, The: The areas of a city unfit for life, including graveyards, abandoned buildings, industrial wastelands, and areas of irreversible urban blight.

Becoming, The: The moment one passes from being a fledgling into "full" vampire status as a neonate. In the Camarilla, one may not Become until her sire deems her ready and gains the Prince's approval.

***Book of Nod, The*:** A collection of Kindred legend and history.

Beast, The: The inchoate drives and urges that threaten to turn a vampire into a mindless, ravening monster.

Blood: A vampire's heritage; that which makes a vampire a vampire. Usage: I doubt her claims to such esteemed Blood.

blood bond: A mystical power over another individual engendered by partaking of a particular vampire's blood thrice; accepting blood from a vampire is an acknowledgment of her mastery.

Caitiff: A vampire of unknown Clan, or of no Clan at all. Caitiff are typically of high Generation, where Caine's blood is too diluted to pass on any consistent characteristics.

Camarilla, The: A Sect of vampires devoted primarily to maintaining the Traditions, particularly that of the Masquerade.

childe: A vampire created through the Embrace — the childe is the progeny of her sire. This term is often used derogatorily, indicating inexperience. Plural childer.

Clan: A group of vampires who share common characteristics passed on by the blood. There are 13 known Clans, all of which were reputedly founded by members of the Third Generation.

coterie: A small group of Kindred, united by the need for support and sometimes common interests. In the Sabbat, coteries are called "packs."

diablerie: The consumption of another Kindred's blood, to the point of the victim's Final Death. Vampires may lower their Generation permanently through this abhorrent practice.

domain: The area of a particular vampire's influence. Princes claim entire cities as their domains, sometimes allowing lesser vampires to claim domain within.

elder: A vampire who has experienced at least two or more centuries of unlife. Elders are the most active participants in the Jyhad.

Elysium: A place where vampires may gather without fear of harm (although some Sects, such as the Sabbat, respect Elysium less than the Camarilla does). Elysium is commonly established in opera houses, theaters, museums, and other locations of culture.

Embrace, The: The act of transforming a mortal into a vampire. The Embrace requires the vampire to drain her victim and then replace that victim's blood with a bit of her own.

Final Death, The: When a vampire ceases to exist, crossing the line from undeath into death.

fledgling: A newly created vampire, still under her sire's protection.

Gehenna: The rumored Armageddon when the Antediluvians will rise from their torpor and devour the race of vampires and the world.

Generation: The number of "steps" between a vampire and the mythical Caine; how far descended from the First Vampire a given vampire is.

ghoul: A minion created by giving a bit of vampiric vitae to a mortal without draining her of blood first (which would create a vampire instead).

haven: A vampire's "home"; where she finds sanctuary from the sun.

Hunger, The: The urge to feed. For vampires, the Hunger replaces all other drives with its own powerful call.

Inconnu: A Sect of vampires who have removed themselves from Kindred concerns and, largely, the Jyhad. Many Methuselahs are rumored to exist among the Inconnu.

Jyhad, The: The secret, self-destructive war waged between the Generations. Elder vampires manipulate their lessers, using them as pawns in a terrible game whose rules defy comprehension.

Kindred: The race of vampires as a whole, or a single vampire. According to rumor, this term came about in the 15th or 16th century, after the Great Anarch Revolt. Sabbat vampires scorn the term, preferring the word "Cainite" instead.

Kiss, The: To drink blood, especially from a mortal. The Kiss causes feelings of ecstasy in those who receive it.

Lupine: A werewolf, the natural and mortal enemy of the vampire race. Plural Lupines.

Lush: A vampire who typically feeds from drugged or drunk mortals in order to experience their inebriation.

Life, The: A euphemism for mortal blood. Many Kindred regard this term as affected and effete.

Man, The: The mote of humanity that a vampire maintains; the spark of mortality that distinguishes him from the Beast.

Masquerade, The: The habit (or Tradition) of hiding the existence of vampires from humanity. Designed to protect vampires from destruction at the hands of mankind, the Masquerade was adopted after the Inquisition claimed many Kindred unlives.

Prince: A vampire who has claimed a given expanse of domain as her own, generally a city, and supports that claim against all others. The term can refer to a Kindred of either sex. In the Sabbat, this Cainite is called the "Archbishop," and in Anarch cities she is called the "Baron."

Rogue: A vampire who feeds upon the vitae of other Cainites, out of necessity or depravity.

Sabbat, The: A Sect of vampires that rejects humanity, embracing their monstrous natures. The Sabbat is bestial and violent, preferring to lord over mortals rather than hide from them.

Sect: A group of vampires arguably united under a common philosophy. The three most widely known Sects currently populating the night are the Camarilla, the Sabbat, and the Anarch Movement.

sire: A vampire's "parent"; the Kindred who created her.

vessel: A source of vitae for sustenance or pleasure, primarily mortal.

Old Form

The elders typically use these turns of phrase, which have existed since long before the modern nights. One is advised to use these words carefully — in some company, their use may be seen as humorously anachronistic, while in the company of Anarchs, for example, they may be misconstrued as elders' propaganda.

Amaranth: The act of consuming another Kindred's blood, q.v. **diablerie**.

ancilla: A "proven" vampire, between the elders and the neonates. Plural ancillae.

Antediluvian: A member of the dreaded Third Generation, one of the eldest Kindred in existence.

antitribu: An "anti-Clan," or one who has turned her back on the Sect that her Clan has founded (usually by joining the Sabbat). Some *antitribu* have evolved into new bloodlines.

Autarkis: A Kindred who remains outside the larger vampire society of a given city and often refuses to acknowledge the claim of a Prince, Archbishop, or Baron.

blood oath: See **blood bond**.

Cainite: A vampire; a member of the race of Caine.

Canaille: The bovine masses of humanity, especially the uncultured and unsavory. The Canaille are viewed primarily as a source of sustenance.

Cauchemar: A vampire who feeds exclusively on sleeping victims.

consanguineous: Literally, "of the same blood," generally denotes lineage.

Cunctator: A vampire who avoids killing when delivering the Kiss; one who takes so little blood as to avoid bringing about her prey's death.

domitor: A ghoul's master; one who feeds her blood and issues her commands.

Footpad: One who feeds from derelicts and other chaff of society. Footpads may not maintain permanent havens.

Gentry: A Kindred who preys at nightclubs, bars, and other establishments of the "red-light district."

Golconda: A fabled state of vampiric transcendence; the true mastery of the Beast and balance of opposing urges and principles. Rumored to be similar to mortal nirvana, Golconda is greatly touted but rarely achieved.

Humanitas: The extent to which a Kindred still maintains her humanity.

kine: A term for mortals, largely contemptuous. The phrase "Kindred and kine" refers to the world at large; everything.

Leech: A human who drinks vampire blood, yet acknowledges no master.

Lextalionis: The code of the Kindred and the system for punishing transgression; the blood hunt. It suggests Hammurabian or Biblical justice — an eye for an eye, and punishment in keeping with the grievance.

lineage: A vampire's bloodline; the Kindred's sire, sire's sire, etc.

Methuselah: A vampire who has existed for a millennium or more; an elder who no longer participates in Kindred society. Methuselahs are rumored to hail from the Fourth and Fifth Generations.

neonate: A young Kindred, recently Embraced.

Papillon: The red-light district; the area of town punctuated by drinking establishments, brothels, gambling houses, and other locales of ill repute. The prime hunting grounds of a city, where the disappearance of mortals goes hand in hand with the area's general seediness.

progeny: All of a given vampire's childer, collectively.

praxis: The right of Princes to govern; the Prince's claim to domain. This term also refers to the Prince's matters of policy and individual edicts and motions.

regnant: A Kindred who holds a blood bond over another.

retainer: A human who serves a vampiric master. This term is almost archaic, referring to a time when vampires kept vast entourages of mortal servants as part of their estates.

Siren: A vampire who seduces mortals in order to drink from them, and then only takes a small quantity of blood, so as to avoid killing them.

Suspire: The rumored epiphany experienced just prior to the attainment of Golconda.

Third Mortal, The: Caine, who was cast out and became the First Vampire.

thrall: A vampire under the effects of a blood bond, having drunk another Kindred's blood thrice.

vitae: Blood.

whelp: A derogatory term for a young Kindred, originally used with exclusive reference to one's own progeny.

Wight: Human; man; a mortal.

Witch-hunter: A mortal who searches out and destroys vampires.

Whig: A contemptuous term for a vampire who possesses an interest in mortal trends and fashions.

Vulgar Argot

These terms are slang, the modern equivalents of older turns of phrase which have fallen out of favor due to their association with the elder ranks. These words are associated with the younger Kindred, who seek to establish their own vampiric cultures.

Alleycat: A vampire who keeps no permanent haven, but sleeps in a different location each night. This term also refers to a vampire who feeds exclusively from the homeless, vagrants, and other elements of low society.

banking: The practice of "withdrawing" blood from blood banks and hospital reserves. This blood has little taste, though it will sustain a vampire, and elder Kindred eschew this base indulgence. A Kindred who engages in this practice is known as a Banker.

Black Hand: A mistaken misnomer for the Sabbat as a whole used by Camarilla vampires (the Black Hand is actually a faction *within* the Sabbat).

Blister: A vampire "Typhoid Mary" who contracts a mortal disease and spreads it to each vessel upon whom he feeds.

bloodline: 1) A vampire's heritage (see **lineage**). 2) A pedigree of vampires similar to a Clan, but that cannot trace their creation back to one of the Third Generation.

blood doll: A mortal who freely gives her blood to a vampire. Most blood dolls gain a perverse satisfaction from the Kiss, and actively seek out vampires who will take their vitae.

Butterfly: One who mingles among the mortal high-society element and feeds exclusively from the famous and wealthy.

Casanova: A vampire who seduces mortals to take their blood, but does not kill them. Casanovas typically erase the memory of their presence from their vessels' minds (see **Cauchemar**).

Change, The: The moment an individual ceases to be a mortal and becomes one of the Kindred.

Damned, The: The race of Cainites; all vampires.

donor: A sarcastic term for a vessel, typically human.

Farmer: A term of mockery for vampires who refuse to feed on human blood, instead taking sustenance from animals.

fief: A sarcastic term for a vampire's domain or claim thereof, most commonly used in reference to a Prince.

head: A Kindred who feeds upon those who have imbibed alcohol or drugs, so as to vicariously experience the same sensations. Those Kindred who prefer individual drugs have their "poison" prefixed to the term head (e.g., methhead, dopehead, smackhead).

Headhunter: A vampire who hunts and feeds from other Kindred (see **Rogue**).

juicebag: A contemptuous term for mortals, indicating that their sole use is for sustenance. Also "juice box."

Lick: A vampire; one of the race of Kindred.

Rack, The: The hunting ground of choice, including bars, nightclubs, drug dens, whorehouses and other bacchanalian locales, where mortals go missing all the time (see **Papillon**).

Rake: A habitual visitor to the Rack, especially in the interests of feeding (see **Gentry**).

Sandman: A vampire who feeds only upon sleeping victims.

slumming: The practice of feeding from derelicts, the homeless, and other dregs of society; one who does this regularly is known as a Slummer.

Stalker: A mortal who hunts down and destroys Kindred (see **Witch-hunter**).

Tease: A term for a female **Casanova**.

turf: 1) A modern affectation used in reference to a domain. 2) The area under a given gang's influence.

Vegetary: A term of contempt for one who drinks exclusively from animals (see **Farmer**).


GROTH GENERAT ME
ME PURAFI ME PROLIFE
SUBSISTENSE
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FAKASHU
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MOLD

Chapter Two: Sects and Clans

"All the Kindred hid from one another and from the humans that surrounded them. In hiding we remain today, for the Jyhad continues still."

- The Book of Nod

In the first nights, so sires tell their childer, the 13 grandchilder of Caine who survived the strife of the First City begat progeny in their own images, passing on their mystic arts and magical curses. Thus were founded the 13 great Clans of Kindred that haunt the world to this very night. Century followed century, and each Clan developed its own history, traditions, and lore. As the Jyhad raged and the Antediluvians retreated into the wastelands, the childer of the Clans assumed lordship of the night for themselves.

This chapter presents the 13 Clans, each claiming descent from a mythical Antediluvian, that comprise the majority the Children of Caine. Because the Clans align themselves by Sect, we first cover the political groups in which the Clans often find themselves. Players may select their characters' Clans from one of these 13 templates, from one of the bloodlines or variants presented in Chapter Ten, or may choose to be Clanless (Caitiff). Each Clan has certain distinguishing powers and weaknesses, which a member of that Clan automatically adopts.

Bloodlines

Lineage is very important to the Damned. Vampires descended from particularly illustrious sires often display peculiar characteristics, and a few vampires have deviated from their Clan in noteworthy fashion. Most such things can be simulated through simple roleplaying, or through Merits and Flaws (p. 479); for example, while the childer of the mighty Hardestadt might all display the same feeding restriction or obsessively focus on control, they do not differ significantly from Ventrue as a whole. In a few cases, bloodlines actually manifest different Disciplines or weaknesses; these are noted in Chapter Ten.

Clans and Characters

Storytellers can choose to limit players' selections of Clan. In a Camarilla city, for example, the vast majority of Kindred hail from one of the seven founding Clans. While an Assamite or Tzimisce *can* be worked into such a chronicle, this requires some extra effort on the Storyteller's part, and we encourage Storytellers to be as open or restrictive with Clan selection as they feel they need to be.

The Camarilla

Traditional Strongholds: Chicago, New Orleans, Vienna, London, Paris

The Camarilla is also known as "The Ivory Tower," and the Sect lives up to that moniker. Created in the 15th century, the Camarilla was formed to preserve and protect vampire society against the decimation brought on by the Inquisition as well as the power drain presented by the War of Princes during the Dark Ages. The leaders of the Camarilla ruthlessly enforced the Tradition of the Masquerade, elevating it to the Sect's highest law, a priority they continue to pursue even in modern nights. These so-called "Kindred" seek to maintain a quiet harmony between vampires and humanity — a goal constantly threatened by the Sabbat.

The Camarilla considers itself to *be* vampire society, and there is some validity to their hubris. It is the largest Sect of Kindred, after all, and nearly any city on the globe likely has some Camarilla presence. A Kindred who walks into a new city and looks for the local vampire population will, more often than not, find a Camarilla court. This expansiveness is partially due to the fact that the Camarilla says that any vampire, regardless of Clan or bloodline, may go to a Prince and claim membership in the Camarilla. It's also partially due to the fact that the Camarilla claims that all vampire society falls under its authority, regardless of what other vampires believe. Many Kindred find it easier to sit in the shadow of the Ivory Tower than debate the point.

Over the centuries, the Camarilla has moved to make good on its claims of global dominance, but with limited success. Vampires are territorial by nature, and there is a world of difference between a Prince supporting the idea that a Justicar claims total authority over the globe and Archons showing up at the borders of her domain and demanding total obedience. Elder vampires who remember a time before Sects scoff at what they see as "neonate audacity." Still, the fires of the Inquisition continue to burn in many elders' memories, and many are willing to give up a few rights to continue preserving the Masquerade and assure their safety against mortal society.

Camarilla cities are not as cosmopolitan as the Sect asserts. While Kindred of any lineage can claim membership, most come from the founding Clans of the Camarilla: the Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavians, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, and Ventrue. These Clans helped to create the Camarilla, and they have a seat on the Inner Circle (see p. 26). Vampires of other bloodlines can attend conclave and meetings, but they are treated as minority voices or simply ignored.

After the Sabbat formed, the Camarilla opposed them as the only way to preserve and protect the Masquerade and its own Kindred. As the Sabbat threw away the Traditions and all pretenses of humanity due to their paranoia about Gehenna, the Ivory Tower stood its ground and declared the Sabbat as enemies of the Sect. Since then, the Camarilla has been in an alternating cold and hot war, trading territories like two warring nations, and anyone who does not stand with the Camarilla against the Sabbat may be considered to be aiding the enemy.

As a result of this ongoing conflict with the Sabbat, in modern nights the Ivory Tower is crumbling, losing a few bricks here and there while it proudly proclaims itself to be strong and whole. The elders cling to their power bases, growing increasingly paranoid that other Kindred are Sabbat infiltrators or Anarch sympathizers. Neonates feel more and more like serfs to the elder nobility, asked to protect and uphold an organization in which they have little hope of advancement but plenty of opportunities for punishment. The ancillae end up in the worst position: unable to break the glass ceiling of elder dominance, but given enough scraps of power to make the younger Kindred sharpen their knives in jealousy.

The neonates and younger ancillae have an increasing advantage — modern technology. Elders find themselves unable or unwilling to master the tools and concepts of the modern nights: smartphones, tablet computers, concealable body armor, portable weaponry, social networking. They fall further and further behind in a world where even children know how to blog and media becomes increasingly fragmented. Some young Kindred co-opt these tools and use them to further the preservation of the Masquerade, but others wonder why they can't take the power that the elders so jealously guard — not only political power, but the very blood in their veins through the foul act of diablerie. Therefore, the elders increasingly lash out at things they don't understand, destroying loyal servant and treacherous childer alike.

The enemies of the Camarilla have taken notice, and bide their time.

Practices

At the heart of the Camarilla lie the Traditions, and at the heart of the Traditions lies the Prince. Whether in name or deed, the Prince enforces the Traditions within their domains and punishes those who violate their law. Many Princes hold a regular court, which function as a combination of social affair and legal proceeding. At court, vampires gossip, politick, and gain favor with the Prince, and the Prince and his officers handle matters of the law and render judgment or enact policies.

When a vampire is found guilty of high crimes (such as an egregious breach of the Masquerade, the diablerie of another Kindred, or offending the Prince), the Prince can call for the Lextalionis – the dreaded blood hunt. The Prince declares the hunt in his court, and the word filters down through his Primogen to the Clans. All who hear the call must participate (although "participation" can simply mean staying out of the way when the hunters come through). Once in a while such a hunt is called to hound the criminal Kindred into exile outside the city's borders, but more often than not the hunt only ends when the hunted suffers the Final Death. Some Princes even turn a blind eye to the act of Amaranth during such a hunt.

But not all legality centers around discipline and punishment. The currency of the Camarilla (and many other independent vampires that deal with the Camarilla) is a system of favors and debts. Such debts (or "boons") are not only given and incurred, but are also traded between vampires in a healthy, invisible economy. The boon you owe to the Brujah Primogen might ultimately be paid off to an elder of the Malkavian Clan, so vampires are always careful about whom they owe favors to. Because ignoring a boon can threaten this entire economy, any hint of rebellion against the system is met with an overwhelming response by the Harpy and the rest of the local vampires.

Conclaves

Conclaves are the center of global Camarilla politics, serving as the highest court of Camarilla legislation, a high-level session of Sect-wide policy, and a political rally all rolled into one. Only called by a Justicar, all Kindred that the Camarilla claims authority over can attend a conclave, and the proceedings can be over in a few hours or stretch on for many weeks. Given the open-door policy of conclaves, security is an issue, and the location of a particular conclave might not be announced until a few days beforehand.

Generally, conclaves are called because of the actions of a powerful individual (such as a Prince) or due to a serious breach of the Traditions, but once called, any Kindred may bring a grievance to the conclave and have it addressed. Entire domains have been reshaped by conclaves: wars declared, blood hunts called, and Princes politely encouraged to suddenly retire. The Traditions are also interpreted here, and amendments or precedents might be added. Princes might be given emergency powers or special dispensation to deal with particularly unruly problems (such as a local Sabbat infestation).

Not all conclaves are convened due to a problem, however. Some Justicars schedule regular conclaves to allow for more long-term policy discussions and to handle less immediate but still pressing cases that have accumulated over the year. Many Camarilla Kindred use the opportunity to fraternize with others of their position or lineage, and some view as a chance to blow off some steam and party. Over the years, however, security has become tighter and tighter due to concerns about the Camarilla's enemies, and more and more only key elders seem to be able to attend and have their voices heard.

The View from Without

The Sabbat

The world has spun ever closer to Gehenna, and these so-called "Kindred" are woefully unprepared for the final nights. They will be torn apart, the whole time bleating their delusions of superiority.

The Anarchs

I don't hate them because they're in charge. I hate them because they're a bunch of psychotic, power-hungry assholes surrounded by mindless sycophants that hope that political power comes from the end of a dick.

The Independents

They say they rule over all Kindred? The Romans had something similar going, and things will end up the same for the Camarilla. I only deal with them because they're the largest pool of clients.

The Sabbat

Traditional Strongholds: Detroit, Miami, Mexico City, Montreal, Madrid

Opposite the Camarilla stand the Sect of inhuman vampires known as the Sabbat. Most of the vampiric factions believe that the so-called "Sword of Caine" is a collection of mindless barbarians and ultraviolent fiends, or even demon worshippers bent on bringing Satan to earth. As such, the Sabbat are vilified all throughout vampire society.

They're right to fear the Sabbat, but not for those reasons.

While the "Kindred" (a term the Sabbat despise) of the Ivory Tower cower among mortals and cling to outdated Traditions, the Sabbat prefer to indulge in their vampiric nature. They refuse to wear the tattered rags of humanity or to act as slaves and cattle to their elders. Besides, vampires are clearly and openly superior to mortals — do humans lie down with cows and call them brother? As such, Sabbat vampires consider mortals to be tools and food at best, and have little tolerance for "Cainites" who pretend to be human. They are inherently alien and literally inhumane.

But the Sword of Caine isn't just a collection of gore-streaked psychotics running around shopping malls with chainsaws. They reject humanity as a moral basis for their lives, so they have turned to other alternatives. They adhere to a wide variety of Paths of Enlightenment (see p. 313), philosophical tenets that force the Beast into a narrow channel and allow the Cainite to maintain a day-to-day existence that resembles stability (if not sanity). Further, the Sabbat not only rebel against morality, but also against their own inclinations towards solitude. They frequently join together into packs that act as one part religious cult, one part political faction, and one part combat unit.

Between moral devotion, pack loyalty, and the need to rebel, Sabbat cities are devoid of the calm, quiet society of the Camarilla court. Tensions are always high in Sabbat "dioceses," and the Cainite's surroundings often reflect their explosive natures. In cities controlled by Sabbat, murder, robberies, rape, and assault are commonplace. The Sword of Caine threatens every city it possesses, insinuating itself into urban landscapes until they become nothing but raw resources for the eternal crusade. Although the Sabbat might not be any more "evil" than some of the elders of the Camarilla, they are certainly more overt with their acts of destruction and elaborate games of terror.

Because of these tensions, the Sabbat is hardly a unified entity, and the Sect is home to numerous factions of vampires united under the Sabbat's banner. One of the most feared is the Black Hand, a special militia hidden within the packs of the Sword of Caine. All members of the Black Hand bear a distinguishing mark — a permanent, mystical sigil on the palms of their right hands. Although this brand may be concealed or made over, it may never be removed — once you're in the Hand, you're a member until Final Death. The Sabbat also has its own Inquisition, a small faction of Cainites charged with rooting out heretics and infernalists. If it labels someone as an infernalist, the accusation is unlikely to be denied, and the faction uses torturous tactics to gain the confessions it needs.

The Loyalist faction believes that it is the "true" Sabbat, claiming that each vampire is his own master. They preach that the freedom to do whatever you want belongs to all vampires, and they tend to act against their leaders' orders just because they feel they should. There is also the Status Quo faction, who accepts the nature of vampires and knows that shaking the foundations of the Sabbat serves only to distract it from its greater goal. The Moderates oppose the encroachment of rules and guidelines that have no place among such creatures as vampires, resting between Loyalist dogma and Status Quo conservatism. Finally, the eldest members of the Sabbat belong to the Ultra-Conservatives, those who favor centralization and authoritarianism in order to turn the Sabbat into a military force against the Antediluvians and the Camarilla.

The thread that holds the Sabbat together is a religious zeal to tear down the Antediluvians. When packs or ideologies threaten to explode into all-out civil war, the Sabbat manage to pull together around their common hatred for the Camarilla (who they view as puppets of the Antediluvians). The entire Sect claims that Gehenna is coming, and that they must prepare for those end times when the Antediluvians awake and destroy the world. When the time comes, the Sword of Caine will save the world and take their rightful places as the vampiric lords of the night.

And the Sabbat has proven to be a serious threat to the Camarilla. Neonates disgusted with staring at the same elders every night dangling power eternally out

The Code of Milan

I. The Sabbat shall remain united in its support of the Sect's Regent. If necessary, a new Regent shall be elected. The Regent shall support relief from tyranny, granting all Sabbat freedom.

II. All Sabbat shall do their best to serve their leaders as long as said leaders serve the will of the Regent.

III. All Sabbat shall faithfully observe all the auctoritas ritae.

IV. All Sabbat shall keep their word of honor to one another.

V. All Sabbat shall treat their peers fairly and equally, upholding the strength and unity of the Sabbat. If necessary, they shall provide for the needs of their brethren.

VI. All Sabbat must put the good of the Sect and the race of Cainites before their own personal needs, despite all costs.

VII. Those who are not honorable under this code will be considered less than equal and therefore unworthy of assistance.

VIII. As it has always been, so shall it always be. The Lextalionis shall be the model for undying justice by which all Sabbat shall abide.

IX. All Sabbat shall protect one another from the enemies of the Sect. Personal enemies shall remain a personal responsibility, unless they undermine Sect security.

X. All Sect members shall protect Sabbat territory from all other powers.

XI. The spirit of freedom shall be the fundamental principle of the Sect. All Sabbat shall expect and demand freedom from their leaders.

XII. The Ritus of Monomacy shall be used to settle disputes among all Sabbat.

XIII. All Sabbat shall support the Black Hand.

Addenda to the Code of Milan

XIV. All Sabbat have the right to monitor the behavior and activities of their fellow Sect members in order to maintain freedom and security.

XV. All Sabbat possess the right to call a council of their peers and immediate leaders.

XVI. All Sabbat shall act against Sect members who use the powers and authority the Sabbat has given them for personal gain at the expense of the Sabbat. Action shall be taken only through accepted means, approved by a quorum of Prisci.



of their reach have openly joined the Sabbat. Every Prince grows increasingly terrified that one night the Sabbat will show up in his Elysium and murder him. Various cities that have stood as Camarilla strongholds for years are contested or have fallen into Sabbat control. As the nights roll on, the Camarilla has been forced into harsh measures, killing vampires with known (or even suspected) Sabbat affiliation outright. Some Kindred use this increasingly hard-line stance to help remove rivals or better themselves in the eyes of their sires, but for every Sabbat Cainite killed, more join their ranks.

Practices

Everything in the Sabbat points back to two key (and often conflicting) principles: freedom and loyalty. Their set of laws, the Code of Milan (see p. 41), reinforces these two points. Cainites are free to do what they wish, but they must always remain loyal to the Sword, because only the Sect can protect free vampires from manipulative elders, especially the Antediluvians. Two of the most influential Clans of the Sect, the Lasombra and the Tzimisce, are believed to have destroyed their Antediluvian progenitors and diablerized them, setting the example for the other Sabbat vampire Clans to follow.

But principles and fervor don't always hold the Beast at bay. Just like the Camarilla, the Sect contains its own rivalries and political maneuvers, as well as religious and philosophical conflicts that can become just as bloody. These conflicts constantly tear at the Sword, often setting them back from their goals as much (or more) than their enemies do. Although the Sect has organization and structure, each Cainite has too many conflicting loyalties to support a rigid structure. The Sabbat is constantly struggling against itself, only coming together when an enemy appears.

The core of the Sabbat is the pack, a collection of vampires bound by Vinculum (p. 288) and common interest. Packs are such an integral part of Sabbat society that Cainites without a pack are often viewed with suspicion and distrust. Each pack usually fights within itself until some authority rises to the top, such as a priest to conduct rituals and a Ductus to lead in secular matters. Higher positions exist (see p. 27), but unlike the Camarilla where all power stems from the Prince, in the Sabbat positions tend to build upon the packs. Some dioceses forego higher positions entirely, choosing to have the packs manage and police themselves (often with very mixed results).

Outside of the Lasombra and Tzimisce, most Sabbat vampires consider themselves to be the "anti-Clans" or *antitribu* of their parent Clans. Some pervert the expectations of their Clans, while others take the core ideas of their lineage to their most monstrous extreme. A few have even become new bloodlines, manifesting different Disciplines because of their place within the Sabbat. (*Antitribu* are covered in Chapter Ten, p. 428.)

Rituals

Unless they are hasty war-time "shovelheads" that are Embraced, hit over the head with a shovel, and forced to dig their way out of their own grave, most Sabbat vampires go through Creation Rites designed to prove themselves True Sabbat. The rite forces the vampire to prove himself to his new sire or pack, often in a way that strips away much of his Humanity, turning the fledgling from a weak, pathetic human into a proper monster worth of the Sect.

Out of mockery of human religious belief, many of the rituals (or "ritae") and conventions of the Sabbat are perversions of those of the Catholic Church. One of the most notable is the Vaulderie (p. 288), a corruption of the Eucharist in which Cainites pour their blood into a chalice and then each drinks the commingled vitae in order to strengthen their loyalty to each other. They also participate in a wide variety of other rituals. Fire, blood, and violence are common themes in their "ritae," and the rituals involved range from fire dances to ceremonial killing to the corruption of existing games and sports into excuses for violent, bloody slaughter. Their unlives are tense and hostile, and ritae allow Cainites to blow off some steam and reconnect with other vampires before heading back down a road towards mistrust and internal conflict. The goal of these rituals is not only to help create solidarity among Sabbat vampires, but also to push the boundaries of their vampiric bodies and test their capabilities for war.

Some example ritae are available in the Appendix (p. 507).

The View from Without

The Camarilla

A Sabbat city is like a third-world country run by demon worshippers. Trust me – we're doing the right thing hunting those bastards down.

The Anarchs

They dress up blood bonds and religious fanaticism as "freedom." Some of the newer recruits dig the violence and the bad boy attitude, but I see what's really going on.

The Independents

One day they're your friend, and the next they're trying to rip your face off because you said the wrong thing. If you have play ball with the Sabbat, play hard or go home.

The Anarch Movement

Traditional Strongholds: Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco

Nominally a faction within the Camarilla, most "Anarchs" are still under the authority of the Ivory Tower. The Camarilla would say that the Anarchs are under the protection of the Sect, while the Anarchs would likely call it oppression. Still, many in the Anarch Movement understand the usefulness of the structure, with only the most radical calling for total withdrawal from the Camarilla. The Anarchs seek to change the Ivory Tower from within, turning it into the benevolent Kindred society it so often claims to be.

What needs to change? Ask twelve Anarchs, and you'll get thirteen different answers. They agree that change needs to happen, but they aren't collectively committed to any particular plan. Common threads pop up, such as the redistribution of power from the elders to all vampires, and for political authority to be based on merit rather than age. Whether those changes come through passionate debate in Elysium or guerrilla action against specific elders, however, depends on the Anarch in question. Unlike the Sabbat who rebel because vampires should be superior, the Movement's goals are at least nominally egalitarian.

Naturally, it's that very sense of equality that makes the Anarch Movement so dangerous to vampire society. This resistance to change isn't unique to the Camarilla; elders in the Sabbat or the independent Clans have just as little desire to relinquish their power, and ancillae have worked equally hard to be next in line for the elders' station. If the Anarch rhetoric takes hold, all that work will have been for nothing. So it's not surprising that Anarchs spend much of their time frustrated, and they tend to adopt a siege mentality.

Despite their integration within the Camarilla, the Anarch Movement is essentially a Sect, although they don't have the level of organization that would keep them from being on the same level as the Camarilla, Sabbat, or the independent Clans. The only thing that unifies them is that they know what they *don't* want to be. That's helpful as a rallying call, but doesn't work well as an organizational chart. Moreover, structure quickly leads to stagnation, and that's exactly what the Anarchs are against.

That doesn't meant that Anarchs are against organization, however. Despite their name, not all Anarchs are actually anarchists; many seek to change the Camarilla or the Sabbat into some sort of new structure, usually based on mortal governmental ideas. Most of these structures tend to revolve around some form of democracy, but variations of neo-feudalism and even fascism have been tried (with varying success) throughout the Movement. One of the few things that Anarchs seem to agree on is that at some point there needs to be someone at the top, and that vampire is commonly called the Baron (p. 25).

But it's only been recently that the Anarchs have been able to have any kind of common identity. After the Second Anarch Revolt in 1944 that led to the creation of the Anarch Free State in California, the Revolutionary Council decided to adopt a set of principles of self-governance for the Free State before dissolving itself — the "Status Perfectus," or "The Perfect State." This was a revolutionary document, the first to state the Anarch dream clearly and unequivocally in modern times. It called on Anarchs everywhere to protect one another, regardless of Clan affiliation. It promised a Kindred nation free of political oppression and elder prejudice, and swore to extend that freedom to all Kindred everywhere. They declared that free will, or "libertas," is an inherent part of Kindred spiritual nature, and that all vampires must work to free themselves from the forces that would rob them of their libertas. Some Anarchs disagree with parts or the whole of the Status Perfectus, but it has proved to be a massively influential document for the Movement, and the closest the Sect has had to a unifying set of principles.

Regardless, what the Anarchs lack in organization, they more than make up in passion. From the most in-your-face angry neonate punk to the most eloquent and soft-spoken intellectual, Anarchs are collectively driven, which provides a momentum that most Kindred simply aren't used to. Even more terrifying to most vampires, the Anarchs appear to actually *believe* in what they say. Elders try to pass it off as naiveté or inexperience with the Jyhad, but these young vampires seem to accomplish things that centuries of manipulation and power couldn't do. And change terrifies those in power.

The Anarch Revolt from centuries ago is flaring back up in the modern nights, and many Anarchs think the time has come for them to take the night back.

Practices

Some Kindred mistakenly think of the Anarch Movement as just a collection of newly-Embraced Brujah raging against their betters. They are often surprised to learn just how cosmopolitan the Sect really is. For every loud, brash neonate that wants to tear everything down, there's a sober, thoughtful ancilla committed to the Movement's ideals. The Anarchs wouldn't have lasted as long as they have if they were all rebels without a clue, or if they were only a handful of Clans wrapped up in their passions. Diversity, the very thing that causes such disorganization, is also one of the greatest strengths of the Movement.

Unfortunately vampires often default to establishing dominance among themselves, and such a diverse collection of Cainites needs something to help show the pecking order. For Kindred bent on proving that merit should be the guiding principle of vampire governance, status is not only an incompatible concept, but actively offensive to some Anarchs. Instead, Anarchs rely on whether they have personally heard of another Anarch, instead of what some other vampire said was important. As a result, the Status Background for Anarchs relies on reputation: a combination of self-promotion, word-of-mouth, and outright braggadocio that gets the Anarch recognized both inside and out of his own barony. It doesn't correspond to a political title or a measure of authority — there are untitled vampires (such as the notorious prankster Smiling Jack) with a universally higher reputation than Kindred who claim the title of Baron. Whether this recognition confers respect or disdain is a secondary concern; as Oscar Wilde said, "There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about."

Games and Pranks

Unlike the blood-splattered games that the Sabbat use as part of their ritae or the forced civility of Elysium, the Anarchs genuinely like to have fun and joke with each other. They believe that Kindred existence shouldn't be all backstabbing and bloodletting, but rather about enjoying each night to the fullest. Sabbat fiends consider this idea to be a disgusting show of humanity while Camarilla cynics believe it to be the folly of youth, but the Anarchs don't care. They frequently play games and pull pranks on each other (and on other unsuspecting Kindred), both as tests of courage and as a way to blow off some steam.

Some Anarchs disapprove of the games and the pranks. They say it brings down the level of the discourse. They say it makes it harder for the Movement to be taken seriously. They say that these games and pranks are dangerous, and that they threaten the Masquerade. Worst of all, they say that they're all just a waste of time, time better suited for bringing about the glorious revolution of vampire society. And sure, playing tag with 9mm pistols *is* pretty dangerous, even if you tell everyone not to aim for the head. Baiting elders in Elysium into frenzy probably *is* making it harder for the Baron to conduct his debate with the local Prince. Staging accidents and pretending to be a corpse around a mortal likely *is* a hair away from breaking the Masquerade.

But the young Anarchs say "Fuck it; eternity's too short." And so the games continue.

The View from Without

The Camarilla

They, at least, understand that their place is within the Ivory Tower, but their destabilizing influence can be a problem. Best to keep them quiet, one way or another.

The Sabbat

They have the right idea, but they aren't willing to give up their comfortable Humanity in order to go to the next step. There's some potential recruitment material there, but they break easy.

The Independents

We should all hold hands and be brothers? Hardly, young Cainite. My Clan had fought hard to stay outside of your Jyhad, and I will not give it up because you tell me I am not fair.

The Independents

Traditional Strongholds: Alamut (Assamites), Cairo (Followers of Set), Venice (Giovanni), Kolkata (Ravnos)

Over the past few centuries, the fatal dance between the Camarilla and the Sabbat has changed vampire society. Their bloody Jyhad has shaped the secret history of the world, destroying millions of mortal lives in the process. However, there are some Clans who witness both Sects tear at each other's throats in the name of their ancient feud and decide that they would prefer to watch from the sidelines.

These four lineages can claim their place as proper Clans, but share a strong disinterest in getting involved in the war between the Camarilla and the Sabbat. Granted, individual members of these Clans (usually younger Kindred) show up in the ranks of both Sects from time to time, but the elders of the independent Clans have their own goals in mind, goals that would conflict with allegiance or loyalty to a Sect.

Of course, independent Kindred are vampires first and Clan members second; they don't all possess mindless, unwavering devotion to the ideals of their Clan. Most of them focus on their personal goals first, whether or not they coincide with their Clan's goals. This has the side-benefit of confusing outside Kindred even more, since it's never clear whether a particular independent will act with their Clan's interests in mind, their personal interests, or some hybrid of the two. (She may even pretend to serve one set of interests while secretly serving another). Individual independents are always wildcards, with no set of laws or politics forcing them into a clear, defined path.

At least, that's the outside perspective.

It's believed that the elders of the independent Clans are active in greater numbers than those that dominate the Sects. One Clan has an Antediluvian that has been actively assisting their goals for centuries. Another seems to benefit from murdering other Kindred. The terrifying Methuselahs of a third are rumored to be waking and possibly organizing their childer for some terrible purpose. As for the fourth….

Regardless of the rumors, the independents continue as if nothing is wrong, working with and against their Clans in the same measure as any Sect vampire. If they are indeed the pawns of their ancient masters, they act as if they are ignorant of it.

The Clans

The independent Clans have almost nothing in common except their unwillingness to join a Sect en masse. Each Clan has a different role in the Jyhad, and each pursues its own goals. Standing apart even from each other, they keep their own laws outside of those of the Sects.

The Assamites

The Assamites (who call themselves the Children of Haqim) are a Clan of murderous vampires. For many years they acted as independent assassins, contracted by the Sects (or anyone who gave them blood) to murder targets. Of all the independents, the Assamites are the most feared, both for their role as assassins and the rumors of their thirst for the blood of elders.

Although they have traditionally acted as mercenary assassins, in the modern nights some of the Children of Haqim question whether an allegiance with one of the Sects might not be more beneficial for them. Ultimately, however, most Assamites follow the will and the orders of Alamut, their ancestral stronghold, as well as their own internal laws, known collectively as the Laws of Haqim. The most loyal of the Assamites believe that other vampires are a plague that needs to be exterminated, while others claim that individual Kindred need to be judged (and perhaps killed) based on their own sins, not merely because they are vampires.

For more on the Assamites, see p. 48.

The Followers of Set

The Followers of Set have different reasons for refusing to join a Sect. They consider themselves to be part of something much older than either the Camarilla or the Sabbat, and dismiss the idea that goals established since antiquity should be cast aside merely because some vampires started calling themselves by a new name a few centuries ago. They claim that their faith dates back to the very start of civilization, and that this ancient trust is far more important than politics.

That doesn't mean that the Setites aren't above playing the mercenary between the Sects. Their Clan lives and worships in secret places, and this gives them access to dark favors and a wealth of knowledge that they can offer to any vampire willing to pay the right price. Many Kindred know the trap that dealing with the Setites entails, and yet time and again Cainites

come to them, each time swearing that it will be the last. Each favor traded or addiction fulfilled brings the Setites one step closer to their ultimate goal: the resurrection of Set himself.

For more on the Followers of Set, see p. 52.

The Giovanni

The Giovanni are a Clan in multiple senses — not only do they share common vampiric blood, but most of their new Embraces come from the mortal descendants of other Clan members as well. The Necromancers are known to pursue two goals — learning the secrets of the dead and acquiring mortal power and wealth — both of which help their Clan as a whole. Only a few trusted elders know that their founder, Augustus Giovanni, seeks to use the knowledge and power of the Clan to destroy the Shroud that separates the realm of the dead from this world.

As such, the Giovanni don't have any need for Sects. They survived the past several centuries all on their own; they don't need protection from the mortals through any flimsy Masquerade. They have their own family to act as allies, resources, and internal enforcement, so they don't need help. What can membership in a Sect give to them that they can't already get through deals, trading, and occasional espionage? They have a Promise that keeps them from interfering in the affairs of the Camarilla (and vice versa), but overall the Giovanni are extremely self-sufficient and stand totally outside the authority of the Sects. That, combined with their mastery of Necromancy, makes many vampires very, very nervous.

For more on the Giovanni, see p. 56.

The Ravnos

The Ravnos are masters of illusion, compelled by their blood to indulge in vice. Their primary allegiance is to themselves, though some consider their Clan to be almost as important. Compared to the other independent Clans they are very loosely organized: partially due to their diaspora all over the world, and partially due to a very un-vampire like wanderlust that pervades the Ravnos. They travel to Camarilla and Sabbat cities alike, where most Princes and Archbishops have learned that it is better to let them pass through than to deal with the headaches that come from trying to prevent them from entering.

As such, the Ravnos are completely indifferent to the politics of the Sects, or indeed to politics of any kind. Many outside observers consider the Ravnos to be too chaotic to have a meaningful impact on the Jyhad as a whole – and the Ravnos nod their heads and continue doing what they want. The Clan believes that one day their Clan founder will awaken and destroy all of the other Antediluvians. Until that day, they wander without allegiance, and see no reason to change.

For more on the Ravnos, see p. 64.

The View from Without

The Camarilla

They are clearly up to something. A trickle of these "independent" Kindred end up joining the Ivory Tower, but too many more do as they will, with no laws or society to contain them. They cannot stand up to us on their own, but they are powerful enough to shift the balance of things.

The Sabbat

These Clans claim that they're free? Bullshit. They're just as much the puppets of the Antediluvians as the Camarilla. No point trying to kill a Giovanni in his mansion or a Setite in his temple, but when the world ends, they'll fall just like everyone else.

The Anarchs

These guys get it. They can stand outside the Jyhad, make their own plans, and people listen. That's freedom, man. Too bad I can't trust any of these fuckers as far as I could throw them.

Assamite

The childer of Haqim, known as Assamites to the rest of the Kindred, are a silent knife in the dark, an order of bloodthirsty assassins who participate in the secret wars of the undead by operating as killers for hire. Outside the purview of the Sects, the Assamites are true independents and mercenaries, hiring out to whoever can pay their blood-price and ungoverned by the will of Prince or Priscus. By the time a mark realizes that he's being hunted by an Assamite, it's often far too late. Needless to say, this makes the Assamites both feared and reviled by many of the other Clans.

In truth, the Assamites are more than simple thugs and killers. Theirs is a complex but insular Clan predicated upon the three principles of wisdom, sorcery, and diablerie. Most Assamites that other vampires encounter are members of the warrior caste, however, so Kindred society has painted them all with that brush. For their part, the Assassins have done nothing to stop this misunderstanding. If it helps them acquire contracts and it occludes the true nature of their Clan, the better for them.

Long ago, the Assamites were brought to heel by a powerful curse to curb their bloodlust, levied by the Tremere at the behest of the Camarilla. They cannot taste the vitae of vampires without it causing them harm. In their ongoing quest to lower their Generation and bring themselves closer to their holy figure, Haqim (whom some outside scholars claim was of the Second Generation, while others insist he was a judge appointed by the other Antediluvians), the Assamites must refine the blood of Kindred into an alchemical solution. Were it not for this mystical yoke, the Assamites would surely be unchecked on a crusade of unholy diablerie.

Nickname: Assassins

Sect: For the most part, the Assamites tend to be independent, letting the Sects hire them to operate on their own terms. That said, some Assamites believe an allegiance with the Camarilla or the Sabbat would allow the entire Clan to stand more strongly.

Appearance: Older Assamites often come from Middle Eastern and North African cultures, though more and more young Assamites come from a wider demographic. In traditional environments, the Assamites prefer garb appropriate to religious or Clan custom. When in public, however, Assamites wear whatever the locals do, allowing them to fulfill their contracts without anyone noticing anything amiss. An



Assamite's skin grows darker with age (as opposed to other vampires, whose skin gets paler); particularly ancient Assamites are almost ebony in complexion.

Haven: Assamites often share communal havens with others of their local cell, remote structures that allow the Assassins to watch the larger domain from a distance. These havens are generally well appointed, but not so lavish that the whole place can't be moved on short notice. Individual Assamites also tend to keep personal hideouts of a much more humble nature, for when they need a place to lay low.

Background: Those Embraced into Clan Assamite tend to fall into two distinct types: The "provincial" members of the Clan fit whatever their locality is, and can blend seamlessly in with the people around them. The higher-profile "jet-setters" transcend cultures, bolstered by their ability to handle interpersonal and intellectual challenges.

Character Creation: Physical Attributes tend to be primary, with some Assamites favoring Social Attributes to help them get close to their prey. Talents and Skills are equally favored, but Knowledges may help the wise Assamite in a pinch. Few Assassins cultivate extensive Backgrounds, and instead specialize in an array of Disciplines that heighten their competence. The most accomplished Assamites follow the Clan's unique Path of Enlightenment, and those who don't often have to spend a great deal of effort maintaining their Virtues and Humanity.

Clan Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Quietus

Weaknesses: Due to the Tremere blood-curse, should an Assamite consume the blood of another Kindred, she suffers one automatic level of unsoakable lethal damage per blood point imbibed. Diablerie attempts result in automatic aggravated damage, one health level per point of permanent Willpower the victim possesses; the would-be diablerist gains no benefits (including Generation reduction) if he survives the process. In addition, Assamites must tithe some of the profits from their contracts to their sires or superiors (generally around 10 percent of all such earnings).

Organization: An insular, hierarchical organization shapes much of Assamite custom. "The Old Man on the Mountain" — the master assassin who makes his haven in the mountain fortress of Alamut — is the ultimate authority, and the Clan heeds the orders that trickle down to them with a mix of reverence and terror. Individual and local cells of Assamites known as *falaqi* frequently have license to act with autonomy, but "turncoats" against the higher cause are rare.

Stereotypes

Brujah: *Where they are blatant, we are subtle. And that is why they are a broken Clan and we are ascendant.*

Followers of Set: *Humility before God is itself divine, but certainly not humility before their unclean god.*

Gangrel: *When the blade bites deeply, they die as readily as all other Kindred.*

Giovanni: *They value their independence as we do, but they squander it in unholy debauchery.*

Lasombra: *For all their posturing, they are quick to pay our fees and hire our knives.*

Malkavian: *In the parable of the scorpion and the frog, they play the roles of both doomed creatures.*

Nosferatu: *But for their desperation to be included among the society that shuns them, they would make puissant* rafiq.

Ravnos: *Make yourself known to them and they will acknowledge their place.*

Toreador: *We kill to honor our God. They kill to avenge a wittier remark.*

Tremere: *Possessing the power of Solomon makes them none the wiser for it, and vengeance will be ours.*

Tzimisce: *They bear old grudges against us; meet them with a wary eye.*

Ventrue: *Vultures picking at the corpse of a long-gone nobility.*

Caitiff: *Every culture must have its Judas goat.*

Camarilla: *A tower built in Babel by Icarus.*

Sabbat: *They profane what is holy and pretend it is an eminent glory.*

Anarchs: *The wisest of the tribes — because they know when to admit they don't know.*

Quote: *Your blood is anathema to me, but the act of spilling it brings me closer to Haqim.*

BRUJAH

The legacy of the Brujah is one of halcyon greatness marred by their own fiery natures. Theirs was the glory of ancient Carthage, but Ventrue treachery in ancient Rome brought the dream to an end. Since then, the Brujah have borne a grudge.

Tonight, the Brujah are rebels and provocateurs, bat-swinging hooligans and agents of change in a society long crippled by stasis. As rebels, it's in their nature to challenge the status quo — though sometimes, without adequate opposition, they embody the status quo themselves. It works out fine, because there's always a hot-blooded Brujah waiting in the wings to bring down an uppity Clanmate grown too comfortable in the role of rebel-turned-dictator.



More so than any other Clan, the Brujah still feel the flames of the passions that once inspired them as mortals. Clan Brujah loves a cause and is quick to act on a stirring speech, accusation of injustice, or a call to arms. This connection to passion can be a blessing, but inspiration can also yield to the madness and hunger of the Beast.

No wise Prince turns his back on the Brujah, and rare is the Brujah who would allow herself to be manipulated or pandered to. A Brujah is her own master, first and foremost, and those who would bring her to heel face a terrible task. A Brujah who thinks she's getting the short end of the stick will tear an enemy to ribbons first and maybe remember to ask questions later, no matter if he's a Primogen or a mortal authority.

Some Kindred historians claim that the Brujah have parlayed their ancient betrayal into a role as agitators against the very order that they help support. Others claim the Brujah have long since submitted to the will of that same order, being little more than loyal opposition rendered impotent. Most Brujah don't care either way, as long as someone needs a good ass-kicking and they can be the ones to deliver it.

Nickname: Rabble

Sect: For all its rebellion, Clan Brujah generally considers itself a member of the Camarilla. Young Rabble sometimes look to the wildness of the Sabbat, but elders

assert that the Ivory Tower provides a fine structure against which to rage.

Appearance: Many Brujah affect styles and mannerisms that reflect an attitude of rebellion. Multicolored hair, shaven heads, spikes, rivets, fetish gear, and t-shirts with bold slogans might appeal to a Brujah. While not every Brujah wears the "uniform," the Rabble often enjoy adorning themselves in outfits intended to provoke. Some young Brujah prefer mobile devices as their tools of resistance, and can summon a riot at the touch of a screen.

Haven: Brujah may feel kinship to a city, but they rarely develop such ties to individual locations. Thus, at any given time, a Brujah probably has a half-dozen or more hideouts, safehouses, and flats available. These are often shabby and ill-kept until the Brujah needs them. Brujah havens might also have mortals who follow the Brujah's ideology or his cult of personality. This works out fine: It never hurts to have a spare vessel in an emergency.

Background: As creatures of passion, Brujah often Embrace without really thinking much about it, and their childer tend to be a disparate lot. Sometimes, the Rabble Embrace those who share a similar outlook or enthusiasm for a cause as the prospective sire. Other times, they inflict the Embrace on those of opposite ideology, cursing a rival with vampirism as punishment.

Character Creation: Brujah are usually — though not exclusively — drawn from mortals with violent or ungovernable personalities. Their Natures and Demeanors are often similar, as Brujah have little use for guile. They lean toward physical Attributes, with Social and Mental about equal afterwards. Many favor Skills and Talents, but most respect the Knowledges that make them more than just thugs. Contacts, Allies, and Herd are common Backgrounds.

Clan Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Presence

Weaknesses: The same passions that inspire Brujah to greatness or depravity, left unchecked, can send them into incandescent rages: The difficulties of rolls to resist or guide frenzy (p. 298) are two higher than normal. Additionally, a Brujah may never spend Willpower to avoid frenzy, though he may spend a point of Willpower to end a frenzy that has already begun.

Organization: Certain causes rise and fall in Brujah fashion, but some of the more tenured are those who call themselves Idealists and Iconoclasts. Iconoclasts want to tear it all down, while Idealists enjoy solving problems through theory. This last harkens somewhat to the classical roots of the Brujah as philosopher-kings, and most Idealists are among the ranks of Brujah ancillae and elders.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Fast, invisible, fanatical, and they want to drink my fucking blood? Sounds like a good case for doing unto others.*

Followers of Set: *The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and the tree should have been chopped down long ago.*

Gangrel: *Much respect, so long as we agree it's mutual.*

Giovanni: *If you have to deal with one of these nasty dagos, you've already lost.*

Lasombra: No habla *Ventrue with a different hat on.*

Malkavian: *Trust one? No. Find some common ground with one? Maybe.*

Nosferatu: *It's better to have one telling you shit about someone else than the other way around, so be cool.*

Ravnos: *I'll bet I can throw one further than you can.*

Toreador: *If you can catch one, see if he'll blow you. They might as well be good for something.*

Tremere: *If one of these witches starts looking at you weird, you'd better hope you can get close to him before your blood catches on fire.*

Tzimisce: *Nasty old bats with claws where their junk used to be. But at least they're usually honest.*

Ventrue: *Boot, meet face.*

Caitiff: *Teach them something and maybe they'll return the favor.*

Camarilla: *It mostly works when we punch it into heading the right direction.*

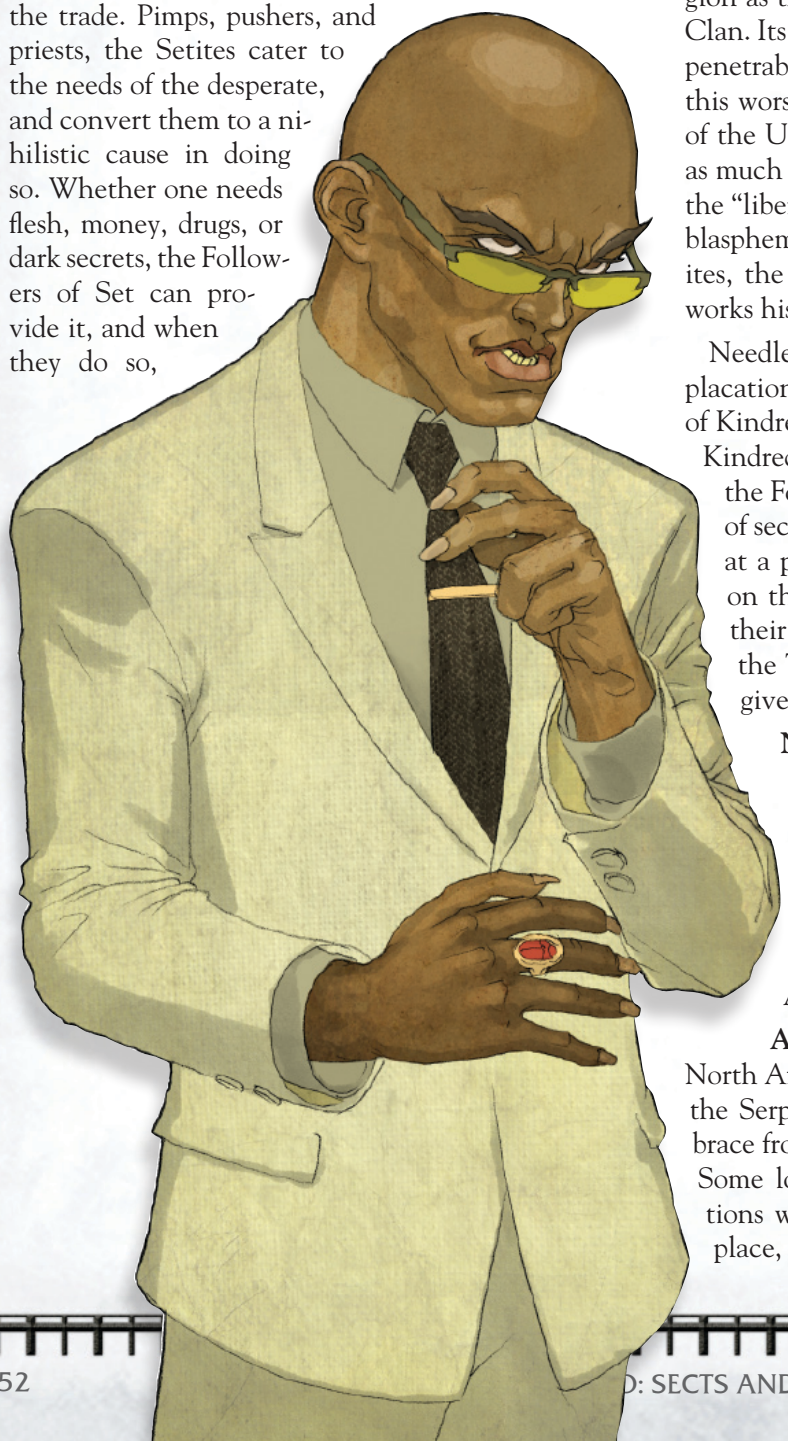
Sabbat: *Giving your soul to the devil makes you a servant, you choads.*

Anarchs: *Get on the bus and let's tear this Prince a new asshole together.*

Quote: *I'll give you a head start. You're the tortoise and I'm the hare — a pissed-off, fuck-the-world hare with a score to settle and a thirst like the devil's own.*

Followers of Set

Addiction, debasement, corruption, and desperation strike fear into many Kindred who worry that theirs will become an unlife of ruin, but to the Followers of Set, these and more are the tools of the trade. Pimps, pushers, and priests, the Setites cater to the needs of the desperate, and convert them to a nihilistic cause in doing so. Whether one needs flesh, money, drugs, or dark secrets, the Followers of Set can provide it, and when they do so, they all but guarantee themselves a return visit from those who seek them.



The Followers of Set are as much a chthonic religion as they are a Clan, though the faith includes the Clan. Its mythology is complex and convoluted, an impenetrable pantheon of god-monsters. At the apex of this worship stands a syncretism of the Egyptian Lord of the Underworld Set and the Greek hydra Typhon, as much spiritual guardians of secret places as they are the "liberators" of other's souls. To outsiders, this is all blasphemous religious affectation, but to devout Setites, the cult and cause are real, and their dark lord works his will through them.

Needless to say, the politics of desperation and the placation of evil gods place the Serpents on the outside of Kindred society. The Setites are fine with this. The Kindred can often find themselves in need of what the Followers of Set purvey, and the extra "service" of secrecy is one the Setites are happy to provide — at a premium. The Setites offer a devil's deal, but on their own terms. That way, when they collect their due and feed blood and souls into the maw of the Typhonic beast, all of its sacrifices have been given willingly.

Nickname: Setites, Serpents

Sect: Externally, none of the Sects will have the Followers of Set. Internally, the Setites sometimes describe themselves in terms of both Sect and Clan. They have no real impetus to join either the Camarilla or Sabbat, and their goals are different from those of the Anarchs.

Appearance: Many older Setites hail from the North African and Mediterranean ethnicities native to the Serpents' historical territory, but they freely Embrace from among the mortals of their adopted homes. Some long-standing Setite temples are tied to locations where "Egyptian" Serpents might seem out of place, but where some aspect of serpent mythology is

present, as in Mesoamerica or even far-flung Nordic locales, and thus draw their membership from local populations. Red hair is considered a mark of Set's favor.

Haven: Where their hidden temples stand, the Setites make their havens, either individually or communally. These may be anything from "churches" with never-before-heard-of denominations or they may be outright cults that have to hide their existences. The secretive Serpents sometimes hide individual havens in places where other Kindred don't often go, such as insular ethnic neighborhoods, abandoned domains, "the rough part of town," and so forth. Some Setites also haven in secret mystical places that have value to the Clan, guarding them from outsiders.

Background: Prospective childer for the Followers of Set often spend some time involved with a Setite cult, so they're indoctrinated in the mysteries of the Clan before becoming one of its Kindred. They may come from any cultural origin, though many are outsiders, loners, or otherwise marginalized by society, which is often what led them to the forbidden fruits offered by the cult of Set in the first place.

Character Creation: Sires choose those who demonstrate acumen in Social and Mental Attributes, as the Clan needs its proselytizers and its priests to be charismatic and quick-witted. Knowledges are almost always primary, though Talents may be so instead, especially among those Serpents engaged in dealings with others. Setites focus on Backgrounds that give influence over others whether subtly or overtly, making Allies, Contacts, Influence, Resources, and sometimes Retainers popular.

Clan Disciplines: Obfuscate, Presence, Serpentis

Weaknesses: Given their origins in darkness, the Serpents react negatively to bright light: Add two health levels to damage caused by exposure to sunlight. Setites also lose one die from dice pools for actions taken in bright light (police spotlights, stage lights, flares, etc.).

Organization: Setite organization is mostly local, with a single temple or network of cults representing a city's Serpent presence. Setites in the cities rarely scheme among each other, preferring to face outward threats in unity rather than the schismatic self-interest of the Sects. Whispers persist of a massive temple devoted to Set located somewhere in Africa, with a terrible Methuselah who claims to be the childe of Set himself at the head. If this is true, then the Clan's higher agenda probably originates here, but the Setites themselves remain silent on the topic.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *They aren't so different from us, and it scares the hell out of them.*

Brujah: *We could have saved their precious Carthage, but in their pride, they chose an eternity of ridicule and failure.*

Gangrel: *Don't mistake their sullenness for noble savagery. They have vices, just like anyone else.*

Giovanni: *They distract themselves with methods and neglect their goals.*

Lasombra: *Behind many successful Lasombra is a debt to the temple.*

Malkavian: *They make excellent allies because no one pays attention to them, and by the time they're due their share, all they can do is gibber.*

Nosferatu: *Forge a relationship or you'll find yourself dragged before a Prince or Archbishop with them as witnesses.*

Ravnos: *Sorry, I don't take credit. From you.*

Toreador: *Cha-ching.*

Tremere: *One in a hundred realizes what we might do together. The rest are up their own asses.*

Tzimisce: *The Dragon is not the only Serpent among the Damned.*

Ventrue: *Let them hate us publicly, so long as they keep buying.*

Caitiff: *How easily the trod-upon becomes a convert.*

Camarilla: *Hypocrisy is great for business.*

Sabbat: *Take one step forward, two steps back, set self on fire, kick own ass. Preen.*

Anarchs: *An idealistic cult of personality that sometime succeeds in spite of itself.*

Quote: *I know what you need.*

Gangrel

A glint of red eyes in the darkness, the scent of a predator's musk, a flash of fangs, the sound of flesh tearing: These mark the presence of the Gangrel. More than any other Clan, the Gangrel resemble the beasts associated with the legends of vampires: bats, wolves, and other creatures of darkness. Indeed, the Outlanders may develop the ability to transform themselves into these and other, more primal forms.

The Gangrel have other characteristics in common with animals as well. Many shun the elaborate social constructs of both Kindred and kine. A number of them prefer to move alone or as a member of small packs or coteries. Most are tough and, when pressed, ferocious. And when Gangrel succumb to the depredations of the Beast, they are left with some feature redolent of the animal kingdom.

As a Clan, the Gangrel are wary and aloof. Most would prefer to spend their nights stalking prey or wilding on the rooftops than minding Princely edicts or lobbying for recognition of domain. Theirs is a tense relationship with vampire society, and Outlanders are among the most frequent to turn Anarch or Autarkis. In some localities, the Gangrel have collectively abandoned membership in any Sect — insofar as the Gangrel truly ever do anything collectively.

The Jyhad seems less pronounced among the Gangrel than it is among other Clans, and the Outlanders have little regard for the eternal conflict. Differences between Gangrel more often fall along the lines of domain and feeding rights than they do on generational mistrust, and the things that concern young Outlanders are matters that concern Gangrel ancillae and even elders. Still, one would be hard-pressed to consider the relationship among Gangrel of different generations amicable, except in isolated sire-childe situations. The Beast is ever suspicious of those who would take sustenance from it.

Nickname: Outlanders

Sect: The Gangrel at least nominally belong to the Camarilla, but the Clan has always had a vocal faction that spurns membership in any Sect. They claim that political games and social structures do nothing for the primal Gangrel.

Appearance: Personal presentation is often not high on the list of many Gangrel priorities, and a Gangrel's appearance is often more a matter of circumstance than it is of active decision. The Clan's weakness can contribute a great deal to their appearance, as does an extended unlife in the places where they make their



havens, which are frequently short of modern conveniences.

Haven: Gangrel often lair where they can, taking refuge when the sun threatens to rise. Those who do maintain permanent havens often lean toward the utilitarian: Everything from a cave to a covered alley to an illegal squat may serve as a Gangrel haven, usually with little demarcating them as any sort of personal territory (until it's too late for the unfortunate interloper).

Background: Gangrel sire childer like they seek prey: after long hunts during which the prospective childe doesn't even know she's being followed. Creating a fledgling means sharing limited resources, so each sire-childe relationship is unique and significant. Outlanders Embrace because they choose an individual, not out of whim or recklessness. Those who earn their attention are hardy, whether physically or emotionally.

Character Creation: Sufficiency is the Gangrel hallmark, and many have outsider or loner personality archetypes. Physical Attributes are far and away most frequent, as are Talents with a smattering of Skills and Knowledges. Many Gangrel focus on Disciplines rather than Backgrounds, preferring to rely on themselves more than others. Gangrel almost never have significant Resources, Influence, or Retainers.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Weaknesses: Every time a Gangrel frenzies, she acquires a temporary animal characteristic (which may replace an existing temporary one). A patch of fur, a brief torpor after feeding, or skittishness around crowds — all of these may mar an Outlander after frenzy. Characteristics acquired in Gangrel frenzies need not only be physical – they can be behavioral as well. Players should work with the Storyteller to determine what new animal trait is acquired (whether the frenzy involved the fight-or-flight impulse may be relevant). Over time, or in an exceptional situation, a particular animal feature may become permanent, with the next frenzy adding a new feature. A good guideline is to require each frenzy-gained trait to have some effect grounded in system terms (such as the temporary reduction of Social Attribute dots or a permanent loss of Humanity), though some Storytellers may allow narrative-only traits that can shape the story.

Organization: Regional groups of Gangrel occasionally assemble in convocations that draw from ethnic or cultural influences. These are informal affairs, geared more toward sharing information and revelry than advancing any cogent agenda. Aside from these infrequent gatherings, almost all Gangrel organization is very local where it exists at all, from pairs of sire-and-childe through terrifying packs centered around one accomplished Outlander.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Pull off the fucking head and the body will die.*

Brujah: *I wouldn't call what we have "trust." More of an understanding that we have a common enemy.*

Followers of Set: *If it smells like carrion, I don't want any part of it.*

Giovanni: *I try to make it a habit not to keep talking to things once I've killed them.*

Lasombra: *I'm not afraid of the dark, so you'd better have something else underneath that cape.*

Malkavian: *Ten gallons of bullshit in a one-gallon jug.*

Nosferatu: *When they get nervous, get the fuck out of there.*

Ravnos: *If she starts calling you her brother, pop your claws and make your point. It's the only way she'll learn.*

Toreador: *Assume that they want something from you when they lower themselves to your level.*

Tremere: *Fight or flight with the grayfaces. Choose carefully.*

Tzimisce: *When I see a carcass eaten through with worms, I'm smart enough to know it's rotten.*

Ventrue: *If you like answering to a master, you can do worse… but not much.*

Caitiff: *Unless they pull their weight, who needs another mouth to feed?*

Camarilla: *Any port in a storm, I guess.*

Sabbat: *Self-righteous evangelical garbage.*

Anarchs: *Almost. They almost get it.*

Quote: *This is not a place for you, and it is too late to turn back.* Run, *little man.*

Giovanni

Achieving prominence during the Venetian Renaissance, the Giovanni family built their fortune on the rise of the middle class and the ready profit of banking and Mediterranean trade (and the criminal enterprise that came with it). However, with the family's rise came hubris, as its *paterfamilias* sought ever more power, and with that hubris came horror. With his earthly power at its apex, Augustus Giovanni turned to the arts of controlling the dead, and in doing so, gained the Embrace from a forgotten Antediluvian. With a conclave of conspirators, the Giovanni plunged a now-forgotten Clan into oblivion and built their own legacy on its corpse.

Since those first nights, the Giovanni have accepted no limits on their ambitions, despite opposition from Kindred outside their Clan and a well-deserved reputation as "Devil Kindred." They studied forbidden arts, becoming formidable in the *nigrimancy* that allowed them power over the spirits of the departed, and degeneracy followed in the wake of unclean ritual. To this night, the Giovanni are known for the insular nature of their Clan and the incestuous practices by which they populate it. A few outside families and factions fall under Giovanni auspices, but the vast majority of the Clan comes from the debased mortal family. The family remains successful despite all of their ghastly peccadilloes, and has amassed a vast wealth through crime, politics, and the secrets of the dead that keeps them in their position of degraded opulence.



In public view, the Giovanni make a great show of humility and respect. Part of this gentility is a habit of centuries, still in place from when the other Clans hunted the usurping Necromancers (and to preserve their hard-won neutrality from the conflict between the Camarilla and the Sabbat). Another part of it is the velvet glove hiding the iron fist of their nature, remarkable for forcing ghosts, minds, and bodies alike to bow to their needs. To hear the Giovanni tell it, Princes and Archbishops alike owe them favors, and anyone with something to offer may earn their patronage.

For the most part, the Giovanni participate little in the Jyhad, pursuing their own agenda of cultivating wealth and building a foundation of power in the lands beyond the veil of death. Outsiders rarely comprehend the goals of the Necromancers, but only the most trusted of the Giovanni know that the Clan wants to plunge the world into a state where the dead and the living commingle. And with their mastery of Necromancy, the Giovanni would be positioned to rule it all.

Nickname: Necromancers

Appearance: Outwardly, Giovanni dress with subtlety and taste. Much of the Clan comes from the original mortal family, and have not only olive Italian complexions, but some amount of inherited family features. Those outside the immediate family often appear "of a type," and in the traditional garb of their regional family branch.

Haven: The family wealth of the Giovanni is evident in

their havens, which may take the form of villas or lavish estates. The Necromancers often have valuables invested in their havens as well, such as galleries of fine art or displays of jewelry. Many Giovanni also maintain secondary havens, where they may have elaborate necromantic crypts or just flats where they can lie low if necessary.

Background: Giovanni of the main family branch have usually spent some amount of time as a ghoul in a practice known as the Proxy Kiss. During this time, the Kindred-to-be learns about the treacherous and jealous reality of the vampire family. She learns ambition and an unhealthy dose of duplicity, in addition to the family history and customs. Giovanni rarely see much of the outside world on their own terms during the Proxy Kiss period, and often become insular and alienated, while at the same time eager to stand out among the other family ghouls.

Character Creation: Giovanni vampires often have outgoing, professional Demeanors that hide unpleasant Natures warped in their upbringing. Social or Mental Attributes are usually primary, though some of the "soldiers" of the family prefer Physical Attributes. Emphasis likewise usually falls on primary Knowledges or Talents, depending on proclivity. A split in the Clan sees those who favor the practicality of Backgrounds (particularly those tied to wealth and exerting influence) diverge from those who prefer the forbidden puissance of Disciplines. Few Giovanni could be described as well-rounded.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Necromancy, Potence

Weaknesses: The Kiss of a Giovanni vampire causes excruciating pain in mortal vessels who receive it. If the Giovanni isn't careful, her vessel may die of shock and agony before being wholly exsanguinated. When a Giovanni feeds upon a mortal, she does twice as much damage as the Kiss of another vampire would inflict. For example, if a Giovanni takes one point of blood from a mortal vessel, that victim would suffer two health levels of damage. As a result, they tend to use blood banks and other means of feeding that don't fight as much.

Organization: Like few other Clans, the Necromancers have a top-down organization where policy is made by a (presumed) still-active Clan progenitor, Augustus. The family maintains an enormous palazzo known as the Mausoleum in Venice, where elders and fledglings alike dance to the whims of their ancient puppetmasters. Clan structure is itself familial, with the added complications that degeneracy and vampirism offer. Incest, ancestor worship, necrophilia, cults of guilt, and bizarre relationships in which fathers and grandmothers are their own issue's childer make a mire of the Clan and family, and fracture many Giovanni long before they become Kindred.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Beware, as all the money in the world still cannot buy one passage back from the grave.*

Brujah: *Inexpensive allies or irascible enemies.*

Followers of Set: *Dangerous relics deluded by a primitive grasp of what lies beyond the Shroud.*

Gangrel: *Let them have their mud and misery.*

Lasombra: *Like us, they stand with one foot in the temporal world and one foot in the occult.*

Malkavian: *Once they crumble to dust, they don't have to suffer their madness anymore.*

Nosferatu: *Dead men do tell tales, and the Sewer Rats have so many tales to tell.*

Ravnos: *The Kindred have forever to make of their fates what they will, and this is how they spend it?*

Toreador: *How tragic is the Kindred so desperately afraid of what she truly is.*

Tremere: *We don't enshrine the history that made us what we are, so why do they?*

Tzimisce: *The worm that feasts on its own flesh must eventually starve.*

Ventrue: *They often forget that Machiavelli worked in the wake of the Borgias and the Medicis.*

Caitiff: *Without knowing their origins, what can they possibly amount to?*

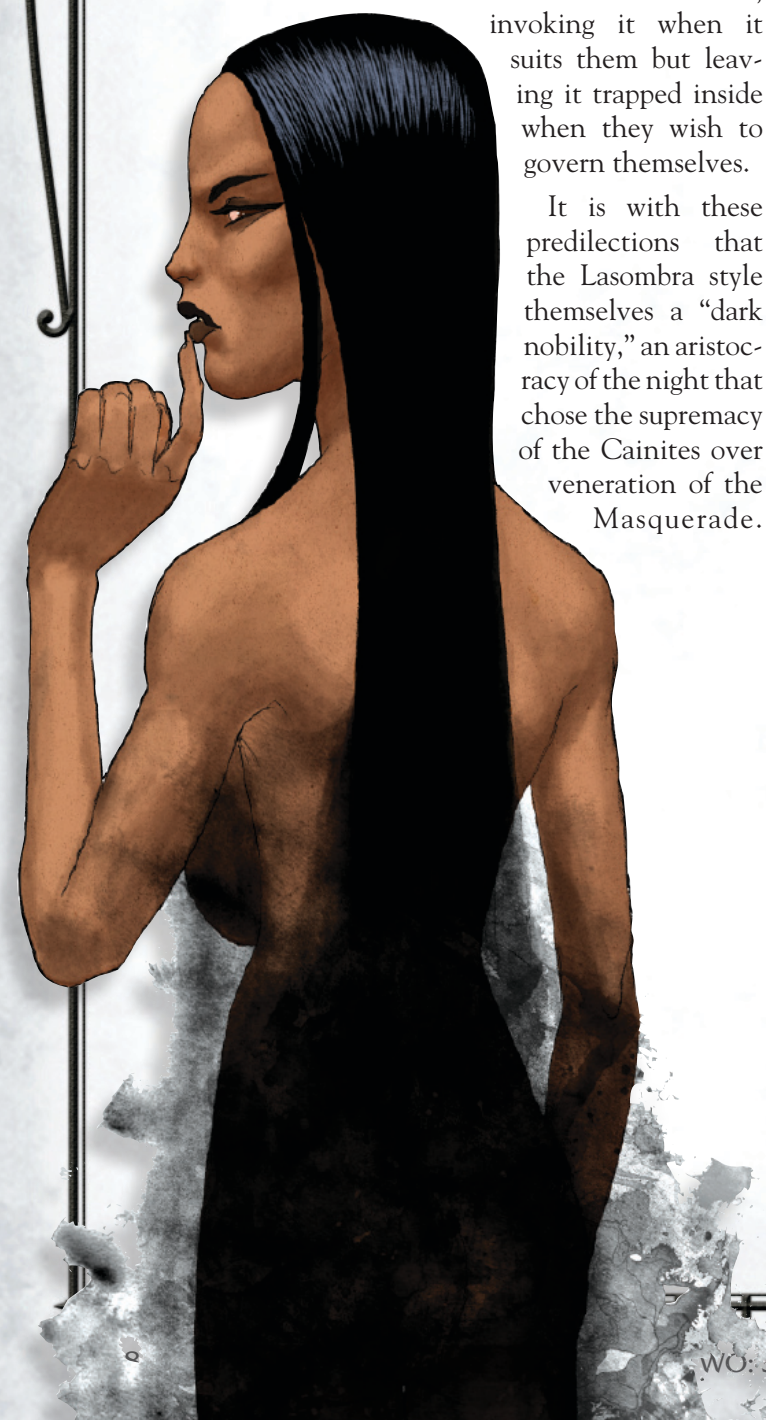
Camarilla and Sabbat: *Let them have their endless war, for we grow rich by selling each side what it needs to continue the effort.*

Anarchs: *Until they build something of lasting import, they are the ugliest of the sisters.*

Quote: *You misunderstand the situation if you think you're important to me alive.*

LASOMBRA

To the mind of a Lasombra, it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven. Fear, frenzy, the power to determine whether another lives or dies: these are at the root of the power that the Lasombra hold dear. Whereas other vampires try vainly to hold the Beast at bay or give themselves wholly to it, the Lasombra beat the Beast into submission, invoking it when it suits them but leaving it trapped inside when they wish to govern themselves.



It is with these predilections that the Lasombra style themselves a "dark nobility," an aristocracy of the night that chose the supremacy of the Cainites over veneration of the Masquerade. Their regard for such ideas as redemption and salvation are cynical at best, and much of the pomp that shaped the Clan's pre-Sabbat outlook remains only with a sense of blackest irony or open mockery. The grandeur and rituals of the Church and aristocracy remain dear to the Lasombra, however, and the Clan was instrumental not only in establishing many of the rituals of the Sabbat, but in the institutions that keep it from descending into chaos each night.

Whether they see themselves as God's instruments or as outcasts from His creation, the Lasombra believe they have a duty (whether to Sect, Clan, pack, or even just themselves), and obligation to their responsibilities gives them a wicked sense of purpose. Even a Lasombra shovelhead may consider himself a cut above the rest; a surprising number of Lasombra mass Embraces survive, perhaps owing to the intervention of their sires.

While the night belongs to all Kindred, the Lasombra are truly born to darkness, to the degree that their very Clan name reveals their tie to shadow. Theirs is the Discipline of Obtenebration, and it allows them to wield the stuff of shadow and darkness, and even reach beyond the darkness of the physical world into the abyss that lies beyond.

Nickname: Keepers (as in "my brother's…")

Sect: The Sabbat would be very different without the influence of the Lasombra, and they remain its most prominent Clan. Young Lasombra often make auspicious starts as Sabbat Ducti or Priests, leading their fellows by charging into the fray or demonstrating mastery of the Beast.

Appearance: The Lasombra are frequently attractive. Whether through the Spanish, Italian, and Moorish stock associated with the Clan, or due to more cosmopolitan modern backgrounds, the Keepers cut a striking figure. Their dress is often conservative or religious, drawing on years of ceremony and faithful ritual. Rare is the Lasombra who cannot at least manipulate shadows to affect a dramatic entrance or enigmatic pose.

Haven: The obligation of their leadership leads many young Lasombra to maintain communal havens with

other members of their pack. Wealthier Keepers and those who predate the Sect often maintain their own havens, whether sinister penthouse suites or sprawling Old World villas.

Background: Prospective sires of Clan Lasombra seek both erudition and ambition in their potential childer. As such, many Lasombra come from professional backgrounds, and display outgoing and even aggressive personalities. Merit in their sires' eyes takes fledgling Lasombra far, and the Keepers do not hesitate to cull their ranks of flawed, lazy, or boorish childer.

Character Creation: Lasombra often have disparate Natures and Demeanors. Mental or Social Attributes are equally likely to be primary. Attributes tend to be narrow and specialized, showing individual expertise. Keepers cultivate Backgrounds of all types similarly in (initially) low quantities, to better diversify themselves.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Obtenebration, Potence

Weaknesses: Lasombra vampires cast no reflections. Whether in a mirror, in a body of water, on a polished surface, or in the rear-view of a taxicab, the image of the Keeper does not reflect.

Organization: For the Lasombra, the nights of high aristocracy never faded, and the titles and offices a modern onlooker might associate with history still carry great weight among the Keepers. A complex system of patronage, mentorship, and lineage characterizes the Clan, similar to the courts and churches of centuries gone by. Childer benefit greatly from esteemed sires and vice versa, while acts that confer Sect or Clan status may also elevate a Lasombra's peers, so long as she associates her success with her fellows.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *They believe themselves lions but possess only the ways of jackals.*

Brujah: *Petulant whelps in a rage over their own loss of rule from a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

Followers of Set: *Peer too deeply into the darkness, serpent, and you shall find that it has the means to smite.*

Gangrel: *Every society needs its beasts of burden.*

Giovanni: *Their inner foulness manifests in their every action.*

Malkavian: *The fool does not dine at the table with the lords.*

Nosferatu: *They are martyrs, not monsters, and their faces are the stigmata they must bear.*

Ravnos: *Filth, suitable only from which to make an example.*

Toreador: *A rose plucked from its garden remains lovely for only so long before it crumbles to dust.*

Tremere: *They revere only themselves, and they will reap a just reward for the sacrilege they practice.*

Tzimisce: *Although we may share a common goal, a murder of crows is always an ill omen.*

Ventrue: *Such a misguided effort, to use the scepter of kings only to hide oneself from his lessers.*

Caitiff: *Lords have ever sired bastards, and have ever hidden them as their marks of shame.*

Camarilla: *Who would wish to dwell in a castle that closes its gates for fear of unruly peasants?*

Sabbat: *Imperfect, and thus in need of ever more investment.*

Anarchs: *They must never* be *equals — it is enough that they think they are.*

Quote: *Wielding the shadows is an extension of controlling the darkness into which we are all Embraced.*

Malkavian



Clan Malkavian is twice damned: once by the curse of being Kindred, and again by the turmoil that disturbs their hearts and minds. Upon the Embrace, every Malkavian is afflicted with an insurmountable insanity that fractures her outlook for every night thereafter, making her unlife one of madness. Some consider this a form of oracular insight, while others simply consider them dangerous.

Make no mistake: Malkavian insanity is a painful, alienating phenomenon, but it occasionally provides the Lunatics with bursts of insight or heretofore unknown perspective. Madness for the Malkavians may take the form of any clinical form of insanity, or it may be a hyperacuity of senses others don't know they have; a supernatural puppeteer pulling the Malkavian's strings, or a sense that the Malkavian is somehow ahead of evolutionary schedule. A Malkavian may believe herself to be an idea given physical form or an avatar of some concept the World of Darkness has yet to encounter. She may be a nonstop ravening psychopath, or may be a mostly lucid individual sometimes rendered catatonic by fear of an impending cosmic cataclysm.

Their precarious stability makes it hard for other Kindred (or, indeed, any vessels with whom they may meet) to interact with Malkavians. The Clan sometimes indulges in elaborate, terrifying, and dangerous "pranks" which do little to endear them to other vampires. These incidents are nominally meant to educate the target, but the lesson can often be lost between the vampire's scramble for safety and the inability to parse the Malkavian's inner logic. Common pranks might be to replace a vain Toreador's haven door with a guillotine or to redistribute a Brujah elder's wealth while he's at Elysium, or it might take the form of giving a hunter the location where the Nosferatu gather. Kindred both dread and resent the word "prank" almost as much as they do the Lunatics themselves.

Nickname: Lunatics

Sect: In their moments of lucidity, the Malkavians offer their unorthodox perspectives and Devil's advocacy to the Camarilla, offering their visions and unique insights to cut through the webs of deceit. Princes and Primogen tolerate the Lunatics to varying degrees, but the Clan as a whole has always been a supporter of the Ivory Tower.

Appearance: While Malkavians can come from any culture, the madness following the Embrace tends to lead them to extremes of self-presentation. Malkavians may appear disheveled, injured, or simply dirty. They could still be wearing the same clothes from the night of their Embrace or they may have stolen clothes from a laundromat or a department store during a fit of confusion or fugue. Of course, Malkavians are just as likely

to be meticulous and exacting in their appearance, trying obsessively to appear as normal as possible.

Haven: Consistency is rare among Malkavians. Quite simply, they establish havens where they think to, where they can, and where they can recall. A significant number of Malkavians have literally no home, spending each night where exhaustion or the sun's rays leave them. Others may permanently have the presidential suite in a posh hotel, a squat in the Barrens, the dispensary at a county jail, or a broom closet in a historical landmark.



Background: Malkavians Embrace with all the caprice one would assume from them. Lunatic childer come from all economic and cultural strata, though most have some sort of hard-luck story or black secret behind them that caused their sire to take note. Truly damaged Malkavians who are unaware of the meanings of their actions may not even be aware that they have sired childer, which makes for very difficult entry into Kindred society for these castoffs, many of whom end up among the Caitiff.

Character Creation: Loner, outsider, and deviant concepts and archetypes prevail among the Malkavians, as do Mental Attributes (with an occasional Social-primary madman or Physical-primary maniac hiding among the ranks). Talents and Knowledges are likely most popular among Malkavians. Backgrounds tend to be either broad and shallow or few and deep, representing the way the way the Malkavian caroms through unlife. Virtues, Humanity, and Paths often tumble quickly, usually in the wake of Willpower doing the same.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dementation, Obfuscate

Weaknesses: All members of Clan Malkavian suffer from a permanent, incurable derangement. They may acquire and recover from other derangements, and may spend Willpower to ameliorate the effects of the derangement for a scene, but they can never recover from their original derangement.

Organization: Rumor is more widespread than truth with regard to Malkavian organization, and any number of harrowing tales describe the function of the Clan. Some say the Lunatics all share a hive consciousness; others claim that this is in fact the lingering consciousness of the Clan's progenitor Malkav. Still others claim that a network of madness puts all Malkavians in contact with one another and is the cause of their crippling insanity. If nothing else, the Malkavians prove inscrutable and uncanny. One night, each of them frenzies when they see one another, while the next night, they all converge at the same time at the Sheriff's haven and accuse him of harboring Sabbat spies. Who can say how the "disease of information" or the customs of the Clan travel among them?

Stereotypes

Assamite: *There's something flattering in what they're doing. Like I'm a little piece of their God.*

Brujah: *You can't hide your horns, devil-man.*

Followers of Set: *Walking westward, they should meet the sun before it sinks.*

Gangrel: *Pin the tail on the— OW, OW, OW, FUCK!*

Giovanni: *Ashes, ashes, we all fall down, and get back up, and dance with ghosts.*

Lasombra: *A hyena doesn't ever choose to be a hyena, I think.*

Nosferatu: *I have dreamed what hunts them in their dark, humid warrens, and it is what each of us can become, if we're not careful.*

Ravnos: *It looks different depending on if I close my left or my right eye.*

Toreador: *Made up of the pieces of the people they've harmed. Each time they feed they become a little less.*

Tremere: *If you can rub those letters off their foreheads, they'll stop in their tracks.*

Tzimisce: *I tried to sprinkle salt on one's tail and he bit off my hand.*

Ventrue: *I will make you a fine new waistcoat, my emperor.*

Caitiff: *I didn't do it.*

Camarilla: *When all you do is look behind you, you never realize that the door in front of you is closed.*

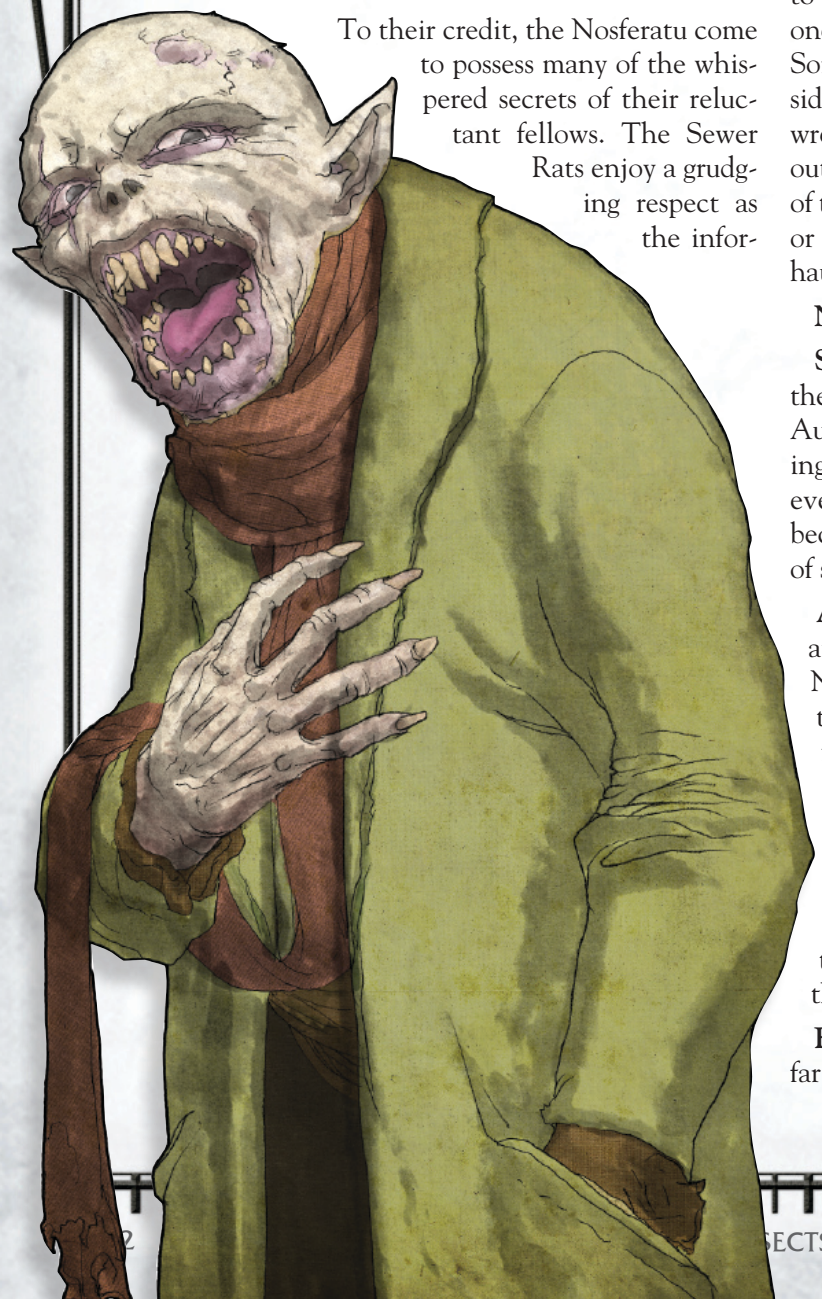
Sabbat: *They have the answer, but they don't understand the riddle itself.*

Anarchs: *All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense.*

Quote: *I was trying to turn water into wine. Where the fuck did all this blood come from? Oh, well — waste not, want not.*

NOSFERATU

Those who doubt that the Embrace is a curse need look no further than the Nosferatu. Twisted by the mark of Caine, members of Clan Nosferatu are warped by the Embrace into hideous monsters. As such, they skulk and keep to the shadows, and they often rouse the ire and mockery of other Kindred for their nightmarish appearances. Still others are so terrified or revolted by the Nosferatu that these warped Kindred have little social interaction at all.



To their credit, the Nosferatu come to possess many of the whispered secrets of their reluctant fellows. The Sewer Rats enjoy a grudging respect as the information-brokers of the Kindred, given their supernatural acumen at stealth and the fact that many Kindred would rather ignore them than acknowledge them. Savvy Nosferatu exploit this for all it's worth, turning the hypocrisy of other vampires to their own profit.

On the whole, the Nosferatu condition is lonely and alienating. How they react to the Curse of Caine varies with their outlook and mental stamina, but it's hard to be an object of utter revulsion and not let it shape one's disposition toward one's "Kindred" in some way. Some of the Sewer Rats are cruel, as blighted on the inside as they are on the outside, while others are tragic, wretched creatures who have been cursed with eternal outsider status through no choice of their own. A few of the Sewer Rats even position themselves as prophets or avatars of the Damned, physically embodying the haunting riddle, "A Beast I am, lest a Beast I become."

Nickname: Sewer Rats

Sect: Clan Nosferatu belongs at least nominally to the Camarilla, though many of its members become Autarkis or support the Anarchs rather than navigating the Ivory Tower's vicious social labyrinth. Some even contend that the Nosferatu need the Camarilla, because without they have no buyers in their economy of secrets.

Appearance: Physical horror is the lot of the Nosferatu, and their unsettling deformations are countless. No two Nosferatu share the exact same malformation, and the Clan is a freakshow of snarled limbs, fanged protrusions, hellish countenances, serpentine spines, ruined faces, spasmodic appendages, and even features not usually seen on the mortal stock from which the Nosferatu are drawn. The Sewer Rats often hide these disfigurements under shapeless robes and rags, but some exult in the discomfort their presence causes, and don't bother disguising them. They may even emphasize them.

Haven: Nosferatu Kindred often make their havens far from the scorn and spite of other vampires. Whether

they construct warrens in the sewers suggested by their nickname or they sculpt a sprawling nightmare-nest in the spire of a condemned church, Sewer Rats value secrecy and distance from rivals in their havens. Nosferatu of humbler means may well squat in an abandoned tenement or a disused alley. So long as it's away from other Kindred, it's a good haven.

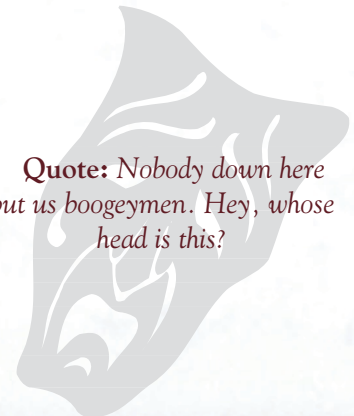
Background: The Sewer Rats mostly fit into one of two categories. Some Nosferatu Embrace the damaged, flawed, outcast, or vile, feeling some degree of kinship with them. Other Embrace spitefully, dragging the beautiful or privileged into an immortal hell of disfigurement and monstrosity.

Character Creation: Many Nosferatu come from loner and outsider concepts, Natures, and Demeanors. They favor Physical and Mental Attributes over Social, and they tend to be balanced in their regard for Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. Nosferatu prefer to specialize rather than generalize in Backgrounds, favoring those that carry favors and information like Allies, Contacts, Mentor, and even a bit of Influence.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence

Weaknesses: All Nosferatu have an Appearance score of zero, and they may never improve it. Cross it off the character sheet. Dice pools that use the Appearance Trait are inherently difficult for these hideous Kindred.

Organization: Occasionally, a coterie of Nosferatu becomes a brood or cult, often based around a remote warren. These can sprawl into vast "kingdoms" of Sewer Rats, who often exist without the knowledge of a domain's Prince or Archbishop. The Nosferatu are among the Kindred most likely to share a communal haven, if only for protection in numbers. As well, Nosferatu share information with each other via networks — whether digital, personal, occult, or something less definable — that defy the comprehension of other Kindred.



Quote: *Nobody down here but us boogeymen. Hey, whose head is this?*

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Secrets for amnesty seems like a fair trade.*

Brujah: *Emits showers of sparks. Point away from face. Point at some other asshole instead.*

Followers of Set: *They want our souls — usually until they understand the stench of a Nosferatu's soul.*

Gangrel: *We have some common ground in being outsiders, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't be careful around them.*

Giovanni: *Down in the sewers we see a lot of shit, but never so much as when a Giovanni heads our way.*

Lasombra: *I try to keep to the shadows, but I'll hang out under the streetlights when I know one of these creeps has my number.*

Malkavian: *See my face? That's what these maniacs' minds look like. Except they're still bleeding in there.*

Ravnos: *Peddlers of lies, they make great patsies, but they sure can bear a grudge.*

Toreador: *Sell them dirt on each other and they'll scratch each other's eyes out. It's the only way to come out ahead with them.*

Tremere: *They're not even vampires, you know that? They did something way wrong back in the day and now it's stuck to them.*

Tzimisce: *I look like this 'cause I* have *to. These fuckers* choose *to. That's how nature says, "Stay away."*

Ventrue: *High and mighty, until they need you. Charge them double when they come calling. They can afford it.*

Caitiff: "I never even knew my father!" *Cry me a fucking river.*

Camarilla: *I'll be damned, they think their claims of domain extend into the sewers.*

Sabbat: *Either monumentally gullible or Bible-grade wicked; either way, you're better off when they're somewhere else.*

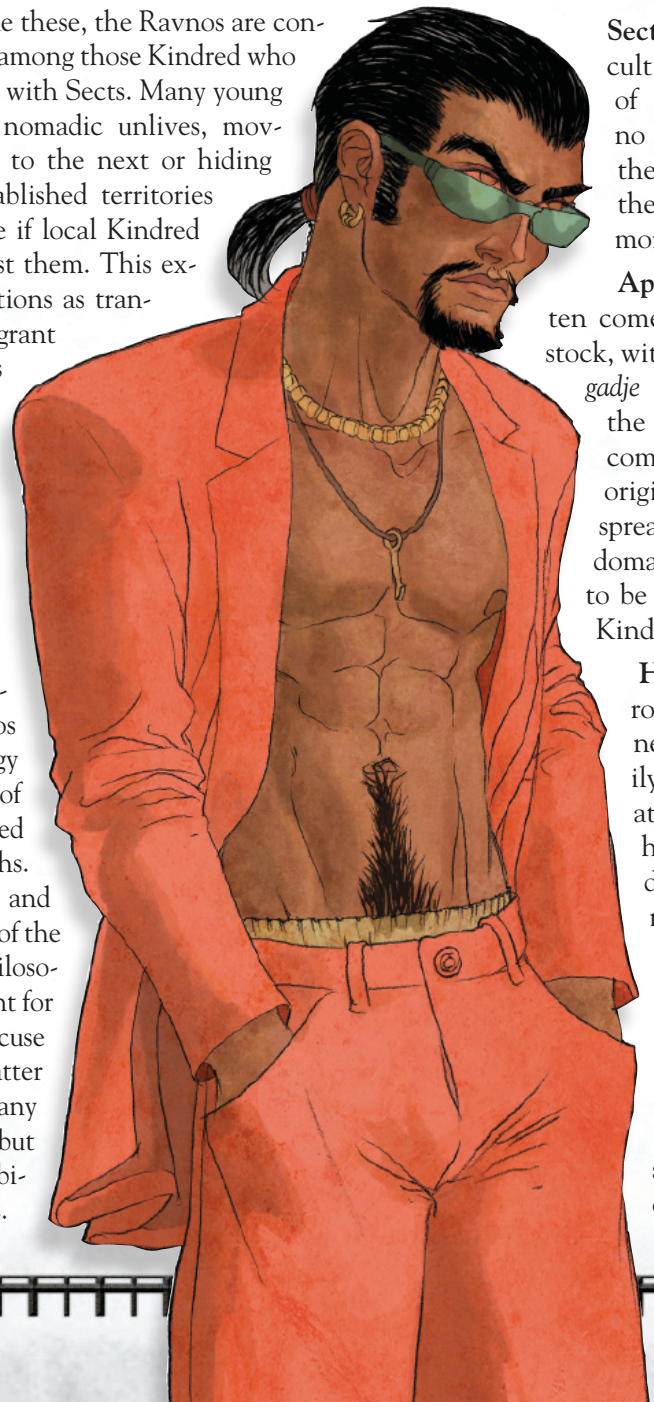
Anarchs: *Sure, I'll buy what you're selling. For tonight, at least.*

Ravnos

The Ravnos move like the rumors that surround them. They are the thief in the night, the *raksha* chased by the wind, the nightmare-dream too fearful to be real. Whether associated with the Romani folk of Europe or the grave-robbing *ghûl* of Western Asia, Kindred society burdens the Ravnos with prejudices of foulness, uncleanliness, and wickedness.

With reputations like these, the Ravnos are considered outsiders even among those Kindred who do not ally themselves with Sects. Many young Ravnos tend toward nomadic unlives, moving from one domain to the next or hiding on the fringes of established territories where they can escape if local Kindred sentiment turns against them. This exacerbates their reputations as transients, gypsies, and vagrant scourges, but Ravnos vampires adapt well, thriving in their marginalized role. In fact, many choose to make themselves into the ravening terrors that other Kindred believe them to be.

The more enlightened among the Ravnos follow a Clan ideology inspired by the cycle of reincarnation espoused by many Indian faiths. Among some young and unprincipled members of the Clan, however, this philosophy becomes a penchant for capriciousness or an excuse for chaos. It is these latter Kindred who give so many Ravnos a bad name, but even the devout seem bizarre to many vampires.



The Ravnos practice a unique Discipline known as Chimerstry that convinces their enemies that they see things that do not exist. Chimerstry does much to convince Kindred that the Ravnos trade in lies and misdirection, but it can also prove to be a Deceiver's salvation and ease the vagaries of an outcast unlife.

Nickname: Deceivers

Sect: Clan Ravnos often has a difficult time heeding the rigorous order of many Camarilla cities, and has no inherent love for the violence of the Sabbat. Thus, the Deceivers find themselves independent for lack of a more suitable option.

Appearance: Young Ravnos often come from Eastern European Romani stock, with a relative paucity of "non-gypsy" *gadje* in the ranks. What few elders of the Clan may remain are presumed to come from Indian or Middle Eastern origins. Given that the Clan is widely spread and holds no traditional central domain, no consistent look can be said to be predominant, and any mendicant Kindred might be of Ravnos origin.

Haven: Many Ravnos take to the road instead of establishing permanent havens, dwelling temporarily among itinerant communities, at roadside rest stops, or even in vehicles. When a Deceiver does put down roots in a domain, his permanent haven is often away from high-profile Kindred territories. Havens in ethnic ghettos, industrial outskirts, and isolated geography are safest and most easily cultivated for the Ravnos.

Background: The Ravnos are scattered and suspicious, and those childer who don't have the ten-

dency toward self-sufficiency don't last long. In many cases, a Ravnos will either never sire, or sire for companionship or safety, with little concern for how well a childe will fare as a vampire. Ravnos rarely seek out childer actively, instead drawing from those whose paths they cross on any given night. As such, the hard-luck drifter reputation tends to follow the Deceivers.

Character Creation: Outsider and selfish Natures are common among the Clan. Physical and Social Attributes predominate, as do Talents and Skills. Savvy Ravnos develop a breadth of Backgrounds that can give them an edge when they're on the move or in a tight spot, such as stashed Resources, defensible Domain, and a few Allies or Contacts.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Chimerstry, Fortitude

Weaknesses: A turbulent history makes the Ravnos slaves to their vices. Each Ravnos has a penchant for some sort of vice — lying, cruelty, or theft, for example. When presented with the opportunity to engage in that vice, the Ravnos must indulge it unless her player succeeds on a Self-Control or Instinct roll (difficulty 6).

Organization: The Ravnos are a far-flung Clan, with little to unite them and an open acknowledgement that each Deceiver looks after his own interests first. That said, Ravnos often like to make a great show of Clan camaraderie and cultural ritual, even though they know that promises made to one another are as fleeting as whispers on a night wind. Deceivers have been known to ally against common enemies such as tyrant Princes or Sabbat pogroms, but these alliances quickly fade once the threat no longer exists.

Quote: *What? Those aren't bones. They're wind chimes. Everything is going to be fine. Relax.*

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Half the time, I think we take a lot of shit because other vampires think, "All A-rabs look alike" and confuse us with these assholes.*

Brujah: *You can get into a lot of trouble if one of these bloodsuckers imagines you did him some awful wrong when all you were doing was checking out his girlfriend.*

Followers of Set: *There's no justice. People think* we're *the demons.*

Gangrel: *They know how rough it is out there, and sometimes you can even convince them to give you a break.*

Giovanni: *Gaudy, vain, and easy marks. Of course, they probably think that about us, too.*

Lasombra: *Nobody cops that much attitude unless he's hiding something to be ashamed of.*

Malkavian: *Be careful. You can either fool them or you can't, but they can't decide which one it is until they either take the bait or go berserk.*

Nosferatu: *Rat them out and you'll have a chance.*

Toreador: *They love being lied to but hate it when someone tips them off that you've been lying.*

Tremere: *Tread carefully or these pricks will drink your soul and blame you for it.*

Tzimisce: *Nothing wrong with these guys that staking them in their coffins and setting them on fire wouldn't solve.*

Ventrue: *I think these cocksuckers actually enjoy being hated by everyone else. Who else would set themselves up in the line of fire all the time?*

Caitiff: *Hard times make for desperate terms.*

Camarilla: *All the fancy costumes in the world don't mean you're not stealing or killing every time you feed, you fucking hypocrites.*

Sabbat: *I've seen this movie before, and the ending is shit.*

Anarchs: *Not usually a problem unless they start asking you to vote or bend the knee. Once the revolution's over and they're declaring themselves emperors, time to hit the road.*

TOREADOR

From the Toreador perspective, when the sun fades, darkness gives rise to an eternal and wondrous world. Everything is fraught with wonder and terror, low politics and sensual glories, the profound and the profane, and an undeniable undercurrent of the sanguinary. These Kindred are the Toreador, and they spend unlives ensconced in pleasure.

Of course, for vampires of this disposition, it's easy to become jaded and bitter. More than the other Clans, Toreador often succumb to ennui, or fight the eventual boredom of unchanging immortality by playing at rivalries. An excess of stimulation turns them into slaves to the sensations they seek. The most debased Toreador can become true monsters, sinking to unimaginable levels of depravity in order to feel anything at all.

The Kindred of Clan Toreador often involve themselves greatly in the world of mortals. They have any number of reasons, whether enjoying proximity to the blush of life, cultivating veritable cults of doting followers, or influencing and following the trends that their own kind simultaneously mock and venerate. To hear the Toreador tell it, they are the Muses of a desperate mortal world, inspiring through their beauty or patronage.

Toreador culture is a mixture of sybarites, dilettantes, and visionaries. Some Toreador, with echoes of mortal passion, Embrace lovers or "project" progeny who seem to fly in the face of every Toreador custom. These either don't last long or rise to great prominence as subversives and individualists. Ideas, trends, and "the next great thing" spread through the Clan, and other Kindred often look to the Toreador to guide them. The Degenerates know this, and many become Harpies, Princes, and other key figures in vampiric society.



Nickname: Degenerates

Sect: The Camarilla would not have survived in the nights following the Anarch Revolt without substantial participation from the Toreador, and they remain among its most ardent supporters.

Appearance: Almost to the last, they are attractive in some way, whether the traditional beauty of a runway model or the dangerous allure of something more predatory. The Degenerates augment their physical beauty with a sense of personal style, which may take the form of expensive couture, avant-garde street wear, or classical fashions designed to emphasize their appealing qualities. This isn't to say that ugly Toreador don't exist. Indeed, those gifted with less physical beauty often go that much further with their choice of accoutrements.

Haven: The Degenerates spare no expense in appointing their havens in luxury, often with many original works of art. It is a point of pride among Toreador to have an unconventional (and thus memorable) haven with modern comforts; thus, many have striking lofts and penthouses, while the bolder among them

renovate or repurpose everything from abandoned aquariums or deconsecrated churches to rooftop gardens or converted warehouse-galleries in fashion-forward neighborhoods. Share a communal haven? How *déclassé*.

Background: Many Toreador hail from high-society or "bohemian" backgrounds. Indeed, many are themselves artists or influential among local art scenes or other subcultures. Actors, singers, musicians, sculptors, poets, playwrights, authors, and creative folk of any stripe may well find a home in the Clan, as do those who serve as patrons to (or travel in the entourages of) those artistic types.

Character Creation: Social attributes are almost always primary, with an even split among Talents, Skills, and Knowledges depending on how the Toreador distinguishes herself. Toreador also love to cultivate Backgrounds. Allies, Contacts, Resources, Domain, Haven, Mentors, Resources, Retainers — all of these have great value among Toreador. Wise Toreador may choose to develop their Virtues, Humanity, Path, or Willpower, because with an unlife of degeneracy, they must frequently attend to the ugly business of bringing the Beast to heel.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Presence

Weaknesses: When a Toreador experiences something truly remarkable — a person, an *objet d'art*, a lovely sunrise — the player must make a Self-Control or Instinct roll (difficulty 6). Failure means that the Kindred finds herself enthralled by the experience. The dazzled Toreador cannot act for the duration of the scene aside from commenting on or continuing their involvement with whatever has captured their attention. If the experience no longer affects her (whether by moving, being destroyed, or whatever is appropriate to the situation), the captivation ends. Enraptured Toreador may not even defend themselves if attacked, though being wounded allows them to make another Self-Control or Instinct roll.

Organization: Clan Toreador is cliquish and parochial in its local domains, but very rarely on a level that affects Clan-wide custom. Certain Toreador (and a few outside the Clan) sometimes use the terms "artiste" and "poseur" when describing individual Toreador, often derisively, to describe whether the Degenerate in question is one who is seen as creative or simply a follower of established trends, but these are certainly informal distinctions.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Blood-soaked barbarians.*

Brujah: *A fire may be stoked, but if left unattended, it may destroy what it once warmed.*

Followers of Set: *Worms breed in their vile footprints.*

Gangrel: *Beauty and the Beast, only without the complication of Beauty. Pity them.*

Giovanni: *Which is more unctuous: their smiles or their hair?*

Lasombra: *If I looked like they do, I'd hide in the dark, too.*

Malkavian: *The tedium of it all.*

Nosferatu: *They make a strong case for the Mark of Caine being a sickness.*

Ravnos: *There are two types of these creatures: Awful, and absent.*

Tremere: *Aren't they supposed to turn back into pumpkins at midnight?*

Tzimisce: *It is a poor artist who blames his tools, but that's the only conceivable answer here.*

Ventrue: *Why are older brothers always such corpulent bullies?*

Caitiff: *The worst sort of fish is the one that feeds from the bottom.*

Camarilla: *This house needs a good cleaning.*

Sabbat: *Such marvelous passion wasted on such craven dementia.*

Anarchs: *Only a petty ruler acknowledges no greater purpose than himself.*

Quote: *Long after you die, I will still be young, beautiful, and adored by everyone whose life I touch.*

TREMERE

In nights long lost to the passage of time, the Tremere existed, though they were *something else*. Those early Tremere then made a bargain — or wrought a spell, or any number of other harrowing methods attributed to the Clan — that changed them from what they had been into the vampires they are tonight. Some claim they stole the Curse of Caine from a torpid Antediluvian, or that they concocted the flawed immortality of the Kindred from the stolen vitae of other vampires. Such mysterious origins, which some describe as treacherous or even blasphemous, haunt the Tremere, as the other Clans look upon them with mistrust and suspicion. The history — and, indeed, the modern legacy — of the Tremere is one marked by Clan war, centuries-old grudges, and the stain of unwholesome mysteries long left unsolved.

Tonight, Clan Tremere is a Clan shaped by its practice of blood sorcery. A flexible Discipline, Thaumaturgy is heavily entrenched within the Tremere, and they maintain cultic havens known as chantries to study its uses and share secrets among each other. To the Tremere, blood is both sustenance and the source of mystical power; they gather in their witch-houses to further their understanding of the vitae that is such a focal point of their unlives.

Beyond the practice of Thaumaturgy itself, the Warlocks are known for their close-knit hierarchy. They hail from the Old World, with an established power base in Vienna to which all members of the Clan answer to some degree. Although they may be one of the youngest Clans — in the terms with which deathless creatures like vampires measure time — they are as adept at the Jyhad as any Kindred. Beset by enemies who call them usurpers and backed by allies who may or may not defend the alliances they force, the Tremere have evolved to be self-sufficient. Indeed, many who eye them warily think they possess too great an edge, with their flexible Discipline and protective Clan and chantry structure, and move against them both secretly and overtly.

Nickname: Warlocks

Sect: Clan Tremere considers itself one of the pillars of the Camarilla. It is rumored that they once performed a ritual that all but eradicated those of the Clan not loyal to the Ivory Tower (and thus the Tremere's pyramidal hierarchy).

Appearance: Tremere often have two distinct presentations: a traditional and severe public aspect and a much more eldritch mien better suited to wielding their blood sorceries. When out in public or at Kindred events, the Tremere favor conservative suits and dresses and muted tones. When in their chantries or convening with others of their Clan, they often prefer robes decorated with subtle occult symbols or garb with various folds and pockets for their bizarre ritual ingredients.



Haven: Many Tremere rely on a central chantry the Clan maintains in cities where it has a notable presence. More solitary Warlocks develop private havens, with all of the trappings one might expect from an occult scholar, from libraries to alchemical laboratories to moonlit balcony observatories and even more sinister oubliettes where vivisected "research subjects" bleed according to experimental Tremere-controlled stimuli.

Background: The Tremere draw from a fairly narrow pool of potential acolytes. Those who have an awareness of the supernatural, who are driven to succeed, who seek answers that elude less inquisitive individuals, yet who also have the discipline to heed the edicts of the hierarchy make good Tremere. This isn't to say that individualists don't have room in the Clan; rather, those who go their own way may well find themselves leading a chantry — or greeting the sun if their interests don't align with those of the pyramid.

Character Creation: Mental Attributes and Knowledges are prominent among the Tremere. Many have high Courage and Willpower, but are somewhat lacking in Conscience or Conviction. They often favor Backgrounds that heighten their relationship to the Clan, like Mentor, Status, and Retainers (whom an accomplished Warlock may craft from otherwise inert components).

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy

Weaknesses: Tremere dependency on blood is even more pronounced than that of other Kindred. It takes only two draughts of another vampire's blood for a Tremere to become blood bound instead of the normal three — the first drink counts as if the Tremere had taken two drinks. (For more information on the blood bond, see p. 286). The elders of the Clan are well aware of this, and seek to impart loyalty to the Clan by forcing all neonate Warlocks to drink of the (transubstantiated) blood of the seven Tremere elders soon after their Embrace.

Organization: The hallmark of Clan Tremere is "the pyramid," the rigid hierarchy that governs the Clan and makes it the most organized of all the Kindred lineages. With many levels of membership, internal factions, and circles of mystery, the Tremere hierarchy presents a unified face to those outside the Clan, and is almost as unified behind the scenes. Still, the pyramid inculcates more than its share of paranoia, as both rogue Warlocks and a competitive environment of academic occultism pits each acolyte against her peers to the greater accomplishment of the Clan.

Quote: *When the world refuses to give, he who makes himself a master of the world may still take.*

Stereotypes

Assamite: *They show signs of being able to subvert our rituals, so the time to tolerate them has expired.*

Brujah: *Hubris and a lack of self-discipline have laid low the Clan of warrior-poets.*

Followers of Set: *We pursue the secrets of the world and they pursue the secrets in its dark places. When too many know, secrets are no longer secrets.*

Gangrel: *Theirs is a simple but formidable power. Fortunately, their blood is as susceptible to mastery as that of all Kindred.*

Giovanni: *Their clumsy understanding of the secret ways will shackle them to empty ritual rather than set them free to work their wills.*

Lasombra: *A once-accomplished lineage dragged into the muck by foul associations.*

Malkavian: *Once we can synthesize their stochastic perception, the Kindred will no longer have to brook their disruptive caprice.*

Nosferatu: *Those involuntarily placed outside the system can prove fruitful allies or accomplices.*

Ravnos: *Disorder sows its own punishments, yet I am happy to expedite those results.*

Toreador: *Form follows function, which makes the ongoing prominence of these self-worshipers such a dispiriting enigma.*

Tzimisce: *Peel away the rot and idolatry and all that's left is the carcass of outmoded mummery.*

Ventrue: *Caesar shall have his due, and to our benefit, his love of lucre blinds him to true power.*

Caitiff: *As Vesalius gathered his cadavers, so do we solicit volunteers in the understanding of our sciences.*

Camarilla: *A sundered house still offers shelter.*

Sabbat: *They do not understand their own ends, and damn themselves thus.*

Anarchs: *In the absence of structure, autarchy yields only the brutishness of lesser Kindred.*

Tzimisce

A blood moon casts a crimson light over the land beyond the forest and something fearsome howls its agony into the night. The Tzimisce call these lands their ancestral home. Since time out of mind the Fiends have been masters and lords of the domains of much of Eastern Europe. But theirs is a proud, selfish Clan for which tradition goes only so far despite their aristocratic origins. In fact, the Clan claims to have destroyed its Antediluvian, and in the wake of that momentous event, helped establish the foundations of the Sabbat.

Tzimisce practice a strange Discipline known as Vicissitude that allows them to twist the skin and bone of their victims. In many cases, they refine their fleshly arts by practicing upon themselves, but they just as frequently use it upon their lackeys and retainers, turning their boyars and *szlachta* into monstrous thralls. Vicissitude itself is a much misunderstood Discipline, and debates over its origins occasionally plunge the Clan into vicious partisan rivalries.

Clan Tzimisce is a Clan of extremes, and long, cold nights spent in remote castles have turned the Fiends' perspectives both greatly inward and outward. Mystics of the Clan study a philosophy of metamorphosis, seeking to discover what lies beyond the state of vampirism. An alien attitude of spiritual secularism characterizes many Tzimisce. Young members of the Clan often find themselves detached from the historical role of the Fiends as terrifying landed lords, and throw themselves wholly into a cause of their own choice, whether as Sabbat zealots, fleshcrafted horrors, or transcendental *koldun* sorcerers.

Nickname: Fiends

Sect: The Tzimisce are longtime but largely detached members of the Sabbat. They were instrumental in the Sect's nascence, and remain one of its most numerous Clans.

Appearance: Given their ability to manipulate their physical appearance with Vicissitude, Tzimisce look however they want, and they often want to provoke or frighten. Some prefer extreme modifications and experimentations with their bodies that leave them looking only vaguely humanoid. Others seek to redefine and even transcend the limits of their forms, rebuilding themselves in the images of angels, monsters, nightmares, and things even less recognizable.

Haven: Young Tzimisce are often Sabbat Priests or Ducti,



and prefer to maintain communal havens with their packs. They encourage the pack to live in fearsome locations, such as beneath a hospital or morgue, or in the dank recesses of a mausoleum. Elders of the Clan sometimes have ancestral holdings in the Old World, and the image of the vampire on the craggy mountain in a crumbling castle owes much to Tzimisce lords. Rarely are these ancient holdings kept to any modern standards of comfort, but their lords are strangely hospitable to invited guests (and terribly intolerant of uninvited bores).

Background: Elder Tzimisce, particularly those of the still-landed nobility in hoary old domains, may have family lines from which they Embrace, or they may restrict their occasional siring to the terrified villages suffering in thrall beneath their estates. New World and younger Tzimisce aren't as discriminating and are more practical. Indeed, many Tzimisce fledglings are little more than shock troops, Embraced and warped to the limits of their frames to cause revulsion and revel in bloodshed until put down.

Character Creation: Few Tzimisce know moderation, and thus often favor Physical or Mental Attributes, usually with one extraordinarily high Trait. Knowledges are usually favored, though Skills are valued as well. Mentor, Allies, Domain, and Retainers are all quite appropriate to Tzimisce, as are narrow — almost overdeveloped — Disciplines. Their alien mindsets often lead them to follow Paths of Enlightenment. The ghastliness to which many Tzimisce are often exposed during their fledgling years sometimes results in complicated derangements.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Vicissitude

Weaknesses: The Tzimisce are inextricably tied to their domains of origin, and must rest in the proximity of at least two handfuls of "native soil" — earth from a place important to her as a mortal, such as the soil from her birthplace or the graveyard where she underwent her Embrace. Each night spent without this physical connection to her land limits all of the Tzimisce's dice pools to one-half, cumulatively, until she has only a single die in her pool. The penalty remains until she rests for a full day amid her earth once more.

Organization: The Fiends are, on the whole, mistrustful of other Kindred, especially others of their own Clan. As such, Tzimisce organization, such as it is, has a high regard for solitude. It is against their nature to be inclusive, and thus they have to work at being Sabbat (though this is less difficult for younger Tzimisce of at least somewhat modern outlooks). This is also a key reason so many of them undertake Paths of Enlightenment: to give their xenophobia purpose, but also to provide some common point of reference with others on the Path.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *The fox convinces the hens to let him watch over their precious eggs — delightful!*

Brujah: *They plunged themselves into ruin millennia ago and continue to blame other for their own failures.*

Followers of Set: *Why worship dead gods when one can become a god herself?*

Gangrel: *They command fierce power, but wield it with little more than a primitive will.*

Giovanni: *Muck out the stables, you slope-browed lummoxes.*

Lasombra: *Competent. Mostly.*

Malkavian: *Suitable for making lampshades from their remains.*

Nosferatu: *Ah, what marvelous paradoxes, redolent of the slime yet possessed of the wisdom to adapt!*

Ravnos: *I'll take thirty, staked for the sun and placed on the ramparts.*

Toreador: *Thou shalt not suffer a bitch to live.*

Tremere: *They are the gout of corruption that issues forth from a lanced boil, only they have none of its charisma.*

Ventrue: *We have warred for so long that they are due a grudging respect before you snuff their heart's fire.*

Caitiff: *How droll! I always thought the term for them was "spare parts."*

Camarilla: *When the serfs don't believe their masters, the reich has lost the war.*

Sabbat: *We play the game with the pawns— er, pieces we are given.*

Anarchs: *There is a misguided nobility in what they do, though they are too childish to succeed fully.*

Quote: *Why on earth would you think I wanted you to stop screaming? I find the results so much more melodious when you indulge your fear.*

Ventrue

Throughout history, while the other Clans have skulked about their petty intrigues, the Ventrue have curried favor with Caesar, whispered into the ear of Charlemagne, bankrolled the Age of Exploration, and even swayed policy in the Holy See. Theirs is a legacy of rulership, from Ventrue fledglings starting their climb to the top to the mightiest elders whose influence spans the world. Long have they played kingmaker in the shadows in the mortal world, and long have they been the Clan of Kings among the Kindred.

Other Clans, of course, find all this insufferably pompous at best, punishably tedious at worst. Someone has to lead, surely, but why does it always have to be some long-winded, self-aggrandizing Ventrue? The Blue Bloods try to bear the criticism of their lessers with a sense of noblesse oblige — ever heavy hangs that head that wears the crown — but even the most munificent of Kindred leaders occasionally succumbs to tyranny and bloody rage.

Tonight, the Ventrue are a synthesis of the modern and the ancient, often in stark contrast within the Clan and among one another. Theirs is money of old, from the vaults of Croesus, but their young manipulate stock markets and influence currencies. Elders may command armies or even whole governments, while neonates conjure their assets from a website or smartphone app. But for all their wealth, their distinguished history, and their status among the Damned, each and every Ventrue must still seek that one resource that makes Kindred society egalitarian: precious blood.



Nickname: Blue Bloods

Sect: To hear the Ventrue tell it, the very idea of the Camarilla originated with them. Every other Clan realized what an invaluable proposition it was and flocked to their banner.

Appearance: The Ventrue favor conservative clothing and reserved presentation, unless they're making a point about power or money. Ventrue Princes may well wear a circlet or carry a scepter as symbols of office, while young Blue Bloods display their own achievement via suits, ties, dresses, and accessories that are easily overlooked singularly but add up to a stunning total effect. If a Ventrue has so much as a hair out of place, it's because he spent all night running down the Society of Leopold and demanding the Sabbat menace retreat.

Haven: A Ventrue's haven displays both her great power (read: wealth) and distinguished tastes. Opulent, grandiose, even baroque — these may all apply to Ventrue havens. They shun the gaudy displays of other Kindred, and their style tends less to the avant-garde than it does to the classical and traditional. To the Blue Bloods, a well-maintained

haven is an extension of oneself, and for someone to see it in less than flawless state implies weakness, distraction, or even madness.

Background: Anyone who has "made something of herself" may attract the attention of the Ventrue, who judge their childer based on their prominence and success even before they start to groom them for the Embrace. Socialites, moneyed family, corporate *wunderkinds*, military leaders, and even untested newcomers who show great promise are keenly valued among the Blue Bloods.

Character Creation: Ventrue usually have directorial or outgoing personality archetypes. Members of Clan Ventrue favor Social and Mental Attributes, but any Ability category can be primary, reflecting a personal avenue of expertise. Backgrounds go both wide and deep for the Ventrue, with almost every Blue Blood possessing some amount of Resources, Status, and Herd (particularly the latter, given the Clan weakness). Elders in particular cultivate enviable havens and sprawling Domains.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Presence

Weaknesses: The Ventrue have rarified tastes, and they find only one specific type of mortal blood palatable and vital for them. When a player creates a Ventrue character, he should decide with the Storyteller what specific type of blood suits the character, and this choice is permanent. Blood of other types (even animals) simply offers the vampire no blood pool increase, no matter how much he consumes — he simply vomits it back up. This refined palate may be very narrow or very broad — say, the blood of younger sisters, or the blood of nude children. Vampiric blood is exempt from this restriction.

Organization: The Clan-wide organization of the Ventrue is localized and feudal, with various universally understood peerages, vassalages, oaths of fealty, and sworn boons taking the place of a rigid hierarchy. Many Ventrue style themselves as secret masters of their domains, consolidating power in longstanding networks and forming conspiracies. The Ventrue greatly value propriety and honor, and use many forms of address and respect — their Laws of Decorum are complex and rigid, and could fill several volumes. Almost every Ventrue worth his status can recite his lineage at least back to the elders, if not to the great Methuselahs.

Stereotypes

Assamite: *Useful only so long as they don't become a poison in our veins.*

Brujah: *Just admit you're beaten and this will become much more pleasant.*

Followers of Set: *When you learn of them in your domain, do not hesitate to introduce them to their master, the sun.*

Gangrel: *Who would guess that Kindred so simple could be so groundlessly prideful?*

Giovanni: *Our stillborn siblings, who never developed a sense of right and wrong or what not to stick your cock into.*

Lasombra: *Pretenders to our mantle of dignity and honor, though they are formidable.*

Malkavian: *When you find yourself making excuses for them, it is time for the purge to begin.*

Nosferatu: *Surprisingly functional, should you be able to handle their odious personalities and overestimation of their own value.*

Ravnos: *No kingdom survives by mingling with the conquered.*

Toreador: *For every king there is a queen, and there are a lot of queens among the ranks of the Rose Clan.*

Tremere: *They can prove dauntless allies or treacherous enemies, often both within the same skin, so let them know who commands.*

Tzimisce: *What more do you need than their cloying scent of corruption to know that theirs is an ill presence?*

Caitiff: *They are mongrels, barely worthy of names. You might as well care about your furniture.*

Camarilla: *It is our greatest triumph, but also our greatest responsibility.*

Sabbat: *The inmates run that asylum.*

Anarchs: *There is something admirable in what they do, yet how they do it is entirely puerile.*

Quote: *There is no shame to bending the knee to one such as myself, so pay your fucking tribute before I lose my temper.*



BOOK TWO: THE BECOMING

Each created a Brood
in order to claim the glory of Caine.

Yet we did not have his wisdom or restraint.

A great war was waged, the Elders against
their Children,
just as Uriel had said,
and the Children slew their parents.

They rose up
used fire and wood
swords and claws
to destroy those who had created them.

The rebels then built a new city.
Out of the fallen Empire,
they collected the Thirteen clans
had been scattered by the Great War,
and brought them all together.



Chapter Three: Character and Traits

"When first I tasted the fruit of the Trees, felt the seeds of Life and Knowledge burn within me, I swore that day that I would not turn back…"

- From the *Oath of Lilith*

As a player of **Vampire**, you create a character — an alter ego through which you interact with the game world and take your part in the story. Like a character in a novel or movie, this character becomes a protagonist in the stories you tell. Rather than making up a new character for each session, you create a single, richly-detailed character, then assume the role of that character every time you play. As your troupe tells its stories, you watch your character grow and develop. Ultimately, the character you create becomes as real and as timeless as one of the great protagonists (or antagonists) in a literary work.

This chapter describes how to create a vampire character, beginning with a general concept and translating that concept into the Traits and statistics that are used in the game. Though the process is relatively simple, it is best to create characters under the Storyteller's supervision, so that she can answer questions and guide the creation process.

Traits

Much of a character's life comes from the way you describe and roleplay him. For example, your vampire's general disposition and attitude toward feeding, as decided by you, might contribute to his role in the story. However, certain aspects of a character — his physical prowess, his looks and his vampiric powers, for example — are described in numerical terms and used in conjunction with the systems of the game. These features are called *Traits*. Traits quantify your character's particular strengths and weaknesses, guiding the character in his interactions with other players' characters and the characters the Storyteller creates. For example, your character might have high Mental Traits, making him invaluable when brains and cunning are required. However, he might have low Physical Traits, forcing him to rely on a friend's character when violence or brute force is necessary.

Traits are commonly described in numerical terms with ratings from 1 to 5. (Humanity/Path ratings and Willpower are exceptions to this guideline, and some particularly ancient and powerful vampires have *other* Traits exceeding 5.) These numbers represent the quantity and quality of the character's prowess with a given Trait. One dot is considered poor, while five dots indicate superiority. Think of Trait ratings as similar to the stars with which restaurants and hotels are rated — one is barely adequate, while five is excellent. Trait ratings become important when rolling dice to perform actions (see Chapter Five for specifics).

Common Traits and Terms

Vampire characters are comprised of the following Traits:

Name: The character's name — this may be anything from the character's birth name to a pseudonym. Some ancient vampires are known by many names, while others are no longer known by names at all.

Player: This is the name of the player portraying the character in question.

Chronicle: This is the series of linked stories in which the character participates. Your Storyteller will provide you with the name of the chronicle (though he may need your help in deciding!).

Attributes: Attributes define your character's inborn aptitudes and potential. See p. 96.

Abilities: Abilities are those proficiencies your character possesses intuitively or has learned. See p. 100.

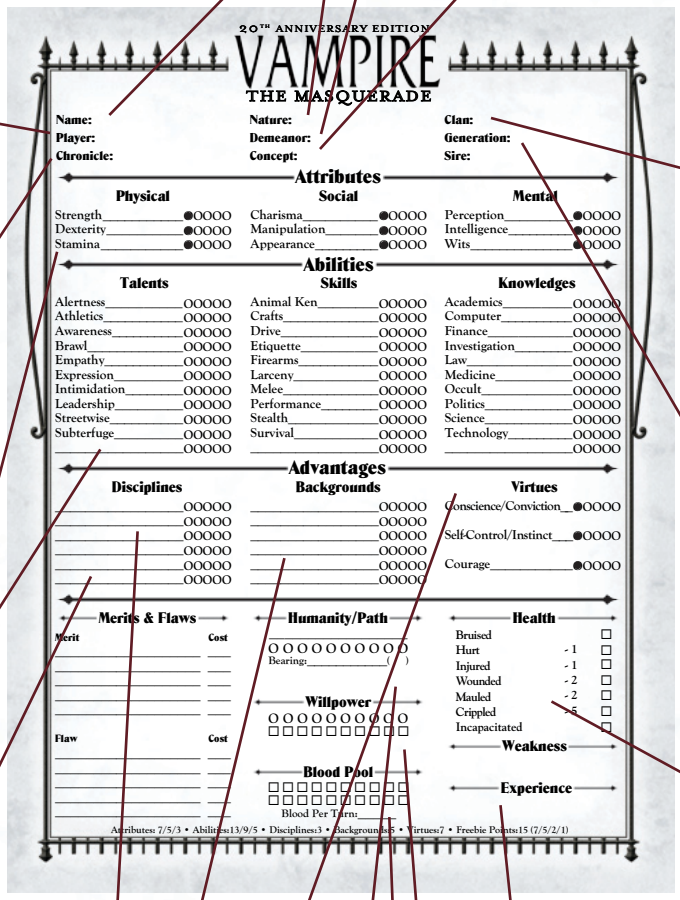
Advantages: A catch-all term for the numerous benefits a vampire has over normal folk, Advantages refers to a collection of three other Traits:

Disciplines (p. 127) refer to the vampiric powers a character possesses as a result of her Embrace.

Backgrounds (p. 110) define the character's material assets and social network.

Virtues (p. 119) show the character's spiritual and moral fiber — or lack thereof.

Humanity/Path: These Traits define your character's outlook on unlife. A character has either a Humanity rating or a rating in a specific Path, never both (though a character may pretend). Humanity is the default Trait (see p. 311), but both Humanity and the Paths are presented in Chapter Seven.


20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
VAMPIRE
THE MASQUERADE
Name:
Player:
Chronicle:
Nature:
Demeanor:
Concept:
Clan:
Generation:
Sire:
Attributes
Physical
Strength ●OOOO
Dexterity ●OOOO
Stamina ●OOOO
Social
Charisma ●OOOO
Manipulation ●OOOO
Appearance ●OOOO
Mental
Perception ●OOOO
Intelligence ●OOOO
Wits ●OOOO
Abilities
Talents
Alertness OOOOO
Athletics OOOOO
Awareness OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO
Empathy OOOOO
Expression OOOOO
Intimidation OOOOO
Leadership OOOOO
Streetwise OOOOO
Subterfuge OOOOO
OOOOO
Skills
Animal Ken OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO
Drive OOOOO
Etiquette OOOOO
Firearms OOOOO
Larceny OOOOO
Melee OOOOO
Performance OOOOO
Stealth OOOOO
Survival OOOOO
OOOOO
Knowledges
Academics OOOOO
Computer OOOOO
Finance OOOOO
Investigation OOOOO
Law OOOOO
Medicine OOOOO
Occult OOOOO
Politics OOOOO
Science OOOOO
Technology OOOOO
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Advantages
Disciplines
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Backgrounds
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OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
Virtues
Conscience/Conviction ●OOOO
Self-Control/Instinct ●OOOO
Courage ●OOOO
Merits & Flaws
Merit Cost
Flaw Cost
Humanity/Path
OOOOOOOOOO
Bearing: ( )
Willpower
Blood Pool
Blood Per Turn:
Health
Bruised
Hurt -1
Injured -1
Wounded -2
Mauled -2
Crippled -5
Incapacitated
Weakness
Experience
Attributes: 7/5/3 • Abilities:13/9/5 • Disciplines:3 • Backgrounds:5 • Virtues:7 • Freebie Points:15 (7/5/2/1)

Nature: This is the "true" personality of your character — who she is deep down. See p. 87.

Demeanor: This is the personality your character presents to the world. More often than not, Nature and Demeanor are different, especially given the deviousness of the vampire mind. See p. 87.

Concept: Your character's concept is a brief "sketch" of who your character was prior to the Embrace — anything from Crazed Vigilante to Aging Porn Star.

Clan: Your character's Clan defines her lineage and her relationship to Caine, the progenitor vampire. Clan dictates your character's vampiric powers and weakness. The Clans start on p. 48.

Generation: Closely related to Clan, your character's Generation defines the potency of her blood and how many steps removed she is from Caine. See p. 28.

Health: Although a vampire is no longer "alive," her corpse-body may still suffer sufficient trauma to incapacitate her, and a sufficient quantity of damage can even "kill" the vampire anew (forcing you to create a new character). The Health Trait measures how much injury the character has suffered. See p. 121.

Experience: Your character's Experience Trait represents how much she has learned since her Embrace. All characters begin the game with an Experience Trait of zero. Experience is spent to purchase new Traits. See p. 122.

Willpower: This Trait reflects your character's inner drive and desire to succeed at tasks she undertakes. See p. 120.

Blood Pool: Your character's blood pool dictates how well fed she is, or, conversely, how hungry. See p. 268.

Getting Started

The **Vampire** character-creation system is designed around five basic precepts. Keep these in mind while generating the persona you will assume in the World of Darkness.

• You may create a character of any age, from any culture and from any nation, subject to the Storyteller's approval. However, all characters are assumed to begin the game as neonate vampires who have only recently left the safety of their sires' protection with no more than 25 years of experience as Kindred. They know relatively little of Kindred society, other than what their sires have told them. This allows characters to experience the World of Darkness as it unfolds before them in all its mystery, rather than having the lore of ages already under their belts. A character's apparent age is the age at which she was Embraced and became one of the Kindred.

• The character-creation system is intended more as a persona development device than as a strict mechanical system. Who wants more rules at the expense of an interesting character or a good story? The character cannot exist as mere dots on a page — roleplaying is always more important than numbers.

• Players have a certain number of points to spend on Traits they would like their characters to have. Players also get "freebie points" at the end of character creation; they may spend these to round out their characters, add personality and further differentiate their characters from those of other players.

• A Trait rating of 1 is poor, while a rating of 5 is excellent. Thus, a character with a single dot in a Trait is either not very good with that Trait or is a beginner. Don't think that your character sucks because she's only got one dot in Manipulation. The experience system presented on p. 122 allows characters to grow and improve their Traits. Traits are rated according to a human scale (except vampiric Traits like Advantages and blood pool, which are rated on a Kindred standard).

• It is your responsibility to take on a role that's not detrimental to the coterie. Vampires are solitary creatures, so there has to be some reason you've joined up with your Kindred companions (the other players' characters). Despite the fact that the hostile World of Darkness forces coteries together, Kindred don't just hang out for the hell of it.

Advancing New Characters

Storytellers may choose to allow players to create more experienced and knowledgeable characters. Indeed, players of **Vampire: The Masquerade 20th Anniversary Edition** may prefer an "ancilla game" or an all-elders chronicle instead.

In this case, we recommend first building a neonate character and then granting players a number of experience points that allows them to increase their characters' Traits to levels suitable to the chronicle and the age of their vampires. As a basic rule of thumb, "idle" Kindred should have a number of Discipline dots equal to the square root of her age. Remember that players' characters are rarely "idle" like Storyteller characters, so they'll rapidly outpace this guideline. That's fine; they're out there in the world, having exciting encounters and earning more experience than passive Storyteller characters. Remember that the cost for raising a Trait which is already advanced can be very expensive. See p. 124 for more information on spending experience points.

Kindred Age Category	Experience Points
Neonate	0-35
Ancilla	75-220
Elder	250-600
Methuselahs	1000+

Character Creation Process

• Step One: Character Concept

Choose concept, Clan, Nature, and Demeanor.

• Step Two: Select Attributes

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (7/5/3). Your character automatically has one dot in each Attribute.

Rate Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina.

Rate Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance.

Rate Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits.

• Step Three: Select Abilities

Prioritize the three categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (13/9/5).

Choose Talents, Skills, Knowledges.

No Ability higher than 3 at this stage

• Step Four: Select Advantages

Choose Disciplines (3), Backgrounds (5), and rate Virtues (7). Your character automatically has one dot in each Virtue.

• Step Five: Finishing Touches

Record Humanity (equal to Conscience + Self-Control), Willpower (equal to Courage), and Blood Pool. If your character is on a Path, see Chapter Seven instead.

Spend freebie points (15). Optional: Choose Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Sample Concepts

- **Criminal** — jailbird, Mafioso, drug dealer, pimp, carjacker, thug, thief, fence
- **Drifter** — bum, smuggler, prostitute, junkie, pilgrim, biker, gambler
- **Entertainer** — musician, film star, artist, club kid, model, web celebrity
- **Intellectual** — writer, student, scientist, philosopher, social critic
- **Investigator** — detective, beat cop, government agent, private eye, witch-hunter
- **Kid** — child, runaway, outcast, urchin, gangbanger
- **Outsider** — urban primitive, refugee, minority, conspiracy theorist, junkie
- **Politician** — judge, public official, councilor, aide, speechwriter
- **Professional** — engineer, doctor, programmer, lawyer, industrialist
- **Reporter** — journalist, blogger, paparazzo, talk-show host, media expert
- **Scenester** — clubgoer, goth, skinhead, punk, barfly, hipster, substance abuser
- **Socialite** — dilettante, host, playboy, sycophant, trophy wife
- **Soldier** — bodyguard, enforcer, soldier of fortune, killer-for-hire
- **Worker** — trucker, farmer, wage earner, manservant, construction laborer

Clans

- **Assamite** — The righteous chosen of a blood cult, the *Assassins* are masters of silent death and an arcane tradition of wisdom.
- **Brujah** — The *Rabble* are rebels and insurgents, fighting passionately for their disparate causes. The Brujah rage against tyranny — occasionally even their own.
- **Follower of Set** — Guardians of the world's blackest secrets, the *Serpents* are feared for what they protect, and all too often seduced by it.

• **Gangrel** — The nomadic *Outlanders* are feral and wild. These solitary wanderers are the source of much of the lore that likens vampires to dark beasts.

• **Giovanni** — Insular and incestuous, the *Necromancers* ply their trade in blood, money, and the souls of the dead.

• **Lasombra** — The shadowy, wicked *Keepers* nominally lead the Sabbat. Clan Lasombra serves itself first and its inner darkness second.

• **Malkavian** — Dangerously deranged, the *Lunatics* nonetheless possess uncanny insight.

• **Nosferatu** — Disfigured and skulking, the hideous *Sewer Rats* find themselves shunned by Kindred society, but gather secrets from the darkness that hides them.

• **Ravnos** — The *Deceivers* are adept with the craft of illusion and guile, and often come to embody the prejudices held against them.

• **Toreador** — Lovers of the sensuous and the aesthetic, the *Degenerates* are trapped in the stagnancy of undeath.

• **Tremere** — A Clan of sorcerous blood magicians, the *Warlocks* are widely distrusted… and just as widely feared.

• **Tzimisce** — A Clan of fallen nobles from Eastern Europe, the brilliant but monstrous *Fiends* now serve the Sabbat.

• **Ventrue** — The reluctant aristocracy of the Kindred, the *Blue Bloods* atone for their damnation by enforcing the Traditions and the Masquerade.

• **Caitiff** — Claiming no Clan at all, the Caitiff exhibit no common characteristics, and often find themselves outcast by vampires of distinct pedigree.

Archetypes (Nature and Demeanor)

• **Architect** — You build something of lasting value.

• **Autocrat** — You need control.

• **Bon Vivant** — Unlife is for pleasure.

• **Bravo** — Might makes right.

• **Capitalist** — Why give it away for free when you can sell it?

• **Caregiver** — Everyone needs nurturing.

• **Celebrant** — Your cause brings you joy.

• **Chameleon** — You manage to blend into any situation.

• **Child** — Won't somebody be there for you?

• **Competitor** — You must be the best.

• **Conformist** — You follow and assist.

• **Conniver** — Others exist for your benefit.

• **Creep Show** — Disgusting the straights makes you smile.

• **Curmudgeon** — Everything has its flaws.

• **Dabbler** — It's always about the next big thing.

• **Deviant** — The status quo is for sheep.

• **Director** — You oversee what must be done.

• **Enigma** — Just when people think they've figured you out, you change the game.

• **Eye of the Storm** — Chaos and havoc follow you, but it never gets to you.

• **Fanatic** — The cause is all that matters.

• **Gallant** — You're not the showstopper: you're the show!

• **Guru** — People find you spiritually compelling.

• **Idealist** — You believe in something greater.

• **Judge** — Your judgment will improve things.

• **Loner** — You make your own way.

• **Martyr** — You suffer for the greater good.

• **Masochist** — Pain reminds you that you still exist.

• **Monster** — You're Damned, so act like it!

• **Pedagogue** — You save others through knowledge.

• **Penitent** — Unlife is a curse, and you must atone for it.

• **Perfectionist** — You strive for an unattainable goal.

• **Rebel** — You follow no one's rules.

• **Rogue** — It's all about you.

• **Sadist** — You live to cause pain.

• **Scientist** — Everything is a puzzle to solve.

• **Sociopath** — The inferior must be destroyed.

• **Soldier** — You follow orders, but in your own way.

• **Survivor** — Nothing can keep you down.

• **Thrill-Seeker** — The rush is all that matters.

• **Traditionalist** — As it has always been, so it must be.

• **Trickster** — Laughter dims the pain.

• **Visionary** — Something exists beyond all this.

Disciplines

• **Animalism** — Supernatural affinity with and control of animals.

• **Auspex** — Extrasensory perception, awareness and premonitions.

• **Celerity** — Supernatural quickness and reflexes.

• **Chimerstry** — The ability to create illusions and hallucinations.

• **Dementation** — The ability to inflict madness upon a victim.

• **Dominate** — Mind control practiced through the piercing gaze.

• **Fortitude** — Unearthly toughness, even to the point of resisting fire and sunlight.

• **Necromancy** — The supernatural power to summon and control the dead.

• **Obfuscate** — The ability to remain obscure and unseen, even in crowds.

• **Obtenebration** — Unearthly control over shadows.

• **Potence** — The Discipline of physical vigor and strength.

• **Presence** — The ability to attract, sway and control crowds.

• **Protean** — Shapechanging, from growing claws to melding with the earth.

• **Quietus** — The art of assassination.

• **Serpentis** — The Discipline of reptilian powers.

• **Thaumaturgy** — The study and practice of blood sorcery.

• **Vicissitude** — The art of flesh-shaping.

Backgrounds

• **Allies** — Mortal confederates, usually family or friends.

• **Alternate Identity** — A false identity, complete with documentation.

• **Black Hand Membership** (Sabbat) — The number of Black Hand members you can call on.

• **Contacts** — The information sources the character possesses.

• **Domain** — Feeding grounds acknowledged by Kindred society.

• **Fame** — How well-known the character is among mortals.

• **Generation** — How far removed from Caine the character is.

• **Herd** — The vessels to which the character has free and safe access.

• **Influence** — The character's political power within mortal society.

• **Mentor** — The Kindred patron who advises and supports the character.

• **Resources** — Wealth, belongings, and income.

• **Retainers** — Followers, guards, and servants.

• **Rituals** (Sabbat) — How many ritae the Cainite knows and can perform.

• **Status** — The character's standing in undead society.

Freebie Points

Trait	Cost
Attribute	5 per dot
Ability	2 per dot
Discipline	7 per dot
Background	1 per dot
Virtue	2 per dot
Humanity/Path	2 per dot
Willpower	1 per dot

The Storyteller and Character Creation

The Storyteller may choose to guide the players through character generation individually, she may wish to run a troupe character creation storytelling session, or she may allow players to create characters at their own leisure before the chronicle begins. Each method has its benefits.

Storytellers may choose to oversee character creation not only to ensure the players' understanding of the process, but also to get a feel for the characters they're creating. Character creation can provide Storytellers with some wonderful plot ideas — ones they would likely never have considered on their own. Likewise, if the players are unfamiliar with the rules, the Storyteller should use character generation as an introduction to the game as a whole, informing the troupe how the rules work and giving them examples based on the personas they're creating.

As the Storyteller, start by printing a few character sheets, copying them from the back of the book, or use your own digital character-creation method like a wiki. Take the players on a "tour" of the sheet, explaining what each section is for. Let players ask questions along the way, and help them through the process rather than letting them fend for themselves.

After the players are familiar with the character sheet, give them a few guidelines about what types of characters will be appropriate for the chronicle. For example, Storytellers running games in Camarilla-held cities might forbid Sabbat or independent vampires outright. Sometimes a player will attempt to portray a character wholly unacceptable to your plotlines, and you should feel free to disallow this in favor of a character who won't disrupt the game. For instance, if, as Storyteller, you want to position the Tremere as universal antagonists, you may wish to restrict the players' choice of Tremere. Alternatively, you may wish to run the chronicle with Tremere characters, giving your players the chance to experience the dawning horror of the Clan that claims them.

Storytellers are advised to spend an entire session simply creating characters and running preludes (see p. 352) with the players. Exceptionally complex characters or secretive chronicles might even warrant an entire session for each individual player. Spending an adequate amount of time on character generation ensures that the players create realistic characters and not simply lists of Traits.

Step One: Character Concept

Concept is the birthing chamber for who a character will become. It only needs to be a general idea — brute; slick mobster; manic Malkavian kidnapper — but it should be enough to ignite your imagination. If you choose, a concept may be quite complex — "My character is a streetwise Nosferatu, Embraced as a child but with a precocious level of maturity. Being a Kindred scares him, but he knows that the alternative is Final Death and he's not ready for that yet." This stage involves the selection of the character's concept, Clan, Nature, and Demeanor.

Concept

A character's concept generally refers to who the character was before becoming a vampire. Many Kindred cling desperately to any salvageable aspects of their former selves — their self-image, their occupation, how they lived, what was unique about them. In their new nocturnal world, echoes of their mortal lives are all that stand between many Kindred and madness.

Concept is important because it helps a vampire relate to the world. It's not a numerical Trait, and it has no mechanical effect on the game. Its benefit is that it allows you to formulate a personality for your character, and it provides an anchor for a vampire who wishes to preserve her dwindling Humanity — or to rail against it.

Some sample concepts are presented on p. 80. If you don't see a concept you like, make one up! Its sole purpose is to help you express your character idea concisely.

Clan

A character's Clan is her vampire "family," the undead legacy into which she was Embraced. Vampires are always of the same Clan as their sires, the vampires who Embrace them. Go back to Chapter Two, look at the templates, and decide which Clan you'd like your character to be. As previously mentioned, the Storyteller may disallow members of certain Clans based on the Sect the chronicle involves. Many chronicles, for example, allow only vampires from the Camarilla Clans, while games run at conventions or by organized play clubs sometimes stipulate specific "venue appropriate" criteria.

If a player wishes, she need not choose a Clan at all. Many vampires in the modern nights have blood so diluted that they can truly claim no Clan. Unwanted

and scorned, these Clanless "Caitiff" are increasingly common. If you wish to play such a character, simply write "Caitiff" under the Clan heading on the character sheet.

Nature and Demeanor (Archetypes)

After choosing concept and Clan, a player should choose her character's Nature and Demeanor. These behavioral Traits, known as *Archetypes*, help players understand their characters' personalities.

Demeanor is the way a character presents herself to the outside world. It is the "mask" she wears to protect her inner self. A character's Demeanor often differs from her Nature, though it might not. Also, Demeanor refers to the attitude a character adopts most often — people change Demeanors as often as they change their minds. Demeanor has no effect on any rules.

Nature is the character's "real" self, the person she truly is. The Archetype a player chooses reflects that character's deep-rooted feelings about herself, others, and the world. Nature should not be the *only* aspect of a character's true personality, merely the most dominant. Nature is also used to determine a character's ability to regain Willpower points (see p. 267).

For a complete list of Archetypes from which to select Nature and Demeanor, see pp. 87-96.

Step Two: Select Attributes

Players now assign dots to their sheets. The first step in determining a character's numeric Traits is to prioritize his Attributes. *Attributes* are the natural abilities and raw capabilities a character is made of. How strong is a character? How attractive? How quick? How smart? Attributes take all these questions and more into account. All **Vampire** characters have nine Attributes, which are divided into three categories: Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), Social (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance), and Mental (Perception, Intelligence, Wits).

First, the player must select which group of Attributes is his character's strong suit (primary). The player then selects the group in which the character is average (secondary). Finally, the remaining group is designated as the character's weak point (tertiary). Is your character tough but antisocial, or gorgeous but a complete airhead? Character concept and Clan may suggest certain ranks for these priorities or obvious ways to play against type, but feel free to decide upon any scheme you please. Your character is a person first and a vampire second.

All **Vampire** characters start with one dot in each Attribute, reflecting the basic capabilities of the mortals from which they're drawn. (There are exceptions, such as the Nosferatu and the Samedi, who have zero dots in their Appearance Attribute.) A character's priorities determine how many dots the player may allocate to that cluster of Attributes. A player may distribute seven additional dots to his character's primary group, five additional dots to the secondary group, and three dots to the tertiary group. For example, a tough, athletic character will likely allocate seven dots to his Physical category, while a clever, wise character will place seven dots in her Mental category.

Step Three: Select Abilities

Abilities are also divided into three categories: Talents, Skills, and Knowledges. *Talents* are intuitive Abilities that are inherent or learned by honing raw aptitude. *Skills* are Abilities learned through rigorous training or determination. They may be improved with careful practice, but can also be studied or learned through training. *Knowledges* are just that — book learning and the like. Knowledges are typically mental pursuits or studies learned through schooling or research.

Like Attributes, Ability groups are also prioritized during character creation. Players should select primary, secondary, and tertiary groups for their Abilities. The primary group receives 13 dots, the secondary group gets nine, and the tertiary group receives five. Note that, unlike Attributes, characters do not begin the game with automatic dots in any Ability. Further, no Ability may be purchased above three dots during this stage of character creation — even among the undead, experts in a field don't grow on trees. You may raise Abilities higher with freebie points later.

Step Four: Select Advantages

Now comes the part of character generation during which the vampire truly becomes unique. *Advantages* are Traits that make the vampire a contender in the hierarchy of the night. Advantages are not prioritized; a set number of dots are allocated to each category. Although this number is fixed, additional Advantage dots may be purchased with freebie points.

Disciplines

When vampires are Embraced, their sires pass on to them certain blood-based mystical powers, known as *Disciplines*. Each character begins with three dots of Disciplines, which may be allocated as the player chooses. For example, she may spend all three dots on one Discipline or spend a dot each on three Disciplines. Disciplines purchased with Advantage dots must be from the three Clan Disciplines all Clans possess. Each Clan description in Chapter Two lists the Disciplines practiced by that Clan (bloodline variations to the Clans can be found in Chapter Ten). If the character is a Clanless Caitiff, she may purchase whatever Disciplines she wants, subject to Storyteller approval. (Note: Disciplines purchased with freebie points need not be Clan Disciplines.)

Backgrounds

A starting character has five dots worth of *Backgrounds*, which may be distributed at the player's discretion. Background Traits should fit the character concept — a destitute Gangrel street preacher isn't likely to have Resources, for example — though the Storyteller may disallow or encourage players to take certain Backgrounds for their characters.

More Inhuman Vampires

Some vampires, such as those of the Sabbat, focus more on their vampiric nature than on the world around them. At the Storyteller's discretion, a new character may start with four dots in Disciplines in lieu of taking any starting dots in Backgrounds.

Virtues

Virtues are very important to **Vampire** characters. They provide the moral backbone for characters and determine how readily they resist the temptations of the Beast. A character's emotional responses are very closely tied to her Virtues; these Traits define how well the character resists frenzy and how keenly she feels remorse. Virtues are essential in resisting the urges of the Beast and the Hunger, and most vampires lose points in their Virtues as they grow older and more callous.



A **Vampire** character has three Virtues. *Conscience* governs a character's sense of right and wrong, while *Self-Control* determines how readily she maintains her composure and contains her Hunger. *Courage* measures the character's gumption and ability to withstand the proximity of fire, sunlight, and other things that vampires dread.

Given that **Vampire** is fundamentally about coming to grips with one's monstrous nature and, hopefully, overcoming it, Storytellers who want to emphasize **Vampire**'s core struggle of the Beast vs. Humanity can encourage their players to select the Virtues of Conscience and Self-Control for their characters. However, certain Kindred, particularly the vampires of the Sabbat, adhere to different ethical outlooks. For these vampires, the Virtues of *Conviction* and *Instinct* may replace the Virtues of Conscience and Self-Control, respectively. (All vampires have the Courage Virtue.) Conviction and Instinct are presented on p. 314. If you decide that your character is sufficiently inhuman to warrant these Virtues, and if the Storyteller permits you to take them, you may circle the appropriate Virtues on the character sheet. Be warned that in taking these Virtues, you have effectively designated your character a monster.

Every character starts out with one dot in Conscience and Self-Control, and zero dots in Conviction and Instinct. The player may then distribute seven additional dots among the Virtues as she sees fit. These Virtues play instrumental roles in determining a character's starting Humanity (or Path) and Willpower levels, so be careful how you spend the points.

Step Five: Last Touches

At this stage, the player may spend 15 freebie points to personalize his character. First, however, a bit of bookkeeping needs to be done.

Humanity

A character's starting Humanity rating equals the sum of her Conscience + Self-Control Traits, yielding a score between 5 and 9. Players can also increase their Humanity with freebie points, as too low a rating indicates that the Beast lies in close proximity.

Note: Characters on Paths other than Humanity may use different Virtues to determine their initial Path ratings. Consult the section on Paths (starting on p. 313) to determine which Paths use which Virtues.

Willpower

A character's beginning Willpower rating equals her Courage dots, and thus ranges from 1 to 5. Players often raise their starting Willpower with freebie points, as the Trait is critical to dealing with a Kindred's dangerous emotional situations. Willpower is also used to resist frenzy (p. 299), undertake especially daunting tasks, and power certain Discipline effects.

Blood Pool

The next step in character creation is determining the vampire's starting blood pool. This part is simple — roll a 10-sided die. The number is the number of blood points a character has in his system at the beginning of the game. This is the only die roll that is made during character creation.

Freebie Points

The player may now spend 15 *freebie points* to purchase additional dots in Traits. These points may be spent however the player chooses — thus the term "freebie" — though the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what she chooses to allow in the chronicle. Each dot has a variable freebie-point cost based on which type of Trait it is — consult the chart on p. 82 for freebie-point costs of Traits. Remember that Disciplines purchased with freebie points need not come from the character's Clan Disciplines (though purchase of some Disciplines may require explanation about how she acquired them, and the Storyteller may restrict access to certain Disciplines).

Optionally, the Storyteller may allow the player to take up to seven points of Flaws to gain more freebie points, or use freebie points to purchase Merits. Merits and Flaws start on p. 479.

Spark of Life

If you go through the steps above, you will have a character — at least in the purely technical sense. All the dots are on the paper, all of your character's capacities have their systems and values defined, and you can roll all the right combinations of dice at the appropriate times.

At this point, the onus is on you to breathe a bit of life into the your character's Traits. If she exists only in game terms, your character's not much more detailed than a featureless piece on a gameboard. Take a good long look at your Traits and numbers. Why are they



there? How will they come across in the story? What parts of the character *don't* you know yet? Like a novelist building a literary figure, decide on all the physical, psychological, and background details that make your character one of a kind, even among the undead.

Sure, your character has an Appearance of 3 — but what does that mean? Does she have a winning smile, does she exude a challenging self-confidence, or does she simply have a killer wardrobe? What color are her eyes and hair? If she's skilled in Performance or Etiquette or Firearms, how did she acquire her skill? Did she always want to be a movie star? Is her polished veneer a reaction against growing up in an economically depressed household? Did she just, for whatever bizarre reason, walk onto a firing range and discover a natural aptitude for plugging holes in targets? Is her Ally actually her ex-lover, who works as an aide to some appalling governor and with whom she maintains an uneasy, tension-laced friendship? Does he suspect what she's become, but helps her out for now because he thinks he still has a chance to make things right?

This last phase of character creation, while the least "necessary," is nevertheless important. Otherwise, your Brujah with Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3 will be just like all the other Brujah with Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3 — and believe us, there are a lot of such undistinguished characters out there. And that's a shame, because characters — especially vampires — should be unique, fascinating, passionate, and memorable.

Personality Archetypes: Nature and Demeanor

Everyone plays a role, often several, every day. Every individual displays multiple layers of personality, varying from the contrived to the sincere. Each of these roles defines how we interact with the people and places around us, and we choose which parts of ourselves we wish to show.

It is the same with Kindred. The concept of Nature and Demeanor corresponds directly to the different masks we wear when we interact. A **Vampire** character's Nature is her true self, her innermost being — the person she truly *is*. It is dangerous to show this, though, as it lets others know who we are and what is important to us. Thus, characters also have Demeanors, faces they

show to the world. By choosing how we relate to the world, we are able to choose how it relates to us as well, as we guide the responses others give us.

Philosophy aside, personality also has an effect on the mechanics of **Vampire**. A character may regain her drive and sense of purpose by acting in accordance with her Nature. Every time a character fulfills the requirement of her Nature Archetype (see below), that character has the opportunity to regain a point of spent Willpower (see p. 267). If the Storyteller allows, the character regains the point.

Archetypes allow players to build a sense of personality for their characters, and to define a bit of what makes the character tick. It is worth noting that Archetypes are not rigid; characters need not slavishly devote themselves to their Natures and Demeanors. Rather, the character should act as the player reasonably or emotionally believes she *would* act in a given situation. Players and Storytellers may wish to define their own Archetypes that more closely exemplify how the character in question responds to her surroundings. After all, every character is an individual, and customized Archetypes should be a logical outgrowth of a well-rounded character.

Here are some example character Archetypes for a wide variety of characters. Some Archetypes are better suited for certain Sects or Clans than others.

Architect

The Architect has a sense of purpose even greater than herself. She is truly happy only when creating something of lasting value for others. People will always need things, and the Architect strives to provide at least one necessity. Inventors, pioneers, town founders, entrepreneurs, and the like are all Architect Archetypes. A Kindred Architect might seek to create new laws that affect her fellow undead, or she might aim to establish a new Anarch domain.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you establish something of importance or lasting value.

Autocrat

The Autocrat wants to be in charge. He seeks prominence for its own sake, not because he has an operation's best interests at heart or because he has the best ideas (though he may certainly think so). He may genuinely believe others are incompetent, but ultimately he craves power and control. Dictators, gang leaders, bullies, corporate raiders, and their ilk are Autocrat Archetypes. A Kindred Autocrat may crave a title, or he may wish to be recognized as the leader of a coterie.

— Regain a point of Willpower when you achieve control over a group or organization involving other individuals.

Bon Vivant

The Bon Vivant knows that life — and unlife — is shallow and meaningless. As such, the Bon Vivant decides to enjoy her time on Earth. The Bon Vivant is not necessarily irresponsible. Rather, she is simply predisposed to having a good time along the way. Most Bon Vivants have low Self-Control ratings, as they are so given to excess. Hedonists, sybarites, and dilettantes are all examples of the Bon Vivant Archetype. A Kindred Bon Vivant may sire a brood of fawning childer, or he may spend his time gorging on the blood of drug abusers for the contact high.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you truly enjoy yourself and can fully express your exultation. At the Storyteller's option, a particularly fabulous revel may yield multiple Willpower points.

Bravo

The Bravo is a tough and a bully, and often takes perverse pleasure in tormenting the weak. To the Bravo's mind, might makes right. Power is what matters, and only those with power should be respected. Naturally, physical power is the best kind, but any kind will do. The Bravo sees overt threats as a perfectly reasonable means of gaining cooperation. The Bravo is not incapable of pity or kindness; he just prefers to do things his way. Robbers, bigots, and thugs are all Bravo Archetypes. A Kindred Bravo may abuse authority the system has granted him, or he may — violently or otherwise — force other Kindred out of his way to get what he wants. He's almost certainly an asshole.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time you achieve your agenda through brutishness or intimidation. This need not be physical, as many Bravos verbally or socially cow their victims.

Capitalist

You are the ultimate mercenary, realizing that there is always a market to be developed — anything can be a commodity. You have a keen understanding of how to manipulate both kine and Cainites into thinking that they need specific goods or services. Appearance and influence are everything when it comes to the big sale, though you'll use anything to your advantage. Sales-

men, soldiers of fortune, and bootlickers all adhere to the Capitalist Archetype.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you make a successful "sale" of any commodity. Commodities need not be physical items; they may be bits of information, favors, or other intangibles.

Caregiver

Everyone needs a shoulder to cry on. A Caregiver takes her comfort in consoling others, and people often come to her with their problems. Vampires with Caregiver Archetypes often attempt, as best they can, to protect the mortals on whom they feed. Nurses, doctors, and psychiatrists are examples of potential Caregivers. Caregiver Kindred are often the type who — tragically — Embrace mortal loves they've left behind in hopes of softening their loss, or even those who create situations of grief in order to ease it and thus validate themselves.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you successfully protect or nurture someone else.

Celebrant

The Celebrant takes joy in her cause. Whether the character's passion is battle, religion, foiling her rivals, or reading fine literature, it gives the Celebrant the strength to withstand adversity. Given the chance, the Celebrant will indulge in her passion as deeply as possible. Unlike the Fanatic (p. 91), the Celebrant pursues her cause not out of duty, but out of enthusiasm. Crusaders, hippies, political activists, and art enthusiasts are Celebrant Archetypes. Celebrant Kindred may cleave to mortal ideologies that are incongruous with their new Damned conditions, or they may be the advocates of new trends and causes that move through undead society.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you pursue your cause or convert another character to the same passion. Conversely, lose a point of temporary Willpower whenever you are denied your passion or it is badly lost to you.

Chameleon

Independent and self-reliant, you carefully study the behavior and mannerisms of everyone you come in contact with so you can pass yourself off as someone else later. You spend so much time altering your mannerisms and appearance that your own sire may not even recognize you. Spies, con artists, drag queens, and impostors best represent the Chameleon.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you fool someone into thinking you're someone else for your own (or your pack or coterie's) benefit.

Child

The Child is still immature in personality and temperament. He wants what he wants *now*, and often prefers someone to give it to him. Although he can typically care for himself, he would rather have someone cater to his capricious desires. Some Child Archetypes are actually innocent rather than immature, ignorant of the cold ways of the real world. Actual children, spoiled individuals, and some drug abusers are Child Archetypes. Kindred with the Child Archetype might have not yet fully reached an understanding of the world and have some characteristic such as cruelty, entitlement, sympathy, or hunger that is out of balance with their other personality aspects, as they haven't yet reached the "rounded" state of adulthood. Note that a Child Archetype need not be a physical, literal child at the time of Embrace. Some people simply never grow up.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you manage to convince someone to help you with no gain to herself, or to nurture you.

Competitor

The Competitor takes great excitement in the pursuit of victory. To the Competitor, every task is a new challenge to meet and a new contest to win. Indeed, the Competitor sees all interactions as some sort of opportunity for her to be the best — the best leader, the most productive, the most valuable, or whatever. Corporate raiders, professional athletes, and impassioned researchers are all examples of Competitor Archetypes. Kindred Competitors have any number of resources and accomplishments over which to assert themselves, from mortal herds and creature comforts to titles and prestige in Kindred society.

— Regain one point of Willpower whenever you succeed at a test or challenge. Note that a test or challenge is more than just a dice roll; it's an entire dramatic situation. Especially difficult victories may, at the Storyteller's discretion, allow you to regain multiple Willpower points.

Conformist

The Conformist is a follower, taking another's lead and finding security in the decisions of others. She prefers not to take charge, instead seeking to throw in with the rest of the group and lend her own unique aid. The

Conformist is drawn to the most dynamic personality or the individual she perceives to be the "best." Being a Conformist is not necessarily a bad thing — every group needs followers to lend stability to their causes. Groupies, party voters, and "the masses" are Conformist Archetypes. Conformist Kindred can take many forms, from the ardent Sabbat pack member, to the Kindred who follows a Clan-first agenda, to the trusted supporters of a titled vampire or rising star.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever the group or your supported leader achieves a goal due to your support.

Conniver

Why work for something when you can trick somebody else into getting it for you? The Conniver always tries to find the easy way, the fast track to success and wealth. Some people call him a thief, a swindler, or less pleasant terms, but he knows that everybody in the world would do unto him if they could. He just does it first, and better. Criminals, con artists, salespeople, urchins, and entrepreneurs might be Connivers. Some would argue that all Kindred are Connivers in some sense, but those that have the Conniver archetype may be abusive to their childer and ghouls, or they may be more persuasive in gaining support for their machinations.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you trick someone into doing something for you, or when you convince someone to help you against their own best interests.

Creep Show

You strive to shock and disgust those around you with gratuitous acts and ostentatiously "evil" mannerisms. You realize, of course, that it's all show and merely a way to intimidate and control others. Outsiders, on the other hand, think you are the Devil incarnate, and you revel in this image. Shock-rockers, rebellious teenagers, circus freaks, and the attention-starved exemplify the Creep Show Archetype.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever someone recoils from you in horror or otherwise reacts in fear.

Curmudgeon

A Curmudgeon is bitter and cynical, finding flaws in everything and seeing little humor in life or unlife. He is often fatalistic or pessimistic, and has very little esteem for others. To the Curmudgeon, the glass is never more than half-full, though it may be damn near empty when other people are involved. Many Internet junkies, pop-culture fans, and Generation Xers are Curmudgeons. Kindred Curmudgeons see elder oppression or spoiled neonates running amok behind every development in undead society, and may or may not rise beyond acerbic grumbling to change any problems they perceive.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever someone does something specific and negative, just like you said they would. You must predict and quantify this failure aloud, such as by warning, "The Prince is going to fuck us on this one," or "Just watch, that Malkavian's ghoul is going to do something really reckless." You may simply whisper your prophecy of grief to the Storyteller if you wish, instead of announcing it to the whole troupe.

Dabbler

The Dabbler is interested in everything but focuses on nothing. He flits from idea to idea, passion to passion, and project to project without actually finishing anything. Others may get swept up in the Dabbler's enthusiasm, and be left high and dry when he moves on to something else without warning. Most Dabblers have high Intelligence, Charisma, and Manipulation ratings, but not much in the way of Wits or Stamina. Toreador are often Dabblers, particularly those afflicted with the derisive sobriquet "Poseurs."

— Regain Willpower whenever you find a new enthusiasm and drop your old one completely.

Deviant

The Deviant is a freak, ostracized from society by unique tastes or beliefs that place her outside the mainstream. Deviants are not indolent rebels or shiftless "unrecognized geniuses"; rather, they are independent thinkers who don't quite fit in the status quo. Deviant Archetypes often feel that the world stands against them, and as such reject traditional morality. Some have bizarre tastes, preferences, and ideologies. Extremists, eccentric celebrities, and straight-up weirdoes are Deviant Archetypes. Kindred deviants may observe heretical or outlawed habits like diablerie or deference to elders, and they may well go Anarch or Autarkis instead of having to constantly defend their subversion of Traditions or Sect customs.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time you are able to flout social mores without retribution.

Director

To the Director, nothing is worse than chaos and disorder. The Director seeks to be in charge, adopting a "my way or the highway" attitude on matters of decision-making. The Director is more concerned with bringing order out of strife, however, and need not be truly "in control" of a group to guide it. Coaches, teachers, and many political figures exemplify the Director Archetype. Kindred Directors may be simple advocates of established codes, or they may prove instrumental in tearing down corrupt existing orders to make way for new leaders or factional movements.

— Regain a point of Willpower when you influence or aid a group or influential individual in the completion of a difficult task.

Enigma

Your actions are bizarre, puzzling, and inexplicable to everyone except yourself. Your strangeness may be a residual effect from your Embrace, or the most effective way for you to carry out your work. To the rest of the world, however, your erratic actions suggest that you're eccentric if not completely crazy. Conspiracy theorists, deep-cover agents, and Jyhad fanatics all live up to the Enigma Archetype

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever someone is completely perplexed or baffled by one of your actions that later turns out to be a fruitful endeavor.

Eye of the Storm

Despite your calm appearance, chaos and havoc seems to follow you. From burning cities to emotional upheaval, death and destruction circle you like albatrosses. For you, unlife is a never-ending trial with uncertainty around every corner. Gang leaders, political figures, and other influential individuals exemplify the Eye of the Storm Archetype.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever a ruckus, riot, or less violent but equally chaotic phenomenon occurs around you.

Fanatic

The Fanatic has a purpose, and that purpose consumes his existence. The Fanatic pours himself into his cause, and he may even feel guilty for undertaking any objective that deviates from his higher goal. To the Fanatic, the end justifies the means — the cause is more important than those who serve it. Players who choose Fanatic Archetypes must select a cause for their character to further. Revolutionaries, zealots, and sincere firebrands are all examples of Fanatic Archetypes. Kindred Fanatics are often champions for or against a particular aspect of undead society, such as equality among all vampires, the extermination of Anarchs, or stamping infernalism out of the Sword of Caine.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you accomplish some task that *directly* relates to your cause.

Gallant

Gallants are flamboyant souls, always seeking attention and the chance to be the brightest star. Gallants seek the company of others, if only to earn their adoration. Attention drives the Gallant, and the chase is often as important as its end. Nothing excites a Gallant so much as a new audience to woo. Performers, only children, and those with low self-esteem often embody the Gallant Archetype. Kindred Gallants may be Harpies, or they may have enormous herds of doting thralls.

— Regain a Willpower point whenever you successfully impress another person. Ultimately, the Storyteller is the arbiter of how much you dazzle someone, even in the case of other players' characters.

Guru

Your enlightenment draws others to you. You may be a mentor of a particular Path of Enlightenment, a priest with the Church, or merely an idealist. Whatever the case, your presence motivates and moves others to engage in spiritual or ideological pursuits. Your peers view you as calm, centered, and "with it," even when you are preaching violence as a means to an end. Cult leaders, Zen masters, and Pack Priests are examples of Gurus.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever someone seeks out your help in spiritual matters and your guidance moves that individual to an enlightened action that he normally would not have taken. Also, regain a point of Willpower whenever you achieve an epiphany that relates to your personal philosophy.

Idealist

The Idealist believes — truly, madly, deeply — in some higher goal or morality. The object of his idealism may be something as pragmatic as the Camarilla's eventual triumph or as amorphous as the ultimate good, but the belief is there. Idealists are frequently either very new to the Blood or very old, and many seek

Golconda as the final expression of their idealism. In the meantime, an Idealist tries to reconcile his beliefs with the demands of vampiric existence, often acting contrary to his self-interest in doing so.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time an action in pursuit of your ideals furthers your goals and brings your ideal closer to fruition.

Judge

The Judge perpetually seeks to improve the system. A Judge takes pleasure in her rational nature and ability to draw the right conclusion when presented with facts. The Judge respects justice, as it is the most efficient model for resolving issues. Judges, while they pursue the "streamlining" of problems, are rarely visionary, as they prefer proven models to insight. Engineers, lawyers, and doctors are often Judge Archetypes. Kindred Judges might gravitate toward enforcement roles in local society, or they might be a voice of reason in an otherwise radical coterie.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you correctly solve a problem by considering the evidence presented, or when one of your arguments unites dissenting parties.

Loner

Even in a crowd the Loner sticks out, because he so obviously does not belong. Others view Loners as pariahs, remote, and isolated, but in truth the Loner prefers his own company to that of others. For whatever reason, the Loner simply disdains others, and this feeling is often reciprocated. Criminals, radicals, and free thinkers are all Loner Archetypes. Kindred Loners often hail from one of the rugged individualist Clans like the Gangrel or Ravnos, and they have a proclivity for ending up Autarkis by dint of not giving a shit what some up-his-own-ass Prince or Archbishop says is a law.

— Regain a point of Willpower when you accomplish something by yourself, yet which still benefits the coterie in some way.

Martyr

The Martyr suffers for his cause, enduring his trials out of the belief that his discomfort will ultimately improve others' lot. Some Martyrs simply want the attention or sympathy their ordeals engender, while others are sincere in their cause, greeting their opposition with unfaltering faith. Many revolutionaries, staunch idealists, and outcasts are Martyr Archetypes. Kindred Martyrs are often associated with reform movements among Kindred society, but rarely as figureheads — and they need not necessarily be on the pro-reform side of the issue.

— Regain a point of Willpower when you suffer some amount of damage or loss of a definable resource for your ideals or another's immediate gain.

Masochist

The Masochist exists to test his limits, to see how much pain he can tolerate before he collapses. He gains satisfaction in humiliation, suffering, denial, and even physical pain. The Masochist defines who he is by his capacity to feel discomfort — he rises each night only to greet a new pain. Certain extreme athletes, urban tribalists, and the clinically depressed exemplify the Masochist Archetype. Kindred Masochists might be overtly self-mortifying horrors who play to their Beast's self-destructive whims, or they may be ambitious taskmasters, as with a coterie leader who refuses to accept failure and pushes his own limits in his exacting schemes.

— Regain one point of Willpower when your own suffering leads to some tangible gain for you, and two points of Willpower whenever you experience pain in a truly unique way.

Monster

The Monster knows she is a creature of darkness and acts like it. Evil and suffering are the Monster's tools, and she uses them wherever she goes. No villainy is below her, no hurt goes uninflicted, and no lie remains untold. The Monster does not commit evil for its own sake, but rather as a means to understand what she has become. Unstable individuals, those who have been greatly wronged or harmed, and those defined as sociopaths may come to display characteristics of the Monster Archetype. Kindred Monsters include many Sabbat, degenerate Kindred elders, and those who never adjust properly to what they have become after the Embrace.

— Malignant deeds reinforce the Monster's sense of purpose. Monster characters should pick a specific atrocity, regaining Willpower whenever they indulge that urge. For example, a tempter regains Willpower for luring someone into wickedness, while an apostate earns back Willpower for causing another to doubt her faith. Pick a destiny and fulfill it. Storytellers, be careful with how you reward this Archetype. For example,

a player who chooses violence as an atrocity shouldn't recoup Willpower in every combat, but perhaps only in those that involve wanton destruction, or even cause degeneration checks due to their gruesomeness. Monster is a difficult Archetype for which to offer rewards, and those rewards should come as a result of the character challenging his own descent into the Beast, not rampaging ungovernably because he gains an ever-refreshing pool of bonus dice.

Pedagogue

The Pedagogue knows it all, and desperately wants to inform others. Whether through a sense of purpose or a genuine desire to help others, the Pedagogue makes sure his message is heard — at length, if necessary. Pedagogue Archetypes may range from well-meaning mentors to verbose blowhards who love to hear themselves talk. Instructors, the overeducated, and "veterans of their field" are all examples of Pedagogue Archetypes. Kindred Pedagogues include watchdogs of the Traditions, ideological Anarchs, and perhaps even that rare soul seeking Golconda who wants company on the journey.

— Regain one point of Willpower whenever you see or learn of someone who has benefited from the wisdom you shared with them.

Penitent

The Penitent exists to atone for the grave sin she commits simply by being who she is. Penitents have either low self-esteem or traumatic past experiences, and feel compelled to "make up" for inflicting themselves upon the world. Penitent Archetypes are not always religious in outlook; some truly want to scourge the world of the grief they bring to it. Repentant sinners, persons with low self-esteem, and remorseful criminals are examples of the Penitent Archetype. Penitent Kindred include those who scourge themselves of the Beast like medieval monks, vampires who stand up for the rights of mortals, and those who subsist entirely on the vitae of animals.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you feel that you have achieved absolution for a given grievance. This redemption should be of the same magnitude as the transgression — the greater the crime, the greater the penance. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of what constitutes a reasonable act of reparation.



Perfectionist

Perfectionist Archetypes demand flawless execution. A half-hearted job gives the Perfectionist no satisfaction, and she expects the same degree of commitment and attention to detail from others that she demands from herself. Although the Perfectionist may be exacting, the achievement of the end goal drives her, and often those for whom she is responsible. Prima donnas, artists, and architects exemplify the Perfectionist Archetype. A Perfectionist Kindred might be a zealous Sabbat member who expects more than his pack can consistently deliver, or she may be a moralist who sometimes applies her own high standards of Humanity to others in her coterie.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you accomplish your goal without any demonstrable flaw or impediment, and regain a Willpower point whenever you motivate another character to succeed as a result of your own shining example.

Rebel

The Rebel is a malcontent, never satisfied with the status quo or the system as it is. He hates the very idea of authority and does everything in his power to challenge and undermine it. Perhaps the Rebel truly believes in his ideals, but it is just as likely that he bears authority figures some ill will over a "wrong" done to him in the past. A Rebel may hate institutions categorically, or she may be consumed with opposition toward a single particular authority. Teenagers, insurrectionists, and nonconformists all exemplify the Rebel Archetype. Rebel Kindred certainly include the Sabbat, Anarchs, and temperamental Brujah, but also have room for Tremere who chafe at the rigid Clan hierarchy or neonates who deplore their sires.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever your actions adversely affect your chosen opposition. Rebels may oppose the government, the Church, a vampire Prince, or any other holder of authority. The player should choose whom or what his character rebels against when he adopts this Archetype. Storytellers should take rebellion against "all authority" with a grain of salt, and apply the Willpower reward for such a broad concept to only greater and greater actions of insurgency.

Rogue

Only one thing matters to the Rogue: herself. To each his own, and if others cannot protect their claims, they have no right to them. The Rogue is not necessarily a thug or bully, however. She simply refuses to succumb to the whims of others. Rogues almost universally possess a sense of self-sufficiency. They have their own best interests in mind at all times. Prostitutes, capitalists, and criminals all embody the Rogue Archetype. Kindred Rogues include diablerists, Autarkis, and a Primogen who puts his Clan's opportunities before the supremacy of the Kindred as a whole.

— Regain a point of Willpower when your self-centered disposition leads you to profit, materially or otherwise. At the Storyteller's discretion, accumulating gain without exposing your own weaknesses may let you regain two points of Willpower. As well, you may regain a point of Willpower when your efforts benefit the group to which you belong when that benefit comes at the expense of another group.

Sadist

You exist to inflict pain and suffering upon others. Killing is too easy; torture is the best way to truly harm a person, and you seek the slowest, most painful means to push others to the ultimate limits. Pain — others' pain — gives you immense pleasure. Drill sergeants, jilted ex-lovers, and some of the terminally deranged may all embody the Sadist Archetype at one time or another; sadism is rare enough to appear only in aberrant cases, rather than reliably in any type or class of person.

— Regain a point of Willpower whenever you inflict pain upon someone for no reason other than your own pleasure.

Scientist

To a Scientist, existence is a puzzle which she can help to reassemble. A Scientist logically and methodically examines her every situation and maneuver, looking for logical outcomes and patterns. This is not to say that the Scientist is always looking for a scientific or rational explanation, but rather she examines her surroundings rigorously and with a critical eye. The system a Scientist attempts to impose on the world may be completely ludicrous, but it is a system, and she sticks by it.

— Regain Willpower any time a logical, systematic approach to a problem helps you solve it, or information gathered logically is of use in another, similar situation.

Sociopath

All inferior beings both living and undead should be exterminated in order to bring about a harmonious existence. You likely feel no remorse when you kill (depending upon your Humanity or Path). On the contrary, you are doing a glorious deed for society. Some vampires are critical of your violent nature, but you sometimes manage to sway them with arguments like, "Darwin would agree that I'm only helping nature along!" and, "Only the strongest shall survive!"

— Regain Willpower whenever you are the greatest contributor to a body count after everything has settled down. This count includes times when you are the only killer, and it needs not result from a massive combat — like killing every member of a movie audience or gunning down defenseless patrons in a bank robbery.

Soldier

The Soldier is not a blindly loyal follower. While she exists for orders, she does not adhere to them unquestioningly. More independent than a Conformist but too tied into the idea of command to be a Loner, the Soldier applies her own techniques to others' goals. While she may seek command herself someday, her ambitions lie within the established hierarchy and structure. The Soldier has no compunctions about using whatever means necessary to do what needs to be done, so long as the orders to do so came from the right place.

— Regain a point of Willpower when you achieve your orders' objectives. The more difficult the orders are to fulfill, the better it feels to accomplish them. At Storyteller discretion, pulling off a spectacular success or fulfilling a lengthy mission may well be worth additional Willpower points.

Survivor

No matter what happens, no matter the odds or opposition, the Survivor always manages to pull through. Whether alone or with a group, the Survivor's utter refusal to accept defeat often makes the difference between success and failure. Survivors are frustrated by others' acceptance of "what fate has in store" or willingness to withstand less than what they can achieve. Outcasts, street folk, and idealists may well be Survivor Archetypes. A Kindred Survivor might be a renegade under a Prince's edict of Blood Hunt, an erstwhile Bishop forced from power, or a lowly Nosferatu who finds himself kicked from hunting ground to hunting ground with no acknowledged claim of domain.

— Regain one point of Willpower whenever you survive a threatening situation through tenacity, or when your counsel causes someone else to persist in spite of opposition.

Thrill-Seeker

The Thrill-Seeker lives for the rush of danger. Unlike those of arguably saner disposition, the Thrill-Seeker actively pursues hazardous and possibly deadly situations. The Thrill-Seeker is not consciously suicidal or self-destructive — he simply seeks the stimulation of imminent disaster. Gangbangers, petty thieves, and exhibitionists are all examples of the Thrill-Seeker Archetype. Kindred Thrill-Seekers might habitually break the Masquerade just to see if they'll get caught, they might maintain contacts in a rival Clan or Sect, or they might actively plot a Prince's overthrow just to see if they can pull it off.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time you succeed at a dangerous task that you have deliberately undertaken. Thrill-Seekers are not stupid, however, and the Storyteller may choose not to reward a player who heedlessly sends her character into danger for the sole intent of harvesting Willpower.

Traditionalist

The orthodox ways satisfy the Traditionalist, who prefers to accomplish her goals with time-tested methods. Why vary your course when what has worked in the past is good enough? The Traditionalist finds the status quo acceptable, even preferable, to a change that might yield unpredictable results. Conservatives, judges, and authority figures are all examples of Traditionalist Archetypes. Traditionalist Kindred unsurprisingly look to the Traditions as a behavior model, though a few Anarchs and elders may espouse a "traditionalism" that predates both Camarilla and Sabbat.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time the proven ways turn out to be the best. Also, regain a point of Willpower any time you adhere to one of your previously espoused positions and it proves to be a wise course of action.

Trickster

The Trickster finds the absurd in everything. No matter how grim life (or unlife) may become, the Trickster always uncovers a kernel of humor within it. Tricksters cannot abide sorrow or pain, and so they strive to lighten the spirits of those around them. Some Tricksters have even higher ideals, challenging static dogma

by exposing its failures in humorous ways. Comedians, satirists, and social critics are examples of Trickster Archetypes. Kindred Tricksters may call attention to the flaws in a leader's policy, they may be glib-tongued devil's advocates who question the Traditions or ritae of their Sect, or they may simply have an acute sense of the ironies of a world that makes vampiric predator and mortal prey almost indistinguishable physically.

— Regain a point of Willpower any time you manage to lift others' spirits, especially if you are able to assuage your own pain in the process.

Visionary

The Visionary is strong enough to look beyond the mundane and perceive the truly wondrous. Visionaries test accepted societal limits, and seek what few others have the courage to imagine. The Visionary rarely finds satisfaction in what society has to offer; she prefers to encourage society to offer what it *could* instead of what it *does*. Typically, society responds poorly to Visionaries, though it is they who are responsible for bringing about progress and change. Philosophers, inventors, and the most inspired artists often have Visionary Natures. Kindred Visionaries may want to plunge all mortals into vampiric thrall, they may adapt technologies that other, more static Kindred fear or overlook, or they may have a "better way" to coexist with other vampires than all of this Prince-and-Regent nonsense.

— Regain a point of Willpower each time you are able to convince others to have faith in your dreams and follow the course of action dictated by your vision. Note that gaining support is the key to a Visionary regaining Willpower. Success need not come to a Visionary, at least not with every step in changing the structures in question. Her greatest successes may indeed come after her Final Death.

Attributes

Every **Vampire** character has Attributes. They represent the basic potential of every person in the world, as well as most other living (and unliving) things. Most people have Attribute ratings between 1 (poor) and 3 (good), though exceptionally gifted individuals may have ratings of 4 (excellent) or even 5 (peak human capacity). Some vampire elders have higher ratings still, while other Kindred, like the hideously ugly Nosferatu, may have ratings supernaturally lower than the human minimum.

Specialties

Some characters are especially good at particular applications of their Traits. For example, a mechanic might be particularly good with muscle cars, a thief might excel at breaking and entering, or a brawler might be infamous as a dirty fighter. To represent this, characters with ratings of 4 or higher in Attributes or Abilities may choose specialties for those Traits.

A *specialty* is a particular subcategory of an Attribute or Ability — thus, a character with a Strength 5 might choose to be especially adept in deadlifting, while a character with Performance 4 might be renowned for her singing. Whenever a player makes a die roll involving an activity in which her character has specialized, she may count any die that comes up "10" as two successes instead of just one.

Physical

Physical Attributes define the condition of a character's body. They indicate how strong, agile, and resilient a character is. Physical Attributes should be taken as the primary category for an action-oriented character.

Vampires may use ingested blood to supernaturally augment their Physical (and *only* their Physical) Attributes. For more on this, see p. 268.

Strength

Strength is the raw, brute power of a character. It governs how much weight a character can lift, how much he can physically push, and how hard he can hit another character or object. The Strength Trait is added to a character's damage dice pool when he hits his opponent in hand-to-hand combat. It is also used when a character wishes to break, lift, or carry something, as well as when a character tries to jump a distance.

- • Poor: You can lift 40 lbs (about 20 kgs).
- •• Average: You can lift 100 lbs (close to 50 kgs).
- ••• Good: You can lift 250 lbs (a little over 100 kgs).
- •••• Exceptional: You can lift 400 lbs (close to 200 kgs).
- ••••• Outstanding: You can lift 650 lbs (nearly 300 kgs) and crush skulls like grapes.

Specialties: Never Lets Go, Powerful Arms, Reserves of Strength, Vicious

Dexterity

The Dexterity Attribute measures a character's general physical prowess. It encompasses the character's speed, agility, and overall quickness, as well as indicating the character's ability to manipulate objects with control and precision. Also included under Dexterity's heading are hand-eye coordination, reflexes, and bodily grace.

- • Poor: You are clumsy and awkward. Put that gun down before you hurt yourself.
- •• Average: You're no clod, but you're no ballerina, either.
- ••• Good: You possess some degree of athletic potential.
- •••• Exceptional: You could be an acrobat if you wished.
- ••••• Outstanding: Your movements are liquid and hypnotic — almost superhuman.

Specialties: Precise, Swift, Feline Grace, Lightning Reflexes

Stamina

The Stamina Trait reflects a character's health, toughness, and resilience. It indicates how long a character can exert herself and how much punishment she can withstand before suffering physical trauma. Stamina also includes a bit of psychic fortitude, indicating a character's grit and tenacity.

- • Poor: You bruise in a stiff wind.
- •• Average: You are moderately healthy and can take a punch or two.
- ••• Good: You are in good shape and rarely fall ill.
- •••• Exceptional: You can run — and perhaps win — any marathon you choose.
- ••••• Outstanding: Your constitution is truly herculean.

Specialties: Tireless, Determined, Tough as Nails, Vigorous

Social

Despite their often lonely fates, Kindred use human society like building blocks to advance their schemes. Social Attributes delineate a character's appearance, charm, and ability to interact with society. These Traits are paramount in determining a character's first impressions, personal dynamics, and relations with other individuals.

Charisma

Charisma is a character's ability to entice and please others through her personality. Charisma comes into question when a character tries to win another character's sympathies or encourage others to trust her. Charisma reflects the power of a character's charm and influence. It governs a character's ability to convince others to see her point of view. This Attribute doesn't necessarily indicate *how* the character is charismatic, whether she's a silver-tongued charmer or a grinning bully. (These should come across through roleplaying and specialties.)

- • Poor: There's something a little sketchy about you.
- •• Average: You are generally likable and have several friends.
- ••• Good: People trust you implicitly.
- •••• Exceptional: You have significant personal magnetism.
- ••••• Outstanding: Entire cultures could follow your lead.

Specialties: Graceful, Smooth Talker, Forceful, Urbane, Witty, Eloquent, Hustler

Manipulation

Manipulation measures a character's ability for self-expression in the interests of getting others to share her outlook or follow her whims. In short, it's getting others to do what she wants. Manipulation comes into



play when a character tries to influence or subtly guide another's behavior. Manipulation is used to trick, bluff, fast-talk, and railroad other characters. Whether or not the characters in question actually *like* the manipulator is irrelevant (this is why Manipulation differs from Charisma). After all, a skilled motivator can even employ the talents of people who hate her.

Manipulation is a dangerous affair, though it is way many Kindred primarily affect the world around them. Failed attempts at manipulation often earn the ire of the would-be patsy. Botching a Manipulation roll may add a name to the character's list of enemies.

People are manipulated every day, and typically ignore it. ("Would you run to the store for me?") If the fact is brought to their attention, however, many people become quite defensive. Manipulation can be the most powerful tool in a Kindred's repertoire, but failure can be disastrous. Characters with high Manipulation ratings are often distrusted by those around them.

- • Poor: A person of few (often ineffectual) words.
- •• Average: You can fool some of the people some of the time, just like anybody else.
- ••• Good: You never pay full price.
- •••• Exceptional: You could be a politician or cult leader.
- ••••• Outstanding: "Of course I'll tell the Prince *I* was the one who tried to stake him!"

Specialties: Persuasive, Seductive, Well-Reasoned, Misdirection, Conjurer of "Facts"

Appearance

The Appearance Attribute is a measure of how well a character makes a first impression. This may be conventional "attractiveness," but it can also be the effect of distinctive features, an exotic mien, an air of confidence, distinctive posture, a flair for dressing well — anything remarkable upon initial observation can contribute to a character's Appearance. Indeed, Appearance is the amalgamation of many descriptive personal characteristics. Appearance is subconscious and instinctual — it appeals to the lower levels of the psyche, so it shapes first impressions and the nature of memories thereafter.

This Trait is useful for getting potential vessels to heed your beckoning across a crowded dance floor. In

situations in which first impressions are paramount, or that involve people who view Appearance as very important, a character may have no more dice in a Social dice pool than her Appearance rating. Thus, it is critically important to either look your best or get to know people before you start trying to convince them to firebomb the Justicar's haven.

- • Poor: Your clothes stink, you turn people off right away, or you're just damned ugly.
- •• Average: You don't stand out in a crowd, for better or for worse.
- ••• Good: "Let me buy you a drink."
- •••• Exceptional: People go out of their way to make your acquaintance.
- ••••• Outstanding: People never forget you.

Specialties: Unconventional Looks, Photogenic, Fashion Sense, Unforgettable Face, Memorable Pose

Mental

Mental Attributes define a character's epistemic capacities, including such aspects as memory, intelligence, awareness of one's surroundings, and the ability to think, learn, and react.

Perception

Perception measures a character's ability to observe his environment. This may involve a conscious effort, such as searching an area, but it is more often intuitive, as the character's keen senses notice something out of the ordinary. Perception is a sensitivity to one's surroundings, and is seldom present in the cynical or jaded (who have seen it all before).

Perception is used to determine whether or not a character understands a given situation or detects an environmental stimulus. It can warn a character of ambushes, distinguish a clue from a pile of refuse, or uncover any other hidden or overlookable detail, whether physical or otherwise.

- • Poor: Perhaps you are absurdly self-absorbed, perhaps merely an airhead. In any event, *watch out for that car*!
- •• Average: The very subtle evades you, but you're aware of the bigger picture.
- ••• Good: You perceive moods, textures, and small changes in your environment.
- •••• Exceptional: Almost nothing escapes your notice.
- ••••• Outstanding: You instantly observe things almost imperceptible to human senses.

Specialties: Attentive, Insightful, Careful, Discerning, Tactical

Intelligence

The Intelligence Attribute refers to a character's grasp of facts and knowledge. It also governs a character's ability to reason, solve problems, and evaluate situations. Intelligence also includes critical thinking and flexibility of thought.

Intelligence does not include savvy, wisdom, or common sense, as those are properties of the character's personality, not Traits. Even the smartest character may be too foolish to realize the thugs who want to "borrow" her car keys are up to no good.

Characters with low Intelligence aren't necessarily stupid (though they might be); they are just uneducated or simple thinkers. Likewise, characters with high Intelligence aren't all Einsteins; they may be better at rote memorization or have particularly keen judgment.

- • Poor: Not the sharpest knife in the drawer.
- •• Average: Smart enough to realize you're normal.
- ••• Good: More enlightened than the masses.
- •••• Exceptional: You're not just bright, you're downright brilliant.
- ••••• Outstanding: Certified genius.

Specialties: Book Knowledge, Creative, Analytical, Problem Solver, Subject Authority

Wits

The Wits Trait measures the character's ability to think on her feet and react quickly to a certain situation. It also reflects a character's general cleverness. Characters with low Wits ratings are thick and mentally lethargic, or maybe gullible and unsophisticated. By contrast, characters with high Wits Traits almost always have a plan immediately and adapt to their surroundings with striking expedience. Characters with high Wits also manage to keep their cool in stressful situations.

•	Poor: Pull my finger.
••	Average: You know when to bet or fold in poker.
•••	Good: You are seldom surprised or left speechless.
••••	Exceptional: You're one of the people who make others think, "Ooh, I should have said..." the next day.
•••••	Outstanding: You think and respond almost more quickly than you can act.

Specialties: Getting the Jump on Others, Witty Bon Mots, Changes in Strategy, Ambushes

Abilities

As mentioned before, Abilities are the Traits used to describe what you know and what you've learned to do. Whereas Attributes represent your raw potential, Abilities represent the ways you've learned to use that potential. You may not need anything but brute strength to smash through a door — but if you're trying to use sheer muscle power to force an engine part into place without breaking anything, you'd better know something about mechanics. When rolling dice, you'll probably pair an Ability with an appropriate Attribute, in order to properly depict the combination of potential and know-how that's necessary for getting things done.

There are 30 Abilities: 10 Talents, 10 Skills, and 10 Knowledges. Each Ability typically covers a broad range of aptitudes. For certain Abilities (Expression, Crafts, Performance, Academics, Law, Science, and Technology), it is best to pick a specialty (p. 96), even if the character's rating in the Ability is not yet 4 or higher. Thus, a character with the Crafts Skill is generally versed in handiwork of all sorts, but might be particularly adept at auto mechanics.

Talents

Talents describe what you intuitively know, what you can do without coaching or instruction. The only way to improve your Talents is through direct experience — with the exception of a very few cases (such as studying a text on Jeet Kune Do to learn a single dot of Brawl), these things can't be learned from a book or an Internet video. If you try an action involving a Talent your character doesn't possess, there's no penalty to your basic Attribute dice pool. Talents are so intuitive that virtually everyone can execute them with some degree of capacity.

Alertness

This is your basic knack for noticing things that go on around you, even when you're not actively looking for them. Alertness describes the attention you pay to the outside world, whether otherwise occupied or not. This Talent is typically paired with Perception, and is best used when sensing physical stimuli (as opposed to moods or clues).

•	Novice: You're no mindless drone.
••	Practiced: Habitual eavesdropper
•••	Competent: You keep a sharp eye on your surroundings.
••••	Expert: Whether from paranoia or good sense, you are rarely caught off-guard.
•••••	Master: Your senses are on par with those of a wild animal.

Possessed by: Hunters, Bodyguards, Security Personnel, Journalists, Burglars

Specialties: Noises, Eavesdropping, Fine Details, Hidden Weapons, Crowds, Forests, Animals

Athletics

This Talent represents your basic athletic ability, as well as any training you might have had in sports or other rigorous activities. Athletics concerns all forms of running, jumping, throwing, swimming, sports, and the like. However, Athletics doesn't cover basic motor actions such as lifting weights, nor does it govern athletic feats covered by another Ability (such as Melee).

•	Novice: You had an active childhood.
••	Practiced: High-school athlete
•••	Competent: Talented lifelong amateur
••••	Expert: Professional athlete
•••••	Master: Olympic medalist

Possessed by: Athletes, Hobbyists, Park Rangers, Jocks, Kids

Specialties: Swimming, Rock Climbing, Acrobatics, Dancing, Parkour, specific sports

Awareness

Awareness is an instinctual reaction to the presence of the supernatural. It differs from Alertness (which measures sensitivity to mundane events) and Occult

(which covers actual knowledge about the supernatural). Usually, only supernatural creatures have access to this particular Talent, but some unique mortals have a sense that something is strange in the world (such as those with True Faith – see p. 372).

Characters with Awareness sometimes get hunches, chills, or sudden flashes of inspiration when they are near supernatural creatures, objects, or events. This insight is purely subconscious, and knowing that something's wrong doesn't mean that the character knows what it is. To get more specific information, the Kindred will need to use Occult or a particular power – Awareness only makes the vampire more receptive to the presence of the unusual.

A vampire can use Awareness deliberately if he suspects that something is supernatural, but more often the Storyteller can ask for an Awareness roll to determine whether a vampire notices a strange event that's not immediately visible.

- • Novice: Once in a while, you get the feeling that something isn't right.
- •• Practiced: You sometimes get strange vibes from a particular direction or vague area (like a building).
- ••• Competent: You can walk into a room and know that something unusual is going on within.
- •••• Expert: If you concentrate, you can sense whether a someone in a group of people or a collection of objects is supernatural.
- ••••• Master: You instinctually know if something or someone is mundane or supernatural.

Possessed by: Psychics, New Agers, Mystics, Paranormal Researchers

Specialties: Ghostly Activity, Mystical Objects, Someone's In My Head, Debunking

Brawl

The Brawl Talent represents how well you fight in tooth-and-nail situations. This Talent represents skill in unarmed combat, whether from formal martial arts training or simply from plenty of experience. Effective brawlers are coordinated, resistant to pain, quick, strong, and *mean*. The willingness to do whatever it takes to hurt your opponent wins plenty of fights.

- • Novice: You were picked on as a kid.
- •• Practiced: You've participated in the occasional barroom tussle.
- ••• Competent: You've fought regularly and routinely, and generally walked away in better shape than your opponents.
- •••• Expert: You could be a serious contender on the MMA circuit.
- ••••• Master: Somewhere on the Internet, there's a video of you taking down three men in four seconds.

Possessed by: Military, Police, Roughnecks, Thugs

Specialties: Dirty Fighting, Strikes, Throws, Submission Holds, specific martial arts or combat styles

Empathy

You understand the emotions of others, and can sympathize with, feign sympathy for, or play on such emotions as you see fit. You are adept at discerning motive, and might be able to discern when someone's lying to you. However, you may be so in tune with other people's feelings that your own emotions are affected.

- • Novice: You lend the occasional shoulder to cry on.
- •• Practiced: You can sometimes literally feel someone else's suffering.
- ••• Competent: You have a keen insight into other people's motivations.
- •••• Expert: It's almost impossible to lie to you.
- ••••• Master: The human soul conceals no mysteries from you.

Possessed by: Social Workers, Parents, Actors, Psychologists, Detectives, Seducers, Mediums, Best Friends

Specialties: Emotions, Insight, Motives, Gaining Trust

Expression

This is your ability to get your point across clearly, whether through conversation, poetry, or even in 140 characters or fewer. Characters with high Expression can phrase their opinions or beliefs in a manner that cannot be ignored (even if their opinions are misinformed or worthless). They might also be talented actors, skilled at conveying moods or communicating emotion with every gesture. Additionally, this Talent



represents your ability for poetry, creative writing, or other literary art forms. For many elders, Expression is the subtle art of crafting a satirical epigram capable of socially crippling one's longtime rival. For younger Kindred, Expression may well be the key to convincing thirty stake-wielding Anarchs to converge on the Sheriff's private hunting ground with the right text message. You can choose a specialty in Expression, even at less than 4 dots.

- • Novice: Your talent has matured past crude poetry on notebook paper.
- •• Practiced: You could lead a college debate team.
- ••• Competent: You could be a successful writer.
- •••• Expert: Your work is Pulitzer material.
- ••••• Master: Steve Jobs asks you for input on his next mobile device.

Possessed by: Actors, Writers, Poets, Politicians, Journalists, Web Personalities, Rabble-Rousers

Specialties: Acting, Poetry, Fiction, Impromptu, Conversation, Social Media

Intimidation

Intimidation takes many forms, from outright threats and physical violence to mere force of personality. It needn't be course or callous, and a well-placed intimidating word under the right circumstances might well be called "diplomacy" in certain circles. You know the right method for each occasion, and can be very… persuasive.

- • Novice: Shady teenager
- •• Practiced: Skinhead thug
- ••• Competent: Drill sergeant
- •••• Expert: Your air of authority cows casual passersby.
- ••••• Master: You can frighten off vicious animals.

Possessed by: Bullies, Anonymous, Military Officers, Bouncers, Gangsters, Sabbat

Specialties: Veiled Threats, Pulling Rank, Physical Coercion, Blackmail, Internet

Leadership

You are an example to others and can inspire them to do what you want. Leadership has less to do with manipulating people's desires than it does with presenting

yourself as the sort of person they want to follow. Anyone can lead a group *into* some sort of conflict; a good leader can get them back out intact. This Talent is usually paired with Charisma rather than Manipulation.

- • Novice: Captain of your Little League team
- •• Practiced: Student body president
- ••• Competent: An effective CEO
- •••• Expert: Presidential material
- ••••• Master: You could be beloved dictator of a nation.

Possessed by: Politicians, Princes, Managers, Executives, Military Officers, Police

Specialties: Oratory, Compelling, Friendly, Open, Noble, Military, Multimedia

Streetwise

The streets can provide a lot of information or money to those who know the language. Streetwise allows you to blend in unobtrusively with the local scene, pick up gossip, understand slang, or even dabble in criminal doings.

- • Novice: You know who's holding.
- •• Practiced: You're accorded respect on the street.
- ••• Competent: You could head your own gang.
- •••• Expert: You have little to fear in even the worst neighborhoods.
- ••••• Master: If you haven't heard it, it hasn't been said.

Possessed by: Criminals, Homeless People, Reporters, Clubgoers, Savvy Detectives, Neonates

Specialties: Fencing, Illegal Drugs, Illegal Weapons, Free Wifi, Gangs, Being On the Guest List, Local Slang

Subterfuge

You know how to conceal your own motives and project what you wish. Furthermore, if you can root out other people's motives, you can then use those motives against them. This Talent defines your talent for intrigue, secrets, and double-dealing. Mastery of Subterfuge can make you the ultimate seducer or a brilliant spy.

- • Novice: You tell the occasional white lie.
- •• Practiced: Vampire
- ••• Competent: Criminal lawyer
- •••• Expert: Deep-cover agent
- ••••• Master: You're the very last person anyone would suspect.

Possessed by: Politicians, Lawyers, Vampires, Teenagers, Con Men, Pick-up Artists

Specialties: Seduction, Impeccable Lies, Feigning Mortality, the Long Con

Hobby Talent

This category encompasses anything that the Storyteller deems to be mainly self-taught and is usually (though not always) more active than intellectual. Storytellers should first examine the list of existing Talents to determine if a particular activity might fall under one of those (for example, Swimming and Climbing would be specialties of Athletics).

- • Novice: You've dabbled.
- •• Practiced: You've got a good grasp of your hobby's basics.
- ••• Competent: Other practitioners regard you as fairly skilled and competent.
- •••• Expert: You are familiar with the subtle nuances and applications of your Talent.
- ••••• Master: You could write a book on what you do. Perhaps you already have.

Suggested Hobby Talents: Carousing, Diplomacy, Fortune Telling, Negotiation, Scrounging

Skills

Skills are Abilities learned through training, apprenticeships, or other instruction. If you try to perform an action involving a Skill in which you have no rating, your difficulty is increased by one. An unskilled worker just isn't as effective as someone who might have lower Attributes but a better understanding of what the procedure entails.

Animal Ken

You can understand animals' behavior patterns. This Skill allows you to predict how an animal might react in a given situation, train a domesticated creature, or even try to calm or enrage animals.

- • Novice: You can get a domesticated horse to let you pet it.
- •• Practiced: You can housebreak a puppy.
- ••• Competent: You could train a seeing-eye dog.
- •••• Expert: Circus trainer
- ••••• Master: You can tame wild beasts without benefit of supernatural powers.

Possessed by: Farmers, Animal Trainers, Zookeepers, Veterinarians, Pet Owners, Domitors

Specialties: Dogs, Attack Training, Big Cats, Horses, Farm Animals, Falconry

Crafts

This Skill covers your ability to make or fix things with your hands. Crafts allows you to work in fields such as carpentry, leatherworking, weaving, or even mechanical expertise such as car repair. You can even create lasting works of art with this Skill, depending on the number of successes you achieve. You must always choose a specialization in Crafts, even though you retain some skill in multiple fields.

- • Novice: High school wood shop
- •• Practiced: You're starting to develop your own style.
- ••• Competent: You could start your own shop.
- •••• Expert: You wrote instruction manuals on your field of specialization.
- ••••• Master: Your craftsmanship and insight is virtually without peer.

Possessed by: Mechanics, Artisans, Artists, Designers, Inventors, Back-to-the-Land Types

Specialties: Pottery, Sewing, Home Repair, Carpentry, Appraisal, Carburetors

Drive

You can drive a car, and maybe other vehicles as well. This Skill does not automatically entail familiarity with complicated vehicles such as tanks or 18-wheelers, and difficulties may vary depending on your experience with individual automobiles. After all, helming a station wagon doesn't prepare you for double-clutching a Maserati at 100 miles per hour.

- • Novice: You know how to work an automatic transmission.
- •• Practiced: You can drive a stick shift.
- ••• Competent: Professional trucker
- •••• Expert: NASCAR daredevil or tank pilot
- ••••• Master: Whether it's a Fiat or a Ferrari, you can make it sing.

Possessed by: Cabbies, Truckers, Race Car Drivers, Automotive Show Hosts, Rebels

Specialties: Off-Road, Motorcycles, High Speed, Heavy Traffic, Avoiding Traffic Cops

Etiquette

You understand the nuances of proper behavior, in both mortal society and Kindred culture. In many cases, knowing how to broach a topic is as important as the discussion itself, and a person with poor etiquette will never have an opportunity to make herself heard because she doesn't know when or how to interject. This Skill is used during meetings, haggling, seduction, dancing, dinner etiquette, and all forms of diplomacy.

- • Novice: You know when to keep your mouth shut.
- •• Practiced: You've been to a black-tie event or two.
- ••• Competent: You know your way around even obscure silverware.
- •••• Expert: Her Majesty would consider you charming.
- ••••• Master: If the right people came to dinner, you could end wars — or start them.

Possessed by: Diplomats, Travelers, High Society, Executives, Kindred of Status

Specialties: At Elysium, Business, High Society, Sabbat Protocol

Firearms

Executing a mortal with a sword starts investigations. Clawing someone to ribbons tears the edges of the Masquerade. So Cainites adapt, and many have devoted their energies to learning how to kill with guns. This Skill represents familiarity with a range of firearms, from holdout pistols to heavy machine guns. Further, someone skilled in Firearms can clean, repair, recognize, and accurately fire most forms of small arms. This Skill is also used to unjam guns (Wits + Firearms).

- • Novice: You had a BB gun as a kid.
- •• Practiced: You while away the occasional hour at the gun club.
- ••• Competent: You've survived a firefight or two.
- •••• Expert: You could pick off people for a living.
- ••••• Master: You've been practicing since the debut of the Winchester.

Possessed by: Anarchs, Neonates, Policemen, Military Personnel, Survivalists, Hunters

Specialties: Fast-Draw, Gunsmithing, Pistols, Marksmanship, Revolvers, Shotguns

Larceny

This Skill entails familiarity with the tools and techniques for the sorts of physical manipulation typically associated with criminal activity. Picking locks, manual forgery, safecracking, simple hotwiring, various forms of breaking and entering, and even sleight-of-hand all fall under the auspices of Larceny. Larceny is useful not only for theft, but also for setting up "the unbeatable system" or deducing where a thief broke in. This skill does not confer any aptitude with advanced security or anti-crime technologies such as video surveillance or alarm systems — those are covered by the Technology Knowledge.

- • Novice: You can pick a simple lock.
- •• Practiced: You could run a shell game hustle on the corner.
- ••• Competent: You can open a standard locked window from the outside.
- •••• Expert: You can "retool" a passport or ID card.
- ••••• Master: You could get into (or out of…) a multinational bank's central vault.

Possessed by: Burglars, Security Consultants, Policemen, Car Thieves, Street Magicians

Specialties: Safecracking, Misdirection, Lockpicking, Hotwiring, Pickpocketing

Melee

As the Kindred maxim runs, "Guns mean nothing to a lifeless heart". A blade is often worth far more, as is the skill to use it properly. Melee covers your ability to use hand-to-hand weapons of all forms, from swords and clubs to esoteric martial-arts paraphernalia such as sai or nunchaku. And, of course, there is always the utility of the wooden stake.…

- • Novice: You know the right way to hold a knife.
- •• Practiced: You may have been in the occasional street fight.
- ••• Competent: You could make a college fencing team.
- •••• Expert: You could keep order in the Prince's court.
- ••••• Master: Your enemies would rather face a SWAT team than your blade.

Possessed by: Assassins, Gang Members, Martial Artists, Police, Duelists

Specialties: Knives, Swords, Improvised Weaponry, Riposte, Disarms

Performance

The Performance Skill governs your ability to perform artistic endeavors such as singing, dancing, acting, or playing a musical instrument. You are almost certainly specialized in one field, although true virtuosos may be talented in many forms of performance. This Skill represents not only technical know-how, but the ability to work an audience and enrapture them with your show. As with Crafts, you must choose a specialty, even though this Skill also imparts a general sense for watching and responding to your audience's mood regardless of medium.

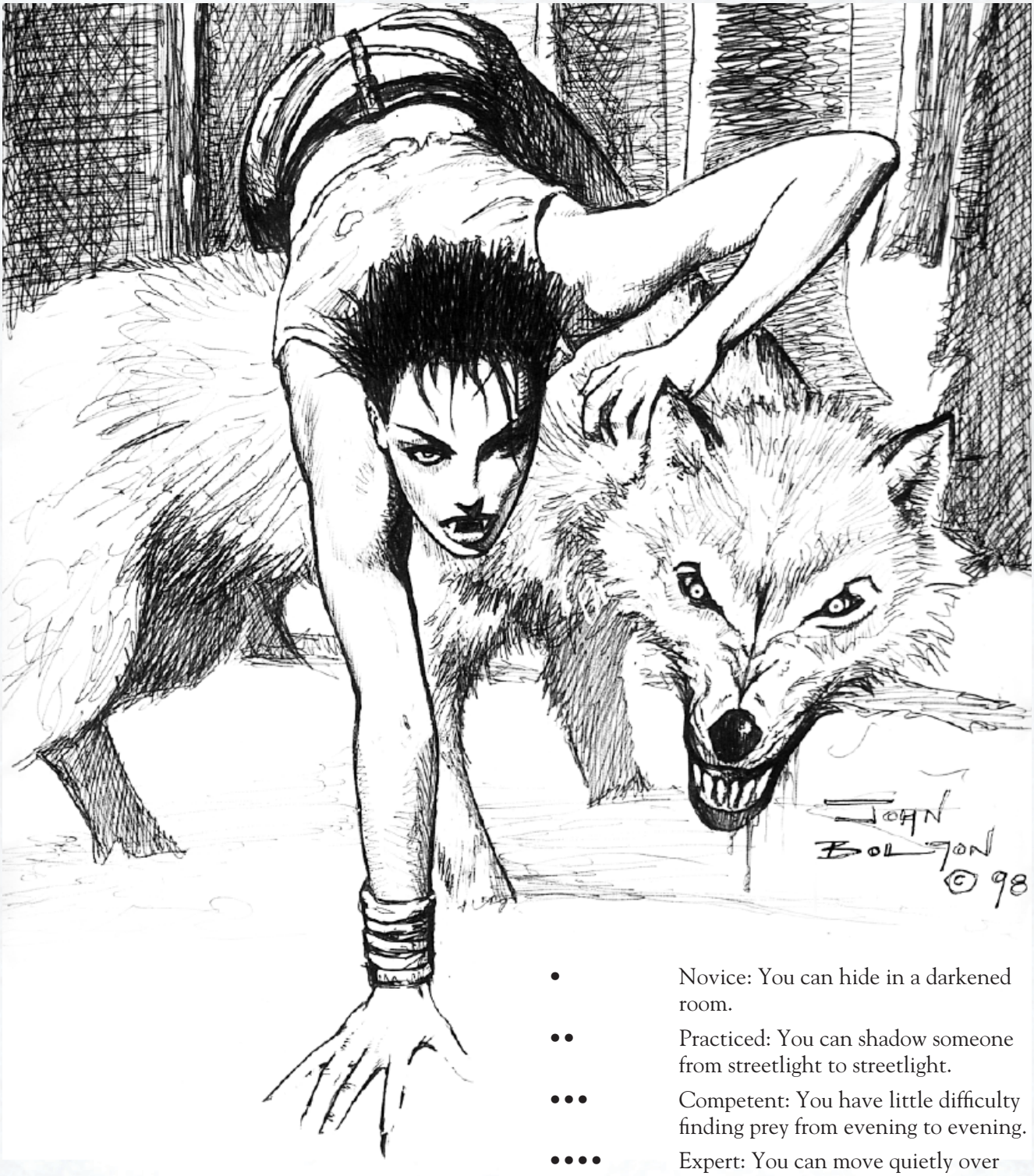
- • Novice: You could sing in the church choir.
- •• Practiced: Your Internet videos have over a hundred thousand views.
- ••• Competent: You almost always have a gig booked.
- •••• Expert: You have the talent to be a national sensation.
- ••••• Master: You are a virtuoso without peer.

Possessed by: Musicians, College Students, Actors, Ballerinas, Mimes

Specialties: Dancing, Singing, Rock and Roll, Acting, Guitar Solos, Drunken Karaoke

Stealth

This Skill is the ability to avoid being detected, whether you're hiding or moving at the time. Stealth is



often tested against someone else's Perception + Alertness. This Ability is, for obvious reasons, highly useful in stalking prey. In many cases, Stealth is also used to conceal items, whether on one's person or somewhere in the environment.

- • Novice: You can hide in a darkened room.
- •• Practiced: You can shadow someone from streetlight to streetlight.
- ••• Competent: You have little difficulty finding prey from evening to evening.
- •••• Expert: You can move quietly over dry leaves.
- ••••• Master: Nosferatu elder

Possessed by: Burglars, Assassins, Kindred, Spies, Reporters, Commandos

Specialties: Hiding, Silent Movement, Shadowing, Crowds

Survival

Although vampires have little to fear from starvation and exposure, the wilderness can still be dangerous to a Cainite. This Skill allows you to find shelter, navigate your way to civilization, track prey, establish a makeshift haven, and possibly even avoid supernatural threats like werewolves that also prowl the World of Darkness. Note that Survival need not be used only in areas considered "wilderness." There's plenty of Survival that goes into getting by in various parts of modern cities.

- • Novice: You can survive a night spent outside.
- •• Practiced: You've "roughed it" on a regular basis.
- ••• Competent: You can separate poison or spoilage from edible forage.
- •••• Expert: You could live for months in the challenging environment of your choice.
- ••••• Master: You could get dropped naked into the Andes and do all right for yourself.

Possessed by: Scouts, Soldiers, Outdoors Enthusiasts, Survivalists, Hunters

Specialties: Tracking, Woodlands, Jungle, Street Life, Hunting, Urban Exploration

Professional Skill

This category encompasses anything that the Storyteller deems to be a taught Ability and is primarily active in application. Storytellers should first examine the list of existing Skills to determine if a particular task might fall under one of those (e.g. Tracking would be a specialty of Survival).

- • Novice: You've apprenticed.
- •• Practiced: You have a handle on the basics.
- ••• Competent: You could make a living, although not a fortune, doing what you do.
- •••• Expert: You know the more esoteric uses of your Skill, and are rarely at a loss.
- ••••• Master: You are an acknowledged authority in your chosen field of endeavor.

Suggested Professional Skills: Blacksmith, Cooking, Fast-Draw, Forgery, Game Playing, Gunsmith, Navigation, Torture

Knowledges

Knowledges involve the application of the mind, not the body. Consequently, Knowledge Abilities are most often paired with Mental Traits. (It's possible to roll Charisma + Academics, or even Stamina + Medicine, but such things are pretty rare.) The following descriptions speak of Knowledge levels in collegiate terms, although formal schooling is just one way to improve a Knowledge. Indeed, Knowledges can be self-taught, and the World of Darkness is home to any number of autodidacts.

If you don't have any dots in a Knowledge, you cannot even attempt a roll involving it unless the Storyteller gives explicit permission (such as where common trivia is concerned). If you don't know Spanish, you can't try holding a conversation *en español* on your wits alone.

Academics

This catchall Knowledge covers the character's erudition in the humanities: literature, history, art, philosophy, and other "liberal" arts and sciences. A character with dots in Academics is generally well rounded in these fields, and at high levels may be considered an expert in one or more areas of study. Not only can this Knowledge impress at salons and other Elysium functions, but it can also offer valuable clues to certain past — and future — movements in the Jyhad. If you like, you can choose a specialty for Academics even at less than 4 dots.

- • Student: You're aware that 1066 isn't a Beverly Hills area code.
- •• College: You can quote from the classics, identify major cultural movements, and expound on the difference between Ming and Moghul.
- ••• Masters: You could get a paper published in a scholarly journal.
- •••• Doctorate: Professor emeritus
- ••••• Scholar: Scholars worldwide acknowledge you as one of the foremost experts of your time.

Possessed by: Professors, Literati, Topical Bloggers, Elders

Specialties: Poststructuralism, Impressionist Painting, Imperial Rome, Color Theory, Linguistics

Computer

This Knowledge represents the ability to operate and program computers, including mobile devices. Most Computer use also imparts a degree of Internet awareness (if not savvy).

- • Student: You can navigate touchscreen and traditional point-and-click GUIs.
- •• College: You know your way around various applications and the Internet.
- ••• Masters: You know what to do with a text command prompt.
- •••• Doctorate: You can make a very comfortable living as a consultant.
- ••••• Scholar: You have all the SDKs and comprehend data structures for a stunning variety of programming languages.

Possessed by: Hackers, Office Workers, Programmers, Data Processors, Students

Specialties: "The YouTubes," Computer Languages, Internet, Database Administration, HCI, Viruses, specific devices and programs

Finance

You know the ins and outs of commerce, from evaluating an item's relative worth to keeping up with currency exchange rates. This Knowledge can be invaluable when brokering items, running numbers, or playing the stock market. Sufficiently high levels in Finance allow you to raise your standards of living to a very comfortable level.

- • Student: You've taken a few business classes.
- •• College: You have some practical experience and can keep your books fairly neat.
- ••• Masters: You'd make a fine stockbroker.
- •••• Doctorate: Corporations follow your financial lead.
- ••••• Scholar: You could turn a $20 bill into a fortune.

Possessed by: Executives, Upper Class, Stockbrokers, Accountants, Fences, Drug Dealers, Smugglers

Specialties: Stock Market, Laundering, Appraisal, Foreign Currencies, Accounting, Fencing, Corporations, Federal Bailouts

Investigation

You've learned to notice details others might overlook, and might make an admirable detective. This Knowledge represents not only a good eye for detail, but also an ability to do research and follow leads. Such research may include Internet searches or more specific research techniques like hitting the law books and periodicals archives at the library.

- • Student: You can parse a broad Web search for clues.
- •• College: Police officer
- ••• Masters: Private detective
- •••• Doctorate: Federal agent
- ••••• Scholar: Sherlock Holmes

Possessed by: Detectives, Mystery Buffs, Policemen, Stalkers

Specialties: Forensics, Shadowing, Search, Discolorations, Database Research

Law

The Law Knowledge represents a knowledge of both legal statutes and proper procedures for enforcing them. Law can be useful for filing suits, avoiding lawsuits, or getting out of jail. What's more, the Kindred keep their own laws, and more than one vampire has saved his own unlife by deftly exploiting a loophole in one of the Traditions. The Law Knowledge has any number of specialties, and a player may choose one for her character when she takes this Ability, representing both her field of experience and a general sense for how the legal system (especially in her locality) functions, though this is not mandatory.

- • Student: You've paid a traffic ticket and know whether to plead guilty, not guilty, or *nolo contendere* next time.
- •• College: You're either studying for or just passed the bar exam.
- ••• Masters: You can make a living of the practice, and probably do.
- •••• Doctorate: If you're not partner yet, you will be soon.
- ••••• Scholar: You could find the loopholes in the Devil's contracts.

Possessed by: Lawyers, Police, Judges, Detectives, Legislators

Specialties: Criminal, Suits, Courtroom Protocol, Contracts, Police Procedure, the Traditions, the Code of Milan

Medicine

You have an understanding of how the human body — and to a lesser extent the vampiric body — works. This Ability covers knowledge of medicines, ailments, first-aid procedures, and diagnosis or treatment of disease. Medicine is of great use to those Kindred with an interest in repairing, damaging, or reworking the human body.

- • Student: You've taken a CPR course.
- •• College: Premed or paramedic
- ••• Masters: General practitioner
- •••• Doctorate: You can perform transplants.
- ••••• Scholar: You are respected by the world's medical community as a pioneer.

Possessed by: Med Students, Doctors, Lifeguards, Parents, Paramedics, Tzimisce

Specialties: Organ Transplants, Emergency Care, Poison Treatments, Pathology, Pharmaceuticals, the Kindred Condition

Occult

You are knowledgeable in occult areas such as mysticism, curses, magic, folklore, and particularly vampire lore. Unlike most other Knowledges, Occult does not imply a command of hard facts. Much of what you know may well be rumor, myth, speculation, or hearsay. However, the secrets to be learned in this field are worth centuries of sifting legend from fact. High levels of Occult imply a deep understanding of vampire lore, as well as a good grounding in other aspects of the occult. At the very least, you can discern what is patently false.

- • Student: You've got a blog about the eerie and the disturbing.
- •• College: There seems to be some unsettling truth to some of the rumors you've heard.
- ••• Masters: You've heard a lot and actually seen a little for yourself.
- •••• Doctorate: You can recognize blatantly false sources and make educated guesses about the rest.
- ••••• Scholar: You know most of the basic truths about the hidden world.

Possessed by: Occultists, The Superstitious, New Agers, Tremere

Specialties: Kindred Lore, Rituals, Infernalism, Witches, Noddist Lore

Politics

You are familiar with the politics of the moment, including the people in charge and how they got there. This Knowledge can aid you in dealing with or influencing mortal politicians, or even offer some insight into the local Cainite power structure. The Politics Knowledge includes the ability to practically navigate various bureaucracies, as it assumes that certain organizational structures and relationship currencies are universal.

- • Student: Activist; you can pay a speeding ticket online.
- •• College: Political science major; you know how to file a request for information.
- ••• Masters: Campaign manager or talk-radio host; the clerk will help you navigate the forms you need to complete and tell you who needs the duplicates.
- •••• Doctorate: Senator; "We're not supposed to show this to anyone without press credentials, so don't quote me."
- ••••• Scholar: You could choose the next President of the United States. "Sure, here are the keys to the file morgue. Turn off the light when you leave."

Possessed by: Activists, Politicians, Lawyers, vampires of all sorts

Specialties: City, State, Federal, Bureaucracy, Dogma, Radical, Camarilla

Science

You have at least a basic understanding of most of the physical sciences, such as chemistry, biology, physics, and geology. This Knowledge can be put to all forms of practical use. In most cases, a player should select a

specialty to reflect a focus for her character's scientific studies, but this isn't strictly necessary.

- • Student: You know most of the high-school basics.
- •• College: You're familiar with the major theories.
- ••• Masters: You could teach high-school science.
- •••• Doctorate: You're fully capable of advancing the knowledge in your field.
- ••••• Scholar: Your Nobel Prize is waiting for you.

Possessed by: Scientists, Students, Researchers, Teachers, Engineers, Technicians, Pilots

Specialties: Chemistry, Biology, Geology, Physics, Astronomy

Technology

The Technology Knowledge represents a broad acumen with electronics, computer hardware, and devices more elaborate than "machines," which fall under the Crafts Skill. If it has a processor, a transistor, or an integrated circuit — if it's electronic rather than electrical — manipulating it uses the Technology Knowledge. This is the wide-ranging Ability used to build one's own computer, install (or subvert) a security system, repair a mobile phone, or kitbash a shortwave radio. You must always choose a specialization in Technology, even though you possess some skill in multiple fields.

- • Student: You can perform simple modifications or repairs.
- •• College: You could make your living in assembly or repair.
- ••• Masters: You can design new technologies from a set of objective requirements.
- •••• Doctorate: For you, it's not, "Can this be done?" but "*How* can this be done?"
- ••••• Scholar: A visionary in the field; you shape how people interact with their world through devices.

Possessed by: Engineers, Scientists, Defense Contractors, the Cable Guy

Specialties: Telecom, Computers, Security, Communications, Improvised Solutions, Industrial Espionage

Expert Knowledge

Like Hobby Talent and Professional Skill, this is a catchall category. An Expert Knowledge is anything that is primarily intellectual or mental in nature and must be studied. Storytellers should first examine the list of existing Knowledges to determine if a particular field of expertise might fall under one of those (e.g. Forensics would be a specialty of Investigation).

- • Student: You've taken an undergraduate course or read a few books.
- •• College: You may have minored in the field.
- ••• Masters: You might hold a degree and are well versed in what's been written.
- •••• Doctorate: You are well-versed in what hasn't been written.
- ••••• Scholar: You know the hidden mysteries of your field and are a veritable font of information.

Suggested Expert Knowledges: Archaeology, Game Theory, Military Science, Psychology

Backgrounds

Backgrounds describe advantages of relationship, circumstance, and opportunity: material possessions, social networks, and the like. Backgrounds are external, not internal, Traits, and you should always rationalize how you came to possess them, as well as what they represent. Who are your contacts? Why do your allies support you? Where did you meet your retainers? What investments do you possess that yield your four dots in Resources? If you've put enough detail into your character concept, selecting appropriate Backgrounds should be easy.

Although it's uncommon to make rolls involving Background Traits, your Storyteller might have you do so to see if you can obtain information, goods, or favors. For example, you might have to roll Wits + Resources to keep your stock portfolio healthy, or Manipulation + Contacts to wheedle that extra favor from your smuggler "associate."

Certain Backgrounds may be "pooled" among characters in a coterie. See "Pooling Backgrounds" on p. 118 for more information.

Allies

Allies are mortals who support and help you — family, friends, or even a mortal organization that owes you some loyalty. Although allies aid you willingly, without coaxing or coercion, they are not always available to offer assistance; they have their own concerns and can do only so much for the sake of your relationship. However, they might have some useful Background Traits of their own, and could provide you with indirect access to their contacts, influence, or resources.

Allies are typically persons of influence and power in your home city. They can be of almost any sort, depending on what your Storyteller will allow. You may have friends in the precinct morgue, at a prominent blog, among the high society of local celebrities, or at a construction site. Your Allies might be a clan of nomads who move their mobile home camp around the area, or they might be a family of generations of police officers. You may even count the mayor himself among your friends, depending on how many dots you spend on this Trait. Your Allies are generally trustworthy (though they probably don't know that you're a vampire, or even that vampires exist). However, nothing comes for free. If you wind up drawing favors from your friend in the *Cosa Nostra*, he'll probably ask you to do him a favor in kind in the future. This often leads to the beginning of a story….

Allies may be pooled among a coterie of characters.

- • One ally of moderate influence and power
- •• Two allies, both of moderate power
- ••• Three allies, one of whom is quite influential
- •••• Four allies, one of whom is very influential
- ••••• Five allies, one of whom is extremely influential

Alternate Identity

You maintain an alternate identity, complete with papers, birth certificates, or any other documentation you desire. Only a few may know your real name or identity. Your alternate persona may be highly involved in organized crime, a member of the opposite Sect, a con artist who uses alternate identities for her game, or you may simply gather information about the enemy. Indeed, some vampires may know you as one individual while others believe you to be someone else entirely.

- • You are new at this identity game. Sometimes you slip and forget your other persona.
- •• You are well grounded in your alternate identity. You are convincing enough to play the part of a doctor, lawyer, funeral salesman, drug-smuggler, or a capable spy.
- ••• You have a fair reputation as your alternate persona and get name-recognition in the area where you have infiltrated.
- •••• Your alternate identity has respect and trust within your area of infiltration.
- ••••• You command respect in your area of infiltration, and you may even have accumulated a bit of influence. You have the trust (or at least the recognition) of many powerful individuals within your area.

Black Hand Membership

This Background is for Sabbat characters only.

You are a member of the feared Black Hand, the body of soldiers and assassins that serves the Sabbat fervently. Having this Background indicates that you are a full-fledged member of the organization, and you have all the responsibilities and benefits that accompany membership.

You may call upon members of the Black Hand to aid you, should you ever need it. Of course, this ability is a two-way street, and other Hand members may call upon you to aid them. Thus, you may find yourself assigned to perform assassinations, lend martial aid, or even further the political ends of the Hand as a diplomat or spy. You may also be required to attend crusades that take you away from your pack. All members of the Black Hand must heed the call of another Hand member, especially the superiors of the faction.

Being a member of the Black Hand is a prestigious matter, and other members of the Sabbat respect the organization. When dealing with other Sabbat, should you choose to reveal your affiliation with the Hand, you may add your rating in this Background to any Social dice pools, even after Status or other Abilities

have been taken into account. Most Hand members, however, choose not to reveal their allegiance. The Black Hand is also remarkably adept at hunting down Sabbat who claim membership in the Sect but do not truly belong — liars, beware.

- • You are a grunt; you may call upon one Black Hand member once per story.
- •• You are known and respected in the Black Hand; you may call upon two Black Hand members once per story.
- ••• You are held in the Black Hand's regard; you may call upon five Black Hand members once per story.
- •••• You are a hero among members of the Black Hand; you may call upon seven Black Hand members twice per story (but you'd better have just cause — if it seems you're becoming soft, you may lose points in this Background). You may also lead large numbers of Hand members into action should it ever become necessary.
- ••••• You are part of Black Hand legend; you may call upon 12 Black Hand members twice per story (but see the preceding caution). You may also lead large numbers of Hand members into action should it ever become necessary. The Seraphim may even seek your counsel on matters of import.

Contacts

You know people all over the city. When you start making phone calls around your network, the amount of information you can dig up is impressive. Rather than friends you can rely on to help you, like Allies, Contacts are largely people whom you can bribe, manipulate, or coerce into offering information. You also have a few major Contacts — associates who can give you accurate information in their fields of expertise. You should describe each major contact in some detail before the game begins.

In addition to your major contacts, you also have a number of minor contacts spread throughout the city. Your major contact might be in the district attorney's office, while your minor contacts might include beat cops, DMV clerks, club bouncers, or members of an online social network. You don't need to detail these various "passing acquaintances" before play. Instead, to successfully get in touch with a minor contact, you should roll your Contacts rating (difficulty 7). You can reach one minor contact for each success. Of course, you still have to convince them to give you the information you need, assuming they can get it.

Contacts may be pooled within the characters' coterie.

- • One major contact
- •• Two major contacts
- ••• Three major contacts
- •••• Four major contacts
- ••••• Five major contacts

Domain

Domain is physical territory (usually within the chronicle's central city) to which your character controls access for the purpose of feeding. Some Kindred refer to their domain as hunting grounds, and most jealously guard their domains, even invoking the Tradition of the same name to protect their claims. As part of this Background, the character's claim to the domain is recognized by the Prince or some other Kindred authority in the city where it is located.

The Kindred who claims the domain can't keep the living inhabitants from going about their business, nor does she exercise any direct influence over them, but she can keep watch herself and mind their comings and goings. She can also have Allies or Retainers specifically look for unfamiliar vampires and alert her when they find some.

Domain refers specifically to the geography (in most cases a neighborhood or street) and properties on it, as opposed to the people who may dwell there (which is the emphasis of Herd). Domain plays an important part in Kindred society — vampires who lack significant Domain seldom earn respect — but it isn't an automatic entitlement to status among the Damned.

You may designate one or more dots in Domain to increase the security of your character's territory rather than its size. Each dot so assigned to security provides a +1 difficulty penalty to efforts to intrude into the domain by anyone your character hasn't specifically al-

lowed in, and a -1 difficulty bonus to efforts by your character to identify and track intruders in the domain. A Domain of one dot's size and two dots' security, for instance, is small but quite resistant to intrusion, as opposed to a Domain rating of three dots' size with no extraordinary security.

Each level of Domain reduces the difficulty of hunting checks by one for your character and those whom the character allows in. It also adds to your starting (not maximum) blood pool. If you use the domain security option, each dot of domain security raises the difficulty of hunting checks by one for uninvited vampires. See p. 259 for more information on hunting.

Domain (both size and security) can be used with pooled Background points.

- • A single small building, such as a single-family home or a social establishment — enough for a basic haven.
- •• A church, factory, warehouse, mid-rise, or other large structure — a location with ready but easily controllable access to the outside world.
- ••• A high-rise, city block, or an important intersection — a location or area that offers areas for concealment as well as controlled access.
- •••• A sewer subsection, a network of service tunnels, the enclave of homes on a hill overlooking the city — a place with inherently protective features, such as an isolated mountain road, bridge-only access, or vigilant private security force.
- ••••• An entire neighborhood, an ethnic subdivision like "Chinatown" or "Little Italy," or a whole suburb.

As noted previously, characters in a coterie can share their domain resources for better results. Six to eight dots secure all of a small town or a distinct city region as a domain. Ten to 15 dots secure an important but not geographically huge city sector, such as "the docks," or "Highland Park." A large city itself might be a hundred-plus Domain points, as with Atlanta, Dallas, Geneva, or Baghdad. A city such as New York, London, Paris, Rome, Sao Paolo, or Shanghai would require many hundreds of Domain points.



Fame

You enjoy widespread recognition in mortal society, perhaps as an entertainer, writer, or athlete. People may enjoy just being seen with you. This gives you all manner of privileges when moving in mortal society, but can also attract an unwanted amount of attention now that you're no longer alive. The greatest weapon fame has to offer is the ability to sway public opinion — as modern media constantly proves. Fame isn't always tied to entertainment: A heinous criminal in a high-profile trial probably has a certain amount of fame, as do a lawmaker and a scientist who has made a popularized discovery.

This Background is obviously a mixed blessing. You can certainly enjoy the privileges of your prestige — getting the best seats, being invited to events you'd otherwise miss, getting appointments with the elite — but you're sometimes recognized when you'd rather not be. However, your enemies can't just make you disappear without causing an undue stir, and you find it much easier to hunt in populated areas as people flock to you (reduce the difficulties of hunting rolls by one for each dot in Fame). Additionally, your Storyteller might permit you to reduce difficulties of certain Social rolls against particularly star-struck or impressionable people.

- • You're known to a select subculture — local club-goers, industry bloggers, or the Park Avenue set, for instance.
- •• Random people start to recognize your face; you're a minor celebrity such as a small-time criminal or a local news anchor.
- ••• You have greater renown; perhaps you're a senator or an entertainer who regularly gets hundreds of thousands of YouTube hits.
- •••• A full-blown celebrity; your name is often recognized by the average person on the street.
- ••••• You're a household word. People name their children after you.

Generation

This Background represents your Generation: the purity of your blood, and your proximity to the First Vampire. A high Generation rating may represent a powerful sire or a decidedly dangerous taste for diablerie. If you don't take any dots in this Trait, you begin play as a Thirteenth Generation vampire. See p. 270 for further information.

- • Twelfth Generation: 11 blood pool, can spend 1 blood point per turn
- •• Eleventh Generation: 12 blood pool, can spend 1 blood point per turn
- ••• Tenth Generation: 13 blood pool, can spend 1 blood point per turn
- •••• Ninth Generation: 14 blood pool, can spend 2 blood points per turn
- ••••• Eighth Generation: 15 blood pool, can spend 3 blood points per turn

Herd

You have built a group of mortals from whom you can feed without fear. A herd may take many forms, from circles of kinky clubgoers to actual cults built around you as a god-figure. In addition to providing nourishment, your herd might come in handy for minor tasks, though they are typically not very controllable, closely connected to you, or particularly skilled (for more effective pawns, purchase Allies or Retainers). Your Herd rating adds dice to your rolls for hunting; see p. 259 for further details.

Players may purchase pooled Herd with Background points.

- • Three vessels
- •• Seven vessels
- ••• 15 vessels
- •••• 30 vessels
- ••••• 60 vessels

Influence

You have pull in the mortal community, whether through wealth, prestige, political office, blackmail, or supernatural manipulation. Kindred with high Influence can sway, and in rare cases even control, the po-

litical and social processes of human society. Influence represents the sum of your opinion- or policy-swaying power in your community, particularly among the police and bureaucracy. In some cases, cultivating Influence is a path to generating Resources (see below).

Some rolls may require you to use Influence in place of an Ability, particularly when attempting to sway minor bureaucrats. It's easier to institute sweeping changes on a local level than a worldwide scale (e.g., having an "abandoned" building demolished is relatively easy, while starting a war is a bit more difficult).

Influence can be used with pooled Background points.

- • Moderately influential; a factor in city politics
- •• Well-connected; a force in state politics
- ••• Position of influence; a factor in regional politics
- •••• Broad personal power; a force in national politics
- ••••• Vastly influential; a factor in global politics

Mentor

This Trait represents a Kindred or group of Kindred who looks out for you, offering guidance or aid once in a while. A mentor may be powerful, but his power need not be direct. Depending on the number of dots in this Background, your mentor might be nothing more than a vampire with a remarkable information network, or might be a centuries-old creature with tremendous influence and supernatural power. He may offer advice, speak to the Prince or Archbishop on your behalf, steer other elders clear of you, or warn you when you're walking into situations you don't understand.

Most often your mentor is your sire, but it could well be any Cainite with an interest in your wellbeing. A high Mentor rating could even represent a group of like-minded vampires, such as the elders of the city's Tremere chantry or a Black Hand cell.

Bear in mind that this Trait isn't a "Get out of Jail Free" card. Your mentor won't necessarily arrive like the cavalry whenever you're endangered (and if she does, you're likely to lose a dot or more in this Background after rousing her ire). What's more, she might occasionally expect something in return for her patronage, which can lead to a number of interesting stories. A mentor typically remains aloof, giving you useful information or advice out of camaraderie, but will abandon you without a thought if you prove an unworthy or troublesome protégé.

- • Mentor is an ancilla of little influence, or a Ductus or Pack Priest.
- •• Mentor is respected: an elder or highly-decorated veteran, for instance.
- ••• Mentor is heavily influential, such as a member of the Primogen or a Bishop.
- •••• Mentor has a great deal of power over the city: a Prince or Archbishop, for example.
- ••••• Mentor is extraordinarily powerful, perhaps even a Justicar or Cardinal.

Resources

Resources are valuable goods whose disposition your character controls. These assets may be actual cash, but as this Background increases, they're more likely to be investments, property, or earning capital of some sort — land, industrial assets, stocks and bonds, commercial inventories, criminal infrastructure, contraband, even taxes or tithes. Remember that vampires don't need to arrange for any food except blood and their actual needs (as opposed to wants) for shelter are very easily accommodated. Resources for vampires go mostly to pay for luxuries and the associated expenses of developing and maintaining Status, Influence, and other Backgrounds. A character with no dots in Resources may have enough clothing and supplies to get by, or she may be destitute and squatting in a refrigerator box under an overpass.

You receive a basic allowance each month based on your rating, so be certain to detail exactly where this money comes from, be it a job, trust fund or dividends. (Storytellers, decide for your locality and any relevant time period what an appropriate amount of cash this monthly allowance is.) After all, a Kindred's fortune may well run out over the course of the chronicle, depending on how well he maintains it. You can also sell your less liquid resources if you need the cash, but this can take weeks or even months, depending on what exactly you're trying to sell. Art buyers don't just pop out of the woodwork, after all.

Players may purchase Resources for their characters with pooled Background points.

- • Sufficient. You can maintain a typical residence in the style of the working class with stability, even if spending sprees come seldom.
- •• Moderate. You can display yourself as a member in good standing of the middle class, with the occasional gift and indulgence seemly for a person of even higher station. You can maintain a servant or hire specific help as necessary. A fraction of your resources are available in cash, readily portable property (like jewelry or furniture), and other valuables (such as a car or modest home) that let you maintain a standard of living at the one-dot level wherever you happen to be, for up to six months.
- ••• Comfortable. You are a prominent and established member of your community, with land and an owned dwelling, and you have a reputation that lets you draw on credit at very generous terms. You likely have more tied up in equity and property than you do in ready cash. You can maintain a one-dot quality of existence wherever you are without difficulty, for as long as you choose.
- •••• Wealthy. You rarely touch cash, as most of your assets exist in tangible forms that are themselves more valuable and stable than paper money. You hold more wealth than many of your local peers (if they can be called such a thing). When earning your Resources doesn't enjoy your usual degree of attention, you can maintain a three-dot existence for up to a year, and a two-dot existence indefinitely.
- ••••• Extremely Wealthy. You are the model to which others strive to achieve, at least in the popular mind. Television shows, magazine spreads, and gossip websites speculate about your clothing, the appointments of your numerous homes, and the luxury of your modes of transportation. You have vast and widely distributed assets, perhaps tied to the fates of nations, each with huge staffs and connections to every level of society through a region. You travel with a minimum of three-dot comforts, more with a little effort. Corporations and governments sometimes come to you to buy into stocks or bond programs.

Retainers

Not precisely Allies or Contacts, your retainers are servants, assistants, or other people who are your loyal and steadfast companions. Many vampires' servants are ghouls (p. 496) — their supernatural powers and blood bond-enforced loyalty make them the servants of choice. Retainers may also be people whom you've repeatedly Dominated until they have no free will left, or followers so enthralled with your Presence that their loyalty borders on blind fanaticism. Some vampires, particularly those with the Animalism Discipline, use animal ghouls as retainers.

You must maintain some control over your retainers, whether through a salary, the gift of your vitae, or the use of Disciplines. Retainers are never "blindly loyal no matter what" — if you treat them poorly without exercising strict control, they might well turn on you.

Retainers may be useful, but they should never be flawless. A physically powerful ghoul might be rebellious, inconveniently dull-witted, or lacking in practical skills. A loyal manservant might be physically weak or possess no real personal initiative or creativity. This Background isn't an excuse to craft an unstoppable bodyguard or pet assassin — it's a method to bring more fully-developed characters into the chronicle, as well as to reflect the followers for which the Kindred are notorious. Generally, retainers are more like Renfield than Anita Blake. (If the player and Storyteller agree, a player may create a more competent single Retainer by combining more points in this Background, putting more eggs in one basket, as the saying goes.)

Players can spend pooled Background points on Retainers.

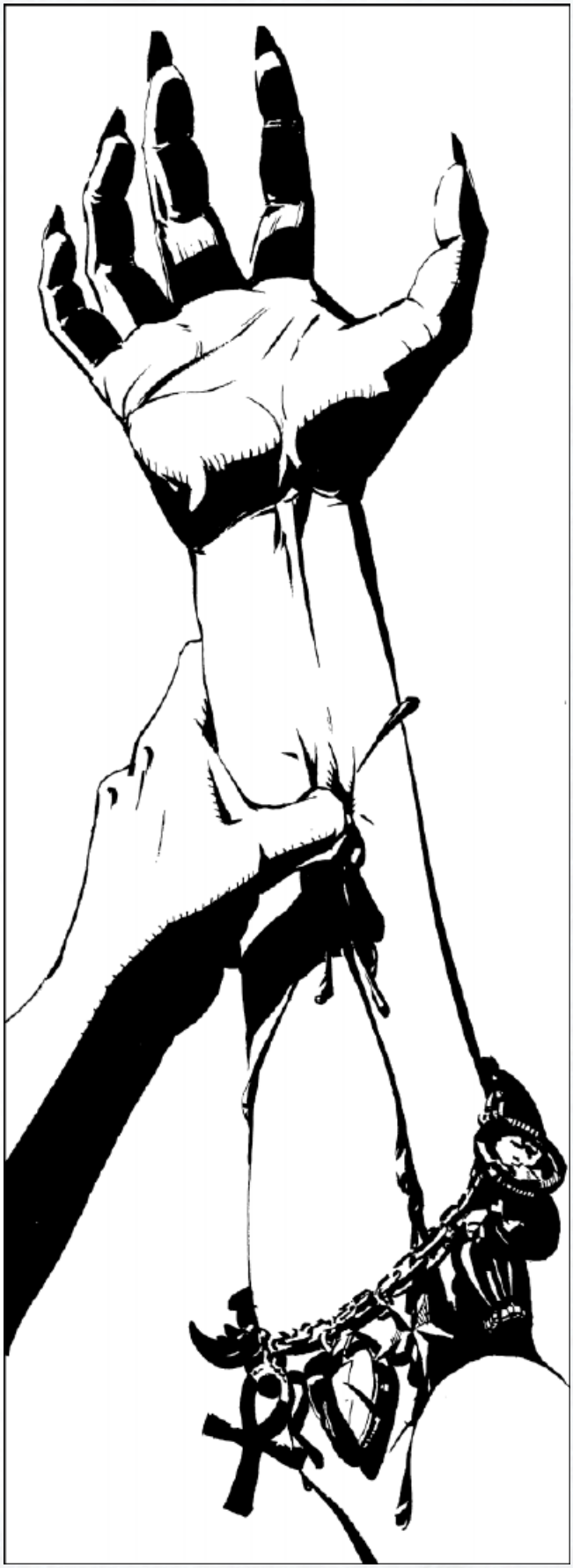
- • One retainer
- •• Two retainers
- ••• Three retainers
- •••• Four retainers
- ••••• Five retainers

Rituals

This Background is for Sabbat characters only.

You know the ritae and rituals of the Sabbat, and you can enact many of them. This Background is vital to being a Pack Priest — without this Background, ritae will not function. This Background is actually a supernatural investment, drawing on the magic of the eldest Tzimisce sorcerers. Sabbat vampires who are not their pack's priests should have an outstanding reason for acquiring this Background, as Pack Priests are loath to share their secrets with more secular members of the Sect. Some example rituals include the Vaulderie (p. 288), as well as those presented in the Appendix (p. 507).

- • You know a few of the auctoritas ritae (your choice).
- •• You know some of the auctoritas ritae (your choice) and a few ignoblis ritae (your choice).
- ••• You know all of the auctoritas ritae and some ignoblis ritae (your choice). Also, you may create your own ignoblis ritae, given enough time (consult your Storyteller for development time and game effects).
- •••• You know all the auctoritas ritae and many ignoblis ritae (your choice). You may create your own ignoblis ritae, given enough time (consult your Storyteller for development time and game effects). You are also familiar with the functions of numerous regional and pack-specific ignoblis ritae, even if you cannot perform them.
- ••••• You know all the auctoritas ritae and dozens of ignoblis ritae (your choice). You may create your own ignoblis ritae, given enough time (consult your Storyteller for development time and game effects). You are also familiar with the functions of almost all regional and pack-specific ignoblis ritae, even if you cannot perform them; if it's been written down or passed around in lore, you've heard of it.



Status

You have something of a reputation and standing (earned or unearned) within the local community of Kindred. Status among Camarilla society is as often derived from your sire's status and the respect due your particular bloodline as it is by personal achievement. Among the Sabbat, status is more likely to stem from the reputation of your pack or the zeal of your outlook. Elders are known for having little respect for their juniors; this Background can mitigate that somewhat.

High status within the Camarilla does not transfer to Sabbat society (and will most likely make you a notorious target for your Sect's rivals), and vice versa. Similarly, Autarkis generally have zero Status, unless they have somehow garnered so much power and attention that they are considered forces to be reckoned with. You may have occasion to roll your Status in conjunction with a Social Trait; this reflects the positive effects of your prestige.

Note that Caitiff characters may not purchase Status during character creation. Caitiff are the lowest of the low, and any respect they achieve must be earned during the course of the chronicle.

- • Known: a neonate/Pack Priest
- •• Respected: an ancilla/respected Ductus
- ••• Influential: an elder/Templar
- •••• Powerful: a member of the Primogen/a Bishop
- ••••• Luminary: a Prince/Archbishop

Pooling Backgrounds

Some Backgrounds lend themselves to joint ownership. Specifically, the members of a coterie may choose to pool their individual stores of Allies, Contacts, Domain, Herd, Influence, Resources, and Retainers.

The Anchor

You and the other players choose one Background as the anchor that holds the shared assets together. For example, this Background might be Domain, with the physical place the characters claim as their haven and for hunting, which also acts as a meeting ground for the mortals they deal with, a repository for their wealth, and so on. Any of the poolable Backgrounds can serve in this role, however: Herd might be this coterie's key to sustenance and stability.

No Background pool can have more dots assigned to it than the Anchor Background does at any time. If the Background is damaged by events during play or between sessions, other assets drift away from the characters' control, and it takes effort to win them back.

Any character contributing to the pool may pull his stake out at any time. The dislocations guarantee some damage: The character gets back one dot less than he put in.

Example: *The members of the Bloody Sunday coterie build their Background pool around Domain. The physical territory of a ruined church and its economically depressed environs give them the opportunity to interact with down-and-out members of their squalid neighborhood and a ragged group of mortals who fear the creepy squatters in the old church. They put a total of four dots into the Domain pool. Members of the coterie also spend three points on pooled Resources and three points on pooled Influence.*

Then things go awry. A Sabbat incursion leads to the arrival of a trouble-shooting Archon, and in the city's paranoia, another coterie mistakes Bloody Sunday for a Sabbat pack and sets the church on fire. The Domain rating drops from 4 to 2. Nobody comes to a burned-down church to score, so the coterie's drug-related Resources also drops to 2. With the church slated for demolition (after a particularly harrowing encounter, the coterie barely avoided the fire marshal discovering that they made their haven there), the coterie's pooled Influence also falls from 3 to 2 as they fight the zoning and demolition permits through proxies.

Sustained effort by Bloody Sunday can repair the damage. Many options are available, from having the church declared a local historical site and thus exempt from demolition "pending repairs" — to taking a tricky political path and trying to achieve satisfaction from the mistaken coterie (or overzealous Archon…).

As the Anchor Background rating rises again, so do the ratings of those anchored to it, as a result of storytelling directed toward the goals of improving lost Backgrounds.

Under normal circumstances, a coterie can't change its Anchor Background, nor can it acquire a new Anchor Background. While it may choose to abandon a certain Background asset over the course of a chronicle (and thus free itself of the limitations of the pooled Backgrounds in question), the fact that Backgrounds change value only as a result of the story's events means that the coterie must acquire new Backgrounds in that manner, rather than through freebie or experience points.

In the end, most vampires end up following personal goals over the course of their unlives. Pooled Backgrounds are a great way for young Kindred to gain an initial advantage as neonates in the World of Darkness, but they quickly become outdated or even liabilities as the Kindred formerly attached to them pursue their own, private agendas.

Using Pooled Backgrounds

Pooled Backgrounds are shared resources; essentially the coterie's communal property. Anyone who contributes to the pool (no matter how much he contributes) has equal access to it. Even if the character donates to only one of the pool's associated Backgrounds, he still has equal access to it. Not everyone can use the pool simultaneously, though. A Herd pool of seven dots can grant access only to the same, finite number of vessels. Just how those points are split up depends on the circumstances and agreements between the characters.

Example: *Four players decide that their characters are forming a Background pool. Their anchor is Resources (the thriving blood doll trade among jaded elders), and they wish to get dots in Contacts (from the elders themselves), Domain (recognition of sovereign hunting grounds from the elders for whom they're providing fresh vessels), and Retainers (a few lackeys who can move about by day). Jeff contributes three dots of Resources; Michelle contributes another two dots of Resources and two of Domain; Joe contributes another two dots of Retainers, two to Contacts, and one to Domain. Finally, Kelley — who is short on dots — contributes only one dot of Retainers. This makes the pool Resources 5, Contacts 2, Domain 3, Retainers 3. All the players can have their characters tap this pool equally, even Kelley, who contributed only a single dot.*

At the Storyteller's discretion, players can agree to place individual access limits on shared Backgrounds, to reflect any agreements their characters have made with one another. Sometimes being the Kindred who contributed fewer Backgrounds than the others comes with its own considerations.

Upper Limits

By pooling points, a coterie can get Backgrounds that surpass the normal five-dot limit. This arrangement is normal, and it reflects the advantages of cooperation. A group can secure a larger domain or maintain a larger network of allies and contacts than a single vampire can. There is no absolute upper limit on the level to which a pooled Background can rise, but things can get downright ludicrous if you aren't careful. It's usually best for the Storyteller to impose a 10-dot limit on the Anchor Background (and thus on all others).

The Storyteller should also take into consideration the scaling of Backgrounds, increasing their reliability rather than their quantitative value as the ratings escalate among the coterie. For example, if an average player group of four players each contributes a single dot or two to a shared Resources pool of 6, the effect shouldn't be that they're collectively the world's secret Kindred billionaires, but rather that they're of more modest means, and that those means are more difficult to wrest from them by other jealous vampires. This is a question of balancing player expectations with elements of the story, so be sure to set some guidelines for what the shared Backgrounds actually represent before the chronicle begins.

Virtues

The *Virtue* Traits define a character's outlook on unlife — they shape a character's ethical code and describe his commitment to his chosen morality. Virtues exist to help give a character a sense of being, not to force players to portray their characters in a given way. However, Kindred are passionate creatures, and sometimes an act or situation may force a character to consider exactly how she should react to a given stimulus. Virtues come into play when a character faces an impending frenzy, does something ethically questionable (according to the character's morality), or confronts something that terrifies or disturbs her.

A vampire's Virtues are determined by his Path, the particular code of ethics he follows. Most Camarilla Kindred maintain their mortal values and follow the Path of Humanity (referred to simply as "Humanity"), but other vampires often subscribe to radically different philosophies. Humanity, Paths, and the alternate Virtues are discussed in Chapter Seven.

At character creation, a character's Humanity is equal to his Conscience + Self-Control Virtues.

Conscience

Conscience is a Trait that allows characters to evaluate their conduct with relation to what is "right" and "wrong." A character's moral judgment with Conscience stems from her attitude and outlook. Conscience is what prevents a vampire from succumbing to the Beast, by defining the Beast's urges as unacceptable.

Conscience factors into the difficulty of many rolls to avoid committing a transgression. Additionally, Conscience determines whether or not a character loses Humanity by committing acts that do not uphold her moral code (see "Degeneration," p. 309). A character with a high Conscience rating feels remorse for transgressions, while a character with a lower Conscience may be more callous or ethically lax.

Some vampires replace the Conscience Virtue with the Virtue of Conviction (p. 314); unless your Storyteller tells you it's OK to do this, assume Conscience is used.

- • Uncaring
- •• Normal
- ••• Ethical
- •••• Righteous
- ••••• Remorseful

Self-Control

Self-Control defines a character's discipline and mastery over the Beast. Characters with high Self-Control rarely succumb to emotional urges, and are thus able to restrain their darker sides more readily than characters with low Self-Control.

Self-Control comes into play when a character faces her Beast in the form of frenzy (p. 298). Self-Control allows the character to resist the frenzy. Note: A character may never roll more dice to resist or control a frenzy than she has in her blood pool — it's hard to deny the Beast when one's mind clouds with hunger.

As with Conscience, Self-Control can be replaced, in this case by the Virtue of Instinct (p. 314). Again, unless the Storyteller specifically says it's all right to do so, assume Self-Control is used.

- • Unstable
- •• Normal
- ••• Temperate
- •••• Hardened
- ••••• Total self-mastery

Courage

All characters have a Courage Trait, regardless of the Path they follow. Courage is the quality that allows characters to stand in the face of fear or daunting adversity. It is bravery, mettle, and stoicism combined. A character with high Courage meets her fears head-on, while a character of lesser Courage may flee in terror.

Kindred use the Courage Virtue when faced with circumstances they endemically dread: fire, sunlight, True Faith. See the section on Rötschreck (p. 299) for mechanical systems dealing with character fear.

- • Timid
- •• Normal
- ••• Bold
- •••• Resolute
- ••••• Heroic

Willpower

Willpower measures a character's inner drive and competence at overcoming unfavorable odds. Unlike other Traits, Willpower has both a permanent rating and a temporary pool of points. The rating is rolled or tested, while the pool is spent. When a player spends a point of a character's Willpower, she should cross off the point from the Willpower pool (the squares), not the Willpower rating (the circles). The *rating* stays constant — if a character needs to roll Willpower for some reason, she bases the roll on the permanent rating. The *pool* is used up during the story.

A character's Willpower pool will likely fluctuate a great deal during the course of a story or chronicle. It decreases by one point every time a player uses a Willpower point to enable his character to do something extraordinary, like maintain self-control or gain an automatic success. Eventually, the character will have no Willpower left, and will no longer be able to exert the effort he once could. A character with no Willpower pool is exhausted mentally, physically, and spiritually, and will have great difficulty doing *anything*, as he can no longer muster the energy to undertake an action or cause. Willpower points can be regained during the course of a story, though players are advised to be frugal with their characters' Willpower pools.

The Willpower Trait is measured on a 1-10 scale rather than a 1-5 scale. At character creation, a character's Willpower is equal to his Courage Virtue.

- • Spineless
- •• Weak
- ••• Unassertive
- •••• Diffident
- ••••• Certain
- ••••• • Confident
- ••••• •• Determined

●●●●● ●●●	Controlled
●●●●● ●●●●	Iron-willed
●●●●● ●●●●●	Unshakable

More information on Willpower is available in Chapter Six, under "Spending Willpower" on p. 266.

Blood Pool

A character's *blood pool* measures how much vitae the vampire has in his system. The blood pool comprises a number of individual blood points. Each blood point corresponds roughly to one-tenth of the blood in an average adult mortal (a pint or one-half liter outside of a human).

The maximum number of blood points a vampire may ingest is dictated by his Generation, as is the number of blood points he may spend in a single turn. A vampire with zero blood points in his system is ravenously hungry and likely in the throes of frenzy.

More information on the blood pool is available in Chapter Six, under "Using Blood Pool" on p. 268.

Health

The Health Trait measures a character's physical condition, from perfect health to Final Death. As characters are wounded or otherwise impaired, they lose health levels, then regain them as they heal. A character's Health Trait consists of seven different "health levels," and each level applies a different dice pool penalty to any actions taken by the person in question. A character who is Hurt subtracts one die from her action dice pools, while a Crippled character subtracts five dice from her action dice pools. If health level penalties leave a character with no dice in a given dice pool, the character cannot take that action. However, a point of Willpower can be spent to ignore wound penalties for one turn (see p. 282).

A character at the Incapacitated health level is utterly immobilized and can take no action of any kind except healing himself with blood points (if the character is a vampire or ghoul) or swallowing blood that is offered to him. A mortal who reaches this stage is a breath away from death; if she takes any more damage, she dies. If a Kindred suffers an *aggravated* wound (see p. 285) after being Incapacitated, he dies the Final Death. A vampire at the Incapacitated health level with no more blood in his body immediately sinks into torpor.



Note that dice pool penalties from health level loss apply only to *actions*. They do not apply to purely reflexive dice pools, such as soak dice, most Virtue checks, or Willpower rolls to abort to another action. If a character is Wounded and suffers more non-aggravated damage, he may still soak with his full Stamina (plus Fortitude, if he has it). The health level penalties do apply to damage rolls for Strength-based attacks, but not for mechanical weapons like firearms. Ultimately, this rule must be adjudicated by the Storyteller and common sense.

Health Levels

Health Level	Dice Pool Penalty	Movement Penalty
Bruised	0	Character is only bruised and suffers no dice pool penalties due to damage.
Hurt	-1	Character is superficially hurt and suffers no movement hindrance.
Injured	-1	Character suffers minor injuries and movement is mildly inhibited (halve maximum running speed).
Wounded	-2	Character suffers significant damage and may not run (though he may still walk). At this level, a character may only move or attack; he *always* loses dice when moving and attacking in the same turn.
Mauled	-2	Character is badly injured and may only hobble about (three yards or meters/turn).
Crippled	-5	Character is catastrophically injured and may only crawl (one yard or meter/turn).
Incapacitated		Character is incapable of movement and is likely unconscious. Incapacitated vampires with no blood in their bodies enter torpor.
Torpor		Character enters a deathlike trance. He may do nothing, not even spend blood, until a certain period of time has passed.
Final Death		Character dies again, this time forever.

Experience

During the course of a chronicle, characters — much like players over the course of their lives — learn from their mistakes and grow. Change is inevitable, even for the eternal undead. Over years and centuries, vampires hone their Disciplines, learn (and forget) the ins and outs of cultures and languages, and refine their skills at the Jyhad.

A great deal of what characters learn is beyond the scope of any game system to reflect. In many cases the more mundane aspects of growing older — and, one would hope, wiser — are reflected in the players' increased confidence and perspicacity. Learning to lock your car when you leave it in a public parking place is simply common sense, not really a skill that can be purchased. Emotional transformations are roleplayed, not bought.

Sometimes, though, characters improve themselves in skills magical or mundane. A system of rewards, called *experience points*, is used to reflect these more quantitative changes. Experience points reflect the Traits that a vampire hones as time passes.

At the end of each story, the Storyteller awards experience points to each character. The players then write down how many experience points the character has

earned. Between stories, players may spend their characters' experience points to purchase or increase Traits.

Experience points can be used to improve Attributes, to acquire new Abilities or enhance ones the character already has, to raise existing Disciplines or purchase new ones, or to increase Virtues. Backgrounds may not be purchased through experience points, though they may be acquired through roleplaying if, for example, the character makes a new friend, acquires a windfall, or commits diablerie. The costs for all of these different changes vary greatly, as shown on the chart on p. 124.

The Storyteller is the final arbiter of how many experience points each character receives, as well as which Traits may be raised. Accordingly, the Storyteller should oversee where experience points are spent. Players may wish to put points into areas that don't honestly reflect what the character has learned during the story or chronicle, in which case the Storyteller can veto their actions. For example, if a character did not use his Dominate Discipline at all during a story, he could not have improved it, and thus the Storyteller should not allow him to increase the number of dots in that Discipline. The same stands for improving Virtues: A character who just killed three children and diablerized her sire has no logical grounds for increasing her Humanity rating. Note that a character does not have to use his Traits *successfully* to be eligible for an increase. We often learn more from failure than from success, and the undead are no different.

As Storyteller, try to be fair about experience-point expenditure, and never take things to the point at which the player feels he has no control over the character any longer. Ask the players what they feel their characters learned before awarding any points, and use that as part of the basis for giving them experience points. These limitations are put forth to add a level of reality to the game. If the changes in the character are completely random, the impact is lost. Weave the changes into the course of events, and make the changes reflect what has occurred.

Virtues increased by experience have no impact on the character's Humanity, Path, or Willpower. Once the character-creation process is finished, that's the end of the matter. For example, a character who, during a story, manages to act in spite of his fear of fire is eligible for a Courage increase, but increasing Courage does not automatically increase Willpower.

No Trait may be increased by more than one point during the course of a story. Vast changes in Traits take time, and the game should reflect that limitation.

New Traits

Increasing existing Traits can be done fairly readily, so long as the character uses or practices the Trait in question. Learning new Traits, however, is a little more difficult. Even a vampire can't simply pick up a functioning legal knowledge or learn to fight if he doesn't know even the basics (to say nothing of learning a new Discipline). Thus, learning an entirely new Ability or Discipline requires some tutoring and study, in addition to the required experience-point expenditure. This study can be simple (a night-school course to learn the basics of Computer) or brutally difficult (months or even years of mind-bending rituals, formulas, and blood manipulation to learn the first dot in Thaumaturgy), but it must always be accomplished. Having the Mentor Background helps, but even a mentor can teach only what she herself knows.

Storytellers: Do not allow players to neglect this requirement! Particularly for more esoteric arts such as Disciplines, pursuit of new knowledge — and payment for same — can lead to all manner of incredible stories.

Awarding Experience Points

Awarding experience points is a double-edged sword. As a Storyteller, you can hurt your chronicle by giving away too many as well as too few. If you give more to some players than you do to others, you might seem as if you're playing favorites, and you also risk unbalancing the game. However, the characters who do the most, who take the risks and learn from their mistakes instead of simply sitting on the sidelines, deserve the experience points to reflect the changes they're going through. The rules below should help you avoid most problems, but you should feel free to experiment and fine-tune them to fit your needs.

End of Each Chapter

At the end of each game session, or chapter, you should award the characters between one and five experience points. One point is awarded automatically, simply because the character experienced the chapter's events. Despite ourselves, we tend to learn from the follies of others as we do from our own.

One Point — Automatic: Each player gets one point at the end of each chapter.

One Point — Learning Curve: Ask the player what his character learned in the course of the night's events. If you agree with the answer, give the player one experience point.

One Point — Roleplaying: The player carried out the role of her character well, not only entertainingly

but appropriately. The player performed as the character should in the circumstances. Truly inspired roleplaying might merit two experience points.

One Point — Heroism: On rare occasions even vampires can truly behave as heroes, risking all to let friends or even strangers escape from disaster or death. If a character acts heroically and manages to survive, he should be rewarded. Some players might try to take advantage of this idea. Don't let them. Stupidity and suicidal behavior should not be mistaken for heroism.

The End of the Story

You might decide to give extra experience points at the end of a story, if the players have done their part and the characters have faced down substantial trials. Only a few points should be given this way, as they are effectively "bonus points" for a job well done.

One Point — Success: The characters achieved all or part of the goals they set out to accomplish. Even minor victories can be rewarded if they pushed the game forward.

One Point — Danger: The characters survived against harsh odds and grave dangers.

One Point — Wisdom: The player, and thus the character, came up with a brilliant plan or even a spontaneous strategy that enabled the coterie to survive when it would likely have failed otherwise.

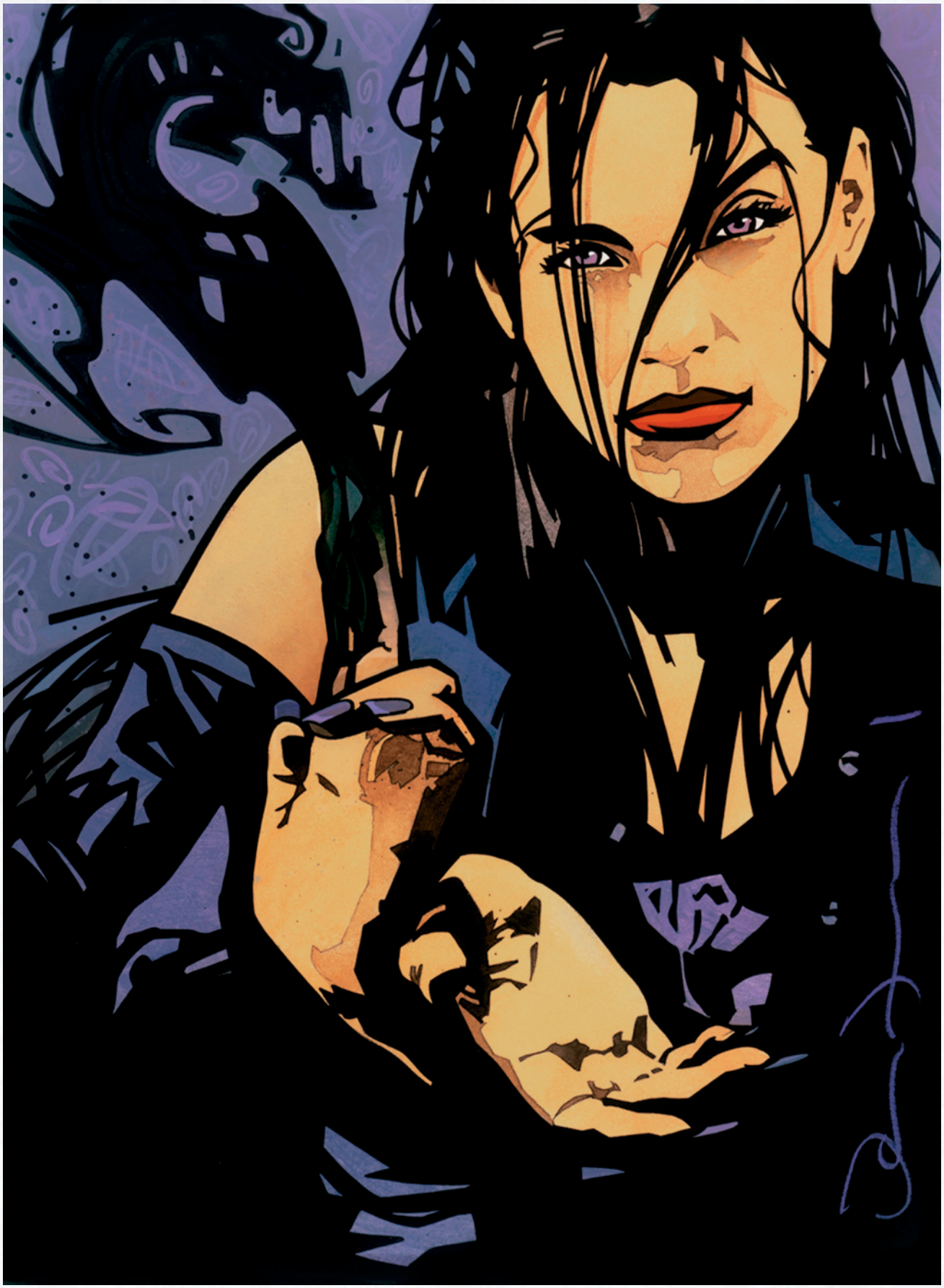
More points can be awarded if you decide they should be, or if you want the characters to advance more quickly than they currently are.

Experience Costs

Trait	Cost
New Ability	3
New Discipline	10
New Path (Necromancy or Thaumaturgy)	7
Attribute	current rating x 4
Ability	current rating x 2
Clan Discipline	current rating x 5*
Other Discipline	current rating x 7*
Secondary Path (Necromancy or Thaumaturgy)	current rating x 4
Virtue	current rating x 2**
Humanity or Path of Enlightenment	current rating x 2
Willpower	current rating

* Caitiff have no Clan-based Disciplines, just as they have no Clan. For them, the cost of raising *all* Disciplines is the current rating x 6. This is both the curse and the blessing of being Clanless.

** Increasing a Virtue through experience does not increase Traits based on that Virtue (Humanity, Path, Willpower).




XII

Chapter Four: Disciplines

"When my energies first surged through me, I discovered how to move like lightning, how to borrow the strength of the earth, how to be as stone. These were like breathing once was to me."

- The Book of Nod

Disciplines are supernatural powers granted by the Embrace, which vampires cultivate to bring to bear against their foes and prey. These powers separate the Damned from mortals, providing an incomparable mystical edge over those who would stand against them. With Disciplines, a vampire can exert the strength of a dozen men, force an enemy into thrall, ignite a fire with a glance, or take the mantle of a beast. Even the youngest Kindred, with a few token powers at his command, has an advantage over most threats, while the elders, who have often mastered a fearsome breadth of these potent gifts, can seem almost unassailable.

The origin of Disciplines is a Kindred mystery. Are they a form of dark Biblical justice, bestowed upon Caine and his get as a damnation-scourge? Are they the wiles of a twisted natural world, taught by Lilith, the mother of monsters? Are they simply predatory advantages, intrinsic to the state of being Kindred? Whatever the answer, learning and honing these supernatural powers is paramount to being able to face undeath on a vampire's own terms. After all, the other forces at play in the Jyhad will be cultivating theirs….

Like other Traits, Disciplines are rated in progressive dots. A rating of one dot indicates that the Discipline

Elder Discipline Powers (6+)

Discipline powers at a rating of 6 and higher sometimes feature multiple powers at various levels; in such cases, the vampire increasing in power simply chooses which one she wants. Some Disciplines have more options than others; usually, this means there are more commonly known applications of those Disciplines. If the character wants to purchase the other option or options later, she can spend additional experience as if buying the same dot in the Discipline again to acquire it. Storytellers may also allow players to create their own elder Discipline powers, if they desire.

It should be noted that 6-dot and higher powers can be abused to stomp a well-crafted chronicle into tiny little pieces. These potent abilities are often difficult (but not impossible) to acquire, so Storytellers should consider the impact that high-level Disciplines might have on their chronicles before allowing them at all.

in question has barely been awakened, while a rating of six dots or higher indicates mastery beyond the capacity of most neonates and even ancillae. As a character increases her rating in a Discipline, she gains access to the powers listed next to the appropriate number of dots, as well as retaining access to lesser powers. As with other Traits, Discipline levels of higher than five dots are available only to those Kindred of Generations seven and lower (see p. 270).

Note: Unless stated in the description, Disciplines cost no blood or Willpower points to activate.

Advancing Disciplines

Players begin the game with three dots to spend on their characters' Clan Disciplines, which are listed with each Clan description in Chapter Two. Caitiff may place their three dots on any Disciplines they like, subject to the Storyteller's discretion. Characters may also acquire Disciplines other than those commonly taught by their Clan, provided they spend the proper freebie or experience points and have access to a vampiric teacher (again, subject to the Storyteller's discretion). Learning a new out-of-clan Discipline requires that the teacher feeds the student a point of their blood before instruction begins, to start the mystical tie to the Discipline being taught. Improving knowledge of a Discipline already known does not require such a transfer (although some unscrupulous teachers may claim that it's still necessary).

Storytellers may decide that certain Disciplines are more or less difficult to acquire, depending on their chronicle. For example, it's generally easier for a Kindred to learn a common power like Potence (which many Clans share) rather than Thaumaturgy (which is generally the domain of the Tremere and a few other bloodlines), but a chronicle set entirely around the storming and acquisition of a rogue Tremere chantry may find that Thaumaturgy is much easier to learn and acquire.

Animalism

The Beast resides within all creatures, from scuttling cockroaches to scabrous rats up through untamed wolves and even powerful Kindred elders. Animalism allows the vampire to amplify his intensely primordial nature. He can not only communicate with animals, but can also force his will upon them, directing such beasts to do as he commands. As the vampire grows in power, he can even control the Beast within mortals and other supernaturals.

Beasts grow distinctly agitated in the presence of a vampire who lacks this Discipline or the Skill of Animal Ken, often to the point of attacking or running from the vampire. In contrast, vampires possessing Animalism exude a dominant vibe to lower creatures, which attracts them.

Animalism is commonly found with vampires of the Gangrel and Nosferatu Clans. Manipulation and Charisma are important for the use of Animalism powers; the stronger the vampire's personality, the more influence he has over animals.

Storytelling Animals

It can be difficult for the Storyteller to use animals as something more than a plot device whenever a character tries to communicate with them. It's easy to fall back on monosyllabic speech and easily led creatures in order to get the story moving along. And indeed, animals are simpler than humans – they focus on the present and are directed by instincts instead of complex goals and elaborate schemes. However, *simple* doesn't necessarily mean *stupid*; animals need cunning and perception to survive, and both can be of great use to a vampire master. Storytellers can make animals dynamic, interesting characters that bring a lot to the chronicle, or they can quickly gloss over the finer points of their characterization to get back to the more pressing conflicts in the chronicle.

Statistics for certain animals are found in Chapter Nine, p. 388.

• Feral Whispers

This power is the basis from which all other Animalism abilities grow. The vampire creates an empathic connection with a beast, thereby allowing him to communicate or issue simple commands. The Kindred locks eyes with the animal, transmitting his desires through sheer force of will. Although it isn't necessary to actually "speak" in chirps, hisses, or barks, some vampires find that doing so helps strengthen the connection with the animal. Eye contact must be maintained the entire time; if it's broken, the Kindred must re-establish contact to continue communication.

The simpler the creature, the more difficult it becomes to connect with the animal's Beast. Mammals, predatory birds, and larger reptiles are relatively easy to communicate with. Insects, invertebrates, and most fish are just too simple to connect with.

Feral Whispers provides no guarantees that an animal will want to deal with the vampire, nor does it ensure that the animal will pursue any requests the vampire makes of it. Still, it does at least make the creature better disposed toward the Kindred. The manner in which the vampire presents his desires to the animal often depends on the type of creature. A Kindred can often bully smaller beasts into heeding commands, but he's better off couching orders for large predators as requests.

If the vampire successfully uses the power, the animal performs the command to the best of its ability and intellect. Only the very brightest creatures understand truly complex directives (orders dealing with conditional situations or requiring abstract logic). Commands that the animal does understand remain deeply implanted, however, and guide its behavior for some time.

System: No roll is necessary to talk with an animal, but the character must establish eye contact (see p. 152) first. Issuing commands requires a Manipulation + Animal Ken roll. The difficulty depends on the creature: Predatory mammals (wolves, cats, vampire bats) are difficulty 6, other mammals and predatory birds (rats, owls) are difficulty 7, and other birds and reptiles (pigeons, snakes) are difficulty 8. This difficulty is reduced by one if the character speaks to the animal in its "native tongue," and can be adjusted further by circumstances and roleplaying skill (we highly recommend that all communication between characters and animals be roleplayed).



The number of successes the player achieves dictates how strongly the character's command affects the animal. One success is sufficient to have a cat follow an individual and lead the character to the same location, three successes are enough to have a raven spy on a target for weeks, and five successes ensure that a grizzly ferociously guards the entrance to the character's wilderness haven for some months.

The character's Nature plays a large part in how he approaches these conversations. The character might try intimidating, teasing, cajoling, or rationalizing. The player should understand that he does not simply play his character in these situations, but the Beast Within as well.

Using this power cannot force an animal to do something against its nature, or to force a creature to risk its life. While the aforementioned grizzly would stand guard to the vampire's haven and even fight for it, it would not do so against obviously superior numbers or something overwhelmingly supernatural. A predatory bird might be convinced to harry a target, but would definitely not hold ground. A docile dog or skittish cat would have no problem with reporting something it had seen, but it wouldn't enter combat unless given no other option — though it would likely agree to stand and fight and then flee at the first opportunity, if a harsh Kindred demanded it.

•• Beckoning

The vampire's connection to the Beast grows strong enough that he may call out in the voice of a specific type of animal — howling like a wolf, shrilling like a raven, etc. This call mystically summons creatures of the chosen type. Since each type of animal has a different call, Beckoning works for only a single species at a time.

All such animals within earshot are summoned, and some percentage of them will heed the Beckoning if it is successful. While the vampire has no further control over the beasts who answer, the animals who do are favorably disposed toward him and are at least willing to listen to the Kindred's concerns. (The vampire can then use Feral Whispers on individual animals to command them, which may be at a decreased difficulty at Storyteller discretion.)

System: The player rolls Charisma + Survival (difficulty 6) to determine the response to the character's call; consult the table below. Only animals that can hear the cry will respond. If the Storyteller decides no animals of that type are within earshot, the summons goes unanswered.

The call can be as specific as the player desires. A character could call for all bats in the area, for only the male bats nearby, or for only the albino bat with the notched ear he saw the other night.

Successes	Result
1 success	A single animal responds.
2 successes	One-quarter of the animals within earshot respond.
3 successes	Half of the animals respond.
4 successes	Most of the animals respond.
5 successes	All of the animals respond.

••• Quell the Beast

As the supreme predators of the natural world, Kindred are highly attuned to the bestial nature that dwells within every mortal heart. A vampire who develops this power may assert his will over a mortal (animal or human) subject, subduing the Beast within her. This quenches all powerful, strong emotions — hope, fury, love, fear — within the target. The Kindred must either touch his subject or stare into her eyes to channel his will effectively.

Mortals who lack the fire of their inner Beasts are quite tractable, reacting to even stressful situations with indifference. Even the most courageous or maddened mortal becomes apathetic and listless, while an especially sensitive individual may suffer from a phobic derangement while under the power's influence.

Different Clans evoke this power in different ways, though the effect itself is identical. Tzimisce call it Cowing the Beast, since they force the mortal's weaker spirit to shrivel in fear before the Kindred's own inner Beast. Nosferatu refer to it as Song of Serenity, since they soothe the subject's Beast into a state of utter complacency, thus allowing them to feed freely. Gangrel know the power as Quell the Beast, and force the mortal spirit into a state of fear or apathy as befits the individual vampire's nature.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Intimidation if forcing down the Beast through fear, or Manipulation + Empathy if soothing it into complacency. The

difficulty of the roll is 7 in either case. This is an extended action requiring as many total successes as the target has Willpower. Failure indicates that the player must start over from the beginning, while a botch indicates that the vampire may not affect that subject's Beast for the remainder of the scene.

When a mortal's Beast is cowed or soothed, she can no longer use or regain Willpower. She ceases all struggles, whether mental or physical. She doesn't even defend herself if assaulted, though the Storyteller may allow a Willpower roll if the mortal believes her life is truly threatened. To recover from this power, the mortal's player rolls Willpower (difficulty 6) once per day until she accumulates enough successes to equal the vampire's Willpower. Kindred cannot be affected by this power.

Though a vampire's Beast cannot be cowed with this ability, the Storyteller may allow characters to use the "soothing" variation of this power to pull a vampire out of frenzy. With three or more successes, the frenzying vampire may roll again to pull herself out of frenzy, using the same difficulty as the stimulus that caused the frenzy originally.

•••• Subsume the Spirit

By locking his gaze with that of an animal, the vampire may mentally possess the creature. Some elders believe that since animals don't have souls but spirits, the vampire can move his own soul into the animal's body. Many younger vampires think it a matter of transferring one's consciousness into the animal's mind. In either case, it's agreed that the beast's weaker spirit (or mind) is pushed aside by the Kindred's own consciousness. The vampire's body falls into a motionless state akin to torpor while his mind takes control of the animal's actions, remaining this way until the Kindred's consciousness returns.

Some haughty Tzimisce eschew this power, considering it debasing to enter the body of a lesser creature. When they do stoop to using it, they possess only predators. Conversely, Gangrel revel in connecting to the natural world in this way. They delight in sampling different animals' natures.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 8) as the character looks into the animal's eyes (see sidebar on p. 152). The number of successes allows the character to employ some mental Disciplines while possessing the animal, as noted below.

Successes	Result
1 success	Cannot use Disciplines
2 successes	Can use Auspex and other sensory powers
3 successes	Can also use Presence and other powers of emotional manipulation
4 successes	Can also use Dementation, Dominate, and other powers of mental manipulation
5 successes	Can also use Chimerstry, Necromancy, Thaumaturgy, and other mystical powers

This power entwines the character's consciousness closely with the animal's spirit, so much so that the character may continue to think and feel like that animal even after breaking the connection. This effect continues until the character spends a total of seven nights or three Willpower points to resist and finally overcome the animal nature. This should be roleplayed, though the character will be affected to a lesser degree if the player chooses to spend Willpower.

At the end of any particularly exciting incident during possession, the player rolls Wits + Empathy (difficulty 8) for the character to retain his own mind. Failure indicates that the character's mind returns to his own body, but still thinks in purely animalistic terms. A botch returns the character to his body, and also sends him into frenzy.

The character may travel as far from his own physical body as he chooses while possessing the animal. The character retains no conscious connection with his vampire body during this time, though. The vampire may also venture out during the day, albeit in the animal's body. However, the character's own body must be awake to do so, requiring a successful roll to remain awake (see p. 262). If the character leaves the animal's body (by choice, if his body falls asleep, or after sustaining significant injury), the vampire's consciousness returns to his physical form instantaneously.

Although the vampire has no conscious link to his body while possessing the animal, he does form a sympathetic bond. Anything the animal feels, the vampire also experiences, from pleasure to pain. In fact, any damage the animal's body sustains is also applied to the character's body, though the Kindred body may soak as normal. If the animal dies before the vampire's soul can flee from the body, the character's body falls into

torpor. Presumably this is in sympathetic response to the massive trauma of death, but some Kindred believe that the vampire's soul is cast adrift during this time and must find its way back to the body.

••••• Drawing Out the Beast

At this level of Animalism, the Kindred has a keen understanding of the Beast Within, and is able to release his feral urges upon another mortal or vampire. The recipient of the vampire's Beast is instantly overcome by frenzy. This is an unnatural frenzy, however, as the victim is channeling the Kindred's own fury. As such, the vampire's own behavior, expressions, and even speech patterns are evident in the subject's savage actions.

Gangrel and Tzimisce are especially fond of unleashing their Beasts onto others. Gangrel do so to stir their ghouls into inspired heights of savagery during combat. Tzimisce care less about who receives their Beast than retaining their own composure.

System: The player must announce his preferred target (since it must be someone within sight, Drawing Out the Beast cannot be used if the vampire is alone), then roll Manipulation + Self-Control/Instinct (difficulty 8). Refer to the table below for the results:

Successes	Result
1 success	The character transfers the Beast, but unleashes it upon a random individual.
2 successes	The character is stunned by the effort and may not act next turn, but transfers the Beast successfully. Alternatively, the character may act normally during the turn, but must spend a Willpower point or suffer a single level of lethal damage.
3+ successes	The character transfers the Beast successfully.

If the attempt fails, the character himself immediately enters frenzy. As the character relaxes in expectation of relieving his savage urges, the Beast takes that opportunity to dig deeper. In this case, the frenzy lasts twice as long as normal and is twice as difficult to shrug off; its severity also increases exponentially. Botching this roll is even more catastrophic; the heightened frenzy grows so extreme that not even expending Willpower curbs its duration or effects. The character is a hapless victim to the terrible fury of his Beast, and may well hurl herself into a savage, flesh-rending rampage that leaves the Masquerade (and unfortunate nearby onlookers) in tatters.

If the character leaves the target's presence before the frenzy expends itself, the vampire loses his Beast, perhaps permanently. While no longer vulnerable to frenzy, the character cannot use or regain Willpower and becomes increasingly lethargic. To recover the Beast, he must find the person who now possesses it (who likely isn't enjoying herself very much) and coax the Beast into its proper vessel. The most effective way to do so is to behave in ways that make the Beast want to return — however, this isn't a guarantee that it will wish to do so. Alternatively, the character can simply kill the host (thus causing the Beast to return to the vampire immediately).

••••• • Animal Succulence

Most vampires find the blood of animals flat, tasteless, and lacking in nutritional value. Some Gangrel and Nosferatu, however, have refined their understanding of the spirits of such "lesser prey" to the point that they are able to draw much more sustenance from beasts than normal Kindred can. This power does not allow an elder to subsist solely on the blood of animals, but it does allow him to go for extended periods of time without taking vitae from humans or other Kindred.

System: No roll is needed; once learned, this power is always in effect. Animal Succulence allows a character to count each blood point drawn from an animal as two in her blood pool. This does not increase the size of the vampire's blood pool, just the nutritional value of animal blood.

Animal Succulence does not allow a character to completely ignore his craving for the blood of "higher" prey; in fact, it heightens his desire for "real food." Every three times (rounded down) the character drinks from an animal, a cumulative +1 difficulty is applied to the next Self-Control/Instinct roll the player makes when the character is confronted with the possibility of dining on human or Kindred blood.

Animal Succulence does not increase the blood point value of the blood of other supernatural creatures (Gangrel, werecreatures, and so on) who have taken animal forms, nor does it change the vampire's feeding preferences (such as the Ventrue have).

••••• • Shared Soul

This power allows a character to probe the mind of any one animal she touches. Shared Soul can be very disconcerting to both parties involved, as each participant is completely immersed in the thoughts and emotions of the other. With enough effort or time, each participant can gain a complete understanding of the other's mind. Shared Soul is most often used to extract an animal's memories of a specific event, but some Gangrel use this power as a tool in the search for enlightenment, feeling they come to a better understanding of their own Beasts through rapport with true beasts. Too close of a bond, however, can leave the two souls entangled after the sharing ends, causing the vampire to adopt mannerisms, behavior patterns, or even ethics (or lack thereof) similar to those of the animal.

System: The character touches the intended subject creature, and the player rolls Perception + Animal Ken (difficulty 6). The player spends a Willpower point for every turn past the first that contact is maintained. Locating a specific memory takes six turns, minus one turn for every success on the roll. A complete bond takes 10 turns, minus one turn for every success on the roll. A botch on this roll may, at the Storyteller's discretion, send the vampire into a frenzy or give the character a derangement related to the behavior patterns of the animal (extreme cowardice if the vampire contacted the soul of mouse, bloodlust if the subject was a rabid dog, and so forth).

••••• • Species Speech

The basic power Feral Whispers (Animalism 1) allows character to communicate with only one animal at a time. With Species Speech, a character can enter into psychic communion with all creatures of a certain species that are present. Species Speech is most often used after an application of The Beckoning (Animalism 2), which can draw a crowd of likely subjects.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 7) to establish contact with the targeted group of animals. Once the character establishes contact, the player makes a second roll to issue commands. There is no practical upper limit on the number of animals that can be commanded with this power, although all of the intended subjects must be in the vampire's immediate vicinity. Only one species of animal can be commanded at a time; thus, if a character is standing in the middle of the reptile house at the zoo, she could command all of the Komodo dragons, all of the boa constrictors, or all of the skinks, but she could not simultaneously give orders to every reptile or snake present. Species Speech functions much like Feral Whispers in all other respects.

Note: Players (and Storytellers) shouldn't get too wrapped up in species differences like northern diamondback rattlesnakes and south-eastern diamondback rattlesnakes. At Storyteller discretion, the expenditure of an additional Willpower point allows the character's commands to extend to members of a similar species to the one initially commanded.

••••• •• Conquer the Beast

Masters of Animalism have a much greater understanding of both beasts in general and the Beast in particular. Those who have developed this power can master their own Beasts to a degree impossible for lesser Kindred to attain. Conquer the Beast allows the vampire both to control her frenzies and to enter them at will. Some elders say that the development of this power is one of the first steps on the road to Golconda.

System: The character can enter frenzy at will. The player rolls Willpower (difficulty 7). Success sends the character into a controlled frenzy. He can choose his targets at will, but gains limited Dominate and wound penalty resistance and Rötschreck immunity as per the normal frenzy rules (p. 298). A botch on the roll sends the vampire into an uncontrolled frenzy which Conquer the Beast may not be used to end.

The player may also roll Willpower (difficulty 9) to enable the character to control an involuntary frenzy. In this case, a Willpower point must be spent for every turn that the vampire remains in frenzy. The player may make Self-Control/Instinct rolls as normal to end a frenzy, but if the vampire runs out of Willpower points before the frenzy ends, he drops into an uncontrolled frenzy again. A botch on the Willpower roll raises the difficulty of the vampire's Self-Control/Instinct rolls by two and renders Conquer the Beast unusable for the remainder of the night.

••••• ••• Taunt the Caged Beast

Some Kindred are so attuned to the Beast that they can unleash it in another individual at will. Vampires who have developed this power are able to send adversaries into frenzy with a finger's touch and the resultant momentary contact with the victim's Beast. The physical contact allows the vampire's own Beast to reach out and awaken that of the victim, enraging it by threatening its territory.

System: The character touches the target. The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty 7). The victim makes a Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty 5 + the number of successes); failure results in an immediate frenzy. A botch causes the character to unleash his own Beast and frenzy instead. This power maybe used on those individuals who are normally incapable of frenzy, sending ordinary humans into murderous rages worthy of the most bloodthirsty Brujah berserker.

••••• •••• Unchain the Beast

The self-destructive nature of Cainites can be turned against them by an elder who possesses this formidable power. With a glance, the vampire can awaken the Beasts of her enemies, causing physical injury and excruciating agony as the victim's own violent impulses manifest in physical form to tear him apart from within. A target of this power erupts into a fountain of blood and gore as claw and bite wounds from an invisible source spontaneously tear his flesh asunder.

System: The character makes eye contact (see p. 152) with the intended victim. The player spends three blood points and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty of the victim's Self-Control/Instinct + 4). Each success inflicts one health level of aggravated damage, which can be soaked normally. A botch inflicts one health level of lethal damage to the invoking character for each "1" rolled. This damage can also be soaked normally.

Auspex

Auspex gives the vampire uncanny sensory abilities. She starts with the capacity to heighten her natural senses significantly, but as she grows in power, she can perceive psychic auras and read the thoughts of another being. Auspex can also pierce through mental illusions such as those created by Obfuscate — see the sidebar "Seeing the Unseen" on p. 142 for more.

However, a vampire with Auspex needs to be careful. Her increased sensory sensitivity can cause her to be drawn in by beautiful things or stunned by loud noises or pungent smells. Sudden or dynamic events can disorient an Auspex-using character unless her player makes a Willpower roll to block them out (difficulty of at least 4, although the more potent the source of distraction, the higher the difficulty). Failure overwhelms the character's senses, making her oblivious to her surroundings for a turn or two. While the Malkavians and Toreador are more prone to these kinds of distractions, the Tremere and Tzimisce aren't immune.

Dots in Perception are very useful for using Auspex powers, as more successes help the character gain more sensory information.

• Heightened Senses

This power increases the acuity of all of the vampire's senses, effectively doubling the clarity and range of sight, hearing, and smell. While her senses of taste and touch extend no farther than normal, they likewise become far more distinct; the vampire could taste the hint of liquor in a victim's blood or feel the give of the board concealing a hollow space in the floor. The Kindred may magnify her senses at will, sustaining this heightened focus for as long as she desires. At the Storyteller's option, this may make hunting easier.

Occasionally, this talent provides extrasensory or even precognitive insights. These brief, unfocused glimpses may be odd premonitions, flashes of empathy, or eerie feelings of foreboding. The vampire has no control over these perceptions, but with practice can learn to interpret them with a fair degree of accuracy.

Expanded senses come at a price, however. Bright lights, loud noises and strong smells present a hazard while the vampire uses this power. In addition to the possibility for distraction, an especially sudden or potent stimulus (like the glare of a spotlight or a clap of thunder) can blind or deafen the Kindred for an hour or more.

System: It takes a reflexive action to activate this ability, but no roll or other cost is required. In certain circumstances, dice rolls associated with using the character's sense (such as Perception + Alertness) decrease in difficulty by a number equal to the character's Auspex rating when the power is engaged.

The Storyteller may also use this power to see if the character perceives a threat. In this case, the Storyteller privately rolls the character's unmodified Auspex rating, applying whatever difficulty he feels best suits the circumstances. For example, sensing that a pistol is pointed at the back of the character's head may require a roll of difficulty 5, while the sudden realization that a rival for Primogen is planning her assassination may require a 9. Note that even this "precognition" comes only as a result of interpreting details the Kindred is

able to notice. It's not an all-purpose insight or miraculous revelation.

At the character's discretion, she may selectively heighten one specific sense, rather than leaving them all on. In these cases, the difficulty to perceive stimuli using that sense drops by one, but the difficulty to avoid distraction or temporary bedazzlement increases by one.

This power does not let characters see in pitch darkness, as does Eyes of the Beast (p. 199), but it does reduce difficulty penalties to act in such darkness from +2 to +1, and the character may make ranged attacks in pitch darkness if she can hear, smell, or otherwise detect her foe.

•• Aura Perception

Using this power, the vampire can perceive the psychic "auras" that radiate from mortals and supernatural beings alike. These halos comprise a shifting series of colors that take practice to discern with clarity. Even the simplest individual has many shifting hues within his aura; strong emotions predominate, while momentary impressions or deep secrets flash through in streaks and swirls.

The colors change in sympathy with the subject's emotional state, blending into new tones in a constantly dancing pattern. The stronger the emotions involved, the more intense the hues become. A skilled vampire can learn much from her subject by reading the nuances of color and brilliance in the aura's flow.

Aside from perceiving emotional states, vampires use Aura Perception to detect supernatural beings. The colors in Kindred auras, while intense, are quite pale; mage halos often flare and crackle with arcane power; the race of shapeshifters has strikingly bright, almost frantic, auras; ghosts have weak auras that flicker fitfully like a dying flame; and faerie creatures' radiance is shot through with capricious rainbow hues.

System: After the character stares at the subject for at least a few seconds, the player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 8); each success indicates how much of the subject's aura the character sees and understands (see the table below). A failure indicates that the play of colors and patterns yields no prevailing impression. A botch indicates a false or erroneous interpretation. The Storyteller may wish to make this roll, thus keeping the player in the dark as to the veracity of the character's interpretation.



Successes	Result
1 success	Can distinguish only the shade (pale or bright).
2 successes	Can distinguish the main color.
3 successes	Can recognize the color patterns.
4 successes	Can detect subtle shifts.
5 successes	Can identify mixtures of color and pattern.

The Aura Colors chart offers some example ideas of common colors and the emotions they reflect that Storytellers can use. Note that it is nearly impossible to determine with certainty if a particular character is lying or not with this power – vampires are inherently deceitful by nature, but even mortals might react with anxiety to questions while still being truthful. It is, however, helpful in determine the target's emotional state, which might lead the vampire to decide that a particular target is suspicious.

A character may choose to perform a very cursory aura scan of a large area like a nightclub's dance floor or the audience in a gallery. In this case, the player decides which characteristic of auras she's looking for, and that's the only information she's able to glean if the roll is successful. (At the Storyteller's discretion, on this general scan roll, more successes on the roll may more quickly yield what the character seeks.) For example, the player may specify, "Who's the most nervous person in attendance?" or "Are there any vampirically pale auras among the CEO's entourage?" Thereafter, the player may narrow down her scrutiny of a single individual, with an additional roll as normal.

The character may focus in on a particular subject's aura only once per scene with any degree of clarity. Any subsequent attempts that result in failure should be considered botches. It is very easy for the character to imagine seeing what she wants to see when judging someone's intentions. After 24 hours, the character may try again at no penalty.

It is possible, though difficult, to sense the aura of a being who is otherwise invisible to normal sight. Refer to "Seeing the Unseen," p. 142, for more information.

••• The Spirit's Touch

When someone handles an object for any length of time, he leaves a psychic impression on the item. A vampire with this level of Auspex can "read" these sensations, learning who handled the object, when he last held it, and what was done with it recently. (For

Aura Colors

Condition	Aura Colors
Afraid	Orange
Aggressive	Purple
Angry	Red
Bitter	Brown
Calm	Light Blue
Compassionate	Pink
Conservative	Lavender
Depressed	Gray
Desirous or Lustful	Deep Red
Distrustful	Light Green
Envious	Dark Green
Excited	Violet
Generous	Rose
Happy	Vermilion
Hateful	Black
Idealistic	Yellow
Innocent	White
Lovestruck	Blue
Obsessed	Green
Sad	Silver
Spiritual	Gold
Suspicious	Dark Blue
Anxious	Auras appear scrambled like static or white noise
Confused	Mottled, shifting colors
Diablerist	Black veins in aura
Daydreaming	Sharp flickering colors
Frenzied	Rapidly rippling colors
Psychotic	Hypnotic, swirling colors
Vampire	Aura colors are pale
Ghoul	Pale blotches in the aura
Magic Use	Myriad sparkles in aura
Werebeast	Bright, vibrant aura
Ghost	Weak, intermittent aura
Faerie	Rainbow highlights in aura

these purposes, a corpse counts as an "object" and can be read accordingly.) These visions are seldom clear and detailed, registering more like a kind of "psychic snapshot." Still, the Kindred can learn much even from such a glimpse. Although most visions concern the last person to handle the item, a long-time owner leaves a stronger impression than someone who held the object briefly.

Gleaning information from the spiritual residue requires the vampire to hold the object and enter a shallow trance. She is only marginally aware of her surroundings while using The Spirit's Touch, but a loud noise or jarring physical sensation breaks the trance instantly.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy. The difficulty is determined by the age of the impressions and the mental and spiritual strength of the person or event that left them. Sensing information from a pistol used for a murder hours ago may require a 4, while learning who owned a bloodstained puppet fashioned a century ago might be a 9.

The greater the individual's emotional connection to the object, the stronger the impression he leaves on it — and the more information the Kindred can glean from it. Events involving strong emotions (a gift-giving, a torture, a long family history) likewise leave stronger impressions than short or casual contact do. Assume that each success offers one piece of information, as per the chart below.

Successes	Information
Botch	The character is overwhelmed by psychic impressions for the next 30 minutes and unable to act.
Failure	No information of value.
1 success	Very basic information: the last owner's gender or hair color, for instance.
2 successes	A second piece of basic information.
3 successes	More useful information about the last owner, such as age and state of mind the last time he used the item.
4 successes	The person's name.
5+ successes	A wealth of information: nearly anything you want to know about the person's relationship with that object is available.

At the Storyteller's discretion, some impressions on objects may be so strong — a knife plunged into Caesar's breast, the tip of the Spear of Destiny, a fang pulled from the maw of Dracula — that any use of this power may be deemed a success.

•••• Telepathy

The vampire projects a portion of her consciousness into a nearby mortal's mind, creating a mental link through which she can communicate wordlessly or even read the target's deepest thoughts. The Kindred "hears" in her own mind the thoughts plucked from a subject as if they were spoken to her.

This is one of the most potent vampiric abilities, since, given time, a Kindred can learn virtually anything from a subject without him ever knowing. The Tremere and Tzimisce in particular find this power especially useful in gleaning secrets from others, or for directing their mortal followers with silent precision.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Subterfuge (difficulty of the subject's current Willpower points). Projecting thoughts into the target's mind requires one success. The subject recognizes that the thoughts come from somewhere other than his own consciousness, though he cannot discern their actual origin without a successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty equal to the vampire's Manipulation + Subterfuge).

To read minds, one success must be rolled for each item of information plucked or each layer of thought pierced. Deep secrets or buried memories are harder to obtain than surface emotions or unspoken comments, requiring five or more successes to access.

Reading thoughts with Telepathy does not commonly work upon the undead mind. A character may expend a Willpower point to make the effort, making the roll normally afterward. Likewise, it is equally difficult to read the thoughts of other supernatural creatures. However, the character may project her thoughts without expending a Willpower point. These thoughts, however, are still obviously intrusions into the target's mind, but the character may attempt to disguise her mental "voice" with a roll of Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty equals the target's Perception + Awareness) so the target doesn't recognize her as the "speaker."

Storytellers are encouraged to describe thoughts as flowing streams of impressions and images, rather than as a sequence of prose (powers such as Telepathic Communication are of more use for that). Instead of making flat statements like "He's planning on killing his former

lover's new boyfriend," say "You see a fleeting series of visions: A couple kissing passionately in a doorway, then the man walking alone at night; you suddenly see your hands, knuckles white, wrapped around a steering wheel, with a figure crossing the street ahead; your heart, mortal now and hammering with panic as you hear the engine rev wildly; and above all, a blazing anger coupled with emotional agony and a panicked fear of loss." Such descriptions not only add to the story, but they also force the player to interpret for herself what her character gleans. After all, understanding minds — especially highly emotional or deranged minds — is a difficult and often puzzling task.

••••• Psychic Projection

The Kindred with this awesome ability projects her senses out of her physical shell, stepping from her body as an entity of pure thought. The vampire's astral form is immune to physical damage or fatigue, and can "fly" with blinding speed anywhere across the earth — or even underground — so long as she remains below the moon's orbit.

The Kindred's material form lies in a torpid state while her astral self is active, and the vampire isn't aware of anything that befalls her body until she returns to it. An ephemeral silver cord connects the Kindred's psyche to her body. If this cord is severed, her consciousness becomes stranded in the astral plane (the realm of ghosts, spirits, and shades). Attempting to return to the vampire's physical shell is a long and terrifying ordeal, especially since there is no guarantee that she will accomplish the journey successfully. This significant danger keeps many Kindred from leaving their bodies for long, but those who dare can learn much.

System: Journeying in astral form requires the player to expend a point of Willpower and make a Perception + Awareness roll. Difficulty varies depending on the distance and complexity of the intended trip; 5 is within sight, 7 is nearby or to a familiar location, and 9 reflects a trip far from familiar territory (a first journey from North America to the Far East; trying to shortcut through the earth). The greater the number of successes rolled, the more focused the character's astral presence is, and the easier it is for her to reach her desired destination.

Failure means the character is unable to separate her consciousness from her body, while a botch can have nasty consequences — flinging her astral form to a random destination on Earth or in the spirit realm, arriving in a place where the sun is active (necessitating a frenzy roll, although the sunlight doesn't do any damage), or hurtling toward the desired destination so forcefully that the silver cord snaps.

The player may spend a point of Willpower to activate this power, and an additional point of Willpower to gain the success necessary to perform the jaunt. This is an exception to the normal rule where a player may not spend more than a single point of Willpower per turn.

Each scene in Psychic Projection requires another point of Willpower and a new roll. Failure indicates that the vampire has lost her way and must retrace the path of her silver cord. A botch at this stage means the cord snaps, stranding the character's psychic form in the mysterious astral plane.

An astral form may travel at great speeds (the Storyteller can use roughly 1000 miles per hour or 1500 kilometers per hour as a general guide) and carries no clothing or material objects of any kind. Some artifacts are said to exist in the spirit world, and the character can try to use one of these tools if she finds one. The character cannot bring such relics to the physical world when she returns to her body, however.

Interaction with the physical world is impossible while using Psychic Projection. At best, the character may spend a Willpower point to manifest as a ghostlike shape. This apparition lasts one turn before fading away; while she can't affect anything physically during this time, the character can speak. Despite lacking physical substance, an astral character can use Auspex normally. At the Storyteller's discretion, such a character may employ some or all Animalism, Dementation, Dominate, Necromancy, Obtenebration, Presence, Thaumaturgy, and similar non-corporeal powers she has, though this typically requires a minimum of three successes on the initial Psychic Projection roll.

If two astral shapes encounter one another, they interact as if they were solid. They may talk, touch, and even fight as if both were in the material world. Since they have no physical bodies, astral characters seeking to interact "physically" substitute Mental and Social Traits for Physical ones (Wits replaces Dexterity, Manipulation supplants Strength, and Intelligence replaces Stamina). Due to the lack of a material form, the only real way to damage another psychic entity is to cut its silver cord. When fighting this way, consider Willpower points to be health levels; when a combatant loses all of her Willpower, the cord is severed.

Although an astrally projected character remains in the reflection of the mortal world, she may venture further into the spirit realms, especially if she becomes

lost. Other beings with particular sensitivity to psychic activity, such as ghosts, werewolves, and even some magi, travel the astral plane as well, and can interact with a vampire's psychic presence normally (although the astrally projected character is not considered a "ghost" for powers such as Necromancy). The observing character notices the astrally projecting vampire with a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 8), requiring more successes than the Psychic Projection activation roll. Even those who do notice you won't be able to identify you; you are merely an immaterial shade hovering in the general area. Storytellers are encouraged to make trips into the spirit world as bizarre, mysterious, and dreamlike as possible. The world beyond is a vivid and fantastic place, where the true nature of things is stronger and often strikingly different from their earthly appearances.

••••• • Clairvoyance

By using Clairvoyance, a vampire can perceive distant events without using Psychic Projection. By concentrating on a familiar person, place, or object, a character can observe the subject's immediate vicinity while staying aware of her own surroundings.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 6) and describes the target she's trying to look in on. If the roll is successful, the character can then perceive the events and environment surrounding the desired target for one turn per success. Other Auspex powers may be used on the scene being viewed; these are rolled normally. Clairvoyance does split the vampire's perceptions between what she is viewing at a distance and what is taking place around her. As a result, while using this power, a character is at +3 difficulty on all rolls relating to actions that affect her physical surroundings.

••••• • Prediction

Some people are capable of finishing their friends' sentences. Elder vampires with Prediction sometimes *begin* their friends' sentences. Prediction is a constant low-level telepathic scan of the minds of everyone the character is in proximity to. While this power does not give the vampire the details of his neighbors' conscious thoughts, it does provide a wealth of cues as to the subjects' moods, suppressed reflexes, and attitudes toward the topic of conversation.

System: Whenever the character is in conversation and either participant in the discussion makes a Social roll, the player may pre-empt the roll to spend a blood point and make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty of the target's Manipulation + Subterfuge). Each success is an additional die that can be applied to the player's Social roll or subtracted from the dice pool of the Social roll being made against the character.

••••• • Telepathic Communication

Telepathy (p. 137) allows a character to pick up only the surface thoughts of other individuals, and to speak to one at a time. With Telepathic Communication, a character can form a more powerful link between his mind and that of other subjects, allowing them to converse in words, concepts, and sensory images at the speed of thought (and without the need for Willpower expenditure, unlike with Telepathy). Vampires with this level of Auspex can act as "switchboard operators," creating a telepathic web that allows all participants to share thoughts with some or all other members of the network as they choose.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Empathy (difficulty equals the target's current Willpower points) to establish contact, although a willing subject may allow the vampire access and thus obviate the need for a roll. The maximum range at which a subject may be contacted and the maximum number of individuals who may be linked simultaneously with this power depends on the Auspex rating of the vampire who initiates contact (see sidebar).

Auspex Rating	No. of Targets	Approximate Range
Auspex 6	3 subjects	500 miles/800 kilometers
Auspex 7	Perception rating	1000 miles/1500 kilometers
Auspex 8	Perception + Empathy	500 miles/800 kilometers per point of Intelligence
Auspex 9	2x (Perception + Empathy)	1000 miles/1500 kilometers per point of Intelligence



••••• •• Karmic Sight

The power of Aura Perception (Auspex 2) allows a vampire to take a brief glimpse at the soul of a subject. This power takes Aura Perception several steps forward, allowing a vampire who has mastered Auspex 2 to probe the inner workings of a subject's mind and soul.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty equals the subject's current Willpower). The degree of success determines the information gained.

Successes	Result
Botch	The character gains a Derangement or Psychological/Mental/Supernatural Flaw similar to one of the target's for one night, at Storyteller discretion.
1 success	As per five successes on an Aura Perception roll.
2 successes	Subject's Nature, Demeanor, and Humanity or Path can be determined.
3 successes	Any outside influences on the subject's mind or soul, such as Dominate or a demonic pact, can be detected.
4 successes	Subject's Willpower, Humanity or Path, and Virtue ratings can be determined.
5 successes	The state of the subject's karma may be determined. This is a highly abstract piece of information best left to Storyteller discretion, but should reveal the general balance between "good" and "bad" actions the subject has performed, both recently and over the course of his existence. If the plot merits it, the character may receive visions of one or more incidents in the subject's past that radically altered his destiny. With this degree of success, some fate-related Merits and Flaws (e.g. Dark Fate) can be identified as well.

••••• •• Mirror Reflex

This power was developed by a Toreador elder who made a fearsome reputation through her fencing prowess, acting as a hired champion in dozens of Ventrue duels. Mirror Reflex is similar to Prediction in that it is in essence a low-level telepathic scan of an opponent, but this power taps into physical (rather than social) reflexes, allowing the character to anticipate an enemy's moves in personal combat.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Perception + the combat skill the opponent is using (difficulty of the subject's Manipulation + combat skill in use). Each success is an additional die that can he applied to the character's dice pools during the next turn of combat for any actions taken against the scanned opponent. The use of Mirror Reflex does take one combat action, and the power has a maximum range in yards or meters equal to the character's Willpower rating.

••••• ••• Psychic Assault

Psychic Assault is nothing less than a direct mind-to-mind attack which uses the sheer force of an elder's will to overpower his target. Victims of Psychic Assault show little outward sign of the attack, save for nosebleeds and expressions of intense agony; all injuries by means of this psychic pressure inflicted are internal. A medical examination of a mortal victim of a Psychic Assault invariably shows the cause of death to be a heart attack or aneurysm, while vampires killed with this power decay to dust instantly, regardless of age.

System: The character must touch or make eye contact with his target. The player spends three blood points (and a Willpower point, if assaulting a vampire or other supernatural being) and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation in a contested roll against the victim's Willpower. The result depends on the number of net successes the attacker rolls.

Successes	Result
Botch	The target becomes immune to the attacker's Psychic Assault for one night per each "1" rolled.
Failure	The target is unharmed and may determine that a psychic assault is taking place by succeeding on a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 6).
1 success	The target is shaken but unharmed. He loses a temporary Willpower point.
2 successes	The target is badly frightened. He loses three temporary Willpower points and, if a vampire, must roll Courage (difficulty of the attacker's Auspex rating) to avoid Rötschreck.
3 successes	The target loses six temporary Willpower points and, if a vampire, must roll Courage as above. If this causes him to lose his last temporary Willpower point, he loses a permanent Willpower point and receives three health levels of bashing damage (soaked normally).
4 successes	The target loses all temporary Willpower points and half of his permanent Willpower points (round down) and suffers three health levels of lethal damage (soaked normally).
5 successes	The target must roll his permanent Willpower (difficulty 7). If he succeeds, apply the effect of four successes, and is also rendered unconscious for the rest of the night. If he fails, the Psychic Assault kills him instantly.

••••• •••• False Slumber

Possibly the source of many Malkavians' conviction that their sire is alive and well on the astral plane, this power allows a Methuselah's spirit to leave his body while in torpor. While seemingly asleep, the vampire is able to project astrally, think, and perceive events normally.

System: No roll is needed. This power is considered to be active whenever the vampire's body is in torpor, and astral travels are handled as per the rules for Psychic Projection. The vampire is not able to awaken physically at will, however — waking from torpor is handled per the normal rules for such an action (see p. 283).

A vampire with this power whose silver cord is severed in astral combat loses all Willpower points, as per the rules for astral combat under Psychic Projection, but is not killed. Instead, he loses the use of this Auspex power and half of his permanent Willpower points. Both the Auspex 9 power and the Willpower must be bought back with experience points. The vampire's soul slowly returns to his body over the course of a year and a day, during which time he may not be awakened from torpor by any means.

Seeing the Unseen

Auspex enables Kindred to perceive many things beyond the limits of lesser senses. Among its many uses, Auspex can detect the presence of a supernatural being who is hidden from normal sight (a vampire using Obfuscate, for example, or a ghost) or pierce illusions created by the Discipline of Chimerstry. Note: "Normal sight" includes regular, non-Auspex use of the Awareness skill.

• **Obfuscate:** When a vampire tries to use her heightened perceptions to notice a Kindred hidden with Obfuscate, she detects the subject's presence if her Auspex rating is higher than his Obfuscate, and she succeeds at a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty equals 7 minus the number of dots by which her Auspex exceeds his Obfuscate). Conversely, if the target's Obfuscate outranks her Auspex, he remains undiscovered. If the two ratings are equal, both characters make a resisted roll of Perception + Awareness (Auspex user) against Manipulation + Subterfuge (Obfuscate user). The difficulty for both rolls is 7, and the character with the most successes wins.

• **Chimerstry:** Likewise, vampires with Auspex may seek to penetrate illusions created with Chimerstry. The Auspex-wielder must actively seek to pierce the illusion (i.e., the player must tell the Storyteller that his character is trying to detect an illusion). The Auspex-user and Chimerstry-wielder then compare relative ratings, per Obfuscate, above. The process is otherwise identical to piercing Obfuscate.

• **Other Powers:** Since the powers of beings like magi and wraiths function differently from vampiric Disciplines, a simple comparison of relative ratings isn't applicable. To keep things simple, both characters make a resisted roll. The vampire rolls Perception + Awareness, while the subject rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge. Again, the difficulty is 7, and the character with the most successes wins.

Celerity

Not all vampires are slow, meticulous creatures. When needed, some vampires can move fast — *really* fast. Celerity allows Assamites, Brujah, and Toreadors to move with astonishing swiftness, becoming practically a blur. The Assamites use their speed in conjunction with stealth to strike quickly and viciously from the shadows before they are noticed. Brujah, on the other hand, simply like the edge that the power gives them against overwhelming odds. The Toreador are more inclined to use Celerity to provide an air of unnatural grace to live performances or for an extra push to complete a masterpiece on time, but they can be as quick to draw blood as any assassin or punk when angered.

System: Each point of Celerity adds one die to every Dexterity-related dice roll. In addition, the player can spend one blood point to take an extra action up to the number of dots he has in Celerity at the beginning of the relevant turn; this expenditure can go beyond her normal Generation maximum. Any dots used for extra actions, however, are no longer available for Dexterity-related rolls during that turn. These additional actions must be physical (e.g., the vampire cannot use a mental Discipline like Dominate multiple times in one turn), and extra actions occur at the end of the turn (the vampire's regular action still takes place per her initiative roll).

Normally, a character without Celerity must divide their dice if she wants to take multiple actions in a single turn, as per p. 248. A character using Celerity performs his extra actions (including full movement) without penalty, gaining a full dice pool for each separate action. Extra actions gained through Celerity may not in turn be split into multiple actions, however.

Celerity 6+

Usually, elders progress in Celerity according to the existing progression – more dots mean more dice and potential actions a turn that are available, and levels 6 through 9 have those powers available at each level, as normal. Similar to other Disciplines at level 6 or higher, though, alternative powers exist. If the elder wants to purchase an alternative power instead of the typical progression (as per the sidebar on p. 127), she can, but she forfeits the capacity an extra Dexterity die and potential for an extra action to gain the special

power instead. She can go back later and purchase the "normal" dot of Celerity later, as desired.

Note that it isn't possible to "skip" levels of progression for the normal Discipline – an elder with Celerity 7 that buys Projective at level 6 needs to go back and buy the normal level 6 power before getting the access to his level 7 power that grants the capacity for up to seven Dexterity dice or actions in a turn.

••••• • Projectile

Despite the fact that a vampire with Celerity moves at incredible speeds, any bullets he fires or knives he throws while in this state don't move any faster than they normally would. Scientifically minded Kindred have been baffled by the phenomenon for centuries, but more pragmatic ones have found a way to work around it. Projectile enables a vampire to take his preternatural speed and transfer it into something he has thrown, fired, or launched.

System: Projectile requires the expenditure of a blood point. In addition, the player must decide how many levels of his character's Celerity he is putting into the speed of the launched object. Thus, a character with Celerity 6 in addition to Projectile could decide to put three dots' worth of speed into a knife he is throwing, and use the other three dots as dice or potential extra actions as per normal. Each dot of Celerity infused into a thrown object becomes an automatic success to the attack's damage roll, assuming the weapon or projectile actually hits.

••••• •• Flower of Death

In combat, speed kills. A proper application of Celerity in combat can turn even the meekest Cainite into a walking abattoir. How much more deadly, then, is a vampire with the ability to utilize his preternatural speed to the utmost in combat? Flower of Death allows a vampire to take his Celerity and apply it in full to each hand-to-hand or melee attack he makes.

System: Flower of Death costs four blood points, but the spectacular effect is well worth it. Once the power is in effect, the vampire's bonus dice for Dexterity rolls get added to every dice pool for attack the character makes (even if the roll doesn't use Dexterity) until the end of the scene. Further, even if the Kindred uses some of his Celerity dots for extra actions during the scene, these extra dice are still available. The effect is limited to hand-to-hand or melee weapon attacks — firearms,



bows, and other ranged weapons are excluded — but does grant the attacker additional dice for damage rolls.

Flower of Death is not cumulative — it is impossible to "layer" uses of the power over one another to create astronomical dice pools.

••••• ••• Zephyr

Zephyr produces an effect vaguely similar to one of the legendary comic book-style uses of enhanced speed, allowing its practitioner to run so fast he can run across water. Particularly successful applications of Zephyr allow a vampire to go so far as to run up walls and, in at least one recorded instance, across a ceiling.

System: Zephyr requires the expenditure of one point of blood and one point of Willpower. Unfortunately, Zephyr requires such extremes of concentration that it cannot be combined with any form of attack, or indeed, with most any sort of action at all. If a character using Zephyr feels the need to do something else while moving at such tremendous speeds, a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) is required. Needless to say, botches at Zephyr speed can be spectacular in all the wrong ways.

Most times, a vampire moving at such a rate of speed is barely visible, appearing more as a vampire-shaped blur than anything else. Observers must succeed on a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7) to get a decent look at a Kindred zooming past in this fashion.

Chimerstry

The Ravnos are known as masters of illusion, although the reason why is lost to history. Rumors abound of Ravnos *ghûls*, rakshasas, and shapeshifters, but whatever its origins, Chimerstry remains a potent and powerful weapon for the Deceivers. The Discipline is, fundamentally, an art of conjuration that converts the vampire's will into phantoms that confound the senses and technology alike. Even vampires fall under the sway of the Ravnos' illusory world, unless they have a strong enough grasp of Auspex (see p. 142). The Ravnos often use this power to swindle and seduce their victims into acts that work out badly for the victim (but great for the Ravnos).

Illusions created by Chimerstry can be seen for what they are by a victim who "proves" the illusion's falsehood (e.g., a person who walks up to an illusory wall, expresses his disbelief in it, and puts his hand through it effectively banishes the illusion), and explicitly incredible illusions are seen as false immediately (e.g., dragons breathing fire or gravity working in reverse). Sometimes, frequent targets of Chimerstry end up attempting to disbelieve everything around them, leading to derangements (and, quite often, to the amusement of the Ravnos).

• Ignis Fatuus

The vampire may conjure a minor, static mirage that confounds one sense. For instance, he may evoke a sulfurous stench, the appearance of stigmata, or the shatter of broken glass. Note that though tactile illusions can be felt, they have no real substance; an invisible but tactile wall cannot confine anyone, and invisible razor-wire causes no real damage. Similarly, the vampire must know the characteristics of what he's creating. While it's easy enough to estimate what a knife wound might look like, falsifying a person's voice or a photograph of a childhood home requires knowledge of the details.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower for the vampire to create this illusion. The volume of smells, ambient lighting, smoke clouds, and the like are limited to roughly 20 cubic feet (half a cubic meter) per dot the vampire has in Chimerstry. The illusion lasts until the vampire leaves its vicinity (such as stepping out of the room) or until another person sees through it somehow. The Cainite may also end the illusion at any time with no effort.

•• Fata Morgana

The Cainite can now create illusions that appeal to all the senses, though they remain static. For example, the vampire could make a filthy cellar appear as an opulent ballroom, though she could not create a glittering chandelier or a score of graceful dancers. Again, the illusion has no solid presence, though it's easy enough to fool an enraptured visitor with suggestions of what she might expect. A bucket of brackish water is as cool as chilled champagne, after all.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and a blood point to create the illusion. These static images remain until dispelled, in much the same way that an Ignis Fatuus illusion does.

••• Apparition

Not really a power unto itself, Apparition allows a vampire to give motion to an illusion created with Ignis Fatuus or Fata Morgana. Thus, the Cainite could create the illusion of a living being, running water, fluttering drapes, or a roaring fire.

System: The creator spends one blood point to make the illusion move in one significant way, or in any number of subtle ways. For example, the vampire could create the illusion of a lurking mugger lurching at her victim, or she could create the illusion of a desolate street, down which a chill wind blows trash while a streetlamp flickers and hums. Taking complicated actions besides maintaining the illusion — that is, anything that would require a dice roll — first requires success on a Willpower roll, resulting in the dissolution of the false construct if the roll fails.

Once the creator stops concentrating on the illusion, it can continue in simple, repetitive motions – roughly speaking, anything that can be described in a simple sentence, such as a guard walking back and forth in front of a steel door. After that, the vampire cannot regain control over the illusion – she can either allow it to continue moving as ordered, or let it fade as described under Ignis Fatuus.

•••• Permanency

This power, also used in conjunction with Ignis Fatuus or Fata Morgana, allows a mirage to persist even when the vampire cannot see it. In this way, Ravnos often cloak their temporary havens in false trappings of luxury, or ward off trespassers with illusory guard dogs.

System: The vampire need only spend a blood point, and the illusion becomes permanent until dissolved (including "programmed" illusions like those created by Apparition).

••••• Horrid Reality

Rather than create simple illusions, the vampire can now project hallucinations directly into a victim's mind. The target of these illusions believes completely that the images are real; a hallucinatory fire can burn him, an imaginary noose can strangle him, and an illusory wall can block him. This power affects only one person at a time; though others can see the illusion, it doesn't impact them in the same way. Other people can try to convince the victim that his terrors are not real, but he won't believe them. Note that targets with enough dots in Auspex can still attempt to roll for Seeing the Unseen (p. 142).

System: A Horrid Realty illusion costs two Willpower points to set in motion and lasts for an entire scene (though its effects may last longer; see below). If the vampire is trying to injure his victim, his player must roll Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty of the victim's Perception + Self-Control/Instinct). Each success inflicts one health level of lethal damage on the victim that cannot be soaked — the Cainite assaults the victim's mind and perceptions, not his body. If the player wishes to inflict less damage or change it to bashing, he may announce a maximum amount of damage before rolling the dice. Secondary effects (such as frenzy rolls for illusory fire) may also occur.

The victim heals all his damage instantaneously if he can be convinced that the damage he took was illusory, but convincing him may take some doing, such as with at least two successes on a Charisma + Empathy roll (difficulty equal to the Manipulation + Subterfuge of the Cainite using Horrid Reality). The target must be convinced of the attack's illusory nature within 24 hours of its taking place, or it becomes too well established in his memory, and he will have to heal the damage using blood (if a vampire) or over time (if mortal).

This power cannot actually kill its victims (though a target with a heart condition may well die from fright). A victim "killed" by an illusory attack loses consciousness or enters torpor.

••••• • False Resonance

Illusions of living or unliving beings are all well and good until someone decides to read the illusion's mind or its aura. The automatic failure to perceive any sense of the target's thoughts or emotions will usually be passed off as bad luck, lack of concentration, or whatever reason any Kindred might construct to explain why he didn't succeed in gleaning information through supernatural means. A vampire can use False Resonance to overlay auras and thoughts on illusions, as well as leave a trace that other emotionally resonant powers can detect later.

System: This power automatically applies to any other use of Chimerstry as the user wishes. In effect, any attempt to use Auspex, the Dementation power Eyes of Chaos, or similar sensory powers that generates five or fewer successes will detect an aura, thoughts, Demeanor or whatever the power would normally detect. Thoughts won't be exceptionally complex, and will relate to whatever is going on around the illusion in a mundane and simplistic way. Auras will consist of colors related to specific emotions (anger, sadness, hatred, love, and happiness) and will not show much complexity beyond that. Spirit's Touch can pick up the same emotional resonance until the next sunrise.

••••• • Fatuus Mastery

A Ravnos with Fatuus Mastery has no restriction on how often she may use the first three levels (Ignis Fatuus, Fata Morgana, and Apparition) and can maintain or control illusions with minimal concentration or fatigue. Kindred who rely on the high cost of Chimerstry to limit a vampire's ability to use illusions are in for a very rude surprise when they encounter a Cainite with this power.

System: Fatuus Mastery negates the Willpower and blood cost for using the first three levels of Chimerstry. In addition, the Kindred may direct movement for a number of illusions equal to his Intelligence without intense concentration. Furthermore, the character can maintain the illusion as long as it remains within his Willpower rating in miles (or about one and a half times that in kilometers), although he may not make it react to events around it if he has no way to perceive those events.

••••• • Shared Nightmare

Even though Horrid Reality is visible to all onlookers, it can only inflict "damage" on one victim. With Shared Nightmare, a vampire can inflict her tormented visions on a crowd.

System: To use this power, the player must spend two Willpower points, plus one blood point per target. The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge once, but compares the results against each target individually. The difficulty is still each victim's Perception + Self-Control/Instinct.

••••• •• Far Fatuus

This power allows a Kindred to project illusions to any area he can see or visualize. Under most circumstances, accomplishing this requires him to have visited the location in question before he can project illusions there. Although more difficult, a vampire may project illusions on the basis of a description, a photo, or a video clip.

System: The difficulty for using Far Fatuus depends on the user's familiarity with the location. The player must roll Perception + Subterfuge to affect the location. Once this roll is successful, the vampire may then use any other Chimerstry power on that location.

Difficulty	Familiarity
6	As familiar as one's haven; currently viewing with Clairvoyance or Psychic Projection
7	Visited three or more times
8	Visited once; viewing on a live feed
9	Described in detail; seen it in a video or have a undoctored photo

••••• •• Suspension of Disbelief

A Ravnos with this power can imbue her Chimerstry with a sense of reality that makes it easier for viewers to believe in the illusion. No matter how strange or surreal the illusion is, an onlooker will accept it as real. If the illusion is wildly unrealistic (fire-breathing dragons, a pack of aliens), once it is no longer in his sight, the observer will question what he saw and eventually deny the event ever happened. A vampire can also use this power to make something appear unbelievable, whether it's real or not. In this case, observers will write off what they're seeing as some kind of trick or hallucination.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). The number of successes determines how many witnesses are affected. If the player uses the power to make something look unbelievable, Auspex will show the thing in question to be an illusion unless the Auspex rating is not high enough to penetrate the Kindred's Chimerstry.

Successes	Result
1 success	Five people
2 successes	10 people
3 successes	25 people
4 successes	50 people
5 successes	Everyone who can see it

••••• ••• Synesthesia

A Cainite who masters this power can shuffle others' senses around to suit his preferences. He can select one target and inflict a serious, disorienting, and all-encompassing case of synesthesia upon her, making it impossible for her to interact meaningfully with the real world for the power's duration. The vampire has complete control over how the target's senses work and can manipulate them to suit. For example, he may decide that she smells all sounds as varieties of nauseating stenches, or more subtly, he may exchange pain for pleasure. Used against a crowd, sensations are randomly shuffled, so one man will see what the woman next

to him sees, but hears what the man 15 feet behind him hears and feels what the child a block away feels. The end result is extremely disorienting for all victims.

System: When used against a single victim, the player must spend one Willpower point and roll Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty is victim's current Willpower points). For use against crowds, the difficulty is 7, and the power affects everyone within the vampire's line of sight and subtracts one point from Perception per success rolled. Victims whose Perception has been reduced to zero can only sit down and wait for the disorientation to end. Duration against a single victim is determined below. Against a crowd, the power persists until sunrise.

Successes	Result
1 success	One week
2 successes	One month
3 successes	Six months
4 successes	One year
5 successes	Permanent

••••• •••• Mayaparisatya

This expression of Chimerstry allows the Cainite to directly alter or create real objects or creatures, although such changes are of finite duration. A vampire with this power can transform the air around a rival Kindred into fire or render a locked door insubstantial. A more harrowing use of this power enables the vampire to force an object out of existence by transforming it into nothing more than a wisp of its former reality.

System: To use this power, the player must spend 10 blood points and one permanent Willpower point and roll Manipulation + Subterfuge. Difficulty for the roll is 6 for affecting inanimate objects, and the victim's Willpower rating for affecting characters. This power can affect anything within miles (kilometers) of the vampire, as long as the character is aware of the target in some way. If used with Far Fatuus, the effects are centered on the chosen location. This power can affect a number of conscious targets equal to the Kindred's Willpower per use.

When dealing with inanimate objects, the number of successes determines how drastic the alteration may be. No matter how many successes the player rolls, the duration is always a scene. This power can affect any objects of a type within the vampire's targeted area.

Successes	Result
1 success	Render an object harmless (swords won't cut, firearms won't shoot), create a large volume of obscuring smoke
2 successes	Change an object into another object (turn candles into tarantulas, etc.)
3 successes	Render the object insubstantial, make smoke solid
4 successes	Cause drastic changes (stone becomes highly flammable)
5 successes	Cause the environment to behave illogically (gravity twists sideways, rivers stand still as hills flow upward)
6+ successes	Delete any offending material objects from existence. This effect is permanent (to use this on conscious targets, follow the system described below).

When using the power on conscious targets, consult the table above for alterations (such as forcing the victim into another form or transforming her into a different substance). If using the power to negate the victim's existence, the power inflicts two levels of unsoakable aggravated damage per success. If the power doesn't kill the victim, subtract one dot of Strength and Stamina per success. The damage must be healed normally, but the lost Attributes return at the end of the scene. Victims of this power look hazy and insubstantial. Victims destroyed with this power simply vanish.

Dementation

Dementation is the Discipline that allows a vampire to focus and channel madness into the minds of those around him. Though it's the natural legacy of the Malkavians, practitioners of Dementation need not actually be mad to use the Discipline… but it helps.

Disturbingly, Dementation doesn't actually make their victims mad, but rather it seems to break down the doors to the hidden darkness of the target's mind, releasing into the open whatever is found there. The Malkavians claim that this is because insanity is the next logical step in mental evolution, a transhumanist advancement of what modern people consider consciousness. Other Kindred scoff that this reasoning is an outright justification for the chaos that Dementa-

tion brings. They don't scoff too loudly, however, lest the Malkavian advance *their* consciousness next.

• Passion

The vampire stirs his victim's emotions, either heightening them to a fevered pitch or blunting them until the target is completely desensitized. The Cainite may not choose which emotion is affected; she may only amplify or dull emotions already present in the target. In this way, a vampire can inflame mild irritation into quivering rage or atrophy true love into casual interest.

System: The character talks to her victim, and the vampire's player rolls Charisma + Empathy (difficulty equals the victim's Humanity or Path rating). The number of successes determines the duration of the altered state of feeling. Effects of this power might include one- or two-point additions or subtractions to difficulties of frenzy rolls, Virtue rolls, rolls to resist Presence powers, etc.

Successes	Result
1 success	One turn
2 successes	One hour
3 successes	One night
4 successes	One week
5 successes	One month
6+ successes	Three months

•• The Haunting

The vampire manipulates the sensory centers of his victim's brain, flooding the victim's senses with visions, sounds, scents, or feelings that aren't really there. The images, regardless of the sense to which they appeal, are only fleeting "glimpses," barely perceptible to the victim. The vampire using Dementation cannot control what the victim perceives, but may choose which sense is affected.

The "haunting" effects occur mainly when the victim is alone, and mostly at night. They may take the form of the subject's repressed fears, guilty memories, or anything else that the Storyteller finds dramatically appropriate. The effects are never pleasant or unobtrusive, however. The Storyteller should let her imagination run wild when describing these sensory impressions; the victim may well feel as if she is going mad, or as if the world is.

System: After the vampire speaks to the victim, the player spends a blood point and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty of his victim's Perception + Self-Control/Instinct). The number of successes determines the length of the sensory "visitations." The precise effects are up to the Storyteller, though particularly eerie or harrowing apparitions can certainly reduce dice pools for a turn or two after the manifestation.

Successes	Result
1 success	One night
2 successes	Two nights
3 successes	One week
4 successes	One month
5 successes	Three months
6+ successes	One year

••• Eyes of Chaos

This peculiar power allows the vampire to take advantage of the fleeting clarity hidden in insanity. She may scrutinize the "patterns" of a person's soul, the convolutions of a vampire's inner nature, or even random events in nature itself. The Kindred with this power can discern the most well-hidden psychoses, or gain insight into a person's true self. Malkavians with this power often have (or claim to have) knowledge of the moves and countermoves of the great Jyhad, or the patterns of fate.

System: This power allows a vampire to determine a person's true Nature, among other things. The vampire concentrates for a turn, then her player rolls Perception + Occult. The difficulty depends on the intricacy of the pattern. Discerning the Nature of a stranger would be difficulty 9, a casual acquaintance would be an 8, and an established ally a 6. The vampire could also read the message locked in a coded missive (difficulty 7), or even see the doings of an invisible hand in such events as the pattern of falling leaves (difficulty 6). Almost anything might contain some hidden insight, no matter how trivial or meaningless. The patterns are present in most things, but are often so intricate they can keep a vampire spellbound for hours while she tries to understand their message.

This is a potent power, subject to adjudication. Storytellers, this power is an effective way to introduce plot threads for a chronicle, reveal an overlooked clue, foreshadow important events, or communicate critical



information a player seeks. Important to its use, though, is delivering the information properly. Secrets revealed via Eyes of Chaos are never simple facts; they're tantalizing symbols adrift in a sea of madness. Describe the results of this power in terms of allegory: "The man before you appears as a crude marionette, with garish features painted in bright stage makeup, and strings vanishing up into the night sky." Avoid stating plainly, "You learn that this ghoul is the minion of a powerful Methuselah."

•••• Voice of Madness

By merely addressing his victims aloud, the Kindred can drive targets into fits of blind rage or fear, forcing them to abandon reason and higher thought. Victims are plagued by hallucinations of their subconscious demons, and try to flee or destroy their hidden shames. Tragedy almost always follows in the wake of this power's use, though offending Malkavians often claim that they were merely encouraging people to act "according to their natures." Unfortunately for the vampire concerned, he runs a very real risk of falling prey to his own voice's power.

System: The player spends a blood point and makes a Manipulation + Empathy roll (difficulty 7). One target is affected per success, although all potential victims must be listening to the vampire's voice.

Affected victims fly immediately into frenzy or a blind fear like Rötschreck. Kindred or other creatures capable of frenzy, such as Lupines, may make a frenzy check or Rötschreck test (Storyteller's choice as to how they are affected) at +2 difficulty to resist the power. Mortals are automatically affected and don't remember their actions while berserk. The frenzy or fear lasts for a scene, though vampires and Lupines may test as usual to snap out of it.

The vampire using Voice of Madness must also test for frenzy or Rötschreck upon invoking this power, though his difficulty to resist is one lower than normal. If the initial roll to invoke this power is a failure, however, the roll to resist the frenzy is one higher than normal. If the roll to invoke this power is a botch, the frenzy or Rötschreck response is automatic.

••••• Total Insanity

The vampire coaxes the madness from the deepest recesses of her target's mind, focusing it into an overwhelming wave of insanity. This power has driven countless victims, vampire and mortal alike, to unfortunate ends.

System: The Kindred must gain her target's undivided attention for at least one full turn to enact this power. The player spends a blood point and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty of her victim's current Willpower points). If the roll is successful, the victim is afflicted with five derangements of the Storyteller's choice (see p. 290). The number of successes determines the duration.

Successes	Result
1 success	One turn
2 successes	One night
3 successes	One week
4 successes	One month
5+ successes	One year

On a botch… well, the Storyteller can decide what a vampire inflicts upon herself by attempting to incite the primal hells lurking within the darkest recesses of a victim's mind.

The victim (or the target of a botch) can spend a number of Willpower points equal to the successes rolled to end the duration prematurely. The Storyteller decides when such Willpower points can be spent (such as after a therapy session or after a friend has managed to prove a particular delusion to be false).

••••• • Lingering Malaise

While lesser Dementation powers allow a vampire to inflict temporary (though often long-lasting) madness upon a victim, elders of the Clan have developed the ability to infect the minds of their victims with permanent maladies. Lingering Malaise causes permanent psychological shifts within the victim, making him, as one Gangrel elder remarked, "an honorary Lunatic."

System: The character speaks to his victim for at least a minute, describing the derangement that Lingering Malaise will inflict. The player rolls Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty equal to the victim's current Willpower points); the victim resists with a Willpower roll (using his permanent Willpower at difficulty 8). If the user of Lingering Malaise scores more successes, the victim gains a permanent derangement chosen by the individual who inflicts it. Lingering Malaise may only be used to inflict one derangement per night on any given victim, though multiple attempts may be made until the derangement takes hold.

••••• • Shattered Mirror

Although Dementation's low-level effects are primarily to initiate or promote insanity rather than to create it spontaneously, some of its more potent manifestations are not as subtle. The wielder of this fearsome power can transfer her own deranged mindset into the psyche of a hapless victim, spreading her own brand of insanity like a virus.

System: The vampire must establish eye contact (p. 152) with her intended victim to apply this power. The player then rolls Charisma + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points) resisted by the target's Wits + Self-Control/Instinct (difficulty equal to the Dementation user's current Willpower points). If the aggressor wins, the target gains all of her derangements and Mental Flaws for a period of time determined by the number of net successes the aggressor scored:

Successes	Result
1 success	one hour
2 successes	one night
3 successes	one week
4 successes	one month
5 successes	six months
6+ successes	one year per success over 5

••••• •• Restructure

The elder with this fearsome power has the ability to twist his victims' psyches at their most basic levels, warping their very beings. The subject of Restructure retains her memories, but her outlook on life changes completely, as if she has undergone a sudden epiphany or religious conversion. This effect goes much deeper than the implantation of a derangement; it actually performs a complete rewrite of the victim's personality.

System: As the description says, this power allows the vampire to change his target's Nature to one more suitable to his ends. To accomplish this, the character must make eye contact (p. 152) with his intended victim. The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty equals the victim's Wits + Subterfuge). If he rolls a number of successes equal to or greater than the target's Self-Control/Instinct, the target's Nature changes to whatever the player using Restructure desires. This

effect is permanent and can be undone only by another application of Restructure (though subtle differences from the character's original Nature may still remain, as it is impossible for such a fundamental change to occur flawlessly). A botch on this roll changes the character's own Nature to that of his intended victim.

••••• ••• Personal Scourge

Similar to the Auspex power of Psychic Assault (p. 141), this fearsome ability allows the elder to turn the very strength of her victim's mind against him, inflicting physical harm with the power of his own will. Victims of this self-powered attack spontaneously erupt in lacerations and bruises, spraying blood in every direction and howling in agony. Those who have observed such an attack with Auspex note that the victim's aura swirls with violent psychosis and erupts outward in writhing appendages — a sight that can make even the most jaded Tzimisce quail.

System: The vampire must touch or establish eye contact (p. 152) with her target. The player rolls Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty equal to the target's Stamina + Self-Control/Instinct) and spends two Willpower points. For a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, the victim rolls his own permanent Willpower as lethal damage against himself. This damage can be soaked with his own Humanity or Path of Enlightenment (difficulty 6); Fortitude does not add to this soak dice pool, nor does body armor. He may take no actions during this time other than thrashing and gibbering; this includes spending blood to heal.

••••• •••• Lunatic Eruption

This fearsome ability is only known to have been applied a few times in recorded Kindred history, most spectacularly during the final nights of the last battle of Carthage. It is effectively a psychic nuclear bomb, used to incite every intelligent being within several miles (kilometers) into an orgy of bloodlust and rage. It is suspected that the Malkavians have used the threat of this power as a bargaining chip in several key negotiations.

System: The player spends four Willpower points and rolls Stamina + Intimidation (difficulty 8). The area of effect is determined by the number of successes scored:

Successes	Result
1 success	One city block
2 successes	An entire neighborhood
3 successes	A large downtown area
4 successes	Several neighborhoods
5 successes	An entire metropolitan area (approximately 30 miles or 45 kilometers)
6+ successes	An additional 10 miles or 15 kilometers for every success past 5

Within this area, all sentient creatures fall prey to their baser instincts. Mortals spontaneously riot, looting and burning between bouts of mass violence. Kindred enter hunger-induced frenzies, draining dry as many vessels as they can sink their fangs into. An entire city can quite literally be driven temporarily insane by this power. Lunatic Eruption's effects persist until the next sunrise, and anyone entering its area of effect (centered on the site at which it was used, not on the character who applied it) falls under its spell. However, momentum may carry the violence spawned by this power much farther — and keep it going much longer — than the power itself can force.

Victims of Lunatic Eruption may resist with Self-Control/Instinct rolls (difficulty equal to the Dementation user's permanent Willpower rating); each success provides one hour of lucidity, which most wise individuals use to leave the power's area of effect (leaving the "blast radius" removes the power's influence). The source of Lunatic Eruption may be pinpointed if a character is using Heightened Senses or an equivalent power at the time it is used; this is automatic and requires no roll. However, this grants no knowledge of what actually happened — the observer simply "feels" a massive psychic shockwave explode from the character using the power.

Dominate

Dominate is one of the most dreaded of Disciplines. It is a vampire's ability to influence another person's thoughts and actions through her own force of will. Dominate requires that the vampire capture her victim's gaze (see p. 152); as such, it may be used against only one subject at a time. Further, commands must be issued verbally, although simple orders may be made with signs — for example, a pointed finger and forceful expression to indicate "Go!" However, the subject won't comply if he can't understand the vampire, no matter how powerful the Kindred's will is.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, vampires to which Dominate comes naturally tend to be from willful, domineering Clans. The Giovanni, Lasombra, Tremere, and Ventrue all consider an iron will to be a boon, and are eager to impose that iron will on any who would move against them.



Eye Contact

Many myths and stories exist about a vampire's mystical ability to put people under her spell by looking deeply into her victim's eyes. The persistence of such stories through the ages isn't surprising, since a number of Kindred Disciplines powers (most notably Dominate) require eye contact in order to work. Other vampires, learning of this requirement, have attempted everything from wearing mirrored sunglasses to gouging out their own eyes in order to prevent an elder from exerting his will upon them.

But Kindred are not so easily thwarted.

The need for eye contact stems from the aggressor Kindred's need to see his victim's soul, and the eyes are the traditionally known as the windows to the soul. While the vampire needs to capture his target's attention, the target's eyes need not be present for such a power to work (although the arts of the Tzimisce make this somewhat challenging at times) — they only need to find the soul of his victim laid bare.

A target trying to avoid eye contact can make a Willpower roll against a difficulty equal to Dominate user's Manipulation + Intimidation (or other appropriate combination for other Disciplines or specific situations, at the Storyteller's discretion). The difficulty may be reduced for mitigating factors: -1 in the case of the target obscuring his eyes slightly (such as closing her eyes or wearing dark sunglasses) up to a -3 for the eyes being completely unseen (such as with a thick blindfold or having her eyes torn out). Ultimately, however, it is up to the Storyteller to decide whether eye contact is established in a particular case.



• Command

The vampire locks eyes with the subject and speaks a one-word command, which the subject must be obey instantly. The order must be clear and straightforward: run, agree, fall, yawn, jump, laugh, surrender, stop, scream, follow. If the command is at all confusing or ambiguous, the subject may respond slowly or perform the task poorly. The subject cannot be ordered to do something directly harmful to herself, so a command like "die" is ineffective.

The command may be included in a sentence, thereby concealing the power's use from others. This effort at subtlety still requires the Kindred to make eye contact at the proper moment and stress the key word slightly. An alert bystander — or even the victim — may notice the emphasis. Still, unless she's conversant with supernatural powers, the individual is likely to attribute the utterance and the subsequent action to bizarre coincidence.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equals the target's current Willpower points). More successes force the subject to act with greater vigor or for a longer duration (continue running for a number of turns, go off on a laughing jag, scream uncontrollably).

Remember, too, that being commanded to against one's Nature confounds the use of this power. Being told to "sleep!" in a dangerous situation or "attack!" in police custody may not have the desired effect, or indeed, any effect at all.

•• Mesmerize

With this power, a vampire can verbally implant a false thought or hypnotic suggestion in the subject's subconscious mind. Both Kindred and target must be free from distraction, since Mesmerize requires intense concentration and precise wording to be effective. The vampire may activate the imposed thought immediately or establish a stimulus that will trigger it later. The victim must be able to understand the vampire, though the two need to maintain eye contact only as long as it takes to implant the idea.

Mesmerize allows for anything from simple, precise directives (handing over an item) to complex, highly involved ones (taking notes of someone's habits and relaying that information at an appointed time). It is not useful for planting illusions or false memories (such as seeing a rabbit or believing yourself to be on fire). A subject can have only one suggestion implanted at any time.



System: The player rolls Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points). The number of successes determines how well the suggestion takes hold in the victim's subconscious. If the vampire scores one or two successes, the subject cannot be forced to do anything that seems strange to her (she might walk outside, but is unlikely to steal a car). At three or four successes, the command is effective unless following it endangers the subject. At five successes or greater, the vampire can implant nearly any sort of command.

No matter how strong the Kindred's will, his command cannot force the subject to harm herself directly or defy her innate Nature. So, while a vampire who scored five successes could make a 98-pound weakling attack a 300-pound bouncer, he could not make the mortal shoot herself in the head.

If a vampire tries to Mesmerize a subject before the target fulfills a previously implanted directive, compare the successes rolled to those gained during the implanting of the first suggestion. Whichever roll had the greater number of successes is the command that now governs in the target's behavior; the other suggestion is wiped clean. If the successes rolled are equal, the newer command supplants the old one.

••• The Forgetful Mind

After capturing the subject's gaze, the vampire delves into the subject's memories, stealing or re-creating them at his whim. The Forgetful Mind does not allow for telepathic contact; the Kindred operates much like a hypnotist, asking directed questions and drawing out answers from the subject. The degree of memory alteration depends on what the vampire desires. He may alter the subject's mind only slightly (quite effective for eliminating memories of the victim meeting or even being fed upon by the vampire) or utterly undo the victim's memories of her past.

The degree of detail used has a direct bearing on how strongly the new memories take hold, since the victim's subconscious mind resists the alteration. A simplistic or incomplete false memory ("You went to the movies last night") crumbles much more quickly than does one with more attention to detail ("You thought about texting your girlfriend while you were in line at the new movie theater, but you knew you'd have to turn your phone off once you got inside. You liked the movie well enough, but the plot seemed weak. You were tired after it ended, so you went home, watched a little late-night television, and went to bed.").

Even in its simplest applications, The Forgetful Mind requires tremendous skill and finesse. It's a relatively simple matter to rifle through a victim's psyche and rip out the memories of the previous night without knowing what the subject did that evening. Doing so leaves a gap in the victim's mind, however — a hole that can give rise to further problems down the road. The Kindred may describe new memories, but these recollections seldom have the same degree of realism that the subject's original thoughts held.

As such, this power isn't always completely effective. The victim may remember being bitten, but believe it to be an animal attack. Greater memories may return in pieces as dreams, or through sensory triggers like a familiar odor or spoken phrase. Even so, months or years may pass before the subject regains enough of her lost memories to make sense of the fragments.

A vampire can also sense when a subject's memories were altered through use of this power, and even restore them, as a hypnotist draws forth suppressed thoughts.

System: The player states what sorts of alteration he wants to perform, then rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points). Any success pacifies the victim for the amount of time it takes the vampire to perform the verbal alteration, provided the vampire does not act aggressively toward her. The table below indicates the degree of modification possible to the subject's memory. If the successes rolled don't allow for the extent of change the character desired, the Storyteller reduces the resulting impact on the victim's mind.

Successes	Result
1 success	May remove a single memory; lasts one day.
2 successes	May remove, but not alter, memory permanently.
3 successes	May make slight changes to memory.
4 successes	May alter or remove entire scene from subject's memory.
5 successes	May reconstruct entire periods of subject's life.

To restore removed memories or sense false ones in a subject, the character's Dominate rating must be equal to or higher than that of the vampire who made the alteration. In that situation, the player must make a Wits + Empathy roll (difficulty equal to the original vampire's permanent Willpower rating) and score more successes than his predecessor did. However, the Kindred cannot use The Forgetful Mind to restore his own memories if they were stolen in such a way.

•••• Conditioning

Through sustained manipulation, the vampire can make a subject more pliant to the Kindred's will. Over time, the victim becomes increasingly susceptible to the vampire's influence while simultaneously growing more resistant to the corrupting efforts of other Kindred. Gaining complete control over a subject's mind is no small task, taking weeks or even months to accomplish.

Kindred often fill their retainers' heads with subtle whispers and veiled urges, thereby ensuring these mortals' loyalty. Yet vampires must pay a high price for the minds they ensnare. Servants Dominated in this way lose much of their passion and individuality. They follow the vampire's orders quite literally, seldom taking initiative or showing any imagination. In the end, such retainers become like automatons or the walking dead.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points) once per scene. Conditioning is an extended action, for which the Storyteller secretly determines the number of successes required. It typically requires between five and 10 times the subject's Self-Control/Instinct rating. Targets with more empathic Natures may require a lower number of successes, while those with willful Natures require a higher total. Only through roleplaying may a character discern whether his subject is conditioned successfully.

A target may become more tractable even before becoming fully conditioned. Once the vampire accumulates half the required number of successes, the Storyteller may apply a lower difficulty to the vampire's subsequent uses of Dominate. After being conditioned, the target falls so far under the vampire's influence that the Kindred need not make eye contact or even be present to retain absolute control. The subject does exactly as she is told (including taking actions that would injure herself), as long as her master can communicate with her verbally. No command roll is necessary unless the subject is totally isolated from the vampire's presence (in a different room, over the phone). Even if a command roll fails, the target will still likely carry out part of the orders given, simply because her master wishes it.

After the subject is fully conditioned, other Kindred find her more difficult to Dominate. Such conditioning raises others' difficulties by two (to a maximum of 10).

It is possible, though difficult, to shake Conditioning. The subject must be separated entirely from the vampire to whom she was in thrall. This period of separation varies depending on the individual, but the Storyteller may set it at six months, less a number of weeks equal to the subject's permanent Willpower rating (so a person with 5 Willpower must stay away from the vampire for just under five months). The subject regains her personality slowly during this time, though she may still lapse into brief spells of listlessness, despair, or even anger. If the vampire encounters the target before that time passes, a single successful Charisma + Leadership roll (difficulty of the target's current Willpower points) on the part of the vampire completely reasserts the dominance.

If the subject makes it through the time period without intervention by her master, the target regains her former individuality. Even so, the vampire may reestablish conditioning more easily than the first time, since the subject is now predisposed to falling under the Kindred's mental control. New attempts require half the total number of successes than the last bout of conditioning did (which means the subject reaches the threshold for reduced difficulties sooner, as well).

••••• Possession

At this level of Dominate, the force of the Kindred's psyche is such that it can utterly supplant the mind of a mortal subject. Speaking isn't required, but the vampire must capture the victim's gaze. During the psychic struggle, the contestants' eyes are locked on one another.

Once the Kindred overwhelms the subject's mind, the vampire moves his consciousness into the victim's body and controls it as easily as he uses his own. The mortal falls into a mental fugue while under possession. She is aware of events only in a distorted, dreamlike fashion. In turn, the vampire's mind focuses entirely on controlling his mortal subject. His own body lies in a torpid state, defenseless against any actions made toward it.

Vampires cannot possess one another in this fashion, as even the weakest Kindred's mind is strong enough to resist such straightforward mental dominance. Only through a blood bond can one vampire control another to this degree. Supernatural creatures also cannot be possessed in this way, although ghouls that have drunk from the vampire using Possession can.

System: The vampire must completely strip away the target's Willpower prior to possessing her. The player spends a Willpower point, then rolls Charisma + Intimidation, while the subject rolls his Willpower in a resisted action (difficulty 7 for each). For each success the vampire obtains over the victim's total, the target loses a point of temporary Willpower. Only if the attacker botches can the subject escape her fate, since this makes the target immune to any further Dominate attempts by that vampire for the rest of the story.

Once the target loses all her temporary Willpower, her mind is open. The vampire rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty 7) to determine how fully he assumes control of the mortal shell. Similar to the Animalism power Subsume the Spirit, multiple successes allow the character to utilize some mental Disciplines, noted on the chart below. (Vampires possessing ghouls can use the physical Disciplines the ghoul possesses, but not the mental ones.)

Successes	Result
1 success	Cannot use Disciplines
2 successes	Can use Auspex and other sensory powers
3 successes	Can also use Presence and other powers of emotional manipulation
4 successes	Can also use Dementation, Dominate, and other powers of mental manipulation
5 successes	Can also use Chimerstry, Necromancy, Thaumaturgy, and other mystical powers

The character may travel as far from his body as he is physically able while possessing the mortal. The vampire may also venture out during the day in the mortal form. However, the vampire's own body must be awake to do so, requiring a successful roll to remain awake (see p. 262). If the vampire leaves the mortal shell (by choice, if his body falls asleep, through supernatural expulsion, after sustaining significant injury, etc.), his consciousness returns to his physical form in an instant.

Once freed from possession, the mortal regains mental control of herself. This can happen in an instant, or the victim may lie comatose for days while her psyche copes with the violation.

The vampire experiences everything the mortal body feels during possession, from pleasure to pain. In fact, any damage the victim's body sustains is also applied to the character's body (though the Kindred may soak as normal). If the mortal dies before the vampire's soul can flee from the body, the character's body falls into torpor. Presumably this is in sympathetic response to the massive trauma of death, though some Kindred believe that the vampire's soul is cast adrift during this time and must find its way back to the body.

The Kindred can remain in the mortal's body even if his own torpid form is destroyed, though such a pathetic creature is not likely to exist for long. At each sunrise, the vampire must roll Courage (difficulty 8) or be expelled from the body. If forced from the mortal body, the vampire tumbles into the astral plane, his soul permanently lost in the spirit world. A vampire trapped in a mortal body may not be "re-Embraced." If the Embrace occurs to such a creature, he simply meets Final Death.

••••• • Chain the Psyche

Not content with merely commanding their subjects, some elders apply this power to ensure obedience from recalcitrant victims. Chain the Psyche is a Dominate technique that inflicts incapacitating pain on a target who attempts to break the vampire's commands.

System: The player spends a blood point when her character applies Dominate to a subject. Any attempt that the subject makes to act against the vampire's implanted commands or to recover stolen memories causes intense pain. When such an attempt is made, the Storyteller rolls the character's Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the subject's Stamina + Empathy). Each success equals one turn that the victim is unable to act, as she is wracked with agony. Each application of Chain the Psyche crushes a number of resistance attempts equal to the character's Manipulation rating, after which the effect fades.

••••• • Loyalty

With this power in effect, the elder's Dominate is so strong that other vampires find it almost impossible to break with their own commands. Despite the name, Loyalty instills no special feelings in the victim — the vampire's commands are simply implanted far more deeply than normal.

System: Any other vampire attempting to employ Dominate on a subject who has been Dominated by a vampire with Loyalty has a +3 difficulty modifier to his rolls and must spend an additional Willpower point.

••••• • Obedience

While most Kindred must employ Dominate through eye contact, some powerful elders may command loyalty with the lightest brush of a hand.

System: The character can employ all Dominate powers through touch instead of eye contact (although eye contact still works). Skin contact is necessary — simply touching the target's clothing or something she is holding will not suffice. The touch does not have to be maintained for the full time it takes to issue a Dominate command, though repeated attempts to Dominate a single target require the character to touch the subject again.

••••• •• Mass Manipulation

A truly skilled elder may command small crowds through the use of this power. By manipulating the strongest minds within a given group, a gathering may be directed to the vampire's will.

System: The player declares that he is using this power before rolling for the use of another Dominate power. The difficulty of the roll is that which would be required to Dominate the most resistant member of the target group — if he cannot be Dominated, no one in his immediate vicinity can. For every success past that needed to inflict the desired result on the first target, the player may choose one additional target to receive the same effect in its entirety. The vampire needs to make eye contact only with the initial target.

••••• •• Still the Mortal Flesh

Despite its name, this power may be employed on vampires as well as mortals, and it has left more than one unfortunate victim writhing in agony — or unable to do even that. A vampire who has developed this power is able to override her victim's body as easily as his mind in order to cut off his senses or even stop his heart. It is rumored that this power once came more easily to the Kindred, but modern medicine has made the bodies and spirits of mortals more resistant to such manipulations.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points + 2; a difficulty over 10 means that this power cannot affect the target at all). The effect lasts for one turn per success. The player must choose what function of the target's body is being cut off before rolling. She may affect any of the body's involuntary functions; breathing, circulation, perspiration, sight, and hearing are all viable targets. While Still the Mortal Flesh is in

effect, a vampire can either stop any one of those functions entirely or cause them to fluctuate erratically.

The exact effects of any given bodily function being shut off are left to the Storyteller. Most mortals panic if suddenly struck blind, but only the shutdown of the heart will kill a target on the spot. Vampires are unaffected by loss of heartbeat or breathing, but may be rendered deaf and blind as easily as mortals.

••••• ••• Far Mastery

This refinement of Obedience (though the character need not have learned Obedience first) allows the use of Dominate on any subject that the vampire is familiar with, at any time, over any distance. If the elder knows where his target is, he may issue commands as if he were standing face- to-face with his intended victim.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty equal to the subject's Wits + Stealth) to establish contact. If this roll succeeds, Dominate may be used as if the character had established eye contact with the target. A second Willpower point must be spent in order for a vampire to use this power on another vampire or other supernatural being.

••••• •••• Speak Through the Blood

The power structures of Methuselahs extend across continents and centuries. This power allows such ancients to wield control over their descendants, even those far outside their geographic spheres of influence. Speak Through the Blood allows an elder to issue commands to every vampire whose lineage can be traced to her — even if the two have never met. Thus, entire broods act to further the goals of sleeping ancients whose existences they may be completely unaware of. The vampires affected by this power rarely act directly to pursue the command they were given, but over a decade or so, their priorities slowly shift until the fulfillment of the Methuselah's command is among their long-term goals. Speak Through the Blood, because it takes effect so slowly, is rarely recognized as an outside influence, and its victims rationalize their behavior as "growing and changing," or something to that effect.

System: The player spends a permanent Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Leadership. The difficulty of this roll is equal to four plus the number of Generations to which the command is to be passed. Unless the character is aware of the location and present agenda of every descendant of his — a highly unlikely event — he may only issue general commands,



such as "work for the greater glory of Clan Malkavian" or "destroy all those who seek to extinguish the light of knowledge." Speak Through the Blood can be used by a vampire in torpor. Commands issued through this power last for one decade per success on the roll. Difficulties over 10 require one additional success for each point past 10, making it that much more difficult to issue long-lasting commands stretching down to the ends of one's lineage.

A vampire who has reached Golconda is not affected by this power, and is completely unaware that it has been used. Her childer, however, are affected normally unless they are also enlightened. Ghouls of the victims of this power are also affected, but to a lesser extent.



Resisting Dominate

Most victims cannot stand against the effects of Dominate. Still, there are situations where this Discipline is powerless to sway the subject.

• **Mortals:** Few mortals can hope to resist Dominate, as their strength of will nothing compared to the supernatural magnetism of a vampire. Still, there are extremely rare individuals who, due to strong religious faith, unique psychic talent, or extraordinary mental resolve, can shrug off this Discipline's effects. Only a foolish vampire ignores the potential threat such human beings represent. (See p. 372 for more information about True Faith, for example.)

• **Vampires:** It is impossible to Dominate another Kindred who is of stronger Blood. The vampire must be of an equal or higher Generation than the target for the powers to be effective. Scholars of the Kindred condition suspect that this is one of the protections Caine put in place to protect himself from the whims of his willful childer. A faction of those who believe this theory also maintain that this implies that Caine himself employed the Discipline of Dominate.

• **Nature:** A character's Nature can have a distinct impact on how easily Dominate influences her. A vampire might easily control subjects with inherently empathic Natures (Caregiver, Child, Conformist), while those whose Natures denote a great degree of inner strength (Bravo, Director, Rebel) can be more of a challenge. The Storyteller may reduce the required difficulty or number of successes by one or two when the player rolls against those subjects with "weaker" Natures, or raise them by a similar amount for "stronger" Natures. On the other hand, "strong" Natures might be *more* easiliy influenced to take aggressive actions — for example, coaxing a Rebel to denounce the Prince is likely easier than goading a Conformist to do the same thing. Ultimately, the Storyteller must adjudicate.

• **Botches:** If a Dominate roll botches, the target is rendered immune to future attempts by the same vampire for the rest of the story.



Fortitude

Although all vampires have an unnatural constitution that make them much sturdier than mortals, Fortitude bestows a resilience that would make an action movie hero envious. Vampires with this Discipline can shrug off agonizing trauma and make the most bone-shattering impact look like a flesh wound. The power even offers protection against the traditional banes of vampires, such as sunlight and fire, and the Gangrel, Ravnos, and Ventrue all find that edge incredibly useful.

System: A character's rating in Fortitude adds to his Stamina for the purposes of soaking normal damage (bashing and lethal). A character with this Discipline may also use his dots in Fortitude to soak aggravated damage, though Kindred cannot normally soak things like vampire bites, werewolf claws, magical effects, fire, sunlight, or massive physical trauma. See p. 272, for further details on soaking and damage.

Fortitude 6+

Elder vampires progress in Fortitude in the same way as Celerity (see p. 142). They can increase their basic mastery of the Discipline or to take an alternate power such as one of those detailed below.

••••• • Personal Armor

Nobody likes to get hit, not even Cainites. The easiest way to ensure that one is not hit (or shot, or stabbed) repeatedly is to take the weapon with which one is assaulted away from one's attacker and break it. That's where Personal Armor comes in. This application of Fortitude, derived from one popular in the 12th century, causes anything that strikes a Kindred who employs Personal Armor to shatter on impact.

System: With the expenditure of two blood points, a vampire can add preternatural hardness to his flesh. Every time an attack is made on the Kindred using Personal Armor (one which he fails to dodge), his player rolls Fortitude (difficulty 8). If the roll grants more successes than the attacker rolled, then the weapon used to make the attack shatters against the vampire's flesh. ("Magical" weapons may be resistant to this effect, at the Storyteller's discretion.) The vampire still takes normal damage if the attack is successful, even if the weapon shatters in the process, though this damage may be soaked. If the attack roll botches, any normal weapon automatically shatters.

A hand-to-hand attack causes the attacker equal damage to that suffered by the defender when Personal Armor comes into play. If the attacker misses entirely, she still takes one level of bashing damage.

The effects of this power last for the duration of the scene.

••••• •• Shared Strength

It's one thing to laugh off bullets, rather another to watch the ricochets mow down everyone around you. Many Kindred have wished, at one time or another, that they could lend their monstrous vitality to those around them. Those few vampires who have mastered Shared Strength can — if only for a little while.

System: Shared Strength duplicates a portion of a vampire's Fortitude (one dot for every point of blood the vampire spends) to another being. Activating the power requires a Stamina + Survival roll (difficulty 8, increased to 9 if the target is not a normal mortal), and the expenditure of a point of Willpower. Furthermore, the vampire must mark his target by pressing a drop of his blood onto the target's forehead. This stain remains visible as long as the power is in effect, the duration of which is determined by the initial roll.

Successes	Duration
1	One turn
2	One scene
3	One hour
4	One night
5	One week
6	One month
7	One year

The target of this power need not be willing to accept the benefit to receive it, and the bestowing vampire can end the effect at any time for no cost. Particularly sadistic Kindred have come up with any number of ways in which a target's "devil's mark" and supernatural endurance can be used to land him in a great deal of trouble.

A vampire can never bestow more levels of Fortitude than he himself possesses.

••••• ••• Adamantine

Adamantine functions as a more potent version of Personal Armor.

System: This power mimics the effects of Personal Armor, save that the vampire who uses it takes no damage from attacks that shatter on her skin.

Necromancy

Necromancy is both a Discipline and a school of blood magic devoted to the command of the souls of the dead. It's similar to Thaumaturgy in that it has several "paths" and accompanying "rituals" rather than a strict linear progression of powers. The study of Necromancy is not widespread among the Kindred, and its practitioners — primarily the Giovanni — are shunned and despised for their foul practices (until those practices become useful, of course).

Over the centuries, the various schools of vampiric Necromancy have evolved and diversified from an earlier form of death magic, leaving several distinct paths of necromantic magic available to Cainites. Nearly all modern necromancers learn the Sepulchre Path first before extending their studies to other paths. The primary Necromancy path increases automatically as the character increases her overall Necromancy rating. Other paths must be bought separately, using the experience costs for secondary paths.

Like Thaumaturgy, Necromancy has also spawned a series of rituals. While not nearly so immediate in effect as the basic powers of Necromancy, Necromantic rituals can have impressive long-term effects. Unsurprisingly, the elements of Necromantic ritual are things like long-buried corpses and hands from the cadavers of hanged men, so obtaining suitable materials can be quite difficult.

System: A Cainite necromancer must learn at least three levels in his primary path before learning his first level in a secondary Necromancy path. He must then master the primary path (all five levels) before acquiring any knowledge of a third path.

As with Thaumaturgy, advancement in the primary path costs the normal experience amount, while study of additional Necromantic paths incurs an additional experience-point cost (see p. 124). Because Necromancy is not quite so rigid a study as Thaumaturgy is, the rolls required to use Necromantic powers can vary from path to path and even within individual paths. The commonly-learned Sepulchre Path is presented first, with the remaining paths presented in alphabetical order.

Statistics for ghosts may be found in Chapter Nine, p. 385.

The Sepulchre Path

Through the Sepulchre path, the vampire can witness, summon, and command the spirits of the dead. At higher levels, the necromancer can force the ghost to remain in a particular place or object, or even damage wraiths directly. Since many other areas of Necromancy involve dealing with ghosts, this is the most common path for necromancers to start with.

Note: If a Kindred uses a Sepulchre Path power in the presence of something of great importance to the ghost the power affects, the chances for success in the summoning increase dramatically (reduce the difficulty by 2). This might be the bathtub in which the ghost's mortal body was drowned, the rusted-out wreck of the car where the ghost's physical body was trapped alive, or something unrelated to the ghost's demise, such as a favorite book or a child-ghost's beloved nursery.

• Witness of Death

Before it is possible to control the dead, one must perceive them. This power allows just that, attuning a vampire's unliving senses to the presence of the incorporeal.



Under its effects, a necromancer sees ghosts as translucent phantoms gliding among the living and hears their whispers and moans. She feels the spectral cold of their touch and smells their musty hint of decay. Yet one cannot mistake the dead for the living, as they lack true substance, and appear dimmer and less real than creatures of flesh and blood. When a vampire uses this power, her eyes flicker with pale blue fire that only the dead can see.

Ghosts resent being spied upon, and more powerful shades may use their own powers to inflict their displeasure on the incautious.

System: The player rolls Perception + Awareness (difficulty 5). Success allows the vampire to perceive ghosts as described for the rest of the scene (in the mortal world — seeing ghosts in the land of the dead requires Shroudsight, on p. 163). Failure has no special effect, but a botch means the vampire can see *only* the dead for the scene; everything else appears as shapeless, dim shadows. While the vampire's other senses remain attuned to the living, he is all but blind in this state and suffers a +3 difficulty to most vision-based Perception rolls and attacks. Ghosts notice the glowing eyes of a vampire using this power only with a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 7).

•• Summon Soul

The power of Summon Soul allows a necromancer to call a ghost back from the Underworld, for conversational purposes only. In order to perform this feat (and indeed, most of the feats in this path), the vampire must meet certain conditions:

- The necromancer must know the name of the wraith in question, though an image of the wraith obtained via Witness of Death (see above), Shroudsight (see p. 163), Auspex, or other supernatural perception will suffice.
- An object with which the wraith had some contact in life must be in the vicinity, though it need not be something of significant importance to the ghost's living consciousness. A piece of the ghost's corpse works well for this purpose (and even provides a -1 difficulty modifier).

Certain types of ghosts cannot be summoned with this power. Vampires who achieved Golconda before their Final Deaths, or who were diablerized, are beyond the reach of this summons. Likewise, many ghosts of the dead cannot be called — they are destroyed, unable to return to the mortal plane, or lost in the eternal storm of the Underworld.

System: The player spends one blood point and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty equal to 7 or the ghost's Willpower, whichever is higher). The vampire must know the name of the ghost and have on hand an object the ghost had contact with in life. Provided that the target has died and become a ghost, success means the shade appears before the necromancer as described above. Not everyone becomes a ghost — it requires a strong will to persevere in the face of death, and souls that have found peace pass on to their eternal rewards. Moreover, it is possible for the dead to suffer spiritual dissolution and destruction after they become ghosts. The Storyteller should consider all these factors when deciding whether a particular ghost exists for a vampire to summon.

Vampires know if their summons should have succeeded by a feeling of sudden, terrifying descent as they reach too far into the great Beyond, so this power can be used to determine whether a soul has endured beyond death. While a failure means the vampire wastes blood, a botch calls a spirit other than the one sought — usually a malevolent ghost known as a Spectre (see p. 385). Such a fiend torments the one who summoned it with every wicked power at its disposal.

Once a ghost is summoned, it may not deliberately move out of sight of the vampire, though it can take any other actions, including direct attack. The vampire's player may spend a Willpower point to dismiss the ghost at any time (unless he rolled a botch). Otherwise, at the end of the scene, shadows engulf the spirit once more and return it to its original location.

••• Compel Soul

With this power, a vampire can command a ghost to do his bidding for a while. Compulsion of the soul is a perilous undertaking and, when used improperly, can endanger vampire and wraith alike.

System: The vampire locates and approaches the intended ghost or calls it to his presence with Summon Soul. As with the previous power, he must have the ghost's name and an object it handled in life. His player then spends one blood point and rolls Manipulation + Occult in a resisted roll against the ghost's Willpower (difficulty 6 for both rolls).

If the vampire wins, the number of net successes determines the degree of control he has over the ghost (as described below). Moreover, the vampire's control keeps ghosts that have been called with Summon Soul from returning to their original locations at the end of the scene. If the ghost wins, the vampire loses a number

of Willpower points equal to the ghost's net successes. On a tie, the roll becomes an extended contest that continues each turn until one side wins. If the vampire botches at any point, the ghost is immune to any use of the vampire's Necromancy for the rest of the scene. If the ghost botches, it must obey as if the vampire's player had rolled five net successes.

Successes	Result
1 success	The ghost must perform one simple task for the vampire that does not place it in certain danger. It must attend to this task immediately, although it can delay the compulsion and pursue its own business at a cost of one Willpower point per scene. The ghost may not attack the vampire until this task is complete. It is possible to issue the task of answering one question, in which case the ghost must answer truthfully and to the best of its knowledge.
2 successes	The vampire may issue two orders or ask two questions as outlined for one success. Alternatively, the vampire may demand a simple task with a real possibility of danger, as long as the danger is not certain. The ghost may delay this compulsion with Willpower.
3 successes	The vampire may issue three orders as outlined for one success. Alternatively, he may demand the ghost fulfill one difficult and dangerous task or a simple assignment that has an extended duration of up to one month. The ghost may delay such orders with Willpower.
4 successes	The vampire may issue four orders, as outlined for one success, or assign two tasks, as for two successes. Alternatively, the vampire may command the ghost to perform one complex assignment that puts the ghost at extreme risk, or perform any number of non-threatening tasks as the vampire's slave for up to one month (or, if the necromancer spends a permanent point of Willpower, for a year and a day). It is possible for ghosts to delay individual tasks, but not put off enslavement.
5+ successes	The vampire may issue multiple orders that have a sum complexity or danger of five successes' worth. Instead, the vampire may order the ghost to perform any one action that it is capable of executing within one month. Such a task can place the ghost in immediate peril of destruction, or even force it to betray and assault loved ones. It is not possible for ghosts to delay a task of this magnitude with Willpower — they *must* obey.

•••• Haunting

Haunting binds a summoned ghost to a particular location or, in extreme cases, an object. The wraith cannot leave the area to which the necromancer binds it without risking destruction.

System: The player spends one blood point while standing at the location for the haunting or touching the intended prison. She then has the ghost brought to her by whatever means she desires, though Summon Soul is quickest and most reliable. Her player then rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty is equal to the target's current Willpower points if resisted, to a minimum of 4; otherwise it is 4). The difficulty rises by one if the vampire wishes to place the ghost in an object. As usual, the difficulty decreases by one if the necromancer has a part of the spirit's corpse in addition to knowing its name (minimum difficulty 3).

Each success binds the ghost within the location or object for one night. This duration extends to one week if the player spends a Willpower point or a year and a day for a dot of permanent Willpower. A wraith attempting to leave the area of a haunting must make an extended Willpower roll (difficulty 9, four cumulative successes necessary in a single scene) or take a level of aggravated damage for each roll. If the wraith runs out of health levels, it is hurled deep into the Underworld to face destruction.

••••• Torment

It is through the use of this power that powerful necromancers convince bound ghosts to behave — or else.

Torment allows the vampire to strike a wraith as if he himself were in the lands of the dead, inflicting damage on the wraith's ectoplasmic form. The vampire remains in the real world, however, so he cannot be struck in return.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Empathy (difficulty equal to the wraith's current Willpower points), and the vampire reaches out to strike the wraith. Each success inflicts a level of lethal damage on the wraith. Should the wraith lose all health levels, it immediately vanishes into what appears to be a doorway to some hideous nightmare realm. Ghosts "destroyed" thus cannot reappear in or near the real world for a month.

The Ash Path

The Ash Path allows necromancers to peer into the lands of the dead, and even affect things there. Of the paths of Necromancy, the Ash Path is the most perilous to learn, because many of the path's uses increase a necromancer's vulnerability to wraiths.

• Shroudsight

Shroudsight allows a necromancer to see through the Shroud, the mystical barrier that separates the living world from the Underworld. By using this power, the vampire can spot ghostly buildings and items, the landscape of the so-called Shadowlands, and even wraiths themselves. However, an observant wraith may notice when a vampire suddenly starts staring at him, which can lead to unpleasant consequences.

System: A simple roll of Perception + Awareness (difficulty 7) allows a necromancer to utilize Shroudsight. The effects last for a scene.

•• Lifeless Tongues

Where Shroudsight allows a necromancer to see ghosts, Lifeless Tongues allows her to converse with them effortlessly. Once Lifeless Tongues is employed, the vampire can carry on a conversation with the denizens of the ghostly Underworld without spending blood or causing the wraiths to expend any effort.

System: To use Lifeless Tongues requires a roll of Perception + Occult (difficulty 6) and the expenditure of a Willpower point.

••• Dead Hand

Similar to the Sepulchre Path power Torment, Dead Hand allows a necromancer to reach across the Shroud and affect a ghostly object as if it were in the real world. Ghosts are solid to necromancers using this power, and can be attacked. Furthermore, the necromancer can pick up ghostly items, scale ghostly architecture (giving real-world bystanders the impression that he's climbing on air!), and generally exist in two worlds. On the other hand, a necromancer using Dead Hand is quite solid to the residents of the Underworld — and to whatever hostilities they might have.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and makes a successful Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 7) to activate Dead Hand for one scene. For each additional scene the vampire wishes to remain in contact with the Underworld, he must spend a point of blood.

•••• Ex Nihilo

Ex Nihilo allows a necromancer to enter the Underworld physically. While in the lands of the dead, the vampire is essentially a particularly solid ghost. He maintains his normal number of health levels, but can be hurt only by things that inflict aggravated damage on ghosts (weapons forged from souls, certain ghostly powers, etc.). A vampire physically in the Underworld can pass through solid objects in the real world (at the cost of one health level) and remain "incorporeal" for a number of turns equal to her Stamina rating. On the other hand, vampires present in the Underworld are subject to all of the Underworld's perils, including ultimate destruction. A vampire killed in the realm of the dead is gone forever, beyond even the reach of other necromancers.

System: Using Ex Nihilo takes a tremendous toll on the necromancer. To activate this power, the vampire must first draw a doorway with chalk or blood on any available surface. (The vampire may draw doors ahead of time for exactly this purpose.) The player must then expend two points of Willpower and two points of blood before making a Stamina + Occult roll (difficulty 8) as the vampire attempts to open the chalk door physically. If the roll succeeds, the door opens and the vampire steps through into the Underworld.

When the vampire wishes to return to the real world, he merely needs to concentrate (and the player spends another Willpower point and rolls Stamina + Occult, difficulty 6). At Storyteller discretion, a vampire who is too deeply immersed in the Underworld may need to journey to a place close to the lands of the living in order to cross over. Vampires who wander too far into the lands of the dead may be trapped there forever.

Vampires in the Underworld cannot feed upon ghosts without the use of another power; their only sustenance is the blood they bring with them.

••••• Shroud Mastery

Shroud Mastery offers the Kindred the ability to manipulate the veil between the worlds of the living and the dead. By doing so, a necromancer can make it easier for bound wraiths in his service to function, or make it nearly impossible for ghosts to contact the material world.

System: To exercise Shroud Mastery, the necromancer expends two points of Willpower, then states whether he is attempting to raise or lower the Shroud. The player then makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). Each success on the roll raises or lowers the difficulties of all nearby wraiths' attempts to cross the Shroud in any way by one, to a maximum of 10 or a minimum of 3. The Shroud reverts to its normal strength at a rate of one point per hour thereafter.

The Bone Path

The Bone Path is concerned primarily with corpses and the methods by which dead souls can be restored to the living world — temporarily or otherwise.

• Tremens

Tremens allows a necromancer to make the flesh of a corpse shift once. An arm might suddenly flop forward, a cadaver might sit up, or dead eyes might abruptly open. This sort of thing tends to have an impressive impact on people who aren't expecting a departed relative to roll over in his coffin.

System: To use Tremens, the necromancer spends a single blood point, and the player must succeed on a Dexterity + Occult roll (difficulty 6). The more successes that are achieved, the more complicated an action can be effected in the corpse. One success allows for an instantaneous movement, such as a twitch, while five allow the vampire to set up specific conditions under which the body animates ("The next time someone enters the room, I want the corpse to sit up and open its eyes."). Under no circumstances can Tremens cause a dead body to attack or cause damage.

•• Apprentice's Brooms

With Apprentice's Brooms, the necromancer can make a dead body rise and perform a simple function. For example, the corpse could be set to carrying heavy objects, digging, or just shambling from place to place. The cadavers thus animated do not attack or defend themselves if interfered with, but instead attempt to carry out their given instructions until such time as they've been rendered inanimate. Generally it takes dismemberment, flame, or something similar to destroy a corpse animated in this way.

System: A roll of Wits + Occult (difficulty 7) and the expenditure of a point of both blood and Willpower are all that is necessary to animate corpses with Apprentice's Brooms. The number of corpses animated is equal to the number of successes achieved. The necromancer must then state the task to which he is setting his zombies. The cadavers turn themselves to their work until they finish the job (at which point they collapse) or something (including time) destroys them.

Corpses animated in this way have no initiative of their own, and are unable to make value judgments. They respond to very literal instruction. Thus, a zombie could be told "sweep this room every day until all the dust and cobwebs are gone" or "transcribe this manuscript" with an expectation of reasonable results, while a more open-ended command such as "fix this motorcycle" or "research this Necromantic ritual and write down the results" would be doomed to failure.

Bodies energized by this power continue to decay, albeit at a much slower rate than normal.

Zombie Statistics

Corpses animated by a necromancer of the Bone Path have Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Brawl 2, and always act last in a turn (unless there are mitigating circumstances). They have zero Willpower points to spend, but resist attacks as if they have Willpower ratings of 10. All Mental and Social ratings are zero for a reanimated corpse, and zombies never attempt to dodge. Zombies' dice pools are not affected by damage, except that caused by fire or the claws and teeth of supernatural creatures. Most zombies have 10 health levels, but they are incapable of healing any damage they suffer. They have no minds or personalities to affect, so they are immune to uses of powers such as Dominate and Presence. Unless otherwise noted, they likewise cannot be usurped from the control of the necromancer invoking them.

••• Shambling Hordes

Shambling Hordes creates obvious results: reanimated corpses with the ability to attack, albeit neither very well nor very quickly. Once primed by this power, the corpses wait — for years, if necessary — to fulfill the command given them. The orders might be to protect a certain site or simply to attack immediately, but they will be carried out until every last one of the decomposing monsters is destroyed.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower. The player then must succeed on a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 8). Each success allows the vampire to raise another corpse from the grave, and costs one blood point. If the player cannot or chooses not to pay the blood point cost of additional zombies past a certain number, the extra successes are simply lost. Each zombie can follow one simple instruction, such as "Stay here and guard this graveyard against any intruders," or "Kill them!"

Note: Zombies created by Shambling Hordes will wait forever if need be to fulfill their functions. Long after the flesh has rotted off their mystically animated bones, the zombies will wait and wait and wait, still able to perform their duties.

•••• Soul Stealing

This power affects the living, not the dead. It does, however, temporarily turn a living soul into a sort of wraith, as it allows a necromancer to strip a soul from a living body. A mortal exiled from his body by this power becomes a wraith with a single tie to the real world: his now-empty body.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and then makes a contested Willpower roll against the intended victim (difficulty 6). Successes indicate the number of hours during which the original soul is forced out of its housing. The body itself remains autonomically alive but catatonic.

This power can be used to create suitable hosts for Daemonic Possession. It has no effect on Kindred or other supernatural creatures (except ghouls) until such creatures are dead – in the case of vampires, this means Final Death.

••••• Daemonic Possession

Daemonic Possession lets a vampire insert a soul into a freshly dead body. This does not turn the reanimated corpse into anything other than a reanimated corpse, one that will irrevocably decay after a week, but it does



give either a wraith or a free-floating soul (say, that of a vampire using Psychic Projection) a temporary home in the physical world.

System: The body in question must be no more than 30 minutes dead, and the new tenant must agree to inhabit it — a ghost or astral form cannot be forced into a new shell. However, most ghosts would gladly seize the opportunity. Should the vampire, for whatever reason, wish to insert a soul into another vampire's corpse (before it crumbles to ash), the necromancer must achieve five successes on a resisted Willpower roll against the original owner of the body. Otherwise, the interloper is denied entrance.

Note: The soul can use whatever physical abilities (Athletics, Brawl, Potence) his new fleshy home possesses, and whatever mental abilities (Computer, Law, Presence) he already possessed. He cannot use the physical abilities of his old form, or the mental abilities of his new one.

The Cenotaph Path

Practitioners of the Cenotaph Path are primarily concerned with discovering or forging links between the living world and the Shadowlands. It functions on the principle that a Kindred, already a corpse, is an unnatural bridge between the living and the dead, and the necromancer can use this to find other, similar linkages. The basic rudiments of the Cenotaph Path function easily enough once the Kindred learns to attune himself to these connections. Advanced mastery of the path usually entails some brief ritual to forge artificial connections, either through focusing unsavory passions or commanding this world and the Shadowlands together.

• A Touch of Death

Just as a necromancer may exert mastery over the Shadowlands, so too can some ghosts exert themselves in the mortal world. Whereas obvious displays of ghostly power such as bleeding walls or disembodied moans certainly won't be mistaken, some ghostly abilities exert subtle effects that aren't easily recognized. A necromancer sensitized to the residue of the dead, though, can feel whether an object has been touched by a ghost or sense the recent passage of a wraith.

System: The necromancer simply touches a person or object that he suspects is a victim of ghostly influence. The player rolls Perception + Awareness (difficulty 6). If successful, the necromancer can determine whether a ghost has exerted any sort of power on the subject, or even crossed nearby, to the duration detailed below.

Successes	Result
1 success	Last turn; detect use of ghostly powers
2 successes	Last three turns; detect use of ghostly powers
3 successes	Last hour; detect ghost's touch and use of ghostly powers
4 successes	Last day; detect ghost's touch and use of ghostly powers
5 successes	Last week; detect nearby passage of ghost, ghost's touch, and use of ghostly powers

On a failure, the necromancer receives no impressions. A botch reveals a misleading answer (an object may seem tinged with ghostly power when it's not, or vice versa). Should the necromancer succeed in detection while touching an object or person that a ghost is possessing, he immediately becomes aware that the ghost is still inside. The impression gained in such a case is sufficient to count as an image of the spirit for purposes of the Sepulchre Path's powers, so the Kindred may be able to (for example) immediately command a ghost to exit a person whom it possesses.

•• Reveal the Catene

Necromantic compulsions function much more effectively when the caster uses an object of significance to the ghost in question. Such fetters tie the dead to the living lands through their remembered importance — a favored recliner for relaxing, a reviled piece of art foisted off by hated relatives, or some object of similarly intense emotion. Many necromancers can detect such catene through the use of rituals (see Ritual of the Unearthed Fetter, p. 181). With this power, though, the necromancer can determine a fetter with just a few moments of handling. The Kindred simply runs his hands over the object and concentrates on it. He quickly receives an impression of the item's (or person's) importance to wraiths, if any; should the wraith be one known to the necromancer, he immediately recognizes the object as a fetter to that (or those) ghost(s). Successful identification of a connected ghost is not exclusive; that is, if the vampire determines that the object is important to a given wraith, he can also determine if there are other ghosts tied to the item, though he must use the power again to gain their identities.

Many necromancers use this power on objects already identified with A Touch of Death, in order to determine whether the ghost is trying to attune a given fetter or simply toying with the world of the living.

System: The necromancer holds and examines the object for at least three turns — if it's an item, this means turning it over in his hands, running his fingers along it, or otherwise giving it a critical eye; with a person, this may require a more… invasive… examination. The player then spends a blood point and rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty 7). If successful, the Kindred determines whether the object holds any significance to any ghost and, with three or more successes, the identity of at least one such ghost (which allows the Kindred to use the Sepulchre Path on that wraith, if desired). If the necromancer already knows any of the ghosts involved, their ties are revealed with their identity — so, if the necromancer already knows a wraith well enough to summon and compel it with other powers, successful identification of a fetter tells whether the object is tied to that ghost, in addition to any other impressions gained.

If a botch is scored, the necromancer can never successfully use this power on the item being examined.

••• Tread Upon the Grave

The extended awareness granted with the Cenotaph Path allows the necromancer to find locations where the Shadowlands and the living world come close. Often, the necromancer experiences a chill or shiver when stepping into an area where the Underworld lies near the living one. With practice, the vampire can tell exactly where such locations are.

Experienced necromancers learn that certain locations are susceptible to ghostly influence; these haunted areas often become homes of a sort for ghosts. A knowledgeable vampire can thus discover places where the dead are likely to congregate, the better to snare them with other Necromancy powers.

System: The player simply declares intent to sense the Shroud in an area and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). Success reveals whether the location is highly attuned to the Shadowlands, about average (not particularly close to the world of the dead), or far removed from the realm of death. A failing attempt at using the power has no adverse effect, though it may be attempted only once per scene (so the necromancer must either wait for a time or move to a different area before attempting Tread Upon the Grave once more). A botch stuns the necromancer into inaction for a full turn and costs him a temporary Willpower point, as he is overcome by shivers and a sense of overwhelming despair.

With three or more successes, the necromancer can determine whether the Shroud's strength has been artificially altered in the area.

•••• Death Knell

Not all who die go on to become ghosts — many lack the drive to hang on after death or simply have no overwhelming needs that compel them to stick around. Normally, even necromancers have no way to sort those who might become ghosts from the masses who go on to whatever rewards await. Over time, though, a necromancer can become sensitized to the pull that occurs when a soul escapes from a body only to hover in wait, enslaved by its desires. The weight of desperation becomes like a tangible tug, and some necromancers savor this emotion even as they follow the sensation to find the new ghost.

Of course, actually discovering the new ghost can be problematic. The Kindred may need some means to see through the Shroud or may have to send other wraiths to look for the new unfortunate, especially if a large accident or massacre leaves too many corpses for the necromancer to easily discern and test names.

System: Whenever someone dies and becomes a ghost within a half-mile or kilometer of the necromancer, she automatically senses the demise (though many choose to ignore this "always-on" power unless actively seeking someone). This power does not automatically pinpoint the location of the new ghost or identify it, but the player may spend one Willpower point and roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 7) for the necromancer to gain a vague sense of the distance and direction to the new wraith. With one success, the Kindred may sense a vague pull in a general direction; with three successes, the necromancer can sense the direction and guess distance to within a quarter-mile or half a kilometer. With five successes, the necromancer immediately senses the location of the new ghost to within one foot or 30 cm. A failure carries no penalty but a botched attempt sends the necromancer scurrying off in the wrong direction.

The Storyteller may rule that disturbances in the Underworld, intervening magic, or other similar phenomena cloud this sensation, simply to prevent overburdening a chronicle with constant ghost-hunting and dice rolling.

••••• Ephemeral Binding

The most puissant necromancers learn not only to sense the ties between living and dead, but to forge such ties themselves. The master of Ephemeral Binding turns an otherwise mundane object or person into a depository for his own necromantic energy. The undying Curse transforms the subject into a sort of linkage between the living and dead. The necromancer smears his blood on the item in question, which mystically absorbs the vitae and, in doing so, becomes a vessel to anchor a spirit.

System: The necromancer must coat an object with his blood (a full blood point's worth); if the subject is a person, then that individual must ingest the vitae. The player marks off the blood point, spends a point of Willpower, and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 8). If successful, the item temporarily becomes a fetter to one wraith. If the Kindred already knows the name of the wraith or has a strong psychic impression, then the object can become a fetter at any range, even to a ghost who normally does not come near the living world (so long as the ghost still exists). Otherwise, the necromancer must be able to see or sense the ghost (with Witness of Death, Shroudsight, or other such means).

A fetter artificially created in this fashion functions for all necromantic and ghostly purposes as a normal fetter: It can be detected with other Necromancy powers, the vampire gains a bonus to Necromancy against the wraith attuned to it, and the ghost similarly finds exertion of its powers easier upon the subject (so the vampire might turn an unwitting ghoul into a consort for a wraith familiar with possession…). The ghost can sink into the fetter to heal; conversely, if the fetter is destroyed, the wraith is banished to some inaccessible region of the Underworld, perhaps never to return.

A fetter created with Ephemeral Binding lasts for one night per success scored. The expenditure of an additional point of Willpower increases this duration to a week per success, whereas spending a permanent dot of Willpower extends the duration to a year and a day.

Botching with this power not only causes failure but also makes the ghost immediately aware of what the necromancer was trying to do. Most ghosts do not take kindly to meddling Kindred trying to make artificial chains for them.

The Corpse in the Monster

This path enhances the necromantic understanding of the unliving form and allows the user to fully experience the corpse as a gateway between life and death. The path lets the vampire apply some of a corpse's traits to a vampire, and she can enhance or reduce these traits at various levels of the power.

Whither Mortis?

Lost Clans and bloodlines, such as the Cappadocians and the Lamia, had access to an ancient Discipline known as Mortis. Some Kindred scholars claim that Mortis and Necromancy are distinct Disciplines, but for ease the three Mortis paths presented in this book are listed as Necromancy paths. The Cappadocians (see p. 418) specialized in either the Corpse in the Monster or the Grave's Decay, while the Lamia (see p. 422) generally took the Path of the Four Humors as their primary path. Rumors are that the Harbingers of Skulls (see p. 402) in the Sabbat have relearned the Corpse in the Monster and the Grave's Decay, claiming them collectively as the "Mortuus Path," but they still tend to follow most modern necromancers and choose Sepulchre Path as their primary path before learning Grave's Decay or the Corpse in the Monster.

• Masque of Death

The character with this ability can assume a visage of death or inflict that shape on another vampire. The victim's flesh becomes pallid and thin (if it is not already), and skin pulls tight against bone. This ability can be very useful, as it allows one to hide in plain sight in a tomb or crypt at any time (though the character remains as vulnerable to sunlight and fire as ever). When a necromancer uses this power on another Kindred, the victim gains the same corpselike demeanor. In this sense, the ability works as something of a minor curse.

System: The player spends one blood point for the character to gain the form described. Those afflicted

with the Masque of Death lose two points of Dexterity and Appearance (minimum of 1 in Dexterity and 0 in Appearance) for the duration of the power. The player also gets two extra dice to his Intimidation dice pool, should he wish to terrify any onlookers. Further, if the character remains perfectly still, observers must roll five successes on a Perception + Medicine roll (difficulty 7) to distinguish the character from a normal corpse. The player doesn't need to roll anything to have the character stop moving — vampires have no autonomic functions.

If the user inflicts Masque of Death on another vampire, he must spend a blood point, touch the target, and then make a Stamina + Medicine roll (difficulty equal to the target's Stamina + 3). The Masque of Death lasts until the next sunset, unless the character who created the masque wishes to extinguish its effects earlier.

•• Cold of the Grave

The dead feel no pain, though most undead do. With this ability, the character can temporarily take on the unfeeling semblance of the dead, in order to protect herself from physical and emotional harm. When assuming the Cold of the Grave, the vampire's skin becomes unusually cold. When she speaks, her breath mists even in warm air — those with exceptional senses might even see a slight red tinge to the breath.

The power brings a sense of lethargy over the character, as a mortal might feel under the influence of a mildly unpleasant disease. It becomes difficult to rouse oneself to action, and very little seems important enough to really worry about. A corpse has no worries, after all.

System: The player spends one Willpower point. For the remainder of the scene, the character takes no wound penalties, and the player gains an additional die to all dice pools that involve resisting emotional manipulation, such as Intimidation or Empathy. However, the player also loses a die from dice pools to emotionally manipulate others. The character is a cold fish to those she interacts with, and they do not respond readily to her. The Cold of the Grave does not protect the character against the depredations of the Beast. She may be emotionally cold on the surface, but if others taunt and anger her sufficiently, she is still subject to frenzy as normal.

••• Curse of Life

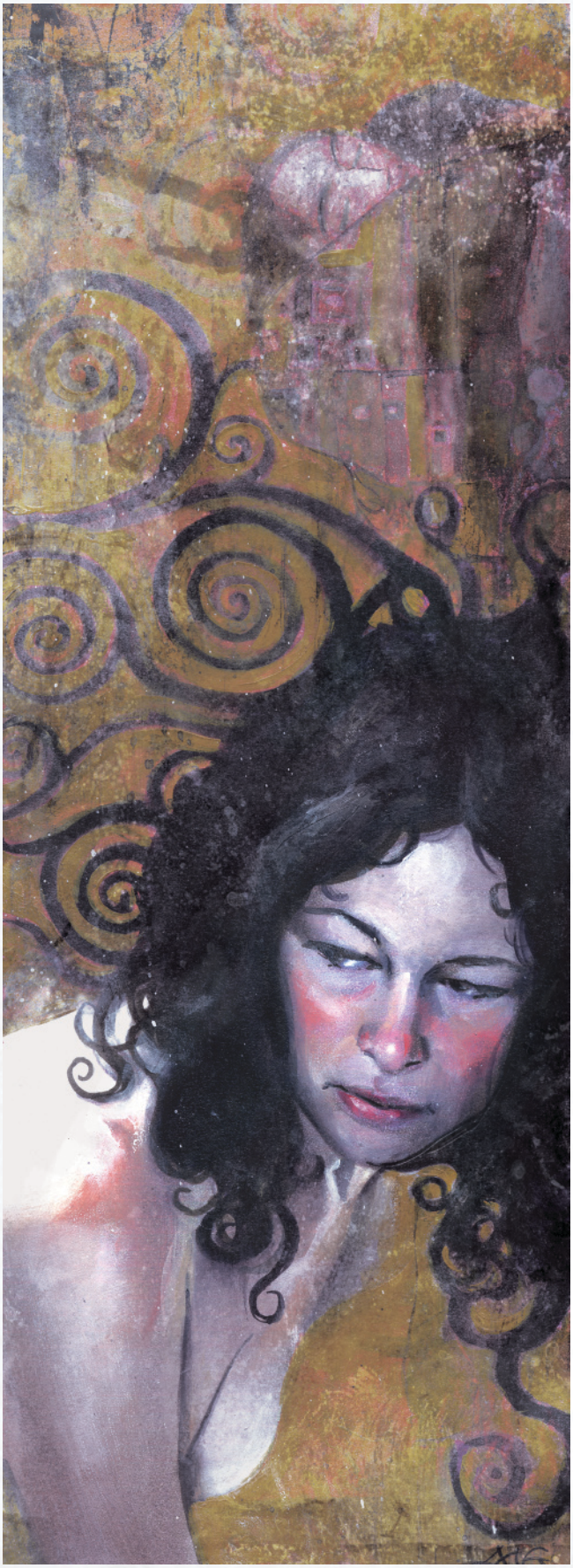
The Curse of Life inflicts some of the undesirable traits of the living upon the undead, removing their corpselike nature and creating a false life to remind them of the worst things about being alive. Targets of this power regain only the unpleasant aspects of life, as culled from the memory of the Discipline's user. This may include mundane hunger and thirst, sweat and other excretions, the need to urinate and defecate, a decrease in sensory acuity, and a particular vulnerability to attacks that the character might normally shrug off.

System: The player spends one Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 8) to affect a target within line of sight and no farther than 20 yards or meters from the character. If the roll succeeds, the target suffers the weaknesses of the living without gaining any benefit from that state. He does not become immune to sunlight or holy artifacts, for instance. However, he does become badly distracted by mundane needs, with the net result that his player suffers a +2 difficulty penalty to all rolls. He can ignore these distractions at the cost of one Willpower point per scene. Additionally, the victim cannot use blood to raise his Physical Attributes while this power is in effect, and Willpower cannot eliminate this penalty. The power remains in effect until the next sunset.

•••• Gift of the Corpse

This power, one of the most potent on the Corpse in the Monster path, enables a necromancer to ignore most of her race's inherent weaknesses for a short time. A dead body is not particularly vulnerable to sunlight, holy artifacts, frenzy, or being staked through the heart, after all, and so it is with a vampire using the Gift of the Corpse. As with the Cold of the Grave, above, the character using this power takes on an even more deathlike mien. It lasts for less than a minute, typically, but that time may be enough to enable a character to charge through a burning building without fearing frenzy or instant death.

System: The player spends one Willpower and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 8). For every success, the character can spend one turn in a state in which he is more akin to an animated corpse than a vampire. Holy artifacts and sanctified ground have no effect, and the character is immune to frenzy and Rötschreck. Sunlight does only bashing damage, and then only if bare skin is exposed on a clear day. Being staked through the heart is only as much of a danger as getting stabbed through his dead spleen would be. Fire harms him only as it would a mortal — causing lethal damage instead of aggravated.



Should the character end the power's duration while exposed to any of the aforementioned harmful things, he immediately takes their full effect. If he is staked, he become immobilized; if he is on or near fire, he begins to take the damage a Cainite should take, and he must immediately roll against Rötschreck.

••••• Gift of Life

With the Gift of Life, the character can experience the best and most positive things about being alive. The overwhelming hunger for blood temporarily abates, allowing the character to consume and enjoy food and drink. She can also enjoy sex as she wishes, and the sun does not burn her. The Gift of Life comes with a dark, terrible cost, however. Its use is almost sure to result in the death of a mortal, as the vampire must expend an enormous quantity of vitae in order to initiate it. The Discipline's effects last until the midnight after the character uses the power, so it is in her best interests to use it just after midnight.

System: The player spends 12 blood points, burning as much blood as possible each turn until she meets that level. She then rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 6) and needs only one success for the power to work. A botch has catastrophic effects. The character might be instantly killed or might inadvertently Embrace her victim, for example. If it takes longer than one turn to spend the necessary blood to enact this ability, it does not take effect until all 12 points have been spent. However, the blood must be spent continuously — the vampire cannot burn five, run off and feed, then burn seven more an hour later. On the other hand, she may feed as she activates the power — in one turn she might burn one blood point while drinking three. Since few Kindred above the Seventh Generation can easily expend such an amount of blood, the most efficient way to activate this power is to have a human nearby who can be sacrificed to power the transformation.

After her transformation, the character gains many traits of an ordinary human. She is largely immune to the scorching effects of the sun (Fortitude difficulties to soak damage from direct sunlight are halved, and she takes no damage if she is sufficiently covered), and she can experience and enjoy many of the fine things about human life. She retains a few of her vampiric benefits, however. Fortitude and Auspex abilities remain in place if she has either of those Disciplines, and the Storyteller may allow her to retain other Disciplines as well if he deems them dramatically appropriate. She also retains a vampire's benefits when it comes to handling bashing damage. However, she is still vulnerable

to holy artifacts, human faith, and being staked. Her blood remains vitae, not human blood. Use of this ability — which creates a mockery of human life — may interfere with a character's Path advancement, at the Storyteller's discretion.

The vampire is no more vulnerable to fire than any other mortal while in this half-alive state, but she still suffers somewhat from the Beast. Frenzy and Rötschreck difficulties are halved (round up). She can remain active during the day without Humanity or Path-based dice pool caps, although she is certainly tired during the day, since that is not her usual time of activity.

Her Beast exacts a dangerous retribution when her day of "life" is done. Although its influence is greatly suppressed during this power's duration, the Beast has its way with the vampire for the next six nights, as all difficulties to resist frenzy increase by three. The wise necromancer hides herself away somewhere during that period, but, depending on morality and temperament, enforced isolation might drive her to frenzy on its own.

The Grave's Decay

This path is derived from the observation of the working of time on all things mortal. Stone crumbles and the corpse rots away to nothing, a process of endless fascination to the lost Cainites known as Cappadocians. Indeed, for the undying, the process of decay is a fascinating disease that afflicts everyone and everything save them. Under this path, a practitioner of Necromancy channels that force.

• Destroy the Husk

Cainites who kill their victims, rather than just feeding upon them, frequently find themselves in need of a quick way to dispose of a corpse. While there are many ways to make sure that a corpse is not found — feed it to a pack of hounds or weigh it down and throw it in a river — many of these methods do involve risk to the vampire and are not guaranteed to succeed. Destroy the Husk, by contrast, is foolproof. Use of this power simply turns one human corpse to a pile of about 30 pounds (13 kilograms) of unremarkable dust, roughly the size and shape of that body.

System: The player spends one blood point as the vampire drips her vitae onto the corpse. The player then rolls Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 6). One success is all that is needed to render the corpse into dust, although the process takes a number of turns equal to five minus the successes.

•• Rigor Mortis

One of the first changes that comes over a dead body is rigidity; the corpse becomes stiff as a board, frozen in a single pose. The Cainite who wields Rigor Mortis is able to push a living or undead body to that frozen point using only his will and understanding of the forces of decay. She forces her target to become rigid and unable to move without enormous effort of will, as his very muscles betray him.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 7). Each success freezes the target in place for one turn. A failure simply indicates the loss of the Willpower point, while a botch renders the target immune to powers in the Grave's Decay path for the next 24 hours. The target must be visible and within about 25 yards or meters for this ability to take effect. A frozen target is treated as though he has been staked (see p. 280). With a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) and two successes, the target can break out of the rigor on her turn. Failure causes her a level of bashing damage and means another turn wasted and frozen.

••• Wither

Reminiscent of some of the powers of Vicissitude, Wither allows a vampire to cripple an opponent's limb. Whether the foe is living or undead, muscle shrivels away, skin peels, and bone becomes brittle. The target is unable to exert any noteworthy strength in the crippled limb. This injury lasts for far longer than most injuries trouble vampires, and in mortals it simply does not heal.

Wither doesn't have to be used on a limb, although that is its usual purpose. It can also be used simply to affect the target's face and hair, making him appear far older than his years. It could also be applied to a target's eye or ear, killing the sense in that organ (and thus requiring two uses to permanently blind or deafen). Wither cannot be used as an "instant-kill" power — necromancers cannot wither internal organs — but it can inflict a wide variety of injuries on a foe.

System: The player spends a Willpower point. The character chooses a limb on the target and then touches that limb. If the target is trying to avoid contact, the invoker's player rolls Dexterity + Brawl to hit as normal. If the character succeeds in touching the intended limb, the target suffers two aggravated wounds. Unless the target soaks both wounds (such as with Fortitude), the struck limb is crippled and unusable until both of those wounds have healed. Kindred heal the wounds as

they would any other aggravated wound (see p. 285). Mortals are incapable of healing aggravated wounds, so they suffer throughout their lives unless they are healed through supernatural means. A withered limb does not degenerate further, even on a mortal. The character may be crippled for life, but the limb won't become infected or gangrenous.

The effects of the withering depend on the affected limb. A crippled arm has a Strength of 0, cannot benefit from Potence, and cannot carry anything heavier than about half a pound (200 grams). A crippled leg prevents the character from moving faster than a stuttering hop or dragging limp. The character suffers the effects of the Lame Flaw (see p. 482). A single withered eye or ear imposes a +1 difficulty to relevant Perception rolls. Losing both eyes or both ears imposes the effects of the Blind or Deaf Flaws (see pp. 484 and 483). A withered tongue imposes the effects of the Mute Flaw (p. 483), while a withered face reduces the target's Appearance by one for each aggravated wound suffered.

•••• Corrupt the Undead Flesh

Corrupt the Undead Flesh blurs the line between life and undeath, turning an undead creature into something just living enough to carry and suffer from disease. The disease inflicts the target, causing lethargy, dizziness, loss of strength, clumsiness, and the inability to keep blood in his system. This pernicious influence is extremely virulent among mortals. They pick the disease up simply by spending a few hours near the victim. Other vampires have a harder time acquiring the disease. They must consume the victim's blood to do so, but afterward, they suffer just as much as the original target — including passing the affliction on to others.

The disease fades after roughly a week.

System: The player chooses a target within her character's line of sight and no more than 20 yards or meters away. She rolls Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 6) and spends a point of Willpower. The victim's player must roll Stamina (+ Fortitude, if appropriate) against a difficulty equal to the attacker's Willpower. If the player scores more successes than the victim, he acquires a virulent disease immediately. The disease has the following effects:

- The victim's Strength and Wits are halved (round down).
- The victim loses one point of Dexterity.
- The victim's player must spend one additional blood point every evening for the vampire to rouse himself to consciousness. Mortals lose one health level per day instead.
- The victim's player must roll Self-Control or Instinct each time the character feeds (difficulty 8). On a failure, the vampire cannot keep the blood he just ingested inside his body, and he vomits it up in great horrifying gouts of gore, losing any benefit the blood might have provided. Humans vomit up food.

Every evening at sunset, the victim has a chance to throw off the plague. The victim's player rolls Stamina, with a difficulty equal to 10 minus the number of sunsets since acquiring the plague. On a successful roll, the character fights the disease to a standstill and begins to recover. He instantly regains his ability to manage blood, and he heals back one lost Attribute point per hour until all have returned.

••••• Dissolve the Flesh

This ability brings the Grave's Decay path full circle, as it causes Destroy the Husk to apply to vampires. Dissolve the Flesh allows a necromancer to attempt to turn vampiric flesh to dust or ash, as though the target had been burned or left out in the sun.

System: The player spends two blood points and a Willpower point as the vampire extracts a quantity of her vitae charged with the power of the grave. If she drips it onto a single Kindred victim anytime within the next few turns (most of the blood must reach the victim, so flinging a few drops is ineffective), it causes whole chunks of the victim's body to crumble to ash. The player rolls Willpower against a difficulty of the victim's Stamina + 3. For every success, the target takes one aggravated wound.

The undead flesh damaged by this power turns to dust (gone for the time being), and it must be regenerated painstakingly by the victim, should he survive. That dust doubtlessly has mystical properties that various sorcerers might be able to take advantage of. Every wound inflicted by this ability represents the loss of about one-eighth of the target's weight; the Storyteller chooses where the loss comes from. (It might also be shed from all over, leaving the victim a bit gaunter or missing chunks of flesh.)

Regenerating body parts occurs naturally while healing aggravated wounds at the normal rate (see p. 285).

Path of the Four Humors

Philosophically, the four humors represent different qualities, split along two axes: hot and cold, and wet and dry. Blood is hot and wet; phlegm is cold and wet; yellow bile is hot and dry; and black bile is cold and dry. Historically, when a mortal was out of sorts or ill, it was said that his humors were out of balance, and a philosopher or physician would try to heal him by bringing his humors back into balance. Ancient necromancers believed that in their undead forms, all four humors were held in a mystical stasis, and that they could tap into all four of them instead of merely tapping into blood in the form of vitae as other vampires did.

This antiquated path was primarily considered the knowledge of the Lamia bloodline, and certainly very few necromancers have learned this path without tutoring from a Lamia. Since the loss of the Lamia, elder necromancers have searched everywhere (both in this world and the next) for clues to its existence.

• Whispers to the Soul

The necromancer with this ability can let slip a little of her own undead bilious humor as she speaks to another being (whether mortal or Kindred). The wicked vapor slips into the target's ear and whispers nightmares to the target throughout the day and night. The target has a harder time sleeping, and becomes irritable and distracted during his waking hours.

System: The character must whisper the target's name (as she knows it) into his ear. The victim rolls Willpower (difficulty 8). If the roll fails, the victim suffers from nightmares and hears mad, wicked mutterings while awake, for a number of full days equal to the necromancer's Manipulation. The victim loses one die from all dice pools while thus afflicted, and at the Storyteller's discretion, the difficulty to resist Rötschreck may be increased by one at the same time.

•• Kiss of the Dark Mother

Kiss of the Dark Mother allows the necromancer who uses it to mix her vitae with black bile, turning it into a noxious poison. The necromancer forces it into her mouth as saliva might once have come; the vitae tastes acrid and bitter, as though it had been scorched. Once the necromancer coats her teeth and lips with it, she can inflict terrible damage with her bite.

System: The player spends one blood point; activating this power is a reflexive action, but it must be done before making a bite attack. If the bite hits, the aggravated damage inflicted by a single bite is doubled before soak is calculated. This power does not affect the character's ability to drain blood from the target, nor does it increase the amount of damage done by blood loss. The necromancer's bite remains potent until this ability is discharged by a successful hit or she spends one turn cleansing the dark blood from her mouth.

••• Dark Humors

The vampire can exude a coat of a particular humor onto her skin, causing all that touch it to experience the most intense form of that humor. After a necromancer has used this power, she generally feels the opposite of the sensation the humor usually conveys: Using blood leaves her depressed and pessimistic; using yellow bile renders her calm and placid; using black bile leaves her optimistic; and using phlegm makes her aroused and angry.

System: The player spends two blood points. The necromancer chooses which humor she wishes to excrete. The humor can simply coat the skin — in which case touching the victim's skin lets the humor take effect — or it can act as a poison if placed in a beverage (or in vitae). The victim must make a Stamina roll (difficulty 8) to resist the effects of the humor:

- *Phlegm:* Target becomes lethargic; all dice pools are reduced by two for the remainder of the scene.
- *Blood (vitae):* Target becomes prone to excessive bleeding, and any lethal or aggravated wounds he suffers deal an additional health level of damage on the turn after they originally occur. Vitae altered by Dark Humors will not turn a human into a ghoul if ingested, nor will it initiate a blood bond.
- *Black Bile:* Target suffers a number of health levels of damage equal to the necromancer's Stamina. This damage is considered lethal and can be soaked (if the victim is normally capable of soaking such damage), though armor does not protect against it.
- *Yellow Bile:* Target becomes melancholic and is plagued with visions of death. He cannot spend Willpower for the remainder of the scene, and all Willpower rolls receive a +2 difficulty.

•••• Clutching the Shroud

Blood, the sanguine humor, was regarded by philosophers as being both hot and wet. Blood from a cold corpse has been transubstantiated into a dead form — a cold incarnation of a hot, wet element. This transformation of the living into death holds great power; the necromancer knows how to infuse her own being with the blood of a cold corpse and transform herself

into something not wholly vampiric. Instead, the necromancer edges closer to being an animated corpse in fact as well as name. She grows distant and chill, as though possessed by the spirit of Death itself; she has to work to push her attention into the physical world.

System: The character must drink, and then spend, five blood points from a cold corpse (one dead for 24 hours or more, but generally less than three days). It will generally take at least two turns to consume that blood, and the power is not activated until the character can spend all of it. For example, if the character is Twelfth Generation, Clutching the Shroud takes at least seven turns total to activate (two to consume the blood and five to spend it).

After the power is active and for the rest of the scene, the necromancer gains several benefits. First, she receives two additional soak dice, which may be used to soak any sort of damage, even if the character does not possess Fortitude. Second, she gains a mystic sense of how far those in the area are from death — whether they are healthy or infirm, suffer from diseases, or are undead, ghouls, or mortals. Finally, a Manipulation + Occult roll lets her speak with ghosts freely. The difficulty for this roll depends on how attuned to death a locale is; a cemetery would be difficulty 5, while a cozy apartment might be difficulty 7. However, this ability makes the necromancer much more susceptible to the effects of powers used by ghosts, which means that she must act carefully.

••••• Black Breath

A necromancer who has mastered this path can harness the undead black bile that festers at the core of her being; she pulls that melancholy to her lungs and lets it mingle with her outgoing breath. She then exhales the dark mist, letting it engulf those nearby. The necromancer feels curiously lightheaded and optimistic after using this power, as she has forced some of her most depressed nature out into the world; those caught in the black vapors grow despairing and hopeless.

System: The player spends one Willpower and one blood point, and rolls Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 7). Black Breath allows the character to exhale a dark cloud of vapor that is five yards or meters in diameter per success rolled. Those caught in the mists may attempt a Dexterity + Athletics roll to escape it if they have an available action; otherwise, they may be overwhelmed by depression to the point of suicide. Those who cannot escape the mists must immediately roll Willpower (difficulty 8 for mortals, 7 for supernatural beings) and achieve more successes than the invoker did. Mortals who fail in this actively attempt to kill themselves on their next turn. They do not attempt such ludicrous suicides as praying for a lightning bolt or holding their breath; they use the most effective means at hand to end their own lives. If prevented from suicide, they attempt it again as soon as an opportunity presents itself. This impulse lasts for the rest of the scene, and the Storyteller may impose flare-ups over the next day or so at his discretion. Those who succeed on the Willpower roll still become enchanted with the prospect of death, whether mortal or Kindred, and lose two dice from all dice pools for the rest of the scene.

Kindred who fail the Willpower roll do not attempt suicide; as they are already dead, the malign influences of undead humors do not have as strong an effect on them. Instead, the affected vampire sinks into torpor. The duration of this torpor is based on the vampire's Humanity or Path rating, just as if lethal wounds had forced him into it.

Vitreous Path

The Vitreous Path allows a necromancer to control and influence the energies pertaining to death. This extremely rare path manipulates entropy, a force that even most necromancers are uncomfortable harnessing. A development of the Nagaraja bloodline (p. 406, although they sometimes call the path "Nihilistics"), the Vitreous Path makes a formidable complement to the necromantic craft, and those obsessed with mastery over death and souls — such as the Harbingers of Skulls — would certainly risk much to uncover this path's secrets.

Like most necromancers, Nagaraja generally learn the Sepulchre Path before any others. The Vitreous Path is usually their second focus of study.

• Eyes of the Dead

The necromancer employing the Eyes of the Dead can see with the perceptions of the Restless Dead (called Deathsight). To such a manipulator of ghostly energies, the auras of surrounding beings give off telltale hints as to their health and even their ultimate fate; the necromancer can see the energies of death flowing through everyone, just as ghosts can. By looking at the entropic markings on a person's body, the necromancer can gain rough knowledge of how far that person is from death, how soon that person is likely to die, and even what the cause of her death is likely to

be. The information thus gained is not exact by any means, but it gives the necromancer an edge over those she scrutinizes.

System: The player rolls Perception + Occult, difficulty 6. One success lets a necromancer determine whether someone is injured, diseased, or dying, as well as whether the individual labors under any sort of curse or baleful magic.

Further, the vampire can divine the target's eventual demise, depending on the successes scored. One success means the character can guess how long the target has to live to within a few weeks. Three successes means the character can estimate how long the target has to live and what the probable source of death will be, as the entropic markings show the wounds that will someday exist on that person. Five successes means the character can actually see where and when the event will occur by interpreting the black marks on the target's soul.

This ability lasts for one scene, though the necromancer may choose to end the power early. It can be used to read the fate of only one target at a time. Storytellers should exercise judgment with this power, since the markings of death are typically unavoidable. He may decide to roll the dice himself, so that the player has no way of knowing whether her insight is correct.

•• Aura of Decay

The necromancer can strengthen the feeling of entropy around her to the point where it breaks down nonliving objects and machines. It can gnarl wood, rust metal, crack silicon chips, and erode plastic, glass, and dead organic material. This power has a range of one yard or meter from the necromancer's body, but all those in the presence of the vampire can feel her corruption as an icy wind.

System: No roll is required, but this power does cost at least one blood point. Objects subjected to this Aura of Decay break down and become useless after being targeted. How the object gives out, as well as the exact mechanism of failure, is up to the Storyteller. Corrosion, metal fatigue, or sheer brittleness are all suitably likely for any given item's demise, but the in-game effect of using a doomed item is as if the owning character rolled a botch. The speed at which an item breaks down depends on how many blood points are spent.

Blood Spent	Time to Breakdown
One	One week
Two	One day
Three	End of scene
Four	Five turns
Five	One turn

Note that since this power requires the expenditure of blood points, a character cannot cause an Aura of Decay while staked.

••• Soul Feast

Just as the necromancer can release entropic energies from within, she may also pull them into herself as a source of power. Soul Feasting allows the caster to either draw on the ambient death energies around her or to actively feed on a ghost, stealing the wraith's substance and mystically transforming that energy into sustenance.

System: The player spends one Willpower point to allow the vampire to feed on the negative energies of the dead. If the character is drawing the energies from the atmosphere, she must be in a place where death has occurred within the hour or in a place where death is common, such as a cemetery, a morgue, or the scene of a recent murder. Generally, the necromancer can draw anywhere from one to four points of entropy from such a location, although the difficulty in using all Necromancy and similar deathly powers within the area increases by an equal amount for a number of nights equal to the points taken. The energies of such an area may only be drained once until the area's entropy replenishes.

In cases when the necromancer feeds on a ghost, the vampire must actually attack the wraith as if feeding normally. Wraiths have up to 10 "blood points" that may be taken from them, and they become less and less substantial as their spirit essence drains away. The character is vulnerable to any attack the ghost might make, even those that do not normally affect the physical world; while feeding, the vampire is essentially in a half-state, existing in both the living lands and the Underworld simultaneously. The wraith so attacked is considered immobilized and cannot run or escape unless it can defeat the vampire in a resisted Willpower roll (difficulty 6 for both sides). This power may also be used in conjunction with Ash Path Necromancy, allowing the vampire to drain power (though not sustenance) from ghosts while traveling in the lands of the dead.

This soul energy may be used just like blood in every respect except for when the vampire rises for the

night. It can activate Disciplines, heal wounds, boost Attributes, etc. Botching this power renders the vampire unable to feed through the Shroud for the rest of the night. However, she remains susceptible to the assaults of ghosts and spirits for several turns (generally, a number of turns equal to the amount of energy that could have been drawn from the area, or one turn if attacking a ghost) as she hovers between worlds, unable to function effectively in either.

•••• Breath of Thanatos

The Breath of Thanatos allows the necromancer to draw out entropic energy and focus it upon an area or person by taking a deep breath and then forcefully exhaling a fog of necromantic energy. This cloud of virulence is completely invisible to anyone without the ability to see the passing of entropy. The energy of this cloud is like a beacon for Spectres, and they are drawn to the entropic force like moths to a flame.

Once the energy is pulled from the necromancer's body, she can either disperse it over a large area as a lure for Spectres, or use the mist for more sinister purposes. Channeled into an object or person, the death-mist inflicts the subject with a debilitating, wasting illness. Furthermore, the focused energies are tainted and eerie, and though generally invisible (except to powers such as Aura Perception), they tend to cause people and animals to feel uncomfortable around the victim.

System: The player spends one blood point and rolls Willpower (difficulty 8). Only one success is needed to draw out the Breath of Thanatos. If dispersed to summon Spectres, the energies cover roughly one-quarter of a mile (400 meters) in radius, centered around the necromancer. The range increases by an additional one-quarter mile or 400 meters for every additional blood point expended.

Spectres summoned with this power will ignore the summoning necromancer for the duration of the power unless provoked, but may well go out of their way to wreak havoc on anyone else in the vicinity. The necromancer can then use other Necromancy powers (such as those in the Sepulchre Path) to manipulate and affect these Spectres. Ghosts so targeted may then interact with the necromancer as normal, although the other Spectres in the area will continue to ignore both the vampire and the targeted ghost. This energy disperses after a scene, after which the Spectres leave to find new prey. Mechanics for Spectres can be found on p. 385.

If the cloud is directed toward a particular target, the necromancer must either touch the target or direct the stream of entropy using Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 7). A target laden with entropy suffers one (and only one) level of aggravated damage; this generally manifests as sudden illness or decay. The target's social difficulties while interacting with those unfamiliar with the touch of death — most normal humans, as well as some supernatural creatures — increase by 2. Furthermore, supernatural perceptions indicate the target is tainted with decay, which can be dangerous. This form of taint lasts until sunrise; a victim already plagued by this power cannot be affected again until the previous fog of entropy has dispersed.

A botch on the roll to control this power indicates that the vampire has turned the energy upon himself, and suffers all the effects of the vitriolic breath. This inflicts the usual injury and may subject the necromancer to the possibly dangerous attention of provoked Spectres and other creatures from beyond the grave.

••••• Night Cry

The breath of entropic energy becomes a scream of pure chaos. The necromancer can issue an unearthly cry (heard both in the living world and in the Shadowlands). The howl pours icy oblivion into a target or group of targets — either sweeping away the inherent entropy or collecting that destruction and unleashing it.

System: The vampire chooses a number of targets within one yard or meter per dot of Necromancy and invokes Night Cry with a terrible scream. The player spends a Willpower point and a blood point for each target beyond the first. (In other words, she spends no blood if only going after one target, or one blood for two targets. Generational blood limits apply, and the vampire may not "pre-spend" blood prior to using Night Cry.)

The player then chooses whether the vampire will aid or harm the targets, and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6). If she chooses to aid the target or targets, each success gives each affected target a -2 difficulty modifier to all of his actions for one turn per success. If she instead chooses harm, each success causes an aggravated wound to each target. Targets may be any kind of living creature, including supernatural ones.

No matter the result, the Night Cry is heard on both sides of the Shroud, attracting the attention of anyone nearby. On a botch, the necromancy may summon unruly ghosts or Spectres, similar to Breath of Thanatos

(although the ghosts are under no compulsion to ignore the necromancer…).

Necromantic Rituals

The rituals connected with Necromancy are a hodgepodge lot. Some have direct relations to the paths, while others seem to have been taught by ghosts themselves, for whatever twisted reason. All beginning necromancers gain one Level One ritual automatically, but any others learned must be gained through in-game play. Necromantic rituals are otherwise identical to Thaumaturgy rituals (pp. 230-240) and are learned in similar fashion, though the two are not at all compatible.

System: Casting times for necromantic rituals vary widely; see the description for particulars. The player rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 3 + the level of the ritual, maximum 9). Success indicates the ritual proceeds smoothly, failure produces no effect, and a botch indicates something has gone horribly wrong.

Level One Rituals

Call of the Hungry Dead

Call of the Hungry Dead takes only 10 minutes to cast and requires a hair from the target's head. The ritual climaxes with the burning of that hair in the flame of a black candle, after which the victim becomes able to hear snatches of conversation from across the Shroud. If the target is not prepared, the voices come as a confusing welter of howls and unearthly demands; he is unable to make out anything intelligible, and may go briefly mad.

Eldritch Beacon

Eldritch Beacon takes 15 minutes to cast. The material component is a green candle, the melted wax from which must be collected and molded into a half-inch (1.5 cm) sphere. Whoever carries this sphere, whether in his hand or in a pocket, is highlighted in the Shadowlands with a sickly-glowing green-white aura. All ghostly powers affect this individual with greater ease and severity. The sphere retains its power for one hour per success on the casting roll.

Insight

This ritual allows a necromancer to stare into the eyes of a corpse and see reflected there the last thing the dead man witnessed. The vision appears only in the eyes of the cadaver and is visible to no one except the necromancer using Insight. The player rolls as normal as the vampire stares into the target's eyes for five minutes. The number of successes on the roll determines the clarity of the vision. A botch shows the necromancer his own Final Death, which can provoke a Rötschreck roll (see p. 299).

This power cannot be used on the corpses of vampires who have reached Golconda, or on bodies in which both eyes are missing or advanced decomposition has already occurred.

Successes	Result
1 success	A basic sense of the subject's death
2 successes	A clear image of the subject's death and the seconds preceding it
3 successes	A clear image, with sound, of the minutes preceding death
4 successes	A clear image, with sound, of the half-hour before the subject's demise
5 successes	Full sensory perception of the hour leading up to the target's death

Knowing Stone

By use of her own blood and the proper rituals, a necromancer can mark a person's spirit, allowing the vampire to see where her subject is at any time, even after he has died. In this fashion many of the spirit-haunted vampires keep tabs on their close kin and their enemies.

The necromancer cuts her skin or otherwise bleeds herself, and then uses the vitae to paint the name of the target on a consecrated stone. If the ritual is successful, she can afterward learn the target's current whereabouts by dancing around the stone in a trance state until one of the spirits whispers the desired information into her ear. The stone loses its powers on the night of All Saints Day unless the vampire spends a blood point.

Minestra di Morte

The necromancer obtains a piece of a dead body and simmers it in a pot with half a quart (or half a liter) of vampiric vitae. To this stew, the necromancer adds rosemary (for remembrance), basil (the funerary herb), and salt (the alchemic principle of clarification). After bringing the concoction to a full boil, the necromancer eats it.

If the roll to activate this ritual is successful, the character discovers whether the subject of the grisly



rite became a wraith or Spectre after death, or if indeed she became either. Unfortunately, this information can be learned only about the person from whose body the "stew meat" was taken.

The blood component is spent progressively through the ritual: If the Necromancer takes the blood from another Kindred, she doesn't become partially bound from drinking it, nor does she add a point to her blood pool. Similarly, if she uses her own blood, her pool decreases by a point but does not increase when she consumes the soup.

Necromantic vampires without the Eat Food Merit (see p. 480) can't keep the soup down, but can still use the ritual and gain the information.

Ritual of the Smoking Mirror

This ritual allows the necromancer to use an obsidian mirror to see as ghosts do. By gazing into the mirror's ebony depths, the vampire may discover an object's flaws, assess the general health of mortals, or even read a being's aura.

At the start of the ritual, the Kindred decides which of the ritual's two aspects she will use — she may not use both at the same time. With Lifesight, the necromancer may read auras as if she had the level two Auspex power Aura Perception. Deathsight, on the other hand, grants the necromancer the ability to see ghosts and the Shadowlands. It also shows the stain of oblivion on the living, as per Eyes of the Dead (p. 174). At the Storyteller's discretion, the Kindred may make a similar study of an inanimate object's flaws and how to repair them, if that object has a strong link to either life- or death-energies (such as a murderer's knife or a window box used to grow healing herbs).

To perform the ritual, the necromancer grasps an obsidian mirror that has had its edge sharpened so that it cuts the flesh of whoever takes hold of it. As the vitae flows onto the mirror's surface, it allows the mirror's reflective power to bridge the worlds of the living and the dead, much as it allows the necromancer herself to do. The player then rolls to activate the ritual as normal. If successful, the Necromancer may view the world as a ghost does via the reflective surface of the mirror, for one scene. On a botch, the vampire may well invoke the ire of the spirits upon whom she calls.

Level Two Rituals

Eyes of the Grave

This ritual, which takes two hours to cast, causes the target to experience intermittent visions of her death over the period of a week. The visions come without warning and can last up to a minute. The caster of the ritual has no idea what the visions contain, as only the victim sees them. Each time a vision manifests, the target must roll Courage (difficulty 7) or be reduced to quivering panic. The visions, which come randomly, can also interfere with activities such as driving, studying, shooting, and so on.

Eyes of the Grave requires a pinch of soil from a fresh grave.

The Hand of Glory

The Hand of Glory is a mummified hand used by the necromancer to anesthetize a home's residents and, thereby, allow him free rein to do what he will in the residence. To create one, the necromancer wraps the severed hand of a condemned murderer in a shroud, draws it tight to squeeze out any remaining blood, and preserves the hand in an earthenware jar with salt, saltpeter, and long peppers. After a fortnight, the vampire removes the hand and dries it in an oven with vervain and fern. At the end of this process, if the roll to activate the ritual garners any successes, the creation is viable.

To use the Hand of Glory, the vampire first coats the fingertips of the mummified hand with a flammable substance derived from the fat of a hanged man and sets the fingers alight. The necromancer then recites the phrase, "Let all those who are asleep be asleep, and let those who are awake be awake." All mortals within a household who are affected fall into a deep sleep and cannot be roused (the hand has no effect on supernatural creatures). For each unaffected occupant of a home, one finger of the hand will refuse to light. Botches may result in all of the fingers being lit but no one in the home being asleep. The hand may be extinguished at any time by the necromancer who created it. Anyone else wishing to douse the hand must use milk to do so — nothing else works. Once made, the Hand of Glory may be reused indefinitely. Effects last for one scene.

Occhio d'Uomo Morto

To cast this ritual, the necromancer needs an eye from a corpse whose absent soul became a ghost or Spectre. The eye is ritually prepared in a process involving incense, the new moon, and a period of midnight chanting. The chanting climaxes when the necromancer removes one of her own eyes and replaces it with the one from the corpse (fresher is better). Kindred healing takes over at that point, sealing the eye within the socket.

If the ritual succeeds, the Necromancer permanently gains the Shroudsight ability (see p. 163). This ability is always active and does not require a roll.

Furthermore, if it was a Spectre's corpse, the vampire can hear the vague murmuring of any Spectres in the area. This ability isn't very precise; rather than mind reading, it's more like trying to overhear a low-voiced conversation in the next room. With a Perception + Occult roll, the Necromancer can glean a very vague impression of what nearby Spectres are up to. Botching this roll may well earn the necromancer a new derangement (at the Storyteller's discretion), as the whispers creep into the caster's subconscious.

This ritual has some major drawbacks, the first being that its proper result is hideously ugly. Unless the vampire wears sunglasses or finds some other way to conceal her eye, her Appearance is reduced by one dot.

Also, dead or rotted tissue is not the best for normal perception. Any mundane visual Perception rolls are at +1 difficulty (possibly more if the corpse had bad eyesight in life). On the other hand, since the eye offers a window into a different soul than the necromancer, it offers some protection against powers requiring eye contact. These Disciplines are used against the dead-eyed necromancer at +1 difficulty.

Most importantly, however, the ghost whose body was desecrated knows it, and very likely *hates* it. The ghost can find the necromancer possessing his eye anywhere, and all ghostly powers used against the necromancer by that particular ghost are at –1 difficulty.

Puppet

Used primarily to facilitate conversations with the recently departed, though also applied as a method of psychological torture, Puppet prepares a subject (willing or unwilling) as a suitable receptacle for ghostly possession. Over the course of one hour, the necromancer smears grave soil across the subject's eyes, lips, and forehead. For the remainder of the night, any wraith attempting to take control of the subject gains two automatic successes. The ritual's effects remain even if the soil is washed off.

The Ritual of Pochtli

This ritual cannot be cast by itself, but only in conjunction with another Necromantic ritual, or with the heavily ritualized use of a Necromantic path. The action of the ritual is this: Two or more Kindred necromancers restrain a mortal vessel and inflict incisions in the shape of blasphemous symbols (typically subverted Egyptian hieroglyphs or Aztec symbols). They then drink from these injuries. Each participating Necromancer must make his own cut and drink from no other cut. Thereafter, the Necromantic power the Kindred seek to employ gains the benefit of all the participants' knowledge. This ritual makes it possible for Necromancers to create truly fearsome feats of death magic.

The player rolls to activate this ritual as normal. If the roll succeeds, the Kindred who have participated in the ritual may work together on the path or ritual the Ritual of Pochtli is intended to assist, and players share successes. Note that the primary application of Necromancy requires its own roll, and that successes (and failures) garnered by the group are pooled. All Kindred participating in the ritual must know the Ritual of Pochtli as well as the ritual or path power the group seeks to enact.

The downside of this power is that a single player's botch negates the successes of the entire group, resulting in a horrific failure for all the ritual workers.

Two Centimes

The necromancer ceremonially "kills" a mortal, laying him out on a pallet and putting pennies on his eyes. The mortal's soul journeys to the Underworld, which he perceives, initially at least, as a way-station. The mortal can interact with the souls of the dead and travel elsewhere in the Underworld, while also retaining the power to speak to the vampire and describe what he's experiencing. While in the Underworld, however, the subject's soul cannot affect the environment. Although he may talk to other spirits, he may not physically interact with them or their surroundings — he is a "ghost among ghosts," as it were. Minions may voluntarily undergo the ritual to assist necromancers, or the vampire may use Two Centimes to terrify unwilling victims.

Level Three Rituals

Blood Dance

The Blood Dance allows a ghost to communicate with a living relative. Necromancers sometimes perform this ritual for people in exchange for money or favors.

The vampire must dance and chant for two hours, calling forth the right spirit and entreating all other ghosts to leave the area. While dancing, the vampire pours colored sands and ocean salt on the ground in a precise pattern and then makes the link between the living person and the deceased. If successful, the ghost "appears" within the necromancer's sand-sigil and the living person can communicate with her for one hour. Failure means the spirit could not be contacted.

Divine Sign

Upon learning a person's birth date, the necromancer's player may roll to activate this ritual. If successful, the Kindred may use this to predict the target's next course of action, allowing him to deal with it accordingly. The effect on ghosts is quite different: Instead, the ritual imparts upon the necromancer so intimate an understanding of the wraith in question that it acts as a connection to the ghost, making it easier to invoke other Necromancy effects on that spirit. For story purposes, it's the equivalent to holding one of that wraith's fetters (see Ritual of the Unearthed Fetter, below).

Din of the Damned

This ritual is similar to the Level One Ritual Call of the Hungry Dead (see p. 177) in that it makes the sounds of the Underworld audible in the physical realm. However, Din of the Damned is an area-effecting ritual used to ward a room against eavesdropping. Over the course of half an hour, the necromancer draws an unbroken line of ash from a crematorium along the room's walls (this line may pass over doorframes to allow entrance and egress). For the rest of the night, any attempt to listen in on events inside the room, whether simple (such as a glass to the wall), electronic (like a laser microphone), or mystic (including powers such as Heightened Senses), requires the eavesdropper to score more successes in a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 7) than the caster of the ritual scored. Failure to beat this mark gives the listener an earful of ghostly wailing and moaning and the sound of howling winds; a botch deafens him for the rest of the night.

Nightmare Drums

The necromancer using this ritual sends the dead to haunt the dreams of an enemy, using the ghosts to drive an opponent slowly insane. Once the ritual is cast, the vampire has no control over this power, except to stop it from continuing. The shape of the nightmares and

the images that assault the target are not under the control of the necromancer; they are under the control of the ghosts who actually do the haunting.

The necromancer uses his own blood and a personal possession of the target's in this ritual. Once the item has been coated with blood, the vampire must burn the item, sending a ghostly icon of it to the Shadowlands both as an identifying badge and as a reward to the ghosts who agree to haunt the target. While the item burns, the necromancer (and assistants, if available) pound out a relentless beat on gigantic drums of human skin. The drums are inaudible in this realm but thunderous in the home of the dead. To silence the deafening drums, the ghosts resignedly agree to negotiate with the necromancer. They promise to send nightmares to the victim for as long as the vampire demands, in return for a favor. Their request normally runs along the lines of passing a message to a living relative or exacting revenge against someone who slighted them.

Ritual of The Unearthed Fetter

This ritual requires that a necromancer have a finger bone from the skeleton of the particular ghost he's interested in. When the ritual is cast, the finger bone becomes attuned to something vitally important to the wraith, the possession of which by the necromancer makes the casting of Necromantic powers against that ghost much easier (see the Sepulchre Path, p. 160, for an example). Most necromancers take the attuned finger bone and suspend it from a thread, allowing it to act as a sort of supernatural compass and following it to the special item in question.

Ritual of the Unearthed Fetter takes three hours to cast properly. It requires both the name of the ghost targeted and the finger bone already mentioned, as well as a chip knocked off a gravestone or other marker (not necessarily the marker of the bone's former owner). During the course of the ritual the stone crumbles to dust, which is then sprinkled over the finger bone.

Tempesta Scudo

Unlike most rituals, *Tempesta Scudo* can be cast speedily. The necromancer performs a short and awkward dance that ends with her biting through her own lip and spitting the blood in a circle around her. All ghosts' actions within the circle of blood are made at +2 difficulty.

To cast this ritual successfully, the necromancer must spend one combat turn performing the dance. At the end of the turn, she makes a Dexterity + Performance roll against difficulty 7 (if done outside of combat, the difficulty is only 6). During the next combat turn, she bites through her own lips (taking a level of bashing damage) and spits (spending one blood point). Then the normal ritual roll is made to see whether the power takes effect.

Level Four Rituals

Baleful Doll

A baleful doll is a powerful figure that is linked directly to the spirit of the target. This doll must be handcrafted, and is only finished when it has been painted with the blood of the necromancer and dressed in some article of clothing from the victim (which should be unwashed for a better connection). Once the doll has been cursed, the vampire can use it to cause physical damage to the target. If the doll is injured (often with pins or other items), the victim takes six dice of bashing damage. If the doll is destroyed, the target suffers six dice of lethal damage.

The necromancer must craft the doll, using ritual chants throughout the process. This normally takes four to five hours. The player rolls Stamina + Crafts (difficulty 8) to succeed in this part of the ritual — a doll that does not resemble its victim is useless for the purposes of this ritual, though some necromancers sell failures as "authentic voodoo dolls" to tourists.

Bastone Diabolico

Casting this ritual is tricky because it requires the removal of a leg bone from a living person. The donor must survive the removal, at least for a little while. The bone is then submerged in molten lead. Once it cools, the thin lead coating is inscribed with various runes. The necromancer then uses this metal-shod bone to beat its donor to death while repeating a droning Greek chant.

With a successful roll, this ritual produces a *bastone diabolico* or "devil stick." The stick can be activated by anyone who holds it and expends a point of Willpower. Activation lasts for a scene, and during that time any ghost hit with the devil stick loses a point from its Passion pool (see p. 385). In addition to its normal effects, this club does an additional die of damage when used against the walking dead (not vampires), and such damage is aggravated.

Unfortunately for the necromancer, ghosts can sense that the *bastone diabolico* is bad news, even if they don't know exactly what the thing does. They tend to stay



away from anybody carrying one, which means that all rolls for such a character to use powers that summon or attract ghosts occur at +1 difficulty.

Cadaver's Touch

By chanting for three hours and melting a wax doll in the shape of the target, the necromancer turns a mortal target into a corpselike ruin. As the doll loses the last of its form, the target becomes cold and clammy. His pulse becomes weak and thready, and his flesh pale and chalky. For all intents and purposes, he becomes a reasonable facsimile of the walking dead. This can have some adverse effects in social situations (+2 difficulty on all Social rolls). The effects of the ritual wear off only when the wax of the doll is permitted to solidify. If the wax is allowed to boil off, the spell is broken.

Peek Past the Shroud

This hour-long ritual enchants a handful of ergot fungi mold to act as a catalyst for second sight. By eating a pinch of the mold, a subject gains the benefits of Shroudsight (p. 163) for a number of hours equal to the necromancer's Stamina score. Three doses of the enchanted ergot are created for every success on the roll. Ergot is normally poisonous to some degree; this ritual removes its toxic properties. However, a botch renders the ergot highly and instantaneously toxic, inflicting eight dice of lethal damage on any subject who ingests it — including vampires.

Ritual of Xipe Totec

To perform the ritual, the Kindred removes his victim's top layer of skin with an obsidian dagger, taking care to damage the skin as little as possible in the process. The victim must survive this process (though she may well die of blood loss shortly after the ritual if not seen to properly). He then drains the victim's blood into a large ceremonial golden bowl. There the blood is mixed with octli, amaranth flower, and other ingredients. When imbibed by the necromancer, this mixture causes him to sweat a glistening sheen of blood (equal to one blood point). The Kindred then dons the skin of his victim, which on a successful roll absorbs the Kindred vitae and begins to heal, forming a second skin over the vampire's own. The victim needs to be of similar stature — otherwise, the features become distorted and the disguise is rendered useless. This power also has no effect on supernatural creatures (although it can affect ghouls).

Under normal visual scrutiny, the ruse is flawless. Of course, it imparts none of the victim's knowledge or

mannerisms (and does nothing to mask the Kindred's own undead nature). Therefore, it works best for situations in which contact with friends and family may be minimized. To preserve the skin's condition, the Kindred must bathe it in a blood point's worth of vitae nightly. When the necromancer removes the skin (which causes one level of unsoakable lethal damage to the user and must be done with the same knife used to flay the victim in the first place), it is ruined in the process.

Level Five Rituals

Chill of Oblivion

Performed over the course of 12 hours (reduced by one hour per success on the casting roll), this ritual infuses the necromancer or a willing subject with the chill of the grave. The ritual's material component is a one-foot (half-meter) cube of ice, which is slowly melted on the subject's chest (inflicting three health levels of bashing damage on mortal subjects). The subject must lie naked on bare earth for the entire duration of the ritual. Once the ritual is completed, its effects remain for a number of nights equal to the caster's Occult rating.

An individual affected by Chill of Oblivion treats aggravated damage from fire and high temperatures as if it were lethal damage. Furthermore, he may attempt to extinguish any fire by rolling Willpower (difficulty 9); each success reduces the fire's soak difficulty (see p. 297) by 1, and a fire with a soak difficulty of 2 dwindles to glowing embers.

However, this ritual has several drawbacks. First and foremost, the subject's aura is laced with writhing black veins that resemble those left by diablerie, and may well be mistaken for such by any observer who is not familiar with this ritual. The subject also radiates a palpable aura of cold that extends to about arm's length from him; this can be extremely disconcerting to mortals, though it causes no damage, and its game effects mirror those of the Flaws Touch of Frost (p. 494) and Eerie Presence (p. 495). Finally, the mystical nimbus of the ritual draws hostile ghosts to the subject, who may plague him with unwholesome acts.

Dead Man's Hand

The necromancer takes a rag stained in the blood, sweat, or tears of the intended victim. She takes a freshly severed human hand (which can come either from a corpse or a living "donor") and closes it around the rag. As the hand decomposes, so does the victim. His flesh bloats, turns gray and then green, then starts to slough off. The victim's brain remains fresh until the very end, so he can see the maggots writhe in the putrescent rack of meat that once was his healthy body.

The necromancer makes the standard roll and spends two blood points for each point of Stamina (and Fortitude) possessed by the victim. The victim loses health levels according to the timetable below. Only the removal of the rag from the hand can stop the process. If this happens, health levels return, also according to the chart below.

Health Level	Time Until Next Loss
Bruised	12 hours
Hurt	12 hours
Injured	Six hours
Wounded	Three hours
Mauled	One hour
Crippled	30 minutes
Incapacitated	12 hours

Mortal characters who suffer more than 12 hours of incapacitation die, while Kindred who remain Incapacitated for more than 12 hours succumb to torpor.

Esilio

Like *Tempesta Scudo*, *Esilio* is a quick and dirty ritual. The necromancer simply speaks five syllables. No one can identify the casting language, but according to the ritual's oblique history, the language is what God gave humankind before the confusion of Babel. The legend further states that while the particular meaning of the words is lost, they are what Caine's father said to him while exiling him to Nod.

Regardless of the truth of the matter, the Words of Exile are not spoken lightly. When the ritual is cast successfully, it opens a hole within reality itself — a rip between the lands of the living and the darkest depths of the Underworld. This tear is invisible to normal vision, but to Witness of Death or Shroudsight it looks like a black vortex opening within the vampire's own body (the very few unfortunate enough to look into the gap with high levels of Auspex are generally unwilling or unable to discuss it). Any ghost clutched to the Kindred's chest is instantly torn to shreds. Grabbing a ghost in this fashion requires a Clinch or Tackle maneuver. Destroyed spirits don't come back for at least

a month, if ever. A wraith destroyed in this fashion tends to return as a Spectre, if it returns at all.

The necromancer may clutch and destroy a number of spirits equal to the number of successes she rolled. After that, the vortex closes. It closes at the end of the scene if it hasn't already.

Of course, using one's body as a portal between our world and what some people might call Hell is neither simple nor healthy. For starters, it costs a blood point and a point of Willpower (which does not give an automatic success on the ritual roll). More importantly, each success rolled inflicts a level of unsoakable lethal damage on the necromancer. Most significantly, every use of *Esilio* permanently reduces the necromancer's Humanity by one point if he follows that morality, and may impact other Paths at the Storyteller's discretion.

Grasp the Ghostly

Requiring a full six hours of chanting, this ritual allows a necromancer to bring an object from the Underworld into the real world. It's not simple, however — a wraith may object to having his possessions stolen and fight back. Furthermore, the object taken must be replaced by a material item of roughly equal mass, otherwise the target of the ritual snaps back to its previous, ghostly existence.

Objects taken from the Underworld tend to fade away after about a year. Only items recently destroyed in the real world (called "relics" by ghosts) may be recaptured in this manner. Artifacts created by wraiths themselves were never meant to exist outside the Underworld, and vanish on contact with the living world.

Obfuscate

Obfuscate is the uncanny ability for Kindred to conceal themselves from sight, sometimes even in full view of a crowd. An Obfuscated vampire doesn't actually become invisible, however — rather, he is able to delude observers into believing that he has vanished. Obfuscate also allows Kindred to change their features and conceal other people or objects. Typically vampires using Obfuscate must be within a short range of their witnesses (approximately five yards or meters per dot of Wits + Stealth) for their power to be effective.

Unless the Kindred chooses to make herself seen, she can remain obscured for as long as she wills it. At higher levels, the vampire can actually fade from sight so subtly that those nearby can't actually recall the moment at which she left.

Usually, few mortals or supernaturals (even those trained in Awareness) can pierce through the fog of Obfuscate. Animals, who rely more on their instincts than their normal senses, can sometime perceive (and be frightened by) the vampire's presence. Children and those to whom deception is foreign may also be able to pierce the illusion, at the Storyteller's discretion. Finally, the Auspex Discipline enables Kindred to see through Obfuscate. Even that is not guaranteed, however; refer to "Seeing the Unseen," p. 142, for more details. (Storytellers needing a die roll for animals or children can use this quick and dirty guideline: treat them as if they had Auspex 1 in terms of contesting Obfuscate. They do not have the Auspex 1 power, but are considered to have it when determining whether a vampire is noticed.)

Since Obfuscate clouds the mind of the viewer, vampires can't use it to hide their presence from electronic or mechanical devices. Video and photo cameras, for example, capture the vampire's image accurately. Even so, the person using, say, her cell phone to record an Obfuscated vampire will still have her mind impacted by the power, and she won't see the Kindred's image until she views the video at a later date (if even then).

Several Clans cultivate this power — the Assamites, Followers of Set, and Malkavians, for example — but the Nosferatu are particularly known for this Discipline. Some elder Kindred believe that Caine, or perhaps Lilith, bestowed the Clan with this Discipline to compensate for the hideous physical deformities its members suffer.

Most Obfuscate powers last for a scene, or until the vampire ceases maintaining them. Once evoked, they require very little mental effort to keep in place.

• Cloak of Shadows

At this level, the vampire must rely on nearby shadows and cover to assist in hiding his presence. He steps into an out-of-the-way, shadowed place and eases himself from normal sight. The vampire remains unnoticed as long as he stays silent, still, under some degree of cover (such as a curtain, bush, door frame, lamppost, or alley), and out of direct lighting. The immortal's concealment vanishes if he moves, attacks, or falls under direct light. Furthermore, the vampire's deception cannot stand up to concentrated observation without fading.

System: No roll is required as long as the character fulfills the criteria described above. So long as he remains quiet and motionless, virtually no one but another Kindred with a high enough Auspex rating will see him.

•• Unseen Presence

With experience, the vampire can move around without being seen. Shadows seem to shift to cover him, and people automatically avert their gazes as he passes by. Others move unconsciously to avoid contact with the cloaked creature; those with weak wills may even scurry away from the area in unacknowledged fear. The vampire remains ignored indefinitely unless someone deliberately seeks him out or he inadvertently reveals himself.

Since the vampire fully retains his physical substance, he must be careful to avoid contact with anything that may disclose his presence (knocking over a vase, bumping into someone). Even a whispered word or the scuffing of a shoe against the floor can be enough to disrupt the power.

System: No roll is necessary to use this power unless the character speaks, attacks, or otherwise draws attention to himself. The Storyteller should call for a Wits + Stealth roll under any circumstances that might cause the character to reveal himself. The difficulty of the roll depends on the situation; stepping on a squeaky floorboard might be a 5, while walking through a pool of water may require a 9. Other acts may require a certain number of successes; speaking quietly without giving away one's position, for instance, demands at least three successes. Upon success, the vampire, all her clothing, and objects that could fit into a pocket are concealed.

Some things are beyond the power of Unseen Presence to conceal. Although the character is cloaked from view while he smashes through a window, yells out, or throws someone across the room, the vampire becomes visible to all in the aftermath. Bystanders snap out of the subtle fugue in which Obfuscate put them. Worse still, each viewer can make a Wits + Awareness roll (difficulty 7); if successful, the mental haze clears completely, so those individuals recall every move the character made up until then as if he had been visible the entire time.

••• Mask of a Thousand Faces

The vampire can influence the perception of others, causing them to see a face different from his. Although the Kindred's physical form does not change, any observer who cannot sense the truth sees whomever the vampire wishes her to see.

The vampire must have a firm idea of the visage he wishes to project. The primary decision is whether to create an imaginary face or to superimpose the features of another person. Manufactured features are often more difficult to compose in believable proportions, but such a disguise is easier to maintain than having to impersonate someone else. Of course, things get simpler if the Kindred borrows the face but doesn't bother with the personality.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Performance (difficulty 7) to determine how well the disguise works. If the character tries to impersonate someone, he must get a good look at the subject before putting on the mask. The Storyteller may raise the difficulty if the character catches only a glimpse. The chart below lists the degrees of success in manufacturing another appearance. Vampires wishing to mask themselves as a person more attractive than they are must pay additional blood points equal to the difference between the vampire's Appearance rating and the Appearance of the mask (which means that younger vampires may need to take longer in order to spend the blood necessary).

Successes	Result
1 success	The vampire retains the same height and build, with a few slight alterations to his basic features. Nosferatu can appear as normal, albeit ugly, mortals.
2 successes	He looks unlike himself; people don't easily recognize him or agree about his appearance.
3 successes	He looks the way he wants to appear.
4 successes	Complete transformation, including gestures, mannerisms, appearance, and voice.
5 successes	Profound alteration (appear as the opposite sex, a vastly different age, or an extreme change of size).

Actually posing as someone else carries its own problems. The character should know at least basic information about the individual; especially difficult deceptions (fooling a lover or close friend) require at least some familiarity with the target in order to succeed.

•••• Vanish from the Mind's Eye

This potent expression of Obfuscate enables the vampire to disappear from plain view. So profound is this vanishing that the immortal can fade away even if he stands directly in front of someone.

While the disappearance itself is quietly subtle, its impact on those who see it is anything but. Most kine panic and flee in the aftermath. Especially weak-willed individuals wipe the memory of the Kindred from their minds. Although vampires are not shaken so easily, even Kindred may be momentarily surprised by a sudden vanishing.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Stealth; the difficulty equals the target's Wits + Alertness (use the highest total in the group if the character disappears in front of a crowd). With three or fewer successes, the character fades but does not vanish, becoming an indistinct, ghostlike figure. With more than three, he disappears completely. If the player scores more successes than an observer's Willpower rating, that person forgets that the vampire was there in the first place.

Tracking the character accurately while he appears ghostlike requires a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8). A successful roll means the individual can interact normally with the vampire (although the Kindred looks like a profoundly disturbing ghostly shape). A failed roll results in a +2 difficulty modifier (maximum 10) when attempting to act upon, or interact with, the vampire. The Storyteller may call for new observation checks if the vampire moves to an environment in which he's difficult to see (heads into shadows, crosses behind an obstacle, proceeds through a crowd). When fully invisible, the vampire is handled as described under Unseen Presence, above.

A person subject to the vanishing makes a Wits + Courage roll (mortals at difficulty 9, vampires at difficulty 5). A successful roll means the individual reacts immediately (although after the vampire performs his action for that turn); failure means the person stands uncomprehending for two turns while her mind tries to make sense of what she just experienced.

••••• Cloak the Gathering

At this degree of power, the vampire may extend his concealing abilities to cover an area. The immortal may use any Obfuscate power upon those nearby as well as upon himself, if he wishes.

Any protected person who compromises the cloak exposes himself to view. Further, if the one who invokes the power gives himself away, the cloak falls from everyone. This power is particularly useful if the vampire needs to bring his retinue through a secure location without drawing the notice of others.

System: The character may conceal one extra individual for each dot of Stealth he possesses. He may bestow any single Obfuscate power at a given time to the group. While the power applies to everyone under the character's cloak, his player need only make a single roll. Each individual must follow the requirements described under the relevant Obfuscate power to remain under its effect; any person who fails to do so loses the cloak's protection, but doesn't expose the others. Only if the vampire himself errs does the power drop for everyone.

••••• • Conceal

The vampire may mask an inanimate object up to the size of a house (Obfuscate cannot be used to disguise inanimate objects without the use of this power). If the object is hidden, so are all of its contents. While Conceal is in effect, passersby walk around the concealed object as if it were still visible, but refuse to acknowledge that they are making any kind of detour.

System: In order to activate this power, a character must be within about 30 feet (approximately 10 meters) of the object to be concealed and the item must hold some personal significance for him. The Conceal power functions as Unseen Presence for purposes of detection, as well as the duration and durability of the disguise.

Conceal can be used on a vehicle in which the character is traveling. In this instance, traffic patterns seem to flow around the vehicle, and accidents are actually less likely as other drivers subconsciously maneuver away from the concealed auto. A police radar gun still registers a speeding car masked in this fashion, but the officer behind the gun is disinclined to make a traffic stop of the phantom blip. Using Conceal on aircraft is problematic, as the power's range generally doesn't extend far enough to cover air traffic controllers and the like.

••••• • Mind Blank

A vampire with this power is able to shrug off telepathic contact, easily withstanding invasive probes of her mind.

System: Any attempt to read or probe the character's mind first requires a successful Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty equal to the character's Wits + Stealth).

Even if a potential intruder does succeed, his dice pool for the attempt is then limited to the number of successes he scored on the initial roll.

••••• • Soul Mask

In addition to concealing her form, a vampire who has developed Soul Mask is able to conceal her aura. She may display whatever combination of colors and shades she wishes, or may appear to have no aura whatsoever. This power is of particular use to those of elder Generation who have reached such heights of power through diablerie.

System: The use of this power allows the projection of only one aura (or lack thereof) — the vampire chooses the precise colors to be displayed when she first develops Soul Mask. If the character has no experience with the use of Aura Perception, she may not choose an alternate aura, as she has no idea what one would look like, though she can still choose to display no aura whatsoever. Soul Mask can be bought multiple times, if desired, in order to give a vampire multiple alternate auras from which to choose.

Unless the player states otherwise, Soul Mask is always in effect. If the character has bought Soul Mask two or more times, her "default" aura displayed is the first one she learned.

••••• •• Cache

Most Obfuscate powers require the individual using them to be within a short distance of the subjects of the concealment. Cache extends this range considerably, allowing an elder with this power to leave people or objects safely hidden while he goes about his business elsewhere.

System: A character must be within the normal required distance to initiate an Obfuscate power. Once this is done, the player spends a Willpower point, which activates Cache on top of the already functioning use of the Discipline. The concealment will now remain in effect as long as the vampire is within a distance equal to his Wits + Stealth in miles (or one and half times that in kilometers) from the object or person he wishes to conceal. The enhanced concealment fades at the next sunrise, or breaks (as always) if the Obfuscate subject reveals himself.

••••• •• Veil of Blissful Ignorance

This power's development is attributed to the Malkavians, but many Nosferatu have also found it to be highly useful. The Veil of Blissful Ignorance allows a vampire to Obfuscate an unwilling victim, removing him from the notice of others. Some Nosferatu use this power to teach a humbling lesson to individuals who take the presence and aid of others for granted, while others utilize it to remove an essential member of a group in the midst of a crisis.

System: The character must touch the victim to activate this power. The player spends a blood point and rolls Wits + Stealth (difficulty equals the victim's Appearance + 3). If the roll is a success, the victim is subject to the effects of Vanish From the Mind's Eye for a length of time determined by the number of successes the player rolls.

Successes	Result
1 success	Three turns
2 successes	One minute (20 turns)
3 successes	15 minutes
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	One night

The victim of Veil of Blissful Ignorance does not necessarily know that he is under the effect of this power. He is only aware that everyone around him has suddenly begun acting as if he were not there. The victim cannot break this effect, even with violence; if he attacks someone, the target ascribes the act to the visible individual nearest to him. More than one fatal brawl has been incited by this side-effect. The Veil persists even if the vampire who activated it leaves the area.

Curiously enough, Veil of Blissful Ignorance can never be used on anyone who is ready and willing to accept its effects.

••••• ••• Old Friend

Many elder Nosferatu have made reputations for omniscience with the secrets they learn through creative uses of this power. A variation of Mask of a Thousand Faces, Old Friend allows a vampire to probe a subject's subconscious and take the semblance of the individual whom that victim trusts over anyone else. Someone using this power does not appear as someone who the victim is frightened of or awed by, but rather someone to whom the victim feels comfortable revealing intimate secrets. Old Friend doesn't necessarily make its user appear as someone who is still among the living; a long- dead friend or relative is just as likely, and in such cases the subject remembers the encounter as a dream or a ghostly visitation.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the victim's Perception + Alertness or Awareness, maximum 10). The more successes, the more convincing the impersonation. This power only affects one victim at a time; other observers see the vampire as she truly is, unless she also establishes a Mask of a Thousand Faces in addition to using Old Friend.

••••• •••• Create Name

Some Toreador call this power the ultimate development of method acting. Create Name allows a character to create a completely new identity; face, speech pattern, aura, even thought processes are constructed according to the vampire's desired identity. The power can be used to impersonate an existing individual, or it can project the semblance of a completely fictional identity with perfect accuracy.

System: A vampire working with Create Name must spend three hours a night in relatively uninterrupted quiet to establish a new personality by means of this power. The player makes an extended roll of Intelligence + Subterfuge (difficulty 8), one roll per night. A total of 20 successes are necessary to construct a new identity, while a botch removes five successes from the vampire's total. Once a new identity has been successfully created, however, the character can step into it at any time without any sort of roll. Any outside observer without Auspex 9 or the equivalent sees the artificial identity. The character's face, aura, Nature, Demeanor, even thoughts and Psychological Merits and Flaws all appear to be those of the persona selected and crafted by the character.

The only way to pierce this disguise, other than Auspex 9, is to notice any discrepancies between the assumed identity and the Abilities it logically ought to possess. A character with no dots in Medicine should have a hard time pulling off a created identity as a neurosurgeon, for example. The Storyteller should make a secret roll of Perception + Alertness (difficulty 9) for each character who should catch a slip made by the impostor.

Obtenebration

The signature power of the Lasombra, Obtenebration grants the vampire power over darkness itself. The nature of the darkness invoked by Obtenebration is a matter of intense debate among Kindred. Some believe it to be merely shadows, while others feel that the power gives control over the stuff of the vampire's soul, coaxing it tangibly outward.

Regardless, the effects of Obtenebration are terrifying, as waves of darkness roil out from the Cainite, enveloping those in their path like an infernal wave. As Obtenebration is mostly known as a Sabbat Discipline, any Camarilla vampire caught using the power had better have a damned good explanation.

Note: Vampires using Obtenebration can see through the darkness they control, though other vampires (even those that also have Obtenebration) cannot. Dreadful tales of rival Lasombra struggling to blind and smother each other with the same wisps of darkness circulate among young members of the Clan, though no elders have come forth to substantiate these claims.

• Shadow Play

This power grants the vampire limited control over shadows and other ambient darkness. Though the vampire cannot truly "create" darkness, she can overlap and stretch existing shadows, creating patches of gloom. This power also allows Kindred to separate shadows from their casting bodies and even shape darkness into the shadows of things that are not there.

Once a Kindred takes control of darkness or shadow, it gains a mystical tangibility. By varying accounts cold or hellishly hot and cloying, the darkness may be used to aggravate or even smother victims. Certain callous Lasombra claim to have choked mortals to death with their own shadows.

System: This power requires no roll, but a blood point must be spent to activate it. Shadow Play lasts for one scene and requires no active concentration. Kindred cloaking themselves in shadow gain an extra die in their Stealth dice pools and add one to the difficulties of ranged weapon attacks against them. Vampires who use the darkness to make themselves more terrifying add one die to Intimidation dice pools. Opponents plagued by flapping shadows and strangling darkness subtract one die from all Stamina dice pools (including soak). Mortals, ghouls, and other air-breathers reduced to zero Stamina by strangling shadows begin to asphyxiate; vampires lose all appropriate dice but are otherwise unaffected. Only one target or subject may be affected by this power at any given time, though some modicum of concealment is offered to a relatively motionless group.

The unnatural appearance of this power proves extremely disconcerting to mortals and animals (and, at the Storyteller's discretion, Kindred who have never

seen it before). Whenever this power is invoked within a mortal's vicinity, that individual must make a Courage roll (difficulty 8) or suffer a one-die penalty to all dice pools for the remainder of the scene, due to fear of the monstrous shadows.

•• Shroud of Night

The vampire can create a cloud of inky blackness. The cloud completely obscures light and even sound to some extent. Those who have been trapped within it (and survived) describe the cloud as viscous and unnerving. This physical manifestation lends credence to those Lasombra who claim that their darkness is something other than mere shadow.

The tenebrous cloud may even move, if the creating Kindred wishes, though this requires complete concentration.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 7). Success on the roll generates darkness roughly 10 feet (three meters) in diameter, though the amorphous cloud constantly shifts and undulates, sometimes even extending shadowy tendrils. Each additional success doubles the diameter of the cloud (though the vampire may voluntarily reduce the area she wishes to cover). The cloud may be invoked at a distance of up to 50 yards/meters, though creating darkness outside the vampire's line of sight adds two to the difficulty of the roll and requires a blood point's expenditure.

The tarry mass actually extinguishes light sources it engulfs (with the exception of fire), and muffles sounds until they are indistinguishable. Those within the cloud lose all sense of sight and feel as though they've been immersed in pitch. Sound also warps and distorts within the cloud, making it nearly impossible to accomplish anything (+2 difficulty, as per Blind Fighting on p. 274). Even those possessed of Heightened Senses, Eyes of the Beast, Tongue of the Asp, and similar powers suffer the penalty for blindness due to the unnatural darkness. Additionally, being surrounded by the Shroud of Night reduces Stamina-based dice pools by two dice, as the murk smothers and agitates the victims. This effect is not cumulative with Shadow Play, although targets asphyxiate as per Shadow Play if they reach 0 Stamina; more than one unfortunate mortal has "drowned" in darkness.

Mortals and animals surrounded by the Shroud of Night must make Courage rolls per Shadow Play, above, or panic and flee.

••• Arms of the Abyss

Refining his control over darkness, the Kindred can create prehensile tentacles that emerge from patches of dim lighting. These tentacles may grasp, restrain, and constrict foes.

System: The player spends a blood point and makes a simple (never extended) Manipulation + Occult roll (difficulty 7); each success enables the creation of a single tentacle. Each tentacle is six feet (two meters) long and possesses Strength and Dexterity ratings equal to the invoking vampire's Obtenebration Trait — Potence and Celerity dots are added to these Strength and Dexterity ratings, respectively. If the vampire chooses, she may spend a blood point either to increase a single tentacle's Strength or Dexterity by one or to extend its length by another six feet or two meters. Each tentacle has four health levels, is affected by fire and sunlight as if it were a vampire, and soaks bashing and lethal damage using the vampire's Stamina + Fortitude. Aggravated damage may not be soaked.

Tentacles may constrict foes, inflicting (Strength +1) lethal damage per turn. Breaking the grasp of a tentacle requires the victim to win a resisted Strength roll against the tentacle (difficulty 6 for each). However, tentacles cannot be used for any kind of manipulation, such as typing or driving.

All tentacles need not emanate from the same source — so long as there are multiple patches of suitable darkness, there are sources for the Arms of the Abyss. Controlling the tentacles does not require complete concentration; if the Kindred is not incapacitated or in torpor, she may control tentacles while carrying out other actions.

•••• Black Metamorphosis

The Cainite calls upon his inner darkness and infuses himself with it, becoming a monstrous hybrid of matter and shadow. His body becomes mottled with spots of tenebrous shade, and wispy tentacles extrude from his torso and abdomen. Though still humanoid, the vampire takes on an almost demonic appearance, as the darkness within him bubbles to the surface.

System: The player spends two blood points and makes a Manipulation + Courage roll (difficulty 7) — vampires of lower Generation may have to take two turns to make the transition. Failure indicates the vampire cannot undergo the Black Metamorphosis (though he spends the blood points nonetheless). A botch inflicts two unsoakable health levels of lethal damage on the vampire as darkness ravages his undead body.

While under the effects of the Black Metamorphosis, the vampire possesses four tentacles similar to those evoked via Arms of the Abyss (though their Strength and Dexterity ratings are equal to the vampire's own Attributes, including dice from Celerity and Potence). These tentacles, combined with the bands of darkness all over the Kindred's body, subtract two dice from the Stamina and soak dice pools of opponents physically touched in combat, for as long as the vampire remains in contact with the victim. This is not cumulative with other powers in Obtenebration, although targets can asphyxiate at Stamina 0, as per Shadow Play. The vampire may make an additional attack without penalty by using the tentacles (for a total of two attacks, not one additional attack per tentacle). Additionally, the vampire can sense his surroundings fully even in pitch darkness.

The vampire's head and extremities sometimes appear to fade away into nothingness, while at other times they seem swathed in otherworldly darkness. This, combined with the wriggling tentacles writhing from his body, creates an unsettling sight. Mortals, animals, and other creatures not accustomed to this sort of display must make Courage rolls (difficulty 8) or succumb to a panic that amounts to Rötschreck (though it is inspired by the darkness rather than fire). Many Kindred cultivate this devilish aspect, and the Black Metamorphosis adds three dice to the invoking Kindred's Intimidation dice pools.

••••• Tenebrous Form

At this level, the Kindred's mastery of darkness is so extensive that she may physically *become* it. Upon activation of this power, the vampire becomes an inky, amoeboid patch of shadow. Vampires in this form are practically invulnerable and may slither through cracks and crevices. In addition, the shadow-vampire gains the ability to see in natural darkness.

System: The transformation costs three blood points (which may need to occur over three turns, depending on the vampire's Generation). The vampire is immune to physical attacks while in the tenebrous form (though she still takes aggravated damage from fire and sunlight), but may not herself physically attack. She may, however, envelop and ooze over others, affecting them in the same manner as a Shroud of Night, in addition to using mental Disciplines. Vampires in Tenebrous Form may even slither up walls and across



ceilings or "drip" darkness upward — they have no mass and are thus unaffected by gravity. Rötschreck difficulties from fire and sunlight do increase by one for vampires in this form, as the light is even more painful to their shadowy bodies.

Mortals (and others not used to such displays) who witness the vampire transform into unholy shadow require Courage rolls (difficulty 8) in order to avoid the debilitating terror described under Black Metamorphosis.

••••• • The Darkness Within

This power allows the Cainite to call forth the darkness contained in her black soul. This enormous, turbulent shadow vomits from the vampire's mouth, though some vampires are said to cut themselves and let the blackness seep from their veins. The shadow-cloud engulfs a chosen target, burning it with a soul-scarring chill and siphoning its blood away in torrents.

System: The player makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) and spends a blood point. The resulting shadow envelops the target and, though it does not physically harm the victim, it may strike terror into him. Individuals observing the Darkness Within, whether as targets or onlookers, may suffer from the terror described under Black Metamorphosis, unless they are already familiar with the Kindred's power.

Individuals touched by The Darkness Within lose one point of blood per turn, though targets may resist this effect by succeeding on a Stamina roll (difficulty 6) each turn the target remains in contact with the cloud.

The Cainite invoking The Darkness Within must devote all her attention to maintaining the cloud. If the vampire is attacked, the darkness immediately returns to her through whatever orifice it originated. The Cainite can summon the darkness back at any time, gaining a number of blood points equal to one-half the number the shadow siphoned from its victims (round up). Taking blood from another in this fashion is similar to drinking from that vampire, and blood bonds may result. Additionally, the Darkness Within may take blood from only one individual per turn, though it may be in contact with many.

••••• • Shadowstep

The vampire has such fine control over the darkness that he may become it briefly and reform himself from other darkness close by. The vampire may Shadowstep through walls, floors, and even mystical barriers. The Cainite simply steps "into" a shadow and re-emerges from another shadow a short distance away (or next to the barrier, if there is no shadow on the other side).

System: The player rolls Dexterity + Occult, and on a successful roll, the character may emerge from another shadow no more than 50 feet (or 15 meters) away. Failing the roll means simply that the character cannot step through the shadow-realm, while a botch signifies the character has become trapped between shadows (which fiendish Storytellers should have a heyday with). Pulling another individual through the shadow requires a Strength + Occult roll, with consequences for failure similar to failing by oneself.

••••• •• Shadow Twin

The vampire's control over darkness has progressed to such a degree that he may bestow upon it a limited degree of sentience. By animating his own shadow or that of another, the Cainite can actually "free" the shadow cast by light. While this power is active, the subject casts no shadow, as it has left to pursue the vampire's commands.

This power can unnerve mortals and even a few inexperienced vampires. The Kindred wielding Obtenebration commands the individual's shadow; some vampires report having seen mortals literally scared to death, as their shadows leapt away to taunt or menace them.

System: The player spends a blood point and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). If the roll succeeds, the shadow springs to unholy freedom for one hour per success (though it disappears at sunrise regardless of how many successes the vampire had). The Shadow Twin has Attribute and Ability ratings equal to half those of its parent body; they won't do much talking or thinking, so Mental and Social Traits don't matter much, though Wits may come into play. Additionally, the Shadow Twin has an Obtenebration score equal to one-half of that of the vampire who animated it (rounded down). Mortals and vampires unused to Obtenebration require a Courage roll upon witnessing this, as per Shadow Play.

The twin may separate itself from the parent and travel up to 50 feet or 15 meters away, crawling through crevices or sliding up walls. It may attack and be attacked, though it takes and does only half damage (again, round down). Flame and supernatural attacks (such as vampire fangs, mystical powers, etc.) do full damage. If the Shadow Twin is killed, its parent loses half her Willpower points and must roll to avoid Rötschreck (difficulty 9).

••••• ••• Oubliette

By creating a "chamber" of pure darkness, the Cainite may entrap or smother her enemies. No air exists in this shadow-trap, and mortals suffocate within its chilling void. Even vampires have little recourse once trapped — they may leave only at their captor's whim. The Oubliette appears as a dense patch of shadow, unaffected by ambient light around it.

System: The vampire spends a blood point, but no roll is necessary to create the Oubliette. To actually create the Oubliette around someone requires a contested Wits + Larceny roll against the target's Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 7 for both rolls). Mortals suffocate within a number of minutes equal to their Stamina (though the Lasombra may choose to leave their heads exposed or trap a quantity of air inside as well), while vampires are simply suspended impotently in darkness and may not use Disciplines or take other actions. The Oubliette vanishes instantly when touched by sunlight — which has left more than one vampire exposed to the sun's unforgiving rays — or when the Kindred chooses to relax it. A vampire may maintain only one Oubliette at a time (which can only contain one target at a time), which leads some Cainite philosophers to argue that it is a prison created from the vampire's very soul.

••••• •••• Ahriman's Demesne

This power allows the vampire to summon a darkness so oppressive that it extinguishes the light of life — or unlife — of any victim trapped within it. Ahriman's Demesne creates a 50-foot (or 15-meter) radius of void that issues from the Cainite's hand and takes away the bodies of those it claims when it vanishes. The overwhelming darkness destroys friend and foe alike, claiming anyone unfortunate enough to be within its circumference.

System: The player spends two points of Willpower and concentrates for three turns. During this time, the blackness billows out of the character's hand, growing to fill the area. At the end of the third turn, the player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6). Everyone in the darkness' area suffers that many health levels of damage (aggravated, if the victims are vampires) outright — six successes yield six levels of damage, not six dice of damage. After Ahriman's Demesne does its damage, it collapses, taking with it the bodies of any who died when they came in contact with the dreadful shadow.

Potence

Kindred endowed with Potence possess unnatural strength. This Discipline enables vampire to leap massive distances, lift tremendous weights, and strike opponents with brutal force. Even low ranks of this power can give Kindred physical power beyond mortal bounds. More powerful Kindred can leap so far that they appear to be flying, toss cars like soda cans, and punch through walls like cardboard. While the more subtle mental Disciplines can be awe-inspiring, the brutal effectiveness of Potence is formidable in its own right.

The Brujah, Giovanni, Lasombra, and Nosferatu are naturally gifted with this Discipline, but members of other Clans often make a point to find someone who can teach them the awesome power of Potence.

System: Each dot that the vampire has in Potence adds one die to all Strength-related dice rolls. Further, the player can spend one blood point and change his Potence dice into an equal number of automatic successes to all Strength-related rolls for the turn. In melee and brawling combat, successes from Potence (either rolled or automatic) are applied to the damage roll results.

Potence 6+

While flesh and blood have their limits, undead sinews and vitae have a bit more latitude when it comes to feats of strength. Vampires who are close to Caine in descent are sometimes capable of strength-based maneuvers that awe even other vampires. A product of blood and will as much as of muscle and bone, mastery of Potence gives a vampire the ability to do far more than just lift progressively heavier objects — if the vampire himself is willing to learn an alternate way.

Advanced Potence powers can be purchased in the same fashion as advanced Celerity or Fortitude powers: A character can choose to learn an alternate power instead of advancing along the Discipline's normal progression, and can later go back and re-purchase what he's missed.

••••• • Imprint

A vampire with extensive knowledge of Potence can squeeze very, very hard. As a matter of fact, she can squeeze (or press, or push) so hard that she can leave an imprint of her fingers or hand in any hard surface up to and including solid steel. A use of Imprint can

simply serve as a threat, or it can be used, for example, to dig handholds into sheer surfaces for purposes of climbing.

System: Imprint requires a point of blood to activate. The power remains active for the duration of a scene. The depth of the imprint the vampire creates with Imprint is up to the Storyteller — decisions should take into account how much force the vampire can bring to bear, the toughness of the material, and its thickness. If the object the vampire grasps is thin enough, at the Storyteller's discretion, the vampire might simply be able to push through it (in the case of a wall) or tear it off (in the case of a spear or pipe).

••••• •• Earthshock

According to some pundits, Potence is merely the art of hitting something very hard. But what do you do when your target is too far away to hit directly? The answer is, if you're sufficiently talented with the Discipline, to employ Earthshock. On its simplest level, Earthshock is the ability to hit the ground at point A, and subsequently have the force of the blow emerge from the ground at point B.

System: The use of Earthshock requires the expenditure of two blood points, as well as a normal Dexterity + Brawl roll. The vampire punches or stamps on the ground, and, if the attack is a success, the force of the blow emerges from the ground as a geyser of stone and earth directly underneath the target. The attack can be dodged at a +2 difficulty.

Earthshock's range is 10 feet or three meters for every level of Potence the vampire has, up to the limits of visibility. A failure on the attack roll means that the strike goes errant and is liable to explode anywhere within range; a botch means that the vampire pulverizes the ground beneath him and may well bury himself in the process.

••••• ••• Flick

It is a truism that "the great ones always make it look easy." In the case of Flick, that saying stops being a truism and becomes literal truth. With this power, a master of Potence can make the slightest gesture — a wave, a snap of the fingers, the toss of a ball — and have it unleash the full, devastating impact of a dead-on strike. The attack can come without warning, limiting the target's ability to dodge or anticipate; this makes Flick one of the most feared applications of Potence.

System: Flick costs a point of blood, and requires a Dexterity + Brawl roll (difficulty 6). The vampire must also make some sort of gesture directing the blow. What the gesture is remains up to the player — anything from a snap of the fingers to a blown kiss has worked in the past.

Flick's range is equal to the limit of the Kindred's perception, and the blow struck does damage equal to a normal punch (including all bonuses).

Presence

Presence is the Discipline of emotional manipulation. Vampires with this power can inspire passionate fervor or unreasoning terror in mortals and Kindred alike. In addition, unlike most Disciplines, some of Presence's powers can be used on entire crowds at one time. Presence can transcend race, religion, gender, class, and (most importantly) supernatural nature. As such, this subtle power is one of the most useful Disciplines a vampire can possess.

Anyone can resist Presence for one scene by spending a Willpower point and succeeding on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8), but the affected individual must keep spending points until he is no longer in the presence of the vampire (or, in the case of Summon, until the effect wears off). Vampires three or more Generations lower than the wielder need only spend a single Willpower to ignore the Presence for an entire night and need not roll Willpower to do so.

The major drawback of Presence is that it controls only the emotions. It causes others to feel a certain way toward the vampire, but does not give her outright control over them. While people weigh strongly the orders that the vampire declares, their minds are still their own. Suicidal or ridiculous directives don't sound any more sensible just because the person giving them is unusually fascinating. Still, inspired eloquence or significant wealth used in combination with this Discipline can enable the vampire to urge others along a desired course.

The Brujah, Followers of Set, Toreador, and Ventrue Clans are all adept in this Discipline. The Ventrue are arguably the most skilled with its application, however, due to their ability to use Presence and Dominate in efficient combination.

• Awe

Those near the vampire suddenly desire to be closer to her and become receptive to her point of view. Awe is extremely useful for mass communication. It matters



little what is said — the hearts of those affected lean toward the vampire's opinion. The weak want to agree with her; even if the strong-willed resist, they soon find themselves outnumbered. Awe can turn a chancy deliberation into a certain resolution in the vampire's favor almost before her opponents know that the tide has turned.

Despite the intensity of this attraction, those so smitten do not lose their sense of self-preservation. Danger breaks the spell of fascination, as does leaving the area. Those subject to Awe will remember how they felt in the vampire's presence, however. This will influence their reactions should they ever encounter her again.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Charisma + Performance (difficulty 7). The number of successes rolled determines how many people are affected, as noted on the chart below. If there are more people present than the character can influence, Awe affects those with lower Willpower ratings first. The power stays in effect for the remainder of the scene or until the character chooses to drop it.

Successes	Result
1 success	One person
2 successes	Two people
3 successes	Six people
4 successes	20 people
5 successes	Everyone in the vampire's immediate vicinity (an entire auditorium, a mob)

Those affected can use Willpower points to overcome the effect, but must continue spending Willpower every scene for as long as they remain in the same area as the vampire. As soon as an individual spends a number of Willpower points equal to the successes rolled, he shakes off the Awe completely and remains unaffected for the rest of the night.

•• Dread Gaze

While all Kindred can frighten others by physically revealing their true vampiric natures — baring claws and fangs, glaring with malevolence, hissing loudly with malice — this power focuses these elements to insanely terrifying levels. Dread Gaze engenders unbearable terror in its victim, stupefying him into madness, immobility, or reckless flight. Even the most stalwart individual will fall back from the vampire's horrific visage.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the victim's Wits + Courage). Suc-

cess indicates the victim is cowed, while failure means the target is startled but not terrified by the sight. Three or more successes means he runs away in abject fear; victims who have nowhere to run claw at the walls, hoping to dig a way out rather than face the vampire. Moreover, each success subtracts one from the target's action dice pools next turn.

The character may attempt Dread Gaze once per turn against a single target, though she may also perform it as an extended action, adding her successes in order to subjugate the target completely. Once the target loses enough dice that he cannot perform any action, he's so shaken and terrified that he curls up on the ground and weeps. Failure during the extended action means the attempt falters. The character loses all her collected successes and can start over next turn, while the victim may act normally again.

A botch at any time indicates the target is not at all impressed — perhaps even finding the vampire's antics comical — and remains immune to any further uses of Presence by the character for the rest of the story.

••• Entrancement

This power bends others' emotions, making them the vampire's willing servants. Due to what these individuals see as true and enduring devotion, they heed the vampire's every desire. Since this is done willingly, instead of having their wills sapped, these servants retain their creativity and individuality.

While these obedient minions are more personable and spirited than the mind-slaves created by Dominate, they're also somewhat unpredictable. Further, since Entrancement is of a temporary duration, dealing with a lapsed servant can be troublesome. A wise Kindred either disposes of those she Entrances after they serve their usefulness, or binds them more securely by a blood bond (made much easier by the minion's willingness to serve).

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Appearance + Empathy (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points); the number of successes determines how long the subject is Entranced, as per the chart below. (Subjects can still spend Willpower to temporarily resist, like any other Presence power.) The Storyteller may wish to make the roll instead, since the character is never certain of the strength of her hold on the victim. The vampire may try to keep the subject under her thrall, but can do so only after the initial Entrancement wears off. Attempting this power while Entrancement is already in operation has no effect.

Successes	Result
Botch	Subject cannot be entranced for the rest of the story.
Failure	Subject cannot be entranced for the rest of the night.
1 success	One hour
2 successes	One day
3 successes	One week
4 successes	One month
5 successes	One year

•••• Summon

This impressive power enables the vampire to call to herself any person whom she has ever met. This call can go to anyone, mortal or supernatural, across any distance within the physical world. The subject of the Summons comes as fast as he is able, possibly without even knowing why. He knows intuitively how to find his Summoner — even if the vampire moves to a new location, the subject redirects his own course as soon as he can. After all, he's coming to the vampire herself, not to some predetermined site.

Although this power allows the vampire to call someone across a staggering distance, it is most useful when used locally. Even if the desired person books the next available flight, getting to Kyoto from Milwaukee can still take far longer than the vampire needs. Obviously, the individual's financial resources are a factor; if he doesn't have the money to travel quickly, it will take him a far greater time to get there.

The subject thinks mainly of reaching the vampire, but does not neglect his own well-being. This is less of a consideration if he only has to cross a room, unless he must get through a gang of gun-wielding punks to do so. The individual retains his survival instincts, and while he won't shirk physical violence to reach the vampire's side, he won't subject himself to suicidal situations.

The Summoning dissipates at dawn. Unless the subject is trained to continue toward the vampire after the first call, the immortal must Summon each night until the target arrives. Still, as long as the vampire is willing and able, she is assured to greet her desired subject some night — as long as nothing happens to him along the way, of course.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Charisma + Subterfuge. The base difficulty is 5; this in-

creases to difficulty 7 if the subject was met only briefly. If the character used Presence successfully on the target in the past, this difficulty drops to 4, but if the attempt was unsuccessful, the difficulty rises to 8.

The number of successes indicates the subject's speed and attitude in responding:

Successes	Result
Botch	Subject cannot be Summoned by that vampire for the rest of the story.
Failure	Subject cannot be Summoned by that vampire for the rest of the night.
1 success	Subject approaches slowly and hesitantly.
2 successes	Subject approaches reluctantly and is easily thwarted by obstacles.
3 successes	Subject approaches with reasonable speed.
4 successes	Subject comes with haste, overcoming any obstacles in his way.
5 successes	Subject rushes to the vampire, doing anything to get to her.

••••• Majesty

At this stage, the vampire can augment her supernatural mien a thousandfold. The attractive become paralyzingly beautiful; the homely become hideously twisted. Majesty inspires universal respect, devotion, fear — or all those emotions at once — in those around the vampire. The weak scramble to obey her every whim, and even the most dauntless find it almost impossible to deny her.

People affected find the vampire so formidable that they dare not risk her displeasure. Raising their voices to her is difficult; raising a hand against her is unthinkable. Those few who shake off the vampire's potent mystique enough to oppose her are shouted down by the many under her thrall, before the immortal need even respond.

Under Majesty's influence, hearts break, power trembles, and the bold shake. Wise Kindred use this power with caution against mortal and immortal alike. While Majesty can cow influential politicians and venerable Primogen, the vampire must be careful that doing so doesn't come back to haunt her. After all, a dignitary brought low before others loses his usefulness quickly, while a humiliated Kindred has centuries to plan revenge.

System: No roll is required on the part of the vampire, but she must spend a Willpower point. A subject must make a Courage roll (difficulty equal to the vampire's Charisma + Intimidation, to a maximum of 10) if he wishes to be rude or simply contrary to the vampire. Success allows the individual to act normally for the moment, although he feels the weight of the vampire's displeasure crushing down on him. A subject who fails the roll aborts his intended action and even goes to absurd lengths to humble himself before the vampire, no matter who else is watching. The effects of Majesty last for one scene.

••••• • Love

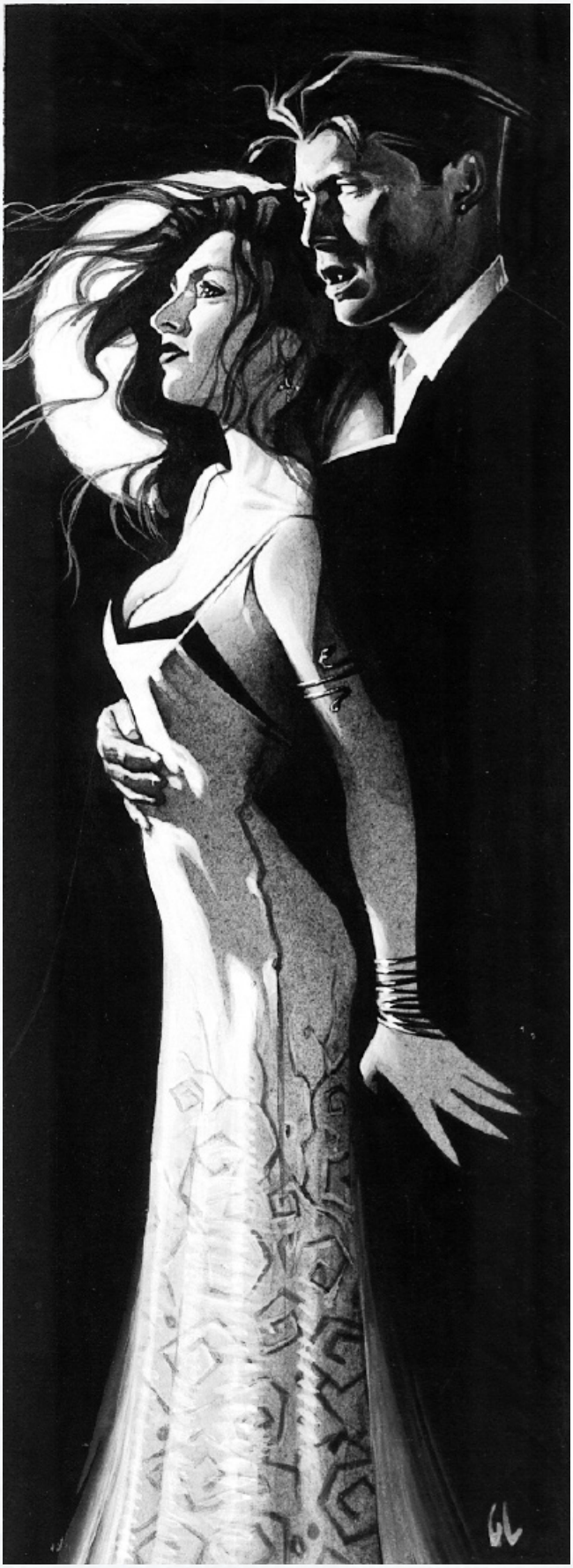
The blood bond is one of the most powerful tools in an elder's inventory. However, more and more childer are aware of how to avoid being bound, so alternatives are needed. The Presence power called Love is one such alternative, as it simulates the effects of the bond without any of the messy side effects. While not as sure a method of control as a true blood bond, nor as long-lasting, Love is still an extremely potent means of command.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Charisma + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points). Success on the roll indicates that the victim feels as attached to the character as if he were blood bound to her. Each success also reduces the victim's dice pool by one die for any Social rolls to be made against the character. A botch makes the target immune to all of the character's Presence powers for the rest of the night. This power lasts for one scene and can be applied to the same victim over multiple scenes in the same night.

••••• • Paralyzing Glance

Some elders have honed their mastery of Dread Gaze to such a degree that they are said to be able to paralyze with a look. The power's name is something of a misnomer, as victims of this power are not precisely paralyzed in a physical sense, but rather frozen with sheer terror.

System: The character must make eye contact (p. 152) with her intended victim. The player then rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points). Success renders the victim so terrified that he falls into a whimpering, catatonic state, unable to take any actions except curl-



ing into a fetal position and gibbering incoherently. The condition lasts for a length of time determined by the number of successes rolled. If the victim's life is directly threatened (by assault, impending sunrise, etc.), the poor wretch may attempt to break out of his paralysis with a Courage roll (difficulty equal to the character's Intimidation + 3). One success ends the paralysis. A botch sends the victim into a continuous state of Rötschreck for the rest of the night.

Successes	Result
1 success	Three turns
2 successes	Five minutes
3 successes	Remainder of the scene
4 successes	One hour
5 successes	Rest of the night
6+ successes	A week (or more, at Storyteller discretion)

••••• • Spark of Rage

A vampire possessing this power can shorten tempers and bring old grudges and irritations to the boiling point with a minimum of effort. Spark of Rage causes disagreements and fights, and can even send other vampires into frenzy.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 8). The number of individuals affected is determined by how many successes are rolled. If this power is used in a crowd, those affected are the people in closest proximity to the character. A vampire affected by this power must spend a Willpower point or roll Self-Control/Instinct (difficulty equal to the character's Manipulation + Subterfuge); failure sends the target into a frenzy. A botch by the vampire using Spark of Rage sends the invoking character into immediate frenzy.

Successes	Result
1 success	Two people
2 successes	Four people
3 successes	Eight people
4 successes	20 people
5 successes	Everyone in the character's immediate vicinity

••••• •• Cooperation

Any elder knows that Kindred are the most difficult beings in existence to force to work together. Peaceful coexistence is not a common tenet of vampiric society. With that in mind, this power can be used to nudge those affected by it into a fragile spirit of camaraderie. Some cynical (or realistic) Ventrue claim that their Clan's mastery of this Presence effect is the sole reason that anything is ever accomplished in Camarilla conclaves. Ventrue who voice this opinion too loudly also tend to have numerous chances to test just how effective Cooperation is.

System: To invoke Cooperation, the player spends a blood point and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty 8). The number of individuals affected is determined by how many successes the player rolls. Cooperation lasts for the remainder of the scene in which it is invoked, though particularly strong users of Presence may create longer-lasting feelings of non-aggression (at Storyteller discretion) by spending Willpower. While this power is in effect, all those under its influence are more favorably disposed toward one another and are more willing to extend trust or make cooperative plans.

For the most part, players should simply roleplay Cooperation's effects, but there are some concrete ramifications to the power's use. For example, Self-Control/Instinct difficulties to resist frenzy in response to insults from within the target group are decreased by three, and certain Social Flaws may be decreased in impact for the duration of Cooperation.

Successes	Result
1 success	Two people
2 successes	Four people
3 successes	Eight people
4 successes	20 people
5 successes	Everyone in the character's immediate vicinity

••••• ••• Ironclad Command

Any individual can normally resist the powers of Presence for a brief time through an effort of will. Some elder Toreador and Ventrue have developed such force of personality that their powers of Presence cannot be resisted without truly heroic efforts.

System: This power is always in effect once it has been learned. A mortal may not spend Willpower to resist the character's Presence (for purposes of this power, the definition of "mortal" does not include supernaturally active humans such as ghouls or those who possess True Faith). A supernatural being must roll Willpower (difficulty of the character's Willpower + 2; difficulties over 10 mean that the roll cannot even be attempted) the first time he attempts to spend a Willpower point to overcome the character's Presence. For the rest of the night, the maximum number of Willpower points he can spend to resist the vampire's Presence powers is equal to the number of successes he rolled. A botch doubles the character's Presence dice pools against the hapless victim for the remainder of the night.

••••• •••• Pulse of the City

A vampire who has developed her Presence to this terrifying degree can control the emotional climate of the entire region around her, up to the size of a large city. This power is always in effect on a low level, attuning those who dwell in the area to the Kindred's mood, but it can also be used to project a specific emotion into the minds of every being in the area. Pulse of the City affects residents much more strongly than tourists, and also has a significant impact on those individuals who might be elsewhere at the time but who still have strong ties to the affected city.

System: The character must be present in the city in question, and have at least a casual, personal knowledge of its streets and makeup (maps won't help). The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Charisma + Streetwise (difficulty 9, though specializations or Storyteller fiat may decrease this difficulty if the character is intimately familiar with a particular city). The number of successes indicates how long mortal residents are affected by the particular emotion that the character broadcasts; visitors with no ties to the area and supernatural beings are affected for a duration one success step lower. The character can choose to terminate this effect at any time before it expires.

Successes	Result
1 success	One minute
2 successes	10 minutes
3 successes	One hour
4 successes	One day
5 successes	One week

Pulse of the City can be used by a character in torpor.

Protean

Protean allows the Kindred the mystical ability to manipulate his physical form. Some vampires believe the power stems from a heightened connection to the natural world, while others consider it to be a magnification of the mark of Caine. Whatever its basis may be, those that develop this Discipline can grow bestial claws, take on the forms of bats and wolves, turn themselves into mist, and even meld into the very earth itself.

Transformed Kindred can generally use other Disciplines — vampires in wolf form can still read auras and communicate with other animals, for example. However, the Storyteller may rule that certain Disciplines may not be used in specific situations. The Kindred's clothes and personal possessions also change when he transforms (presumably absorbed within his very substance), although armor and the like do not provide any benefit while transformed.

Vampires cannot change or transform large objects or other beings; Protean is a personal expression of power. A Kindred who has been staked (thereby trapping his soul within his body) cannot transform. Some vampires believe that those who have mastered the highest levels of Protean can deny this limitation, however.

The Gangrel Clan is well known for their mastery of Protean, although other Kindred have learned some of this Discipline's secrets from these bestial Cainites.

• Eyes of the Beast

The vampire sees perfectly well in pitch darkness, not requiring a light source to notice details in even the darkest basement or cave. The vampire's Beast is evident in his red glowing eyes, a sight sure to disturb most mortals.

System: The character must declare his desire to call forth the Eyes. No roll is necessary, but the change requires a full turn to complete. While manifesting the Eyes, the character suffers a +1 difficulty to all Social rolls with mortals unless he takes steps to shield his eyes (sunglasses are the simplest solution). (A vampire without this power who is immersed in total darkness suffers blind-fighting penalties as per p. 274.)

•• Feral Claws

The vampire's nails transform into long, bestial claws. These talons are wickedly sharp, able to rend flesh with ease and even carve stone and metal with little trouble. The Beast is prominent in the claws as well, making them fearsome weapons against other immortals. It's rumored that some Gangrel have modified this power to change their vampiric fangs into vicious tusks.

System: The claws grow automatically in response to the character's desire, and can grow from both hands and feet. The transformation requires the expenditure of a blood point, takes a single turn to complete, and lasts for a scene.

The character attacks normally in combat, but the claws inflict Strength + 1 aggravated damage. Other supernaturals cannot normally soak this damage, although a power such as Fortitude may be used. Additionally, the difficulties of all climbing rolls are reduced by two.

••• Earth Meld

One of the most prized powers within Protean, Earth Meld enables the vampire to become one with the earth. The immortal literally sinks into the bare ground, transmuting his substance to bond with the earth.

Though a vampire can immerse himself fully into the ground, he cannot move around within it. Further, it is impossible to meld into earth through another substance. Wood slats, blacktop, even artificial turf blocks Earth Meld's effectiveness — then again, it's a relatively simple matter for a vampire at this level of power to grow claws and rip apart enough of the flooring to expose the raw soil beneath.

By interring himself in the ground, the vampire gains full protection from daylight when outdoors. It is also the method of choice for those Kindred who wish to sleep away the centuries; these vampires lock themselves in the earth's embrace, gaining strength and power as they rest. Superstitious and paranoid Kindred whisper that thousands of Ancients sleep within the ground and will awaken when Gehenna arrives.

While so interred, the vampire is in a transitional state between flesh and earth. His physical presence exists between the physical world and the astral plane. As such, the vampire is difficult to sense, even through supernatural means. However, a disruption to the soil that the immortal occupies, or to his presence on the astral realm, returns him immediately to the physical world (and to full wakefulness), showering dirt outward as his body displaces the soil.

System: No roll is necessary, although the character must spend a blood point. Sinking into the earth is

automatic and takes a turn to complete. The character falls into a state one step above torpor during this time, sensing his surroundings only distantly. The player must make a Humanity or Path roll (difficulty 6) for the character to rouse himself in response to danger prior to his desired time of emergence.

Since the character is in an in-between state, any attempts to locate him (catching his scent, scanning for his aura, traveling astrally, and so on) are made at +2 difficulty. Astral individuals cannot affect the vampire directly, instead meeting with a kind of spongy resistance as their hands pass through him. Similarly, digging in the material world encounters incredibly hard-packed earth, virtually as dense as stone.

Attempts at violence upon the submerged vampire from either side return him to his physical nature, expelling the soil with which he bonded in a blinding spray (all Perception-based rolls are at +2 difficulty for the turn). The character himself subtracts two from his initiative for the first turn after his restoration, due to momentary disorientation. Once expelled from the earth, the vampire may act normally.

•••• Shape of the Beast

This endows the vampire with the legendary ability to transform into a wolf or bat. A Kindred changed in this way is a particularly imposing representative of the animal kingdom. Indeed, he is far superior to normal animals, even ones possessed by Subsume the Spirit. He retains his own psyche and temperament, but can still call upon the abilities of the beast form — increased senses for the wolf and flight for the bat. Gangrel are reputed to change to other animal forms better suited to their environment — jackals in Africa, dholes in Asia, and even enormous rats in urban environments — a feat that other Clans learning Protean cannot seem to duplicate.

System: The character spends one blood point to assume the desired shape. The transformation requires three turns to complete (spending additional blood points reduces the time of transformation by one turn per point spent, to a minimum of one). The vampire remains in his beast form until the next dawn, unless he wishes to change back sooner.

While in the animal's shape, the vampire can use any Discipline he possesses except Necromancy, Serpentis, Thaumaturgy, or Vicissitude (as well as any others the Storyteller deems unavailable). Furthermore, each form gives the character the abilities of that creature. In wolf form, the vampire's teeth and claws inflict Strength + 1 aggravated damage, he can run at double speed, and the difficulties of all Perception rolls are reduced by two. In bat form, the vampire's Strength is reduced to 1, but he can fly at speeds of up to 20 miles per hour, difficulties for all hearing-based Perception rolls are reduced by three, and attacks made against him are at +2 difficulty due to his small size.

The Storyteller may allow Gangrel to assume a different animal shape, but should establish the natural abilities it grants the character.

••••• Mist Form

This truly unsettling power enables the vampire to turn into mist. His physical shape disperses into a hazy cloud, but one still subject entirely to the immortal's will. He floats at a brisk pace and may slip under doors, through screens, down pipes, and through other tiny openings. Although strong winds can blow the vampire from his chosen course, even hurricane-force winds cannot disperse his mist shape.

Some Kindred feel that this power is an expression of the vampire's ultimate control over the material world, while others believe that it is the immortal's soul made manifest (damned though it may be).

System: No roll is required, although a blood point must be spent. The transformation takes three turns to complete, although the character may reduce this time by one turn for each additional blood point spent (to a minimum of one turn). Strong winds may buffet the character, although Disciplines such as Potence may be used to resist them. Vampires in Mist Form can perceive their surroundings normally, although they cannot use powers that require eye contact.

The vampire is immune to all mundane physical attacks while in mist form, although supernatural attacks affect him normally. Also, the vampire takes one fewer die of damage from fire and sunlight. The character may not attack others physically while in this state — this includes encountering another vampire in mist form. He may use Disciplines that do not require physical substance, however.

••••• • Earth Control

An Earth Melded character with this power is no longer confined to the resting place she selected the night before. She can pass through the ground as if it were water, "swimming" through the earth itself. Some elders use this as a means of unobstructed and unobtrusive travel, while others find it a highly effective means of maneuvering in combat.



System: This power is in effect whenever a character is Earth Melded, with no additional roll or expenditure necessary. While in the ground, a vampire can propel herself at half of her normal walking speed. She cannot see, but gains a supernatural awareness of her underground surroundings out to a range of 50 yards or meters. Water, rock, tree roots, and cement all effectively block her progress; she can only move through earth and substances of similar consistency, such as sand or fine gravel. If two or more vampires attempt to interact underground, only direct physical contact is possible. All damage dice pools in this case are halved, and dodge and parry attempts are at -2 difficulty. If an underground chase takes place, it is resolved with an extended, contested Strength + Athletics roll (see p. 261).

••••• • Flesh of Marble

Tales have long spoken of the combat prowess of Gangrel elders and of their inhuman resilience. Poorly informed individuals believe the stories of swords shattering and bullets flattening against immortal skin to be exaggerated reports of the effects of Fortitude. Those with more reliable information know that such tales result from encounters with vampires who have developed Flesh of Marble. The skin of an elder with Flesh of Marble becomes in essence a sort of flexible stone, although it appears (and feels) no different than normal skin and muscle.

System: The player spends three blood points to activate Flesh of Marble, which goes into effect instantly. The effects of the power last for the remainder of the scene. While the power is functioning, the damage dice pools of all physical attacks made against the character are halved (round down). That includes assaults made with fists, claws, swords, firearms, and explosions, but not fire, sunlight, or supernatural powers (unless the effect in question is a direct physical attack, such as a rock hurled by means of Movement of the Mind). Additionally, while this power is in effect, a character can attempt to parry melee attacks with his bare hands as if he were holding some form of weapon.

••••• •• Restore the Mortal Visage

Cainites are of two opinions regarding this power. Those who are politically active, or who associate extensively with mortals, view it as both necessary and acceptable. Those Kindred who embrace their more feral sides, however, see it as a disgusting defiance of the very nature of vampirism. The schism comes because the power allows the elder who possesses it to tempo-

rarily return his appearance to what it was before the Embrace, removing the bestial features he has accumulated over the centuries. Restore the Mortal Visage has only been displayed by Gangrel; several Nosferatu elders have attempted to develop it, and it is whispered that they met spontaneous, grotesque Final Deaths when they attempted to take their mortal forms.

System: The player spends three blood points and a Willpower point and rolls Willpower (difficulty 8). Success restores the character's appearance to what it was just before he was first Embraced, erasing all physical or social animalistic features gained from frenzies (see p. 55). The power also affects any of the character's affected Traits relating to social interaction, returning them to their original values (for example, lost Appearance dots return, but Humanity points removed due to frenzy are not). A botched Willpower roll earns the character another feature, as per the Gangrel Clan weakness. Once activated, Restore the Mortal Visage lasts for the remainder of the scene.

••••• •• Shape of the Beast's Wrath

Users of this power are often mistaken for Tzimisce employing the Vicissitude power Horrid Form. A vampire employing this power shifts into a huge, monstrous form, gaining half her height again and tripling her weight. Her overall shape flows into an unholy amalgamation of her own form and that of the animal she feels the closest kinship to (wolves, rats, and great cats are the most common manifestations, though ravens, serpents, bats, and stranger beasts have been reported). The vampire's new shape does bear some vague resemblance to the war-forms of the werecreatures, but the difference quickly becomes apparent.

System: The player spends three blood points, the expenditure of which triggers the change. The character's transformation takes three turns (the player may spend additional blood points to reduce this time at a cost of one point per turn of reduction). Once transformed, the character remains in this form until sunrise or until she shifts back voluntarily.

The precise Traits of this form are determined when the character first learns this power, as is the animal whose appearance the character takes on. The vampire's new form adds a total of seven dots to the character's Physical Attributes. At least one dot must go into each Physical Attribute, meaning that no more than five can go into any one (so a character could have +5 Strength, +1 Dexterity, and +1 Stamina, but not +2 Strength and +5 Dexterity). These bonuses are always the same once they are selected; a different allocation requires that the character buy this power a second time and thus purchase another alternate form. Additionally, the character inflicts Strength + 2 dice of aggravated damage with both bite and claw attacks when in monstrous form. She also gains an extra Hurt health level, and doubles her normal running speed. Finally, the character's perceptions are also heightened. She is assumed to have both the Auspex power Heightened Senses and the Protean power Eyes of the Beast after transformation, with all of the benefits and drawbacks of each.

This form does carry two additional drawbacks. The first is a lack of communication ability. The character's Social Attributes all drop to 1, or to 0 if they already were 1 (except when making Intimidation rolls) when the transformation occurs. The second problem that a character in this form encounters is the suddenly heightened power of her Beast. All difficulties of rolls to resist frenzy are increased by two for the duration of the power's effect, and the player may not spend Willpower points on such rolls.

••••• •• Spectral Body

This powerful variation on Mist Form allows a vampire to take a shape with most of the advantages of the lesser power but fewer of the disadvantages. A vampire who assumes Spectral Form retains his normal appearance, but becomes completely insubstantial. He walks through walls and bullets with equal ease, and can pass through the floor on which he stands if he chooses to. Although his lungs are no longer solid, the vampire can still speak, a fact in which some elders of the Daughters of Cacophony bloodline have expressed great interest.

System: The player spends three blood points. The transformation takes one turn to complete, and lasts for the rest of the night unless the character decides to reverse it. When the power takes hold, the character becomes completely insubstantial, but remains fully visible. Henceforth, he is unaffected by any physical attacks, and he doubles his dice pool to soak damage from fire and sunlight. The vampire may even ignore gravity if he chooses to do so, rising and sinking through solid objects if he does not wish to stand on them (although he may move no faster than his normal walking speed while "flying" in this manner). While in this form, the character may also use any Disciplines that do not require physical contact or a physical body. On the downside, while in Spectral Form, a vampire can physically manipulate his environment only through the use of powers such as Movement of the Mind.

••••• ••• Purify the Impaled Beast

Camarilla records indicate that a disproportionately small number of Gangrel elders were killed by mortals and Anarchs during the Inquisition and the Anarch Revolt. This power is one of the primary reasons for the survival of these Kindred. An elder with this Protean power can expel foreign objects from her body with great force, even excising stakes that transfix her heart.

System: The player spends three blood points and rolls Willpower (difficulty 6, or 8 if the vampire is paralyzed by an object impaling her heart). One success is sufficient to remove all foreign objects and substances from the character's body. Dirt, bullets, and even stakes through the heart are instantly and violently removed. The larger the object, the farther away it is hurled by this power. Objects expelled thus are considered to have an attack dice pool of three for any bystanders, and to have a dice pool of one to four (depending on size) for damage. If the character wishes to leave an object in his body (such as a prosthetic limb) or partially in (expelling a stake from his heart but leaving it sticking out of his breastbone as a ruse), the player must also spend a Willpower point when activating this power.

••••• •••• Inward Focus

This power has no outwardly visible effects whatsoever. Indeed, its very existence is unknown outside those Gangrel Methuselahs who have developed it. The internal effects of this razor-sharp honing of Protean, however, are in some ways more dramatic than any external manifestation. A vampire with this power can heighten the efficiency of his undead body's internal workings to levels undreamed of by lesser Kindred, withstanding inconceivable amounts of injury and moving with blinding speed and shattering strength.

System: The player spends four blood points to activate this power and an additional two blood points for every turn past the first that Inward Focus is maintained. There are three effects of this power: First, the character gains a number of extra actions during each turn equal to his unmodified Dexterity score. Second, the damage of his physical attacks is increased by three dice per dice pool. Finally, all damage inflicted on the character is halved and rounded down after the soak roll is made (so an attack that inflicts five health levels after soak is reduced to two health levels).

This power may be used in conjunction with other Protean powers that modify the character's combat abilities, such as Shape of the Beast's Wrath (above). It may also be used in conjunction with Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence, turning a vampire who has mastered this power into a truly terrifying opponent.

Quietus

The Discipline of silent death, Quietus is practiced by those of Clan Assamite. Based on elements of blood, poison, vitae control, and pestilence, Quietus focuses on the destruction of a target through a variety of means. This Discipline doesn't always cause a *quick* death, but the Assamites rely on its lethality to hide their involvement with their victims.

• Silence of Death

Many Assamites claim never to have heard their targets' death screams. Silence of Death imbues the vampire with a mystical silence that radiates from her body, muting all noise within a certain vicinity. No sound occurs inside this zone, though sounds originating outside the area of effect may be heard by anyone in it. Rumors abound of certain skilled Assamite viziers who have the ability to silence a *location* rather than a circumference that follows them, but no proof of this has been forthcoming.

System: This power (which costs one blood point to activate) maintains a 20-foot (6-meter) radius of utter stillness around the Kindred for one hour.

•• Scorpion's Touch

By changing the properties of her blood, a vampire may create powerful venom that strips her prey of his resilience. This power is greatly feared by other Kindred, and all manner of hideous tales concerning methods of delivery circulate among trembling coteries. Kindred with Quietus are known to deliver the poison by coating their weapons with it, blighting their opponents with a touch, or spitting it like a cobra. An apocryphal account speaks of a proud Prince who discovered an Assamite plotting her exsanguination and began to diablerize her would-be assassin. Halfway through the act, she learned that she had ingested a dire quantity of tainted blood and was then unable to resist the weakened *hashashiyyin's* renewed attack.

System: To convert a bit of her blood to poison, the Kindred's player spends at least one blood point and rolls Willpower (difficulty 6). If this roll is successful, and the vampire successfully hits (but not necessarily damages) her opponent, the target loses a number of Stamina points equal to the number of blood points

converted into poison — vampires attempting to drink the blood of the Kindred with Scorpion's Touch are automatically considered to be "successfully hit."

The victim may resist the poison with a Stamina + Fortitude roll (difficulty 6); successes achieved on the resistance roll subtract from the vampire's successes. The maximum number of blood points a Kindred may convert at any one time is equal to her Stamina. The number of successes scored indicates the duration of the Stamina loss.

Successes	Result
1 success	One turn
2 successes	One hour
3 successes	One day
4 successes	One month
5 successes	Permanently (though Stamina may be bought back up with experience)

If a mortal's Stamina falls to zero through use of Scorpion's Touch, she becomes terminally ill and loses any immunity to diseases, her body succumbing to sickness within the year unless she somehow manages to increase her Stamina again. If a Kindred's Stamina falls to zero, the vampire enters torpor and remains that way until one of her Stamina points returns. If a Kindred is *permanently* reduced to zero Stamina, she may recover from torpor only through mystical means.

To afflict someone with the poison, the Cainite must touch her target's flesh or hit him with something that carries the venom. Many Assamites lubricate their weapons with the excretion, while others pool the toxin in their hands (or fleck their lips with the poison, for a "kiss of death") and press it to their opponents. Weapons so envenomed must be of the melee variety — arrows, sling stones, bullets, thrown weapons, and the like cannot carry enough of the stuff to do damage, or it drips off in flight. Players whose vampires wish to spit at their targets must make a Stamina + Athletics roll (difficulty 6). No more than two blood points' worth of poison may be expectorated, and a Kindred may spit a distance of 10 feet (3 meters) for each point of Strength (and Potence) the character possesses. Vampires with Quietus are immune to their own poison, but not the blood-venom of other Kindred with this power.

••• Dagon's Call

This terrible power allows a vampire to drown her target in his own blood. By concentrating, the Kindred bursts her target's blood vessels and fills his lungs with vitae that strangles him from within. The blood actually constricts the target's body from the inside as it floods through his system; thus, it works even on unbreathing Kindred. Until the target collapses in agony or death throes, this power has no visible effect, and many Kindred like it because it leaves no trace of their presence.

System: The vampire must touch her target prior to using Dagon's Call. Within an hour thereafter, the vampire may issue the call, though she need not be in the presence or even in the line of sight of her target.

Invoking the power costs one Willpower point. The Kindred's player makes a contested Stamina roll against the target's Stamina; the difficulty of each roll is equal to the opponent's permanent Willpower rating. The number of successes the vampire using Dagon's Call achieves is the amount of lethal damage, in health levels, the victim suffers. For an additional point of Willpower spent in the next turn, the vampire may continue using Dagon's Call by engaging in another contested Stamina roll. So long as the Kindred's player continues to spend Willpower, the character may continue rending her opponent from within.

•••• Baal's Caress

The penultimate use of blood as a weapon (short of diablerie itself), Baal's Caress allows the Kindred to transmute her blood into a virulent ichor that destroys any living or undead flesh it touches. In nights of yore, when Assamites led the charges of Saracen legions, the Assassins were often seen licking their blades, slicing open their tongues and lubricating their weapons with this foul secretion.

Baal's Caress may be used to augment any bladed weapon; everything from poisoned knives and swords to tainted fingernails and claws has been reported.

System: Baal's Caress does not increase the damage done by a given weapon, but that weapon inflicts aggravated damage rather than normal. No roll is necessary to activate this power, but one blood point is consumed per hit. For example, if a Cainite poisons his knife and strikes his opponent (even if he inflicts no damage), one blood point's worth of lubrication disappears. For this reason, many vampires choose to coat

their weapons with a significant quantity of blood. If the vampire misses, no tainted blood is consumed.

••••• Taste of Death

A refinement of Baal's Caress, Taste of Death allows the Cainite to spit caustic blood at her target. The blood coughed forth with this power burns flesh and corrodes bone; some vampires have been reported to vomit voluminous streams of vitae that reduce their targets to heaps of sludge.

System: The vampire may spit up to 10 feet (3 meters) for each dot of Strength and Potence he possesses. Hitting the target requires a Stamina + Athletics roll (difficulty 6). Each blood point spewed at the target inflicts two dice of aggravated damage, and there is no limit (other than the vampire's capacity and per-turn expenditure maximum) to the quantity of blood with which a target may be deluged.

••••• • Blood Sweat

Although vampires do not have functioning sebaceous glands, they are still capable of sweating at times of extreme stress. This "sweat" is actually a thin sheen of blood on the Cainite's forehead and palms. Most Kindred see blood sweat as an admission of fear or guilt. The vampire who has mastered Blood Sweat is capable of inducing these feelings in a subject to a preternatural degree. The victim experiences a torrential outpouring of vitae if he harbors the tiniest shred of remorse for any action he has ever undertaken.

System: The character must be within line of sight of the subject and spend three turns concentrating. The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower points). The target loses one blood point per success. Mortals sustain injury as if they had lost blood from being fed upon. The target actually "sweats out" the lost blood in a sudden rush of sanguinary perspiration that soaks his clothes. Large amounts may even form puddles at his feet. Blood lost through this process is considered dead, inert mortal blood, and provides minimal nutrition (half normal) for Cainites desperate enough to lick it up from the floor or wring it out of towels. It provides no sustenance for the individual from whom it emerged.

In addition to the blood loss, the victim is overcome by a sense of remorse and guilt for his past transgressions (if he has a strong conscience) or an overwhelming compulsion to brag (if he is of sufficiently coarse moral character). The severity of this impulse depends



on the number of successes rolled: One success could cause a slight twinge of conscience, while five successes may result in the subject breaking down and pouring out a full confession of his crimes. This effect is more story-oriented than mechanical, and the Storyteller is the final authority on what the victim feels compelled to confess or boast.

Note that this power's existence is not widely known. Vampires and mortals alike tend to shrink away from someone who begins spontaneously sweating blood, and experiencing such an affliction may panic even the staunchest individual.

••••• • Selective Silence

Although Silence of Death is an effective tool for the battlefield and the court alike, it is indiscriminate in its effects. The assassin who uses it in preparation for firing a shotgun also silences the radio over which her comrades might warn her of an oncoming guard. The courtier who suppresses a room full of dissenting voices is likewise unable to speak her own mind. Selective Silence allows the skilled Cainite to overcome these limitations by silencing only those individuals or objects that she wants to silence.

When using this power, most individuals exhale a thin mist of blood that clings to the selected subjects, gradually evaporating as Selective Silence's effects fade. Some vampires also use a similar technique when invoking Silence of Death, in which case the mist surrounds them and moves with them.

System: The player spends two blood points and rolls Stamina + Stealth (difficulty 7). Each success allows for one individual or object that the character can silence with this use of the power. Each subject must be within 20 yards or meters of the character. Objects larger than a man count as more than one subject: a heavy machine gun counts as two, a car as three, and a small aircraft as five. Objects larger than a private jet or creatures larger than an elephant cannot be silenced through the use of this power.

Each subject is completely silenced for a number of minutes equal to the character's permanent Willpower. Nothing it does generates sound, though the secondary effects of its actions will do so normally. For example, a gun silenced with this power will not produce an audible explosion when fired, but its bullets still make noise as they break the sound barrier. A silenced victim can scream all he likes and not make a sound, but may be able to summon help by smashing a window.

••••• • Ripples of the Heart

According to Assamite lore, this technique originated with a Byzantine scholar who wanted to protect his herd from the thirst of other Cainites. Ripples of the Heart allows a Cainite to leave emotions within the bloodstream of any mortal from whom he feeds. Any other vampire who subsequently drinks from that mortal experiences those emotions as if they were his own.

System: The character drinks at least one blood point from the subject mortal then spends a minute in physical contact with the subject while concentrating on the emotion he wishes to leave in her blood. The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Empathy (difficulty 7 under normal circumstances, 5 if the subject is currently experiencing the intended emotion, 9 if he is currently experiencing a strong opposite emotion). The subject's blood carries the weight of the intended emotion for one lunar month per success rolled. A mortal's blood can only carry one emotion at a time. Subsequent attempts to use Ripples of the Heart on the same individual have no effect until the previous application has worn off.

Any vampire who drinks from a vessel under the effects of Ripples of the Heart must succeed in a Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty of the mortal's current Willpower points) as soon as she swallows the first blood point. If she fails this roll, the vitae-borne emotion immediately overtakes her. The strength of the emotion depends on how many blood points she drinks. One blood point results in a momentary mood swing, two causes a significant shift in demeanor, and three or more generates a complete change in emotional state. Depending on the circumstances and the precise emotion, the effects of this may be spectacular or catastrophic. A vampire overtaken by romantic passion may temporarily believe she is in love with the mortal (or any other convenient bystander). One who drinks from a hate-infused vessel may rend her prey to shreds, and one who takes a draught of a mortal touched with fear may run away screaming. The vampire remains subject to the emotion for a number of hours equal to the mortal's permanent Willpower, though she is still subject to other feelings after the initial rush of sensation.

The mortal who is under the effects of Ripples of the Heart is unaware of the power's effects on him, though he is slightly predisposed toward the emotion in question while the power is in effect. The vampire who

used Ripples of the Heart on a mortal is immune to any effects from that use.

••••• • Purification

Although most mortal cultures affix negative connotations to the spilling of blood, most Assamites — indeed, most vampires — have quite the opposite reaction to it. For them, blood is an unlife-affirming and reinvigorating substance. Purification works on this principle, using the power of vitae to cleanse and restore. Rather than purging foreign taints from the body, Purification allows its wielder to cleanse other individuals' minds and souls of stains, including those left by the mind control of other Kindred. The vampire using this power expels his own blood through his skin and allows it to soak through his subject, slowly dissipating. As it does so, it carries away spiritual impurities and outside influences.

System: The character touches the forehead of her intended subject, and both parties spend a minimum of five minutes in deep concentration. The player spends a number of blood points equal to the subject's permanent Willpower. The subject rolls Willpower once for every external supernatural influence (a vampiric Discipline, usually) to which his mind has been subjected. The difficulty equals the level of the power in question +4 (or a difficulty of 7 if the power level is unknown, such as one used by a different kind of supernatural creature). A success nullifies that effect.

Purification has its limits. It can remove directly intrusive influences such as Dominate-implanted commands, Dementation-generated derangements, or the imperatives caused by elder vampires' Presence. It cannot dispel influences that are transmitted by blood, including a blood bond or the dispositions imparted by one's Clan or bloodline, nor can it erase those caused by purely mundane techniques such as persuasion, hypnosis, or brainwashing, or genuine emotional states such as love and hate. It can remove mind-altering blood magic effects, but either the character wielding Purification or the power's beneficiary must have a level of Thaumaturgy equal to or greater than that with which the effect was placed. A character cannot use Purification on herself.

••••• •• Baal's Bloody Talons

The toxin generated by Baal's Caress is not enough to significantly harm some truly fearsome foes. This progressive development of that lesser technique allows its user to envenom his weapon with a blood-based poison so potent that it corrodes the very weapon that bears it, eating away at the strongest metal in a minute or less. However, its effects on its victims are spectacular enough to make the loss of even the most treasured blades worthwhile. This power's effects are of very limited duration, as the substance it creates will quickly evaporate away.

System: The character coats an edged weapon with her own blood, as per Baal's Caress. The player spends one or more blood points and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7). The weapon now does aggravated damage. It also gains a number of additional damage dice equal to the number of successes rolled plus the number of blood points spent. These extra dice fade at a rate of one per turn as the poison dissipates, drips off, and reacts with the weapon's material. Once the extra damage dice are all gone, the weapon's base damage dice begin to fade at the same rate. The weapon breaks if used when its base damage is reduced to the wielder's Strength or less. The only weapons that can resist this corrosion are those created with a supernatural power of a level equal to or greater than the character's Quietus rating, though even this is subject to the Storyteller's discretion.

Baal's Bloody Talons is subject to the same limitations as Baal's Caress, except the limit on the number of successful strikes that do aggravated damage. A weapon affected by Baal's Bloody Talons does aggravated damage with every successful attack until it is destroyed.

At the Storyteller's discretion, the character may use the venom this power produces for other purposes, such as burning through a padlock or destroying an incriminating tape. He may not, however, store this poison for later use — even if a container proves resistant to it, the substance becomes inert within a few minutes of leaving its creator's body.

••••• •• Poison the Well of Life

Beyond leaving emotional traces in a subject's blood, the master of this Quietus power can now taint that same vitae, making it into a deadly poison for any other Cainite who drinks from that mortal. Some vampires use Poison the Well of Life to guard their own herds against "poachers" or to ward specific vessels against indiscriminate feeding. Others have been known to employ it as a subtle trap for other vampires, turning herds against their owners.

System: The character touches the mortal he wishes to taint and smears a streak of his own vitae on the victim's skin. The player spends three blood points

and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 7). For a number of months equal to the number of successes, any other vampire who drinks that mortal's blood sustains two health levels of aggravated damage for every blood point imbibed. This damage manifests as a combination of acid burns and something akin to toxic shock.

While a mortal is poisonous to vampires, his body's alchemical balance is slightly altered toward toxicity. He gains two extra points of Stamina for the purposes of resisting the effects and damage of poisons and acids. However, his bodily excretions, especially his sweat, are slightly more noxious than normal. He suffers a one-die penalty to all Social dice pools if whomever he chooses to interact with has a particularly sensitive nose and is close enough to smell him.

••••• ••• Songs of Distant Vitae

Blood magic practitioners and individuals skilled at Auspex have long known that vitae can carry residual impressions of emotion and personality. This power invokes those impressions to overwhelm its victim with "remembered" images and sensations drawn from the vessels who held that blood before the vampire fed from them. Particularly strong-willed or hardened subjects may shrug off these visions as daydreams, but those who are less self-possessed can be permanently changed by the experience. A side effect of the use of this power is the partial destruction of the vitae from which the images are drawn. Some viziers theorize that this is the result of motes of the vessels' consciousness making an effort to escape their usurper.

System: The character touches his target and spends a turn in concentration. The player spends four blood points and rolls Wits + Intimidation in a contested roll against the victim's permanent Willpower (difficulty 7). If the target has committed diablerie within a number of nights equal to the character's Perception, the attacker gains one automatic success. The result depends on the number of net successes the attacker rolls. Note that in all invocations of this power, the sensations that the subject relives are expressly negative and terrifying — for example, he experiences none of the pleasure that would normally accompany the Kiss when he flashes back to such an event.

In addition to the effects listed below, the subject of a successful attack loses a number of blood points equal to the number of successes rolled. This vitae oozes from his body in warm red trickles that do no damage but are certain to terrify onlookers.

Successes	Result
Botch	The attacker enters a flashback sequence in which he relives his last feeding from the vessel's point of view. If the player rolled three or more "1"s, the character acquires a permanent derangement related to feeding.
Failure	The target is unharmed and immune to this power for a number of nights equal to his Willpower.
1 success	The target experiences a brief (10-second/3-turn) flashback sequence in which he relives his last feeding from the vessel's point of view. During this time, he is at +2 difficulty to all rolls.
2 successes	The target experiences a brief montage (15 seconds/5 turns) of flashbacks during which his viewpoint flashes between various feedings from the vessels' points of view. During this time, he is at +3 difficulty to all rolls. Once the initial rush of sensation passes, he is unsettled and at +1 difficulty to all rolls until he succeeds on a Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty 8), which he may attempt once per scene.
3 successes	The target experiences a composite memory, assembled by his own subconscious, of the terror that various vessels felt while being stalked and fed upon. He must succeed in a Courage roll (difficulty 8) or instantly enter Rötschreck. If he succeeds in this roll, he is still at +3 difficulty on all actions for the rest of the scene due to the distraction that his visions impose.
4 successes	The target is stunned and completely unable to act for a number of turns equal to 8 - his Self-Control/Instinct as he is bombarded by a sequence of the most terrifying memories of his various vessels. Once this initial onslaught subsides, he must roll Courage (difficulty 9) or enter Rötschreck. If he fails this roll, he must roll Self-Control/

	Instinct (difficulty 8) or gain the Sanguinary Animism derangement.
5 successes	The target is thrown into a nightmarish reenactment of the greatest fears of every individual upon whom he has ever fed. He must make a successful Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty 9) or fall into torpor for (10 - the target's Stamina) nights, at the end of which he loses half his permanent Willpower and gains the derangement Sanguinary Animism. If he succeeds on the Self-Control/Instinct roll, he enters Rötschreck for the rest of the night, during which time his greatest fear is of his own image. At the end of the night, he must succeed at a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) or lose a permanent Willpower point and gain the derangement Sanguinary Animism.

••••• •••• Condemn the Sins of the Father

Although the Second City's judges recognized that heritage does not equal guilt, they also encountered many situations in which a vampire's entire brood had committed the same crime. In such cases, the judges often decreed the same punishment for all transgressors. This technique, which modern viziers believe to have originated at that time, allows its wielder to administer such judgments. Through Condemn the Sins of the Father, a Cainite can apply lesser Quietus powers to an entire lineage.

System: After successfully using any lesser Quietus power on another vampire, the player spends a permanent Willpower point and 10 blood points and rolls Stamina + Occult. The difficulty of this roll is equal to four plus the number of Generations of the original target's descendants that the player wants to affect, up to a maximum difficulty of 10. If the roll succeeds, every descendant of the original target within the specified range of Generations suffers the same effects that the original target experienced, resisting with his own relevant Traits. The player may exempt a number of potential subjects from this effect equal to twice the character's Wits, but the character must know their faces or have tasted their vitae.

Serpentis

Serpentis is believed to be the legacy of Set himself, a gift to his children. The Followers of Set are very careful to guard this Discipline's secrets, only teaching the art to those who they deem worthy. Most vampires fear the Setites because of the powers of Serpentis and its connection to snakes and reptiles; this Discipline can evoke a primordial fear in others, particularly those who recall the tale of Eden.

• The Eyes of the Serpent

This power grants the vampire the legendary hypnotic gaze of the serpent. The Kindred's eyes become gold with large black irises, and mortals in the character's vicinity find themselves strangely attracted to him. A mortal who meets the vampire's beguiling gaze is immobilized. Until the character takes his eyes off his victim, the person is frozen in place.

System: No roll is required, but this power can be avoided if the mortal takes care not to look into the vampire's eyes. Vampires and other supernatural creatures can also be affected by this power if the Cainite's player succeeds on a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). If attacked or otherwise harmed, supernatural creatures can spend a point of Willpower to break the spell.

Note: This is different than normal eye contact detailed on p. 152. The target must be able to see the vampire's eyes for Eyes of the Serpent to work.

•• The Tongue of the Asp

The vampire may lengthen her tongue at will, splitting it into a fork like that of a serpent. The tongue may reach 18 inches or half a meter, and makes a terrifyingly effective weapon in close combat.

System: The lash of the tongue's razor fork causes aggravated wounds (difficulty 6, Strength damage). If the Kindred wounds her enemy, she may drink blood from the target on the next turn as though she had sunk her fangs into the victim's neck. Horrifying though it is, the tongue's caress is very like the Kiss, and strikes mortal victims helpless with fear and ecstasy. Additionally, the tongue is highly sensitive to vibrations, enabling the vampire to function effectively in the darkness the Clan prefers. By flicking his tongue in and out of his mouth, the vampire can halve any penalties relating to darkness (p. 274).



••• The Skin of the Adder

By calling upon her Blood, the vampire may transform her skin into a mottled, scaly hide. A vampire in this form becomes more supple and flexible.

System: The vampire spends one blood point and one Willpower point. Her skin becomes scaly and mottled; this, combined with the character's increased flexibility, reduces soak difficulties to 5. The vampire may use her Stamina to soak aggravated damage from claws and fangs, but not from fire, sunlight, or other supernatural energies. The vampire's mouth widens and fangs lengthen, enabling her bite to inflict an extra die of damage. Finally, the vampire may slip through any opening wide enough to fit her head through.

The vampire's Appearance drops to 1, and she is obviously inhuman if observed with any degree of care, though casual passersby might not notice, if the vampire is in darkness or wearing heavy clothing.

•••• The Form of the Cobra

The Cainite may change his form into that of a huge black cobra. The serpent weighs as much as the vampire's human form, stretches over 10 feet or three meters long, and is about 20 inches (50 cm) around. The Form of the Cobra grants several advantages, including a venomous bite, the ability to slither through small spaces, and a greatly enhanced sense of smell. The character may use any Disciplines while in this form save those that require hands (such as Feral Claws).

System: The vampire spends one blood point; the change is automatic, but takes three turns. Clothing and small personal possessions transform with the vampire. The vampire remains in serpent form until the next dawn, unless he desires to change back sooner. The Storyteller may allow the Setite bonus dice on all Perception rolls related to smell, but the difficulties for all hearing rolls are increased by two. The cobra's bite inflicts damage equal to the vampire's, but the vampire does not need to grapple his victim; furthermore, the poison delivered is fatal to mortals.

••••• The Heart of Darkness

A Kindred with mastery of Serpentis may pull her heart from her body. She can even use this ability on other Cainites, although this requires several hours of gruesome surgery. This power can only be invoked during a new moon. If performed under any other moon, the rite fails. Upon removing her heart, the vampire places it in a small clay urn, and then carefully hides or

buries the urn. While her heart is hidden, she cannot be staked by any wood that pierces her breast. Moreover, because the heart is the seat of emotion, the difficulties of all her rolls to resist frenzy are two lower while this power is in effect.

Cainites are careful to keep their hearts safe from danger. If someone seizes her heart, the vampire is completely at that person's mercy. The heart can be destroyed only by casting it into a fire or exposing it to sunlight. If this happens, the Kindred dies where she stands, boiling away into a blistering heap of ash and blackened bone. Plunging a wooden stake into an exposed heart drives the vampire into instant torpor.

A vampire may carry her heart with her, or have several false hearts buried in different places. A smart Kindred often avoids her heart's hiding place, to deter discovery. Those wise in Setite lore whisper that the corrupt elders of the Clan often hold their underlings' hearts as yet another method of control.

System: This power requires no roll. Those who witness a vampire pull his heart from his breast (or cut the heart from another vampire) must make Courage rolls. Failure indicates anything from strong uneasiness to complete revulsion, possibly even Rötschreck.

••••• • Cobra Fangs

A character using Form of the Cobra gains a venomous bite along with his serpentine form. Unfortunately, huge black cobras tend to make people run away as fast as they can. This Serpentis power enables a vampire to gain the deadly bite without the full-body transformation, making it more useful for taking victims by surprise. The police do ask questions when someone dies from a cobra bite under unlikely circumstances, so Cobra Fangs still requires some discretion in its use.

System: The Kindred expends one blood point, and in one turn his fangs become hollow, more slender and venomous. The vampire injects venom when he bites. He must still grapple with the victim to deliver a bite attack, and the bite does the usual amount of damage; the venom, however, kills mortals within one minute. Bitten vampires or other supernaturally resilient creatures suffer (10 – victim's Stamina and Fortitude) levels of aggravated damage over the course of five minutes.

••••• •• Divine Image

Many of the low-Generation Setite elders no longer need the illusions of Obfuscate to appear as a god. Through this Serpentis power, a vampire can physically metamorphose into the form of a god. Male Kindred generally take the form of Set himself: a muscular man with the head of the "Typhonic Beast," an animal with a long, narrow snout and upstanding, square-topped ears. Less often, they take the form of the crocodile-headed god Sobek, whom the Egyptians often linked to Set, or the wolf-headed war-god Wepwawet, often identified with Set's son Anubis. Female vampires generally assume the form of the cobra-headed goddess Renenet, wife of Sobek, or the hippopotamus-goddess Taweret, sometimes considered a consort of Set. Both were goddesses of pregnancy and childbirth. Setite doctrine labels all four deities as Set's eldest childer.

While assuming the Divine Image, the vampire becomes stronger, tougher, and more impressive. More importantly, perhaps, the vampire's will becomes more powerful as he identifies with a divine forebear.

System: The character expends three blood points and transforms into the Divine Image in one turn. In the Divine Image, the vampire gains two dots each of Strength and Stamina and a dot each of Charisma and Manipulation, but her Appearance drops to 1. These enhancements can push the vampire over his generational limit. The character also gains two full dots of Willpower (to a maximum of 10). The Cainite can stay in the Divine Image for a full scene.

A vampire has only one Divine Image form (unless the player buys this power twice). The character does not know what Divine Image he will manifest until he invokes the power the first time, although the player can freely choose the preferred form.

••••• ••• Heart Thief

The Serpentis power Heart of Darkness normally takes hours to perform upon other vampires, and only works at the dark of the moon. Some elders, however, can pull the heart from another vampire's chest with a quick snatch. This does not destroy the victim, unless the attacker then destroys the stolen heart. Heart Thief is not an easy power to use despite its speed, but few Discipline effects can place one vampire in another's power so suddenly and completely.

System: The character must expend one Willpower point. Removing the heart of a reluctant vampire is a difficult feat, comparable to staking: the attacker must garner at least three successes on a Dexterity + Brawl attack (difficulty 9). The victim may use Fortitude to "soak" the attacker's successes, but mundane Stamina has no effect against this magical attack.

A vampire who loses his heart this way takes one unsoakable level of aggravated damage, and receives

all the benefits and drawbacks of the Heart of Darkness power. Resisting frenzy becomes easier (-2 difficulty) and he cannot be staked by wood that impales his breast. On the other hand, thrusting a stake through the removed heart will instantly force the vampire into torpor and exposing the heart to fire or sunlight will bum the vampire to ash; even biting into the heart will cause aggravated wounds to the vampire in question.

••••• •••• Shadow of Apep

Only Set and Set's own childer can perform this terrifying power. These ancient monsters can take the form of Set's defeated enemy, Apep. The vampire becomes a giant serpent of fluid, glittering Darkness — not mere shadow, but anti-light, like the black force commanded by Obtenebration. In this form, physical force cannot harm the vampire: not claws or fangs, not bullets, not explosions, nothing but fire, sunlight, or mystical powers. Physical barriers cannot easily stop the vampire, whose shadowy form can seep through even the tiniest crack. The vampire, however, can still exert physical and supernatural force quite freely.

System: Taking the form of Apep costs a Willpower point. The transformation takes three turns to complete; once the vampire has transformed, her body remains changed for one scene. In this form, the vampire takes no damage from any physical attack: fists, weapons, or falling buildings pass through the vampire as if she were a shadow. Fire and sunlight inflict the normal aggravated damage, however, and mystical powers (such as Thaumaturgy) still affect the transformed vampire. The vampire's new body gains three dots in each Physical Attribute. Ignore generational limits for this purpose. The transformed vampire can use her Strength to make normal close combat attacks and can bite for Strength + 2 dice of damage. The vampire can also employ any Discipline that does not require hands.

Thaumaturgy

Thaumaturgy encompasses blood magic and other sorcerous arts available to Kindred. The Tremere Clan is best known for their possession (and jealous hoarding) of this Discipline. The Tremere created Thaumaturgy by combining mortal wizardry with the power of vampiric vitae, and as a result it is a versatile and powerful Discipline. Although there are whispers of the existence of Tremere *antitribu* in the Sabbat, other Clans in the Sword of Caine have also researched and developed access to such mystical might. Nevertheless, the Tremere of the Camarilla remain this Discipline's masters.

Like Necromancy, the practice of Thaumaturgy is divided into paths and rituals. Thaumaturgical paths are applications of the vampire's knowledge of blood magic, allowing her to create effects on a whim. Rituals are more formulaic in nature, most akin to ancient magical "spells." Because so many different paths and rituals are available to the arcane Tremere, one never knows what to expect when confronted with a practitioner of this Discipline.

When a character first learns Thaumaturgy, the player selects a path for the character. That path is considered the character's primary path, and she automatically receives one dot in it, as well as one Level One ritual. Thereafter, whenever the character increases her level in Thaumaturgy, her rating in the primary path increases by one as well. Additional rituals are learned separately, as part of a story; players need not pay experience points for their characters to learn rituals up to the level equal to their overall rating in Thaumaturgy, though they must find someone to teach the rituals in question. Path ratings never exceed 5, though the overall Thaumaturgy score may. If a character reaches a rating of 5 in her primary path and increases her Thaumaturgy score afterward, she may allocate her "free" path dot to a different path. (Experience costs are covered on p. 124.)

Many Kindred fear crossing the practitioners of Thaumaturgy. It is a very potent and mutable Discipline, and almost anything the Kindred wishes may be accomplished through its magic.

Thaumaturgical Paths

Paths define the types of magic a vampire can perform. A vampire typically learns his primary path from his sire, though it is not unknown for some vampires to study under many different tutors.

As mentioned before, the first path a character learns is considered her primary path and increases automatically as the character advances in the Discipline itself. Secondary paths may be learned once the character has acquired two or more dots in her primary path, and they must be raised separately with experience points. Furthermore, a character's rating in her primary path must always be at least one dot higher than any of her secondary paths until she has mastered her primary path. Once the character has achieved the fifth level

of her primary path, secondary paths may be increased to that level.

Each time the character invokes one of the powers of a Thaumaturgical path, the thaumaturge's player must spend a blood point and make a Willpower roll against a difficulty equal to the power's level +3. Only one success is required to invoke a path's effect — path levels, not successes, govern the power of blood magic. Failure on this roll indicates that the magic fails. A botch causes some kind of loss or catastrophic backfire, such as losing a Willpower point (or dot!), spontaneous combustion, or accidentally letting a living statue run rampant. Thaumaturgy is an unforgiving art.

Various Sects and Clans have different access to each path, but unless the Storyteller decides otherwise, it is assumed the Tremere have some access to all of them. ("Having access" does not mean the same thing as "easily gained," especially within the Tremere power structure.) The paths start with one of the most common (The Path of Blood), and thereafter are presented in alphabetical order. (The unusual "path" of Thaumaturgical Countermagic is also presented, although it is considered a separate Discipline – see p. 228 for details.)

The Path of Blood

Almost every Tremere studies the Path of Blood as her primary path. It encompasses some of the most fundamental principles of Thaumaturgy, based as it is on the manipulation of Kindred vitae. If a player wishes to select another path as her character's primary path, the Storyteller may require additional reasoning (though choosing a different path is by no means unheard of).

• A Taste for Blood

This power was developed as a means of testing a foe's might — an extremely important ability in the tumultuous early nights of Clan Tremere. By merely touching the blood of his subject, the caster may determine how much vitae remains in the subject and, if the subject is a vampire, how recently he has fed, his approximate Generation and, with three or more successes, whether he has ever committed diablerie.

System: The number of successes achieved on the roll determines how much information the thaumaturge gleans and how accurate it is.

•• Blood Rage

This power allows a vampire to force another Kindred to expend blood against his will. The caster must touch her subject for this power to work, though only the lightest contact is necessary. A vampire affected by this power might feel a physical rush as the thaumaturge heightens his Physical Attributes, might find himself suddenly looking more human, or may even find himself on the brink of frenzy as his stores of vitae are mystically depleted.

System: Each success forces the subject to spend one blood point immediately in the way the caster desires (which must go towards some logical expenditure the target vampire could make, such as increasing Physical Attributes or powering Disciplines). Note that blood points forcibly spent in this manner may exceed the normal "per turn" maximum indicated by the victim's Generation. Each success gained also increases the subject's difficulty to resist frenzy by one. The thaumaturge may not use Blood Rage on herself to circumvent generational limits.

••• Blood of Potency

The thaumaturge gains such control over his own blood that he may effectively "concentrate" it, making it more powerful for a short time. In effect, he may temporarily lower his own Generation with this power. This power may be used only once per night.

System: One success on the Willpower roll allows the character to lower his Generation by one step for one hour. Each additional success grants the Kindred either one step down in Generation or one hour of effect. Successes earned must be spent both to decrease the vampire's Generation and to maintain the change (this power cannot be activated again until the original application wears off). If the vampire is diablerized while this power is in effect, it wears off immediately and the diablerist gains power appropriate to the caster's actual Generation. Furthermore, any mortals Embraced by the thaumaturge are born to the Generation appropriate to their sire's original Generation (e.g., a Tenth-Generation Tremere who has reduced his effective Generation to Eighth still produces Eleventh-Generation childer).

Once the effect wears off, any blood over the character's blood pool maximum dilutes, leaving the character at his regular blood pool maximum. Thus, if a Twelfth-Generation Tremere (maximum blood pool of 11) decreased his Generation to Ninth (maximum blood pool 14), ingested 14 blood points, and had this much vitae in his system when the power wore off, his blood pool would immediately drop to 11.

•••• Theft of Vitae

A thaumaturge using this power siphons vitae from her subject. She need never come in contact with the subject — blood literally streams out in a physical torrent from the subject to the Kindred (though it is often mystically absorbed and need not enter through the mouth).

System: The number of successes determines how many blood points the caster transfers from the subject. The subject must be visible to the thaumaturge and within 50 feet (15 meters). Using this power prevents the caster from being blood-bound, but otherwise counts as if the vampire ingested the blood herself. This power is spectacularly obvious, and Camarilla princes justifiably consider its public use a breach of the Masquerade.

••••• Cauldron of Blood

A thaumaturge using this power boils her subject's blood in his veins like water on a stove. The Kindred must touch her subject, and it is this contact that simmers the subject's blood. This power is always fatal to mortals, and causes great damage to even the mightiest vampires.

System: The number of successes gained determines how many blood points are brought to boil. The subject suffers one health level of aggravated damage for each point boiled (individuals with Fortitude may soak this damage using *only* their Fortitude dice). A single success kills any mortal, though some ghouls with access to Fortitude are said to have survived after soaking all of the aggravated damage.

Elemental Mastery

This path allows a vampire limited control over and communion with inanimate objects. Elemental Mastery can only be used to affect the unliving — a vampire could not cause a tree to walk by using Animate the Unmoving, for instance. Thaumaturges who seek mastery over living things generally study paths such as The Green Path (p. 215).

• Elemental Strength

The vampire can draw upon the strength and resilience of the earth, or of the objects around him, to increase his physical prowess without the need for large amounts of blood.

System: The player allocates a total of three temporary bonus dots between the character's Strength and Stamina. The number of successes on the roll to activate the power is the number of turns these dots remain. The player may spend a Willpower point to increase this duration by one turn. This power cannot be "stacked" — one application must expire before the next can be made.

•• Wooden Tongues

A vampire may speak, albeit in limited fashion, with the spirit of any inanimate object. The conversation may not be incredibly interesting, as most rocks and chairs have limited concern for what occurs around them, but the vampire can get at least a general impression of what the subject has "experienced." Note that events which are significant to a vampire may not be the same events that interest a lawn gnome.

System: The number of successes dictates the amount and relevance of the information that the character receives. One success may yield a boulder's memory of a forest fire, while three may indicate that it remembers a shadowy figure running past, and five will cause the rock to relate a precise description of a local Gangrel.

••• Animate the Unmoving

Objects affected by this power move as the vampire using it dictates. An object cannot take an action that would be completely inconceivable for something with its form — for instance, a door could not leap from its hinges and carry someone across a street. However, seemingly solid objects can become flexible within reason: Barstools can run with their legs, guns can twist out of their owners' hands or fire while holstered, and humanoid statues can move like normal humans.

System: This power requires the expenditure of a Willpower point with less than four successes on the roll. Each use of this power animates one object no larger than human-sized; the caster may simultaneously control a number of animate objects equal to his Intelligence rating. Objects animated by this power stay animated as long as they are within the caster's line of sight or up to an hour, although the thaumaturge can take other actions during that time.

•••• Elemental Form

The vampire can take the shape of any inanimate object of a mass roughly equal to her own. A desk, a statue, or a bicycle would be feasible, but a house or a pen would be beyond this power's capacity.

System: The number of successes determines how completely the character takes the shape she wishes to counterfeit. At least three successes are required for

the character to use her senses or Disciplines while in her altered form. This power lasts for the remainder of the night, although the character may return to her normal form at will.

••••• Summon Elemental

A vampire may summon one of the traditional spirits of the elements: a salamander (fire), a sylph (air), a gnome (earth), or an undine (water). Some thaumaturges claim to have contacted elemental spirits of glass, electricity, blood, and even atomic energy, but such reports remain unconfirmed (even as their authors are summoned to Vienna for questioning). The caster may choose what type of elemental he wishes to summon and command.

System: The character must be near some quantity of the classical element corresponding to the spirit he wishes to invoke. The spirit invoked may or may not actually follow the caster's instructions once summoned, but generally will at least pay rough attention to what it's being told to do. The number of successes gained on the Willpower roll determines the power level of the elemental.

The elemental has three dots in all Physical and Mental Attributes. One dot may be added to one of the elemental's Physical Attributes for each success gained by the caster on the initial roll. The Storyteller should determine the elemental's Abilities, attacks, and damage, and any special powers it has related to its element.

Once the elemental has been summoned, the thaumaturge must exert control over it. The more powerful the elemental, the more difficult a task this is. The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty of the number of successes scored on the casting roll + 4), and the number of successes determines the degree of control:

Successes	Result
Botch	The elemental immediately attacks the thaumaturge.
Failure	The elemental goes free and may attack anyone or leave the scene at the Storyteller's discretion.
1 success	The elemental does not attack its summoner.
2 successes	The elemental behaves favorably toward the summoner and may perform a service in exchange for payment (determined by the Storyteller).
3 successes	The elemental performs one service, within reason.
4 successes	The elemental performs any one task for the caster that does not jeopardize its own existence.
5 successes	The elemental performs any task that the caster sets for it, even one that may take several nights to complete or that places its existence at risk.

The Green Path

The Green Path deals with the manipulation of plant matter of all sorts. Anything more complex than an algae bloom can theoretically be controlled through the appropriate application of this path. Ferns, roses, dandelions, and even ancient redwoods are all valid targets for this path's powers, and living and dead plant matter are equally affected. While not as immediately impressive as some other more widely practiced paths, the Green Path (sometimes disparagingly referred to as "Botanical Mastery") is as subtle and powerful as the natural world which it affects.

• Herbal Wisdom

With a touch, a vampire can commune with the spirit of a plant. Conversations held in this manner are often cryptic but rewarding — the wisdom and experience of the spirits of some trees surpasses that of the oracles of legend. Crabgrass, on the other hand, rarely has much insight to offer, but might reveal the appearance of the last person who trod upon it.

System: The number of successes rolled determines the amount of information that can be gained from the contact. Depending on the precise information that the vampire seeks, the Storyteller might require the player to roll Intelligence + Occult in order to interpret the results of the communication.

Successes	Result
1 success	Fleeting cryptic impressions
2 successes	One or two clear images
3 successes	A concise answer to a simple query
4 successes	A detailed response to one or more complex questions
5 successes	The sum total of the plant-spirit's knowledge on a given subject



•• Speed the Season's Passing

This power allows a thaumaturge to accelerate a plant's growth, causing roses to bloom in a matter of minutes or trees to shoot up from saplings overnight. Alternately, she can speed a plant's death and decay, withering grass and crumbling wooden stakes with but a touch.

System: The character touches the target plant. The player rolls normally, and the number of successes determines the amount of growth or decay. One success gives the plant a brief growth spurt or simulates the effects of harsh weather, while three noticeably enlarge or wither it. With five successes, a full-grown plant springs from a seed or crumbles to dust in a few minutes, and a tree sprouts fruit or begins decaying almost instantaneously. If this power is used in combat, three successes are needed to render a wooden weapon completely useless. Two successes suffice to weaken it, while five cause it to disintegrate in the wielder's hand.

••• Dance of Vines

The thaumaturge can animate a mass of vegetation up to his own size, using it for utilitarian or combat purposes with equal ease. Leaves can walk along a desktop, ivy can act as a scribe, and jungle creepers can strangle opponents. Intruders should beware of Tremere workshops that harbor potted rowan saplings.

System: Any total amount of vegetation with a mass less than or equal to the character's own may be animated through this power. The plants stay active for one turn per success scored on the roll, and are under the complete control of the character. If used for combat purposes, the plants have Strength and Dexterity ratings each equal to half the character's Willpower (rounded down) and Brawl ratings one lower than that of the character.

Dance of Vines cannot make plants uproot themselves and go stomping about. Even the most energetic vegetation is incapable of pulling out of the soil and walking under the effect of this power. However, 200 pounds (100 kilograms) of kudzu can cover a considerable area all by itself….

•••• Verdant Haven

This power weaves a temporary shelter out of a sufficient amount of plant matter. In addition to providing physical protection from the elements (and even sunlight), the Verdant Haven also establishes a mystical barrier which is nearly impassable to anyone the caster wishes to exclude. A Verdant Haven appears as a six-foot-tall (two-meter-tall) hemisphere of interlocked branches, leaves,

and vines with no discernible opening, and even to the casual observer it appears to be an unnatural construction. Verdant Havens are rumored to have supernatural healing properties, hut no Kindred have reported experiencing such benefits from a stay in one.

System: A character must be standing in a heavily vegetated area to use this power. The Verdant Haven springs up around the character over the course of three turns. Once the haven is established, anyone wishing to enter the haven without the caster's permission must achieve more than the caster's original number of successes on a single roll of Wits + Survival (difficulty equal to the caster's Willpower). The haven lasts until the next sunset, or until the caster dispels or leaves it. If the caster scored four or more successes, the haven is impenetrable to sunlight unless physically breached.

••••• Awaken the Forest Giants

Entire trees can be animated by a master of the Green Path. Ancient oaks can be temporarily given the gift of movement, pulling their roots from the soil and shaking the ground with their steps. While not as versatile as elementals or other summoned spirits, trees brought to ponderous life via this power display awesome strength and resilience.

System: The character touches the tree to be animated. The player spends a blood point and rolls normally. If the roll succeeds, the player must spend a blood point for every success. The tree stays animated for one turn per success rolled; once this time expires, the tree puts its roots down wherever it stands and cannot be animated again until the next night. While animated, the tree follows the character's verbal commands to the best of its ability. An animated tree has Strength and Stamina equal to the caster's Thaumaturgy rating, Dexterity 2, and a Brawl rating equal to the caster's own. It is immune to bashing damage, and all lethal damage dice pools are halved due to its size.

Once the animating energy leaves a tree, it puts down roots immediately, regardless of what it is currently standing on. A tree re-establishing itself in the soil can punch through concrete and asphalt to find nourishing dirt and water underneath, meaning that it is entirely possible for a sycamore to root itself in the middle of a road without any warning.

Hands of Destruction

This Path is practiced most commonly by the various thaumaturges of the Sabbat. Though it is not widely seen outside that Sect, a few Camarilla Tremere have managed to learn the secrets of this path over the centuries. The Hands of Destruction has an infamous history, and some Tremere refuse to practice it due to rumors that it is demonic in origin.

• Decay

This power accelerates the decrepitude of its target, causing it to wither, rot, or otherwise break down. The target must be inanimate, though dead organic matter can be affected.

System: If the roll is successful, the inanimate object touched by the thaumaturge ages 10 years for every minute the Kindred touches it. If the vampire breaks physical contact and wishes to age the object again, another blood point must be spent and another roll must be made. This power does not affect vampires.

•• Gnarl Wood

This power warps and bends wooden objects. Though the wood is otherwise undamaged, this power often leaves the objects completely useless. This power may also be used to swell or contract wood, in addition to bending it into unwholesome shapes. Unlike other powers of this path, Gnarl Wood requires merely a glance rather than physical contact.

System: Fifty pounds or twenty-five kilograms of visible wood may be gnarled for each blood point spent on this power (the thaumaturge may expend as much blood as she likes on this power, up to her per-turn generational maximum). It is also possible to warp multiple visible objects — like all the stakes a team of vampire-hunters wields.

••• Acidic Touch

The vampire secretes a bilious, acidic fluid from any portion of his body. The viscous acid corrodes metal, destroys wood, and causes horrendous chemical burns to living tissue.

System: The player spends one blood point to create the acid — the blood literally transmutes into the volatile secretion. One blood point creates enough acid to burn through a quarter-inch or half a centimeter of steel plate or three inches (seven centimeters) of wood. The damage from an acid-augmented hand-to-hand attack is aggravated and costs one blood point per turn to use. A thaumaturge is immune to her own acidic touch.

•••• Atrophy

This power withers a victim's limb, leaving only a desiccated, almost mummified husk of bone and skin. The effects are instantaneous; in mortals, they are also irreversible.

System: The victim may resist the effects of Atrophy by scoring three or more successes on a Stamina + Athletics roll (difficulty 8). Failure means the limb is permanently and completely crippled. Partial resistance is possible: One success indicates that the difficulty of any roll involving the use of the arm increases by two, though these effects are still permanent with regard to mortals. Two successes signify that difficulties increase by one. Vampires afflicted by this power may spend five blood points to rejuvenate atrophied limbs. Mortals are permanently crippled. This power affects only limbs or parts of limbs (arms, legs, hands); it does not work on victims' heads, torsos, etc.

••••• Turn to Dust

This fearsome power accelerates decrepitude in its victims. Mortals literally age at the mere touch of a skilled thaumaturge, gaining decades in moments.

System: Each success on the roll ages the victim by 10 years. A potential victim may resist with a Stamina + Courage roll (difficulty 8), but must accumulate more successes than the caster's activation roll — it's an all-or-nothing affair. If the victim succeeds, he does not age at all. If he does not acquire more successes than the thaumaturge, he ages the full amount. Obviously, this power, while it affects vampires, has no detrimental effect on them (they're immortal). At most, a Kindred victim grows paler and withers slightly (-1 to Appearance) for one night.

The Lure of Flames

This path grants the thaumaturge the ability to conjure forth mystical flames — small fires at first, but skilled magicians may create great conflagrations. Fire created by this path is not "natural." In fact, many vampires believe the flames to be conjured from Hell itself. The Lure of Flames is greatly feared, as fire is one of the surest ways to bring Final Death upon a vampire. See "Fire" (p. 297) for more information on how vampires suffer from flame.

Fire conjured by The Lure of Flames must be released for it to have any effect. Thus, a "palm of flame" does not burn the vampire's hand and cause an aggravated wound (nor does it cause the caster to frenzy) — it merely produces light. Once the flame has been released, however, it burns normally and the character has no control over it.

System: The number of successes determines how accurately the vampire places the flame in his desired location (declared before the roll is made). One success is all that is necessary to conjure a flame in one's hand, while five successes place a flame anywhere in the Kindred's line of sight. Less successes mean that the flame appears somewhere at the Storyteller's discretion — as a rough rule of thumb, the thaumaturge can accurately place a flame within 10 yards or meters of themselves per success.

Individual descriptions are not provided for each level of this path — fire is fire, after all (including potentially causing frenzy in other vampires witnessing it). The chart below describes the path level required to generate a specific amount of flame. To soak the damage at all, a vampire must have the Fortitude Discipline. Fire under the caster's control does not harm the vampire or cause him to frenzy, but fires started as a result of the unnatural flame affect the thaumaturge normally.

•	Candle (difficulty 3 to soak, one health level of aggravated damage/turn)
••	Palm of flame (difficulty 4 to soak, one health level of aggravated damage/turn)
•••	Campfire (difficulty 5 to soak, two health levels of aggravated damage/turn)
••••	Bonfire (difficulty 7 to soak, two health levels of aggravated damage/turn)
•••••	Inferno (difficulty 9 to soak, three health levels of aggravated damage/turn)

Neptune's Might

Vampires are rarely associated with the ocean in most mythologies, and most Kindred have nothing to do with water in large quantities simply because they have no reason to do so. Nevertheless, Neptune's Might has enjoyed a small, but devoted, following for centuries among Camarilla thaumaturges. This path is based primarily around the manipulation of standing water, although some of its more disturbing effects depart from this principle.

Once a character reaches the third level of Neptune's Might, the player may choose to specialize in either fresh water or salt water. Such specialization lowers all Neptune's Might difficulties by one when dealing with the chosen medium but raises them by one when deal-

ing with the opposite. Blood is considered neither fresh nor salty for this purpose, and difficulties in manipulating it are unaffected.

• Eyes of the Sea

The thaumaturge may peer into a body of water and view events that have transpired on, in, or around it from the water's perspective. Some older practitioners of this art claim that the vampire communes with the spirits of the waters when using this power; younger Kindred scoff at such claims.

System: The number of successes rolled determines how far into the past the character can look.

Successes	Result
1 success	One day
2 successes	One week
3 successes	One month
4 successes	One year
5 successes	10 years

The Storyteller may require a Perception + Occult roll for the character to discern very small details in the transmitted images. This power can only he used on standing water; lakes and puddles qualify, but oceans, rivers, sewers, and wine glasses do not.

•• Prison of Water

The thaumaturge can command a sufficiently large quantity of water to animate itself and imprison a subject. This power requires a significant amount of fluid to be fully effective, although even a few gallons can be used to shape chains of animated water.

System: The number of successes scored on the roll is the number of successes the victim must score on a Strength roll (difficulty 8; Potence can add to this roll) to break free. A subject may be held in only one prison at a time, although the caster is free to invoke multiple uses of this power upon separate victims and may dissolve these prisons at will. If a sufficient quantity of water (at least a bathtub's worth) is not present, the difficulty of the Willpower roll to activate this power is raised by one.

••• Blood to Water

The thaumaturge has now attained enough power over water that she can transmute other liquids to this basic element. The most commonly seen use of this power is as an assault; with but a touch, the victim's blood transforms to water, weakening vampires and killing mortals in moments.

System: The character must touch her intended victim. The player rolls Willpower normally. Each success converts one of the victim's blood points to water. One success kills a mortal within minutes. Vampires who lose blood points to this power also suffer dice pool penalties as if they had received an equivalent number of health levels of injury. The water left in the target's system by this attack evaporates out at a rate of one blood point's worth per hour, but the lost blood does not return.

At the Storyteller's discretion, other liquids may be turned to water with this power (the difficulty for such an action is reduced by one unless the substance is particularly dangerous or magical in nature). The character must still touch the substance or its container to use this power.

•••• Flowing Wall

Tales of vampires' inability to cross running water may have derived in part from garbled accounts of this power in action. The thaumaturge can animate water to an even greater degree than is possible with the use of Prison of Water, commanding it to rise up to form a barrier impassable to almost any being.

System: The character touches the surface of a standing body of water; the player spends three Willpower points and the normal required blood point and rolls normally. Successes are applied to both width and height of the wall; each success "buys" 10 feet/three meters in one dimension. The wall may be placed anywhere within the character's line of sight, and must be formed in a straight line. The wall lasts until the next sunrise. It cannot be climbed, though it can be flown over. To pass through the barrier, any supernatural being (including beings trying to pass the wall on other levels of existence, such as ghosts) must score at least three successes on a single Willpower roll (difficulty 9).

••••• Dehydrate

At this level of mastery, the thaumaturge can directly attack living and unliving targets by removing the water from their bodies. Victims killed by this power leave behind hideous mummified corpses. This power can also be used for less aggressive purposes, such as drying out wet clothes — or evaporating puddles to keep other practitioners of this path from using them.

System: This power can be used on any target in the character's line of sight. The player rolls normally; the victim resists with a roll of Stamina + Fortitude (difficulty 9). Each success gained by the caster translates into one health level of lethal damage inflicted on the victim. This injury cannot be soaked (the resistance roll replaces soak for this attack) but can be healed normally. Vampires lose blood points instead of health levels, though if a vampire has no blood points this attack inflicts health level loss as it would against a mortal. The victim of this attack must also roll Courage (difficulty equal to the number of successes scored by the caster + 3) to be able to act on the turn following the attack; failure means he is overcome with agony and can do nothing.

Movement of the Mind

This path gives the thaumaturge the ability to move objects telekinetically through the mystic power of blood. At higher levels, even flight is possible (but be careful who sees you…). Objects under the character's control may be manipulated as if she held them — they may be lifted, spun, juggled, or even "thrown," though creating enough force to inflict actual damage requires mastery of at least the fourth level of this path. Some casters skilled in this path even use it to guard their havens, animating swords, axes, and firearms to ward off intruders. This path may frighten and disconcert onlookers.

System: The number of successes indicates the duration of the caster's control over the object (or subject). Each success allows one turn of manipulation, though the Kindred may attempt to maintain control after this time by making a new roll (she need not spend additional blood to maintain control). If the roll is successful, control is maintained. If a thaumaturge loses or relaxes control over an object and later manipulates it again, her player must spend another blood point, as a new attempt is being made. Five or more successes on the initial roll means the vampire can control the object for duration of the scene.

If this power is used to manipulate a living being, the subject may attempt to resist. In this case, the caster and the subject make opposed Willpower rolls each turn the control is exercised.

Like The Lure of Flames, individual power levels are not provided for this path — consult the chart below to see how much weight a thaumaturge may control. Once a Kindred reaches a rating of 3, she may levitate herself and "fly" at approximately running speed, no matter how much she weighs, though the weight restrictions apply if she manipulates other objects or subjects. Once a Kindred achieves 4, she may "throw" objects at a Strength equal to her level of mastery of this path.

•	One pound/one-half kilogram
••	20 pounds/10 kilograms
•••	200 pounds/100 kilograms
••••	500 pounds/250 kilograms
•••••	1000 pounds/500 kilograms

The Path of Conjuring

Invoking objects "out of thin air" has been a staple of occult and supernatural legend since long before the rise of the Tremere. This Thaumaturgical path enables powerful conjurations limited only by the mind of the practitioner.

Objects summoned via this path bear two distinct characteristics. They are uniformly "generic" in that each object summoned, if summoned again, would look exactly as it did at first. For example, a knife would be precisely the same knife if created twice; the two would be indistinguishable. Even a *specific* knife — the one a character's father used to threaten her — would appear identical every time it was conjured. A rat would have repeated "tiled" patterns over its fur, and a garbage can would have a completely uniform fluted texture over its surface. Additionally, conjured objects bear no flaws: Weapons have no dents or scratches, tools have no distinguishing marks, and cellphones all look like they just came out of their packaging.

The limit on the size of conjured objects appears to be that of the conjurer: nothing larger than the thaumaturge can be created. The conjurer must also have some degree of familiarity with the object he wishes to call forth. Simply working from a picture or imagination calls for a higher difficulty, while objects with which the character is intimately familiar (such as the knife described above) may actually lower the difficulty, at the Storyteller's discretion.

When a player rolls to conjure something, the successes gained on the roll indicate the quality of the summoned object. One success yields a shoddy, imperfect creation, while five successes garner the caster a nearly perfect replica.

• Summon the Simple Form

At this level of mastery, the conjurer may create simple, inanimate objects. The object cannot have any moving parts and may not be made of multiple materials. For example, the conjurer may summon a steel baton, a lead pipe, a wooden stake, or a chunk of granite.

System: Each turn the conjurer wishes to keep the object in existence, another Willpower point must be spent or the object vanishes.

•• Permanency

At this level, the conjurer no longer needs to pay Willpower costs to keep an object in existence. The object is permanent, though simple objects are still all that may be created.

System: The player must invest three blood points in an object to make it real.

••• Magic of the Smith

The Kindred may now conjure complex objects of multiple components and with moving parts. For example, the thaumaturge can create guns, bicycles, chainsaws, or cellphones.

System: Objects created via Magic of the Smith are automatically permanent and cost five blood points to conjure. Particularly complex items often require a Knowledge roll (Crafts, Science, Technology, etc.) in addition to the basic roll.

•••• Reverse Conjuration

This power allows the conjurer to "banish" into nonexistence any object previously called forth via this path.

System: This is an extended success roll. The conjurer must accumulate as many successes as the original caster received when creating the object in question. This can also be used by the thaumaturge to banish object she created herself with this Path.

••••• Power Over Life

This power cannot create true life, though it can summon forth impressive simulacra. Creatures (and people) summoned with this power lack the free will to act on their own, mindlessly following the simple instructions of their conjurer instead. People created in this way can be subject to the use of the Dominate power Possession (p. 155), if desired.

System: The player spends 10 blood points. Imperfect and impermanent, creatures summoned via this path are too complex to exist for long. Within a week after their conjuration, the simulacra vanish into insubstantiality.

The Path of Corruption

The origins of this path are hotly debated among those who are familiar with its intricacies. One theory holds that its secrets were taught to the Tremere by demons and that use of it brings the practitioner dangerously close to the infernal powers. A second opinion has been advanced that the Path of Corruption is a holdover from the days when Clan Tremere was still mortal. The third theory, and the most disturbing to the Tremere, is that the path originated with the Followers of Set, and that knowledge of its workings was sold to the Tremere for an unspecified price. This last rumor is vehemently denied by the Tremere, which automatically makes it a favorite topic of discussion when the matter comes up.

The Path of Corruption is primarily a mentally and spiritually oriented path centered on influencing the psyches of other individuals. It can be used neither to issue commands like Dominate nor to change emotions in the moment like Presence. Rather, it produces a gradual and subtle twisting of the subject's actions, morals, and thought processes. This path deals intimately with deception and dark desires, and those who work through it must understand the hidden places of the heart. Accordingly, no character may have a higher rating in the Path of Corruption than he has in Subterfuge.

• Contradict

The vampire can interrupt a subject's thought processes, forcing the victim to reverse his current course of action. An Archon may be caused to execute a prisoner she was about to exonerate and release; a mortal lover might switch from gentle and caring to sadistic and demanding in the middle of an encounter. The results of Contradict are never precisely known to the thaumaturge in advance, but they always take the form of a more negative action than the subject had originally intended to perform.

System: This power may be used on any subject within the character's line of sight. The player rolls as per normal. The target rolls Perception + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the number of successes scored by the caster + 2). Two successes allow the subject to real-



ize that she is being influenced by some outside source. Three successes let her pinpoint the source of the effect. Four successes give her a moment of hesitation, neither performing her original action nor its inverse, while five allow her to carry through with the original action.

The Storyteller dictates what the subject's precise reaction to this power is. Contradict cannot be used in combat or to affect other actions (at the Storyteller's discretion) that are mainly physical and reflexive.

•• Subvert

This power follows the same principle as does Contradict, the release of a subject's dark, self-destructive side. However, Subvert's effects are longer-lasting than the momentary flare of Contradiction. Under the influence of this power, victims act on their own suppressed temptations, pursuing agendas that their morals or self-control would forbid them to follow under normal circumstances.

System: This power requires the character to make eye contact (see p. 152) with the intended victim. The player rolls normally. The target resists with a roll of Perception + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the target's Manipulation + Subterfuge). If the thaumaturge scores more successes, the victim becomes inclined to follow a repressed, shameful desire for the length of time described below.

Successes	Result
1 success	Five minutes
2 successes	One hour
3 successes	One night
4 successes	Three nights
5 successes	One week

The Storyteller determines the precise desire or agenda that the victim follows. It should be in keeping with the Psychological Flaws that she possesses or with the negative aspects of her Nature (for example, a Loner desiring isolation to such an extent that she becomes violent if forced to attend a social function). The subject should not become fixated on following this new agenda at all times, but should occasionally be forced to spend a Willpower point if the opportunity to succumb arises and she wishes to resist the impulse.

••• Dissociate

"Divide and conquer" is a maxim that is well-understood by the Tremere, and Dissociate is a powerful tool with which to divide the Clan's enemies. This power is used to break the social ties of interpersonal relationships. Even the most passionate affair or the oldest friendship can be cooled through use of Dissociate, and weaker personal ties can be destroyed altogether.

System: The character must touch the target. The player rolls normally. The target resists with a Willpower roll (difficulty of the thaumaturge's Manipulation + Empathy). The victim loses three dice from all Social rolls for a period of time determined by the number of successes gained by the caster:

Successes	Result
1 success	Five minutes
2 successes	One hour
3 successes	One night
4 successes	Three nights
5 successes	One week

This penalty applies to all rolls that rely on Social Attributes, even those required for the use of Disciplines. If this power is used on a character who has participated in the Vaulderie or a similar ritual, that character's Vinculum ratings are reduced by three for the duration of Dissociate's effect.

Dissociate's primary effect falls under roleplaying rather than game mechanics. Victims of this power should be played as withdrawn, suspicious, and emotionally distant. The Storyteller should feel free to require a Willpower point expenditure for a player who does not follow these guidelines.

•••• Addiction

This power is a much stronger and more potentially damaging form of Subvert. Addiction creates just that in the victim. By simply exposing the target to a particular sensation, substance, or action, the caster creates a powerful psychological dependence. Many thaumaturges ensure that their victims become addicted to substances or thrills that only the mystic can provide, thus creating both a source of income and potential blackmail material.

System: The subject must encounter or be exposed to the sensation, substance, or action to which the character wants to addict him. The thaumaturge then touches his target. The player rolls normally; the victim resists with a Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty equal to the number of successes scored by the caster + 3). Failure gives the subject an instant addiction to that object.

An addicted character must get his fix at least once a night. Every night that he goes without satisfying his desire imposes a cumulative penalty of one die on all of his dice pools (to a minimum pool of one die). The victim must roll Self-Control/Instinct (difficulty 8) every time he is confronted with the object of his addiction and wishes to keep from indulging. Addiction lasts for a number of weeks equal to the thaumaturge's Manipulation score.

An individual may try to break the effects of Addiction. This requires an extended Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty of the caster's Manipulation + Subterfuge), with one roll made per night. The addict must accumulate a number of successes equal to three times the number of successes scored by the caster. The victim may not indulge in his addiction over the time needed to accumulate these successes. If he does so, all accumulated successes are lost and he must begin anew on the next night. Note that the Self-Control/Instinct dice pool is reduced every night that the victim goes without feeding his addiction.

••••• Dependence

Many former pawns of Clan Tremere claim to have felt a strange sensation similar to depression when not in the presence of their masters. This is usually attributed to the blood bond, but is sometimes the result of the vampire's mastery of Dependence. The final power of the Path of Corruption enables the vampire to tie her victim's soul to her own, engendering feelings of lethargy and helplessness when the victim is not in her presence or acting to further her desires.

System: The character engages the target in conversation. The player rolls normally. The victim rolls Self-Control/Instinct (difficulty equals the number of successes scored by the caster + 3). Failure means that the victim's psyche has been subtly bonded to that of the thaumaturge for one night per success rolled by the caster.

A bonded victim is no less likely to attack his controller, and feels no particular positive emotions toward her. However, he is psychologically addicted to her presence, and suffers a one-die penalty to all rolls when he is not around her or performing tasks for her.

Additionally, he is much less resistant to her commands, and his dice pools are halved when he attempts to resist her Dominate, Presence (or other mental or emotional control powers), or mundane Social rolls. Finally, he is unable to regain Willpower when he is not in the thaumaturge's presence.

The Path of Mars

Those rare Sabbat who have retained Thaumaturgical talents have turned their focus to the assistance of the Sect in times of war. This path has proven useful, turning the tides of several confrontations with elder vampires. The path adopts a very martial stance, whereas other blood magics tend to have subtler, less violent effects. It is rumored that some Camarilla Tremere have learned this path, but very few of them have the right temperament to wield this path effectively.

• War Cry

A vampire on the attack can focus his will, making him less susceptible to battle fear or the powers of the undead. The vampire shouts a primal scream to start the effect, though some thaumaturges have been known to paint their faces or cut themselves open instead.

System: For the duration of one scene, the vampire adds one to his Courage Trait. Additionally, for the purposes of hostile effects, his Willpower is considered to be one higher (though this bonus applies only to the Trait itself, not the Willpower pool). A character may only gain the benefits of War Cry once per scene.

•• Strike True

The vampire makes a single attack, guided by the unholy power of her Blood. This attack strikes its foe infallibly.

System: By invoking this power, the player need not roll to see if the vampire's attack hits — it does, automatically. Only Melee or Brawl attacks may be made in this manner. These attacks are considered to be one-success attacks; they offer no additional damage dice. Also, they may be dodged, blocked, or parried normally, and the defender needs only one success (as the attacks' number of success is assumed to be one). Strike True has no effect if attempted on multiple attacks (dice pool splits) in a single turn from one character.

••• Wind Dance

The thaumaturge invokes the power of the winds, moving in a blur. She gains a preternatural edge in avoiding her enemies' blows, moving out of their way before the enemy has a chance to throw them.

System: The player can dodge any number of attacks with her full dice pool in a single turn. This advantage applies only to dodges — if the character wishes to attack and dodge, the player must still split her dice pool. This power lasts for one scene.

•••• Fearless Heart

The vampire temporarily augments his abilities as a warrior. Through the mystical powers of blood magic, the character becomes a potent fighting force.

System: Fearless Heart grants the vampire an extra point in each of the Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina). These Traits may not exceed their generational maximums, though the player may use blood points to push the character's Traits even higher. The effects last for one scene, and a character may gain its benefits only once per scene. The vampire must spend two hours in a calm and restful state following the use of Fearless Heart, or lose a blood point every 15 minutes until he rests.

••••• Comrades at Arms

This ability extends the power of the previous abilities in the path. It allows any of the earlier effects to be applied to a group such as a pack or War Party.

System: The player chooses one of the lower-level powers in the path, invoking it as normal. Afterward, he touches another character and (if the roll for Comrades at Arms is successful) bestows the benefit on her as well. The same power may be delivered to any number of packmates, as long as the rolls for Comrades at Arms are successful and the thaumaturge pays the appropriate blood costs.

The Path of Technomancy

The newest path to be accepted by the Tremere hierarchy as part of the Clan's official body of knowledge, the Path of Technomancy is a relatively recent innovation, developed in the latter half of the 20th century. The path focuses on the control of electronic devices, from cellphones to laptops, and its proponents maintain that it is a prime example of the versatility of Thaumaturgy with regards to a changing world. More conservative Tremere, however, state that mixing Tremere magic with mortal science borders on treason or even blasphemy, and some European Regents have gone so far as to declare knowledge of Technomancy

grounds for expulsion from their chantries. The Inner Council did approve the introduction of the path into the Clan's grimoires, but has yet to voice any opinion on the conservative opposition to Technomancy.

• Analyze

Mortals are constantly developing new innovations, and any vampire who would work Technomancy must be able to understand that upon which he practices his magic. The most basic power of this path allows the thaumaturge to project his perceptions into a device, granting him a temporary understanding of its purpose, the principles of its functioning, and its means of operation. This does not grant permanent knowledge, only a momentary flash of insight which fades within minutes.

System: A character must touch the device in order to apply this power. The number of successes rolled determines how well the character understands this particular piece of equipment. One success allows a basic knowledge (on/off and simple functions), while three successes grant competence in operating the device, and five successes show the character the full range of the device's potential. The knowledge lasts for a number of minutes equal to the character's Intelligence.

This power can also be used to understand a non-physical technological innovation — generally a piece of software — at +2 difficulty. The character must touch the computer on which the software is installed — simply holding the flash drive or CD-ROM is not enough. Software applied remotely to a device (such as through an app store) also cannot be analyzed until it is installed.

•• Burnout

It is usually easier to destroy than to create, and sensitive electronics are no exception to this rule. Burnout is used to cause a device's power supply (either internal or external) to surge, damaging or destroying the target. Burnout cannot be used to directly injure another individual, although the sudden destruction of a pacemaker or a car's fuel injection control chip can certainly create a health hazard.

System: A character can use this power at a range of up to 10 times her Willpower in yards or meters, although a +1 difficulty is applied if she is not touching the target item. The number of successes determines the extent of the damage:

Successes	Result
1 success	Momentary interruption of operation (one turn), but no permanent damage.
2 successes	Significant loss of function; +1 difficulty to use using the device for the rest of the scene.
3 successes	The device breaks and is inoperable until repaired.
4 successes	Even after repairs, the device's capabilities are diminished (permanent +1 difficulty to use).
5 successes	The equipment is a total write-off; completely unsalvageable.

Large enough systems, such as a server cluster or a passenger aircraft, impose a +2 to +4 difficulty (at Storyteller discretion) to affect with this power. Additionally, some systems, such as military and banking networks, may be protected against power surges and spikes, and thus possess one to five dice (Storyteller discretion again) to roll to resist this power. Each success on this roll (difficulty 6) takes away one success from the Thaumaturgy roll.

Burnout may be used to destroy electronic data storage, in which case three successes destroy all information on the target item, and five erase it beyond any hope of non-magical recovery.

••• Encrypt/Decrypt

Electronic security is a paramount concern of governments and corporations alike. Those thaumaturges who are techno-savvy enough to understand the issues at stake have become quite enamored of this power, which allows them to scramble a device's controls mystically, making it inaccessible to anyone else. Encrypt/Decrypt also works on electronic media; a DVD under the influence of this power displays just snow and static if played back without the owner's approval. Some neonates have taken to calling this power "DRM."

System: The character touches the device or data container that he wishes to encrypt. The player rolls normally. The number of successes scored is applied as a difficulty modifier for anyone who attempts to use the protected equipment or access the scrambled information without the assistance of the character. The caster can dispel the effect at any time by touching the target item and spending a point of Willpower.

This power may also be used to counter another thaumaturge's use of Encrypt/Decrypt. The player rolls at +1 difficulty; each success negates one of the "owner's."

The effects of Encrypt/Decrypt last for a number of weeks equal to the character's permanent Willpower rating.

•••• Remote Access

With this power, a skilled thaumaturge can bypass the need for physical contact to operate a device. This is not a form of telekinesis; the vampire does not manipulate the item's controls, but rather touches it directly with the power of his mind.

System: This power may be used on any electronic device within the character's line of sight. The number of successes rolled is the maximum number of dice from any relevant Ability that the character may use while remotely controlling the device. (For instance, if Fritz has Technology 5 and scores three successes while using Remote Access on a keypad lock, he can only apply three dots of his Technology rating to any rolls that he makes through any use of the power.) Remote Access lasts for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, and can only be used on one item at a time.

If an item is destroyed while under the effects of Remote Access, the character takes five dice of bashing damage due to the shock of having his perceptions rudely shunted back into his own body.

••••• Telecommute

A progressive derivation of Remote Access, Telecommute allows a thaumaturge to project her consciousness into the Internet, sending her mind through network connections as fast as they can transfer her. While immersed in the network, she can use any other Technomancy power on the devices with which she makes contact.

System: The character touches any form of communications device: a cellphone, 3G-equipped netbook, Wi-Fi tablet, or anything else that is connected directly or indirectly to the Internet. The player rolls normally and spends a Willpower point. Telecommute lasts for five minutes per success rolled, and may be extended by 10 minutes with the expenditure of another Willpower point. The number of successes indicates the maximum range that the character can project her consciousness away from her body:

Successes	Result
1 success	25 miles/40 kilometers
2 successes	250 miles/400 kilometers
3 successes	1000 miles/1500 kilometers
4 successes	5000 miles/8000 kilometers
5 successes	Anywhere in the world

While in the network, the character can apply any other Path of Technomancy power to any device or data with which she comes in contact. A loss of connection, either through the destruction of a part of the network or simply a loss of cell signal, hurls her consciousness back to her body and inflicts eight dice of bashing damage.

A character traveling through the Internet by means of this power can use her Path of Technomancy powers at a normal difficulty. Using any other abilities or powers while engaged thus is done at a +2 difficulty.

The Path of the Father's Vengeance

This path, based loosely on a powerful thaumaturge's interpretations of the *Book of Nod*, devotes itself to delivering justice to the race of Cainites. Each power supposedly has some precedent in the parables of the ancient book, and focuses on teaching the lessons of Caine via the power of blood magic. Use of this path is hotly debated in the Sabbat, as some consider it tantamount to claiming to hold Caine's right over all vampires oneself. Camarilla vampires don't have the same knowledge of the *Book of Nod* that the Sabbat do, but the path is not entirely unheard of in Tremere chantries.

The power of this path comes not only from the magic of blood, but also incantation of verses from the *Book of Nod*. For any of these powers to take effect, the caster must speak the actual condemnation. For example, to invoke the third-level power, the caster must state plainly to his target that she may eat only ashes. The subject must generally be able to hear the caster for these powers to take effect, though writing them and showing them to the subject will do.

These powers apply to vampires only. They do not affect mortals, ghouls, or any other supernatural creatures.

• Zillah's Litany

Zillah, the wife of Caine, unknowingly drank from her husband and sire three times, thus becoming bond-

ed to him. This power reveals existing blood bonds and Vinculi to the thaumaturge.

System: If the subject has any blood bonds or Vinculi to other vampires, this power reveals them to the caster. Although the caster may not know the vampires in question, this power does reveal the names and gives rough psychic impressions of the individuals in question.

•• The Crone's Pride

This power inflicts the curse of the crone, who bound Caine to her as he fled his wife's spurning. Hideously ugly, the crone had to resort to trickery to get others to help or serve her.

System: This power reduces the target's Appearance to zero. All Social rolls during this time generally fail, unless the character attempts to intimidate or browbeat the subject. This power lasts for one night.

••• Feast of Ashes

Primarily used against wanton or excessive vampires, this power temporarily removes a vampire's dependency on blood. While some would say this negates the Curse of Caine, it reduces the vampire to little more than a wretched scavenger, as he must consume literal ashes, though he gains little sustenance from them.

System: The victim of this power can no longer consume blood, vomiting it up as he would mortal food or drink. Instead, the victim can eat only ashes, and the "blood points" he gains from this may be used only to rise each night. Ashen "blood points" may not be used to power Disciplines, raise Attributes, or feed ghouls (though actual blood points in the character's body at the time this power is invoked may still be used for such). One blood point's worth of ash is roughly one pint or half-liter, and any ash will do — cigarette ash, campfire leftovers, or vampire corpses destroyed by fire or sunlight. This power lasts for one week.

•••• Uriel's Disfavor

This power invokes the darkness of the Angel of Death. All but the dimmest of light causes the subject excruciating pain, and some artificial forms of bright light may even damage the vampire. Uriel delivered God's curse on Caine, shielding him in the blackness of his wings.

System: The presence of any light makes the subject uncomfortable, and bright light of any kind — flash-



lights, headlights, etc. — inflict one health level of aggravated damage on the character for every turn he remains under its direct focus. Most vampires who suffer this curse elect to sleep for the duration, hiding away in the darkness of their havens until they can walk again among the living without pain. This power lasts for one week.

••••• Valediction

Many Sabbat rightfully fear this power, though very few have ever seen it used. It levies a punishment for breaking one of Caine's greatest commandments — the ban against diablerie. As most Sabbat attain their power and station through some measure of diablerie, they must reconcile their beliefs with the admonitions of Caine, and this power engenders a great sense of humility.

System: When this power takes effect, the subject immediately reverts to her original Generation. This change may entail losing points in certain Traits due to generational maximums. This power lasts for one week, after which any Traits reduced to higher-Generation maximums return to normal. It takes three turns to speak the full verse that implements this power's effects.

Thaumaturgical Countermagic

This is less of a path than it is a separate Discipline, as the power to resist Thaumaturgy can be taught independently of Thaumaturgy, even to those Kindred who are incapable of mastering the simplest ritual. Though the techniques of Thaumaturgical Countermagic are not officially taught outside Clan Tremere, unofficial methods are likely to exist. Any non-Tremere who displays the ability to resist Thaumaturgy quickly becomes the subject of potentially fatal scrutiny from the entirety of Clan Tremere.

System: Thaumaturgical Countermagic is treated as a separate Discipline, although it uses the usual rules for Thaumaturgy (including experience costs and the fact that it is limited to only five levels). It cannot be taken as a character's primary path, and a rating in it does not allow the character to perform rituals.

The use of Thaumaturgical Countermagic is treated as a free action in combat and does not require a split dice pool. To oppose a Thaumaturgy power or ritual, a character must have a Thaumaturgical Countermagic rating equal to or greater than the rating of that power or ritual. The player spends a blood point and rolls the number of dice indicated by the character's Thaumaturgical Countermagic rating (difficulty equal to the difficulty of the power in use). Each success cancels one of the opposing thaumaturge's successes.

Thaumaturgical Countermagic is only at full effectiveness when used against Thaumaturgy. It works with halved dice pools against Necromancy and other mystical Disciplines, and is completely ineffective against non-vampiric magics and powers.

Thaumaturgical Countermagic can be learned by characters who are unable to learn Thaumaturgy (e.g., those with the Merit Magic Resistance). Any non-Tremere character with a rating in this power automatically gains the Flaw Clan Enmity (Tremere), receiving no freebie points for it. This power cannot be taken during character creation and cannot be spontaneously developed. Whether the character has Thaumaturgy as an in-Clan power or not, it costs the same as any other non-Clan Discipline to learn.

•	Two dice of countermagic. The character can attempt to cancel only those powers and rituals that directly affect him, his garments, and objects on his person.
••	Four dice of countermagic.
•••	Six dice of countermagic. The character can attempt to cancel a Thaumaturgy power that affects anyone or anything in physical contact with him.
••••	Eight dice of countermagic.
•••••	Ten dice of countermagic. The character can now attempt to cancel a power or ritual that targets anything within a radius equal to his Willpower in yards or meters, or one that is being used or performed within that same radius.

Weather Control

Command over the weather has long been a staple power of wizards both mortal and immortal, and this path is said to predate the Tremere by millennia. The proliferation of usage of this path outside the Clan tends to confirm this theory; Weather Control is quite common outside the Tremere, and even outside the Cama-

rilla. Lower levels of this path allow subtle manipulations, while higher stages of mastery allow a vampire to call up raging storms. The area affected by this power is usually rather small, no more than three or four miles (five to six kilometers) in diameter, and the changes the power wreaks are not always immediate.

System: The number of successes rolled indicates how long it takes the weather magic to take effect. One success indicates an entire day may pass before the weather changes to the thaumaturge's liking, while a roll with five successes brings an almost instant effect.

The difficulty of the Willpower roll necessary to invoke this power may change depending on the current local weather conditions and the weather the character is attempting to create. The Storyteller should impose a bonus (-1 or -2 difficulty) for relatively minor shifts, such as clearing away a light drizzle or calling lightning when a severe thunderstorm is already raging. Conversely, a penalty (+1 or +2 difficulty) should be applied when the desired change is at odds with the current conditions, such as summoning the same light drizzle in the middle of the Sahara Desert or calling down lightning from a cloudless sky.

If the character tries to strike a specific target with lightning, the player must roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 6 if the target is standing in open terrain, 8 if he is under shelter, or 10 if he is inside but near a window) in addition to the base roll to use Thaumaturgy. Otherwise the bolt goes astray, with the relative degree of failure of the roll determining where exactly the lightning strikes.

Effects of the power default to the maximum area available unless the caster states that he's attempting to affect a smaller area. At Storyteller discretion, an additional Willpower roll (difficulty 6) may be required to keep the change in the weather under control.

Weather Control is not the sort of power that lends itself well to indoor application. While certain of the path's uses (changes of temperature, high winds, and possibly even fog) do make a certain amount of sense in interior settings, others (precipitation of any sort, lightning) don't. The difficulty for all rolls to use Weather Control indoors is at +2, and the Storyteller should feel free to disallow any proposed uses that don't make sense.

Individual power descriptions are not provided for this path, as the general principle is fairly consistent. Instead, the strongest weather phenomenon possible at each level is listed.

- **Fog:** Vision is slightly impaired and sounds are muffled; a +1 difficulty is imposed on all Perception rolls that involve sight and hearing, and the effective range of all ranged attacks are halved.

  Light breeze: A +1 difficulty is imposed on all Perception rolls that involve smell.

  Minor temperature change: It is possible to raise or lower the local temperature by up to 10 degrees Fahrenheit or 5 degrees Celsius.

- •• **Rain or snow:** As Fog, but Perception rolls are impaired to a much greater extent; the difficulty modifier for all such rolls rises to +2. In addition, the difficulty on all Drive rolls increases by two.

- ••• **High Winds:** The wind speed rises to around 30 miles per hour or 50 kilometers per hour, with gusts of up to twice that. Ranged attacks are much more difficult: + 1 to firearm attacks and +2 to thrown weapons and archery. In addition, during fierce gusts, Dexterity rolls (difficulty 6) may be required to keep characters from being knocked over by the winds. When gale-force winds are in effect, papers go flying, objects get picked up by the winds and hurled with abandon, and other suitably cinematic effects are likely.

  Moderate temperature change: The local temperature can be raised or lowered by up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit or 10 degrees Celsius.

- •••• **Storm:** This has the effects of both Rain and High Winds.

- ••••• **Lightning Strike:** This attack inflicts 10 dice of lethal damage. Body armor does not add to the target's dice pool to soak this attack.

Rituals

Rituals are Thaumaturgical formulas, meticulously researched and prepared, that create powerful magical effects. Rituals are less versatile than paths, as their effects are singular and straightforward, but they are better suited to specific ends.

All thaumaturges have the ability to use rituals, though each individual ritual must be learned separately. By acquainting herself with the arcane practice of blood magic, the caster gains the capacity to manipulate these focused effects.

Thaumaturgical rituals are rated from 1 to 5, each level corresponding to both the level of mastery of Thaumaturgy the would-be caster must possess and the relative power of the ritual itself. Unless stated otherwise, a ritual requires five minutes per level to cast.

Casting rituals requires a successful Intelligence + Occult roll, for which the difficulty equals 3 + the level of the ritual (maximum 9). Only one success is required for a ritual to work, though certain spells may require more successes or have variable effects based on how well the caster's roll goes. Should a roll to activate a ritual fail, the Storyteller is encouraged to create strange occurrences or side effects, or even make it appear that the ritual was successful, only to reveal its failure at a later time. A botched ritual roll may even indicate a catastrophic failure or summon an ill-tempered demon.

Rituals sometimes require special ingredients or reagents to work — these are noted in each ritual's description. Common components include herbs, animal bones, ceremonial items, feathers, eye of newt, tongue of toad, etc. Acquiring magical components for a powerful ritual may form the basis for an entire story.

At the first level of Thaumaturgy, the vampire automatically gains a single Level One ritual. To learn further rituals, the thaumaturge must find someone to teach him, or learn the ritual from a scroll, tome, or other archive. Learning a new ritual can take anywhere from a few nights (Level One ritual) to months or years (Level Five ritual). Some mystics have studied individual rituals for decades, or even centuries.

Level One Rituals

Bind the Accusing Tongue

This ancient ritual is said to have been one of the first developed by the Tremere and a primary reason for the lack of cohesive opposition to their expansion. Bind the Accusing Tongue lays a compulsion upon the subject that prevents him from speaking ill of the caster, allowing the thaumaturge to commit literally unspeakable acts without fear of reprisal.

System: The caster must have a picture or other image or effigy of the ritual's target, a lock of the target's hair, and a black silken cord. The caster winds the cord around the hair and image while intoning the ritual's vocal component. Once the ritual is complete, the target must score more successes on a Willpower roll (difficulty of the caster's Thaumaturgy rating + 3) than the caster scored in order to say anything negative about the caster. The ritual lasts until the target succeeds at this roll or the silk cord is unwound, at which point the image and the lock of hair crumble to dust.

Blood Rush

This ritual allows the vampire to create the sensation of drinking blood in himself without actually feeding. The ritual can be used for pleasure, but it is more often used to prevent frenzy when confronted with fresh blood. The vampire must carry the fang of a predatory animal on his person for this ritual to work.

System: Performance of the ritual results in the Beast being kept in check automatically. Blood Rush allows the vampire to resist hunger-based frenzy for up to one hour, at which point the Cainite feels hungry again (assuming he did before). This ritual takes only one turn to enact.

Communicate with Kindred Sire

By enacting this ritual, the caster may join minds with her sire, speaking telepathically with him over any distance. The communication may continue until the ritual expires or until either party ends the conversation. The caster must possess an item once owned by her sire for the ritual to work.

System: The caster must meditate for 30 minutes to create the connection. Conversation may be maintained for 10 minutes per success on the activation roll.

Defense of the Sacred Haven

This ritual prevents sunlight from entering an area within 20 feet (six meters) of this ritual's casting. A mystical darkness blankets the area, keeping the baleful light at bay. Sunlight reflects off windows or magically fails to pass through doors or other portals. To invoke this ritual's protection, the caster draws sigils in

her own blood on all the affected windows and doors. The ritual lasts as long as the thaumaturge stays within the 20-foot (6-meter) radius.

System: This ritual requires one hour to perform, during which the caster recites incantations and inscribes glyphs. One blood point is required for this ritual to work.

Deflection of Wooden Doom

This ritual protects the caster from being staked, whether she is resting or active. While this ritual is in effect, the first stake that would pierce the vampire's heart disintegrates in the attacker's hand. A stake merely held *near* the caster is unaffected; for this ritual to work, the stake must actively be used in an attempt to impale the vampire.

System: The caster must surround herself with a circle of wood for a full hour. Any wood will work: furniture, sawdust, raw timber, 2' x 4's, whatever. The circle must remain unbroken, however. At the end of the hour, the vampire places a wooden splinter under her tongue. If this splinter is removed, the ritual is nullified. This ritual lasts until the following dawn or dusk.

Devil's Touch

Thaumaturges use this ritual to place curses upon mortals who earn their ire. Using this ritual marks an individual invisibly, causing all those who come in contact with him to receive him poorly. The mortal is treated as the most loathsome individual conceivable, and all who deal with him do everything in their power to make him miserable. Even bums spit at an afflicted individual, and children taunt him and barrage him with vulgarities.

System: The effects of this ritual last one night, disappearing as the sun rises. The mortal (it doesn't work on vampires) must be present when the ritual is invoked, and a penny must be placed somewhere on his person (in a pocket, shoe, etc.).

Domino of Life

A vampire wanting or needing to simulate a human characteristic can do so once Domino of Life is cast. For one entire night, the vampire can eat, breathe, maintain a normal body temperature, assume a human flesh tone, or display some other single trait of humankind she desires. Note that only one trait can be replicated in this fashion. The vampire must have a vial of fresh human blood on his person to maintain this ritual.

System: Using this ritual adds one die to the caster's dice pools when attempting to pass as human. Unless onlookers are especially wary, the Domino of Life should fool them into thinking the caster is mortal — not that they should have any reason to suspect otherwise.

Engaging the Vessel of Transference

This ritual enchants a container to fill itself with blood from any living or unliving being who holds it, replacing the volume of blood taken with an equal amount previously held inside the container. When the ritual is enacted, the vessel (which must be between the size of a small cup and a one-gallon/four-liter jug) is sealed full of the caster's blood and inscribed with the Hermetic sigil which empowers the ritual. Whenever an individual touches the container with his bare skin, he feels a slight chill against his flesh but no further discomfort. The container continues to exchange the blood it contains until it is opened. The two most common uses of this ritual are to covertly create a blood bond and to obtain a sample of a subject's blood for ritual or experimental purposes.

System: This ritual takes three hours to enact (reduced by 15 minutes for each success on the casting roll) and requires one blood point (although not necessarily the caster's blood), which is sealed inside the container. The ritual only switches blood between itself and a subject if it is touched with bare skin — even thin cotton gloves keep it from activating.

Individuals with at least four dots in Occult recognize the Hermetic sigil with two successes on an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8).

Illuminate the Trail of Prey

This ritual causes the path of the subject's passing to glow in a manner that only the vampire can see. The tracks shine distinctly, but only to the eyes of the caster. Even airplane trajectories and animal tracks shine with unhealthy light. The ritual is nullified if the target wades through or immerses himself in water, or if he reaches the destination of his journey. The caster must burn a length of white satin ribbon that has been in her possession for at least 24 hours for this ritual to take effect.

System: The thaumaturge must have a mental picture of or know the name of her prey. The individual's wake glows with a level of brightness dependent on how long it has been since he passed that way — old tracks burn less brightly, while fresh tracks blaze.

Incantation of the Shepherd

This ritual enables the caster to mystically locate all members of his herd. While intoning the ritual's vocal component, he spins in a slow circle with a glass object of some sort held to each of his eyes. At the end of the ritual, he has a subliminal sense of the direction and distance to each of his regular vessels.

System: This ritual gives the character the location (relative to him) of every member of his Herd. If he does not have the Herd Background, Incantation of the Shepherd locates the closest three mortals from whom the caster has fed at least three times each. This ritual has a maximum range of 10 miles or 15 kilometers times the character's Herd Background, or five miles (eight kilometers) if he has no points in that Background.

Purity of Flesh

The caster cleanses her body of all foreign material with this ritual. To perform it, she meditates on bare earth or stone while surrounded by a circle of 13 sharp stones. Over the course of the ritual, the caster is slowly purged of all physical impurities: dirt, alcohol, drugs, poison, bullets lodged in the flesh, and tattoo ink are equally affected, slowly rising to the surface of the caster's skin and flaking away as a gritty gray film that settles within the circle. Any jewelry, makeup, or clothes that the caster is wearing are also dissolved.

System: The player spends one blood point before rolling. Purity of Flesh removes all physical items from the caster's body, but does not remove enchantments, mind control, or diseases of the blood.

Wake with Evening's Freshness

This ritual allows a vampire to awaken at any sign of danger, especially during the day. If any potentially harmful circumstances arise, the caster immediately rises, ready to face the problem. This ritual requires the ashes of burned feathers to be spread over the area in which the Kindred wishes to sleep.

System: This ritual must be performed immediately before the vampire goes to sleep for the day. Any interruption to the ceremonial casting renders the ritual ineffective. If danger arises, the caster awakens and may ignore the Humanity/Path dice pool limit rule for the first two turns of consciousness. Thereafter, the penalty takes effect, but the thaumaturge will have already risen and will be able to address problematic situations.

Widow's Spite

This ritual causes a pain, itch, or other significant (but not deadly) sensation in the subject. Similar in effect to legendary "voodoo doll" effects, this ritual is used more out of scorn or malice than actual enmity. In fact, it requires a wax or cloth doll that resembles the target, which bleeds when the power takes effect.

System: The ceremonial doll must resemble, however rudely, the victim of the ritual. It produces no mechanical effect, other than a simple physical stimulus. The caster may determine where on the subject's body the pain or itch appears.

Level Two Rituals

Blood Walk

A thaumaturge casts this ritual on a blood sample from another vampire. Blood Walk is used to trace the subject's Kindred lineage and the blood bonds in which the subject is involved.

System: This ritual requires three hours to cast, reduced by 15 minutes for each success on the roll. It requires one blood point from the subject. Each success allows the caster to "see back" one Generation (to a limit of the Fourth Generation — the Third Generation do not give up their secrets so easily), giving the caster both the true name of the ancestor and an image of his face. The caster also learns the Generation and Clan or bloodline from which the subject is descended. With three successes, the caster also learns the identities of all parties with whom the subject shares a blood bond, either as regnant or thrall.

Burning Blade

Developed during Clan Tremere's troubled inception, Burning Blade allows a caster to temporarily enchant a melee weapon to inflict unhealable wounds on supernatural creatures. While this ritual is in effect, the weapon flickers with an unholy greenish flame.

System: This ritual can only be cast on melee weapons. The caster must cut the palm of her weapon hand during the ritual — with the weapon if it is edged, otherwise with a sharp stone. This inflicts a single health level of lethal damage, which cannot be soaked but may be healed normally. The player spends three blood points, which are absorbed by the weapon. Once the ritual is cast, the weapon inflicts aggravated damage on all supernatural creatures for the next few successful attacks, one per success rolled. Multiple castings of Burning Blade cannot be "stacked" for longer durations.

Furthermore, the wielder of the weapon cannot choose to do normal damage and "save up" aggravated strikes — each successful attack uses one aggravated strike until there are none left, at which point the weapon reverts to inflicting normal damage.

Donning the Mask of Shadows

This ritual renders its subject translucent; her form appears dark and smoky, and the sounds of her footsteps are muffled. While it does not create true invisibility, the Mask of Shadows makes the subject much less likely to be detected by sight or hearing.

System: This ritual may be simultaneously cast on a number of subjects equal to the caster's Occult rating; each individual past the first adds five minutes to the base casting time. Individuals under the Mask of Shadows can only be detected if the observer possesses a power (such as Auspex) sufficient to penetrate Obfuscate 3. The Mask of Shadows lasts a number of hours equal to the number of successes rolled when it is cast or until the caster voluntarily lowers it.

Eyes of the Night Hawk

This ritual allows the vampire to see through the eyes of a bird, and to hear through its ears. The bird chosen must be a predatory bird, and the vampire must touch it when initiating this ritual. At the end of this ritual, the caster must put out the bird's eyes, or suffer blindness herself.

System: The vampire is able to mentally control where the bird travels for the duration of the ritual. The bird will not necessarily perform any other action than flight — the caster cannot command it to fight, pick up and return an object, or scratch a target. The bird returns to the vampire after finishing its flight. If the vampire does not put out the bird's eyes, she suffers a three-night period of blindness. This ritual ceases effect at sunrise.

Machine Blitz

Machines go haywire when this ritual is cast. It takes effect instantly and lasts as long as the vampire concentrates on it. This ritual may be used to kill car engines, erase flash drives, drain the battery of a cellphone, stop life-support machines, et cetera. Essentially, Machine Blitz stops any machine more complex than a rope-and-pulley. The thaumaturge must have a scrap of rusted metal in her possession for this ritual to work, though some vampires use a variant that requires a knot steeped in human saliva to be untied.



System: This ritual only stops machines; it does not grant any control over them. The effects of this ritual are invisible and appear to be coincidental.

Principal Focus of Vitae Infusion

This ritual imbues a quantity of blood within an object small enough for the vampire to carry in both hands. (The object may not be any larger than this, though it may be as small as a dime.) After the ritual is conducted, the object takes on a reddish hue and becomes slick to the touch. At a mental command, the caster may release the object from its enchantment, causing it to break down into a pool of blood. This blood may serve whatever purpose the vampire desires; many thaumaturges wear enchanted baubles to ensure they have emergency supplies of vitae.

System: An object may store only one blood point of vitae. If a Kindred wishes to make an infused focus for an ally, she may do so, but the blood contained within must be her own. (If the ally then drinks the blood, he is one step closer to the blood bond). The ally must be present at the creation of the focus.

Recure of the Homeland

The vampire calls on the power of the earth to heal grave wounds she may have received. The thaumaturge must use at least a handful of dirt from the city or town of her mortal birth and recite a litany of her mortal family tree as she casts this ritual.

System: The Cainite must mix the earth with two points of her own blood to make a healing paste. One handful will heal one aggravated wound, and only one handful can be used per night. This ritual can only be used on the vampire who knows it.

Ward Versus Ghouls

Wary Tremere created this ritual to protect themselves from the minions of vengeful rivals. By invoking this ritual, the caster creates a glyph that causes great pain to any ghouls who come in contact with it. The Kindred pours a point's worth of blood over the object he wishes to ward (a piece of parchment, a coin, a doorknob, etc.), and recites the incantation, which takes 10 minutes. In 10 hours, the magical ward is complete, and will inflict excruciating pain on any ghoul unfortunate enough to touch the warded object.

System: Ghouls who touch warded objects suffer three dice of lethal damage. This damage occurs again if the ghoul touches the object further; indeed, a ghoul who consciously wishes to touch a warded object must spend a point of Willpower to do so.

This ritual wards only *one* object — if inscribed on the side of a car, the ward affects only that door or fender, not the whole car. Wards may be placed on weapons, even bullets, though this usually works best on small-caliber weapons. Bullets often warp upon firing, however, and for a ward to remain intact on a fired round, the player needs five successes on the Firearms roll.

Warding Circle versus Ghouls

This ritual is enacted in a manner similar to that of Ward versus Ghouls, but creates a circle centered on the caster into which a ghoul cannot pass without being burned. The circle can be made as large and as permanent as the caster desires, as long as she is willing to pay the necessary price. Many Tremere chantries and havens are protected by this and other Warding Circle rituals.

System: The ritual requires three blood points of mortal blood. The caster determines the size of the warding circle when it is cast; the default radius is 10 feet/3 meters, and every 10-foot/3-meter increase raises the difficulty by one, to a maximum of 9 (one additional success is required for every increase past the number necessary to raise the difficulty to 9). The player spends one blood point for every 10 feet/3 meters of radius and rolls. The ritual takes the normal casting time if it is to be short-term (lasting for the rest of the night) or one night if it is to be long-term (lasting a year and a day).

Once the warding circle is established, any ghoul who attempts to cross its boundary feels a tingle on his

Other Warding Circle Rituals

The Tremere have access to several other Warding Circle rituals: Warding Circle versus Lupines (Level Three), Warding Circle versus Kindred (Level Four), and Warding Circles versus Spirits, Ghosts, and Demons (Level Five). Each Warding Circle ritual must be learned separately. The material components required for each warding circle are the same as those needed for the corresponding ward, but in larger amounts. The effects against the targeted beings are the same as for Warding Circle versus Ghouls.



skin and a slight breeze on his face — a successful Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8) identifies this as a warding circle. If the ghoul attempts to press on, he must roll more successes on a Willpower roll (difficulty of the caster's Thaumaturgy rating + 3) than the caster rolled when establishing the ward. Failure indicates that the ward blocks his passage and inflicts three dice of bashing damage, and his next roll to attempt to enter the circle is at +1 difficulty. If the ghoul leaves the circle and attempts to enter it again, he must repeat the roll. Attempts to leave the circle are not blocked.

Level Three Rituals

Clinging of the Insect

This ritual allows the caster to cling to walls or ceilings, as would a spider. She may even crawl along these surfaces (as long as they can support her). Use of this power seriously discomfits mortal onlookers. The character must place a live spider under her tongue for the duration of the ritual (though the spider may die while in the thaumaturge's mouth without canceling the power).

System: The character may move at half her normal rate while climbing walls or ceilings. This power lasts for one scene, or until the vampire spits out the spider.

Flesh of Fiery Touch

This defensive ritual inflicts painful burns on anyone who deliberately touches the subject's skin. It requires the subject to swallow a small glowing ember, which does put off some vampires with low pain thresholds. Some vain thaumaturges use this ritual purely for its subsidiary effect of darkening the subject's skin to a healthy sun-bronzed hue.

System: Flesh of Fiery Touch takes two hours to cast (reduced by 10 minutes per success). It requires a small piece of wood, coal, or other common fuel source, which ignites and is swallowed at the end of the ritual. The subject who swallows the red-hot ember receives a single aggravated health level of damage (difficulty 6 to soak with Fortitude). Until the next sunset, anyone who touches the subject's flesh receives a burn that inflicts a single aggravated health level of damage (again, difficulty 6 to soak with Fortitude). The victim must voluntarily touch the subject; this damage is not inflicted if the victim is touched or accidentally comes in contact with the subject.

This ritual darkens the subject's skin to that which would be obtained by long-term exposure to the sun in a mortal. The tone is slightly unnatural and metallic, and is clearly artificial to any observer who succeeds in a Perception + Medicine roll (difficulty 8).

Incorporeal Passage

Use of this ritual allows the thaumaturge to make herself insubstantial. The caster becomes completely immaterial and thus is able to walk through walls, pass through closed doors, escape manacles, etc. The caster also becomes invulnerable to physical attacks for the duration of the ritual. The caster must follow a straight path through any physical objects, and may not draw back. Thus, a Kindred may walk through a solid wall, but may not walk down through the earth (as it would be impossible to reach the other side before the ritual lapsed). This ritual requires that the caster carry a shard from a shattered mirror to hold her image.

System: This ritual lasts a number of hours equal to the number of successes scored on a Wits + Survival roll (difficulty 6). The caster may prematurely end the ritual (and, thus, her incorporeality) by turning the mirror shard away so that it no longer reflects her image.

Mirror of Second Sight

This object is an oval mirror no less than four inches (10 cm) wide and no more than 18 inches (45 cm) in length. It looks like a normal mirror, but once created, the vampire can use it to see the supernatural: It reflects the true form of Lupines and faeries, and enables the owner to see ghosts as they move though the Underworld. The caster creates the mirror by bathing an ordinary mirror in a quantity of her own blood while reciting a ritual incantation.

System: The ritual requires one point of the vampire's blood. Thereafter, the mirror reflects images of other supernatural creatures' true forms — werewolves appear in their hulking man-wolf shapes, magi glow in a scintillating nimbus, ghosts become visible (in the mirror), and so on. Sometimes, the mirror also reveals those possessed of True Faith in clouds of golden light.

Pavis of Foul Presence

The Tremere joke privately that this is their "ritual for the Ventrue." Kindred who invoke the Presence Discipline on the subject of this ritual find the effects of their Discipline reversed, as if they had used the power on themselves. For example, a vampire using Presence to instill fear in a Kindred under the influence of this ritual feels the fear herself; a vampire summoning the caster is instead drawn to the thaumaturge's location. This ritual is an unbroken secret among the Tremere, and the Warlocks maintain that its use is unknown outside their Clan. The magical component for this ritual is a length of blue silken cord, which must be worn around the caster's neck.

System: This ritual lasts against a number of effects equal to the successes rolled, or until the sunrise after it is enacted. Note that the Presence Discipline power must actually *succeed* before being reversed by the ritual. As such, only powers that specifically target the caster (and thus, require a roll to succeed) can be reversed — "passive" powers such as Majesty are not affected.

Sanguine Assistant

Thaumaturges often need laboratory assistants whom they can trust implicitly. This ritual allows the intrepid vampire to conjure a temporary servant. To cast the ritual, the thaumaturge slices open his arm and bleeds into a specially prepared earthen bowl. The ritual sucks in and animates whatever random unimportant items the wizard happens to have lying around his workshop — glass beakers, dissection tools, pencils, crumpled papers, semiprecious stones — and binds the materials together into a small humanoid form animated by the power of the ritual and the blood. Oddly enough, this ritual almost never takes in any tool that the caster finds himself needing during the assistant's lifespan, nor does it take the physical components of any other ritual nor any living thing. The servant has no personality to speak of at first, but gradually adopts the mannerisms and thought processes that the thaumaturge desires in an ideal servant. Sanguine Assistants are temporary creations, but some vampires become fond of their tiny accomplices and create the same one whenever the need arises.

System: The player spends five blood points and rolls. The servant created by the ritual stands a foot (30 cm) high and appears as a roughly humanoid shape composed of whatever the ritual sucked in for its own use. It lasts for one night per success rolled. At the end of the last night, the assistant crawls into the bowl used for its creation and falls apart. The assistant can be reanimated through another application of this ritual; if the caster so desires, it re-forms from the same materials with the same memories and personality.

A Sanguine Assistant has Strength and Stamina of 1, and Dexterity and Mental Attributes equal to those

of the caster. It begins with no Social Attributes to speak of, but gains one dot per night in Charisma and Manipulation until its ratings are equal to those of the caster. It has all of the caster's Abilities at one dot lower than his own. A Sanguine Assistant is a naturally timid creature and flees if attacked, though it will try to defend its master's life at the cost of its own. It has no Disciplines of its own, but has a full understanding of all of its master's Thaumaturgical knowledge and can instruct others if so commanded. A Sanguine Assistant is impervious to any mind-controlling Disciplines or magic, so completely is it bound to its creator's will.

Shaft of Belated Quiescence

This ritual turns an ordinary stake of rowan wood into a particularly vicious weapon. When the stake penetrates a vampire's body, the tip breaks off and begins working its way through the victim's flesh to his heart. The trip may take several minutes or several nights, depending on where the stake struck. The stake eludes attempts to dig it out, burrowing farther into the victim's body to escape surgery. The only Kindred who are immune to this internal attack are those who have had their hearts removed by Serpentis.

System: The ritual takes five hours to enact, minus 30 minutes per success. The stake must be carved of rowan wood, coated with three blood points of the caster's blood, and blackened in an oak-wood fire. When the ritual is complete, the stake is enchanted to act as described above.

An attack with a Shaft of Belated Quiescence is performed as with a normal stake: a Dexterity + Melee roll (difficulty 6, modified as per the normal combat rules; the attack does not need to specifically target the heart) with a lethal damage rating of Strength + 1. If at least one health level of damage is inflicted after the target rolls to soak, the tip of the stake breaks off and begins burrowing. If not, the stake may be used to make subsequent attacks until it strikes deep enough to activate.

Once the tip of the stake is in the victim's body, the Storyteller begins an extended roll of the caster's Thaumaturgy rating (difficulty 9), rolling once per hour of game time. Successes on this roll are added to the successes scored in the initial attack. This represents the tip's progress toward the victim's heart. A botch indicates that the tip has struck a bone and all accumulated successes are lost (including those from the initial attack roll). Removing the part of the body where the tip impacted (such as a Tzimisce turning into blood or a vampire cutting off their arm) may stop the tip's progress, depending on the number of successes acquired and the Storyteller's discretion. When the shaft accumulates a total of 15 successes, it reaches the victim's heart. This paralyzes Kindred and is instantly fatal to mortals and ghouls.

Attempts to surgically remove the tip of the shaft can be made with an extended Dexterity + Medicine roll made once per hour (difficulty 7 for Kindred and 8 for mortals). The surgeon must accumulate a number of successes equal to those currently held by the shaft in order to remove the tip. Once surgery begins, however, the shaft begins actively evading the surgeon's probes, and its rolls are made once every 30 minutes for the duration of the surgery attempt. Each individual surgery roll that scores less than three successes inflicts an additional unsoakable level of lethal damage on the patient.

Shaft of Belated Quiescence may be performed on other wooden impaling weapons, such as spears, arrows, practice swords, and pool cues, provided that they are made of rowan wood. It may not, however, create a Bullet of Belated Quiescence.

Ward versus Lupines

This wards an object in a manner identical to that of the Level Two ritual Ward Versus Ghouls, except that it affects werewolves.

System: Ward versus Lupines behaves exactly as does Ward versus Ghouls, but it affects werewolves rather than ghouls. The ritual requires a handful of silver dust rather than a blood point.

Level Four Rituals

Bone of Lies

This ritual enchants a mortal bone so that anyone who holds it must tell the truth. The bone in question is often a skull, though any part of the skeleton will do — some casters use strings of teeth, necklaces of finger joints, or wands fashioned from ribs or arms. The bone grows blacker as it compels its holder to tell the truth, until it has turned completely ebony and has no magic left.

This ritual binds the spirit of the individual to whom the bone belonged in life; it is this spirit who wrests the truth from the potential liar. The spirit absorbs the lies intended to be told by the bone's holder, and as it compels more truth, it becomes more and more corrupt. If summoned forth, this spirit reflects the sins

it has siphoned from the defeated liar (in addition to anger over its unwilling servitude). For this reason, anonymous bones are often used in the ritual, and the bone is commonly buried after it has been used to its full extent. A specific bone may never be used twice for this ritual, though different bones from the same corpse can.

System: The bone imbued with this magical power must be at least 200 years old and must absorb 10 blood points on the night that the ritual is cast. Each lie the holder wishes to tell consumes one of these blood points, and the holder *must* speak the truth immediately thereafter. When all 10 blood points have been consumed, the bone's magic ceases to work.

Firewalker

This ritual imbues the vampire with an unnatural resistance to fire. Only a foolish vampire would actually attempt to walk on or through fire, but this ritual does grant an advanced tolerance to flame. Some Sabbat use this ritual to show off, while other thaumaturges use it only for martial concerns. To enact the ritual, the caster must cut off the end of one of his fingers and burn it in a Thaumaturgical circle.

System: Cutting off one's finger does not do any health levels of damage, but it hurts like hell and requires a Willpower roll to perform. This ritual may be cast on other vampires (at the expense of the caster's fingertips...). If the subject has no Fortitude, he may soak fire with his Stamina for the duration of this ritual. If the vampire has Fortitude, he may soak fire with his Stamina + Fortitude for the duration of the ritual. This ritual lasts one hour.

Heart of Stone

A vampire under the effect of this ritual experiences the transformation suggested by the ritual's name: his heart is completely transmuted to solid rock, rendering him virtually impervious to staking. The subsidiary effects of the transformation, however, seem to follow the Hermetic laws of sympathetic magic: The vampire's emotional capacity becomes almost nonexistent, and his ability to relate to others suffers as well.

System: This ritual requires nine hours (reduced by one hour for every success). It can only be cast on oneself. The caster lies naked on a flat stone surface and places a bare candle over his heart. The candle burns down to nothing over the course of the ritual, causing one aggravated health level of damage (difficulty 5 to soak with Fortitude).

At the end of the ritual, the caster's heart hardens to stone. The caster gains a number of additional dice equal to twice his Thaumaturgy rating to soak any attack that aims for his heart and is completely impervious to the effects of a Shaft of Belated Quiescence (see p. 237). Additionally, the difficulty to use all Presence or other emotionally manipulative powers on him is increased by three due to his emotional isolation. The drawbacks are as follows: the caster's Conscience/Conviction and Empathy scores drop to 1 (or to 0 if they already were at 1) and all dice pools for Social rolls except those involving Intimidation are halved (including those required to use Disciplines). All Merits that the character has pertaining to positive social interaction are neutralized. Heart of Stone lasts as long as the caster wishes it to.

Splinter Servant

Another ritual designed to enchant a stake, Splinter Servant is a progressive development of Shaft of Belated Quiescence. (The two rituals, however, are mutually exclusive.) A Splinter Servant consists of a stake carved from a tree which has nourished itself on the dead. The stake must be bound in wax-sealed nightshade twine. When the binding is torn off, the Splinter Servant leaps to life, animating itself and attacking whomever the wielder commands — or the wielder, if she is too slow in assigning a target. The servant splits itself into a roughly humanoid form and begins single-mindedly trying to impale the target's heart. Its exertions tear it apart within a few minutes, but if it pierces its victim's heart before it destroys itself, it is remarkably difficult to remove, as pieces tend to remain behind if the main portion is yanked out.

System: The ritual requires 12 hours to cast, minus one per success, and the servant must be created as described above. When the binding is torn off, the character who holds it must point the servant at its target and verbally command it to attack during the same turn. If this command is not given, the servant attacks the closest living or unliving being, usually the unfortunate individual who currently carries it.

A Splinter Servant always aims for the heart. It has an attack dice pool of the caster's Wits + Occult, a damage dice pool of the caster's Thaumaturgy rating, and a maximum movement rate of 30 yards or meters per turn. Note that these values are those of the caster who created the servant, not the individual who activates it. A Splinter Servant cannot fly, but can leap its full movement rating every turn. Every action it takes is to attack or move toward its target; it cannot

dodge or split its dice pool to perform multiple attacks. The servant makes normal stake attacks that aim for the heart (difficulty 9), and its success is judged as per the rules for a normal staking (see p. 280). A Splinter Servant has three health levels, and attacks directed against it are made at +3 difficulty due to its small size and erratic movement patterns.

A Splinter Servant has an effective life of five combat turns per success rolled in its creation. If it has not impaled its victim by the last turn of its life, the servant collapses into a pile of ordinary, inanimate splinters. Three successes on a Dexterity roll (difficulty 8) are required to remove a Splinter Servant from a victim's heart without leaving behind shards of the stake.

Ward versus Kindred

This warding ritual functions exactly as do Ward versus Ghouls and Ward versus Lupines, but it inflicts injury upon Cainites.

System: Ward versus Kindred behaves exactly as does Ward versus Ghouls, but it affects vampires rather than ghouls. The ritual requires a blood point of the caster's own blood and does not affect the caster.

Level Five Rituals

Blood Contract

This ritual creates an unbreakable agreement between the two parties who sign it. The contract must be written in the caster's blood and signed in the blood of whoever applies their name to the document. This ritual takes three nights to enact fully, after which both parties are compelled to fulfill the terms of the contract.

System: This ritual is best handled by the Storyteller, who may bring those who sign the blood contract into compliance by whatever means necessary (it is not unknown for demons to materialize and enforce adherence to certain blood contracts). The only way to terminate the ritual is to complete the terms of the contract or to burn the document itself — attempts to add a clause forbidding burning the contract have resulted in the contract spontaneously combusting upon completion of the ritual. One blood point is consumed in the creation of the document, and an additional blood point is consumed by those who sign it.

Enchant Talisman

This ritual is the first taught to most Tremere once they have attained mastery of their first path. Create Talisman allows the caster to enchant a personal magical item (the fabled wizard's staff) to act as an amplifier for her will and thaumaturgical might. Many talismans are laden with additional rituals (such as every ward known to the caster). The physical appearance of a talisman varies, but it must be a rigid object close to a yard or a meter long. Swords and walking sticks are the most common talismans, but some innovative or eccentric thaumaturges have enchanted violins, shotguns, pool cues, and classroom pointers.

System: This ritual requires six hours per night for one complete cycle of the moon, beginning and ending on the new moon. Over this time, the vampire carefully prepares her talisman, carving it with Hermetic runes that signify her true name and the sum total of her thaumaturgical knowledge. The player spends one blood point per night and makes an extended roll of Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 8), one roll per week. If a night's work is missed or if the four rolls do not accumulate at least 20 net successes, the talisman is ruined and the process must be begun again.

A completed talisman gives the caster several advantages. When the character is holding the talisman, the difficulty of all magic that targets her is increased by one. The player receives two extra dice when rolling for uses of the character's primary path and one extra die when rolling for the character's ritual castings. If the talisman is used as a weapon, it gives the player an additional die to roll to hit. If the thaumaturge is separated from her talisman, a successful Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 7) gives her its location.

If a talisman is in the possession of another individual, it gives that individual three additional dice to roll when using any form of magic against the talisman's owner. At the Storyteller's discretion, rituals that target the caster and use her talisman as a physical component may have greatly increased effects.

A thaumaturge may only have one talisman at a time. Ownership of a talisman may not be transferred — each individual must create her own.

Escape to a True Friend

Escape to a True Friend allows the caster to travel to the person whose friendship and trust she most values. The ritual has a physical component of a yard-wide/meter-wide circle charred into the bare ground or floor. The caster may step into the circle at any time and speak the true name of her friend. She is instantly transported to that individual, wherever he may be at the moment. She does not appear directly in front of

him, but materializes in a location within a few minutes' walk that is out of sight of any observer. The circle may be reused indefinitely, as long as it is unmarred.

System: This ritual takes six hours a night for six nights to cast, reduced by one night for every two successes. Each night requires the sacrifice of three of the caster's own blood points, which are poured into the circle. Once the circle is complete, the transport may be attempted at any time. The caster may take one other individual with her when she travels, or a maximum amount of "cargo" equal to her own weight.

Paper Flesh

This dreadful ritual enfeebles the subject, making her skin brittle and weak. Humors rise to the surface and flesh tightens around bones and scales away at the slightest touch. Used against physically tough opponents, this ritual strips away the inherent resilience of the vampiric body, leaving it a fragile, dry husk. The thaumaturge must inscribe his subject's true name (which is much harder to discern for elders than it is for young vampires) on a piece of paper, which he uses to cut himself and then burns to cinders.

System: This ritual causes the subject's Stamina and Fortitude (if any) to drop to 1 each. For every Generation below Eighth, the subject retains one extra point of Stamina or Fortitude (keeping Fortitude first, though she may not exceed her original scores). For example, a vampire of the Fourth Generation with Fortitude targeted by Paper Flesh would drop to a Stamina + Fortitude score of 6 (assuming the score was 6 or more to begin with). This ritual lasts one night.

Ward versus Spirits

This warding ritual functions exactly as Ward versus Ghouls, but it inflicts injury upon spirits. Several other versions of this ward exist, each geared toward a particular type of non-physical being.

System: Ward versus Spirits behaves exactly as does Ward versus Ghouls, but it affects spirits (including those summoned or given physical form by Thaumaturgy Paths such as Elemental Mastery). The material component for Ward versus Spirits is a handful of pure sea salt.

The other versions of this ward, also Level Five rituals, are Ward versus Ghosts and Ward versus Demons. Each of these three Level Five wards affects its respective target on both the physical and spiritual planes. Ward versus Ghosts requires a handful of powdered marble from a tombstone, while Ward versus Demons requires a vial of holy water.



Vicissitude

Vicissitude is the signature power of the Tzimisce, and is rarely shared outside the Clan (though it is known to some other Cainites of the Sabbat). Similar to Protean in some ways, Vicissitude allows vampires to shape and sculpt flesh and bone. When a Kindred uses Vicissitude to alter mortals, ghouls, and vampires of higher Generation, the effects of the power are permanent; vampires of equal or lower Generation can choose to heal the effects of Vicissitude as though they were aggravated wounds. A wielder of Vicissitude can always reshape her own flesh.

The wielder must establish skin-to-skin contact and must often manually sculpt the desired result for these powers to take effect. This also applies to the use of the power on oneself. Tzimisce skilled in Vicissitude are often inhumanly beautiful; those less skilled are simply inhuman.

There are rumors that Vicissitude is a disease rather than a "normal" Discipline, but only the Fiends know for sure, and they aren't talking.

Note: Nosferatu *always* "heal" Vicissitude alterations, at least the ones that make them better-looking. The ancient curse of the Clan may not be circumvented through Vicissitude. The same applies to physical deformities from the Gangrel Clan weakness.

Body Crafts

Vampires who wish to use Vicissitude well often specialize their knowledge of Medicine in an art known as Body Crafts. This specialization enables its possessor to make all manner of alterations to living and dead flesh and bone. It also gives insight into more mundane techniques; many Tzimisce are skilled at flaying, bone-carving, embalming, taxidermy, tattooing, and piercing.

• Malleable Visage

A vampire with this power may alter her own bodily parameters: height, build, voice, facial features, and skin tone, among other things. Such changes are cosmetic and minor in scope — no more than a foot (30 cm) of height gained or lost, for example. She must physically mold the alteration, literally shaping her flesh into the desired result.

System: The player must spend a blood point for each body part to be changed, then roll Intelligence + Medicine (difficulty 6). To duplicate another person or voice requires a Perception + Medicine roll (difficulty 8), and five successes are required for a flawless copy; fewer successes leave minute (or not-so-minute) flaws. Increasing one's Appearance Trait has a difficulty of 9, and the vampire must spend an additional blood point for each dot of Appearance increased beyond their natural total. A botch permanently reduces the Attribute by one.

•• Fleshcraft

This power is similar to Malleable Visage, above, but allows the vampire to perform drastic, grotesque alterations on other creatures. Tzimisce often use this power to transform their servitors into monstrous guards, the better to frighten foes. Only flesh (skin, muscle, fat, and cartilage, but not bone) may be transformed.

System: After spending a blood point, the vampire must grapple the intended victim. The player of the Flescrafting vampire makes a successful Dexterity + Medicine roll (difficulty variable: 5 for a crude yank-and-tuck, up to 9 for precise transformations). A vampire who wishes to increase another's Appearance Trait does so as described under Malleable Visage; reducing the Attribute is considerably easier (difficulty 5), though truly inspired disfigurement may dictate a higher difficulty. In either case, each success increases or reduces the Attribute by one.

A vampire may use this power to move clumps of skin, fat, and muscle tissue, thus providing additional padding where needed. For each success scored on a Dexterity + Medicine roll (difficulty 8), the vampire may increase the subject's soak dice pool by one, at the expense of either a point of Strength or a health level (vampire's choice).

••• Bonecraft

This terrible power allows a vampire to manipulate bone in the same manner that flesh is shaped. In conjunction with Fleshcraft, above, this power enables a Vicissitude practitioner to deform a victim (or herself) beyond recognition. This power should be used in conjunction with the flesh-shaping arts, unless the vampire wants to inflict injury on the victim (see below).

System: The vampire's player must spend a blood point and make a Strength + Medicine roll (difficulties as above). Bonecraft may be used without the flesh-shaping arts, as an offensive weapon. Each success scored on the Strength + Medicine roll (difficulty 7) inflicts one health level of lethal damage on the victim, as his bones rip, puncture, and slice their way out of his skin.

The vampire may utilize this power (on herself or others) to form spikes or talons of bone, either on the knuckles as an offensive weapon or all over the body as defensive "quills." If bone spikes are used, the vampire or victim takes one health level of lethal damage (the vampire's comes from having the very sharp bone pierce through his skin — this weaponry doesn't come cheaply). In the case of quills, the subject takes a number of health levels equal to five minus the number of successes (a botch kills the subject or sends the vampire into torpor). These health levels may be healed normally. Knuckle spikes inflict Strength +1 lethal damage. Defensive quills inflict a hand-to-hand attacker's Strength in lethal damage unless the attacker scores three or more successes on the attack roll (in which case the attacker takes no damage); the defender still takes damage normally. Quills also enable the vampire or altered subject to add two to all damage inflicted via holds, clinches, or tackles.

A vampire who scores five or more successes on the Strength + Medicine roll may cause a rival vampire's rib cage to curve inward and pierce the heart. While this does not send a vampire into torpor, it does cause the affected vampire to lose half his blood points, as the seat of his vitae ruptures in a shower of gore.

•••• Horrid Form

Kindred use this power to become hideous and deadly monsters. The vampire's stature increases to a full eight feet (two and a half meters), the skin becomes a sickly greenish-gray or grayish-black chitin, the arms become apelike and ropy with ragged black nails, and the face warps into something out of a nightmare. A row of spines sprouts from the vertebrae, and the external carapace exudes a foul-smelling grease.

System: The Horrid Form costs two blood points to awaken. All Physical Attributes increase by three, but all Social Attributes drop to zero, except when dealing with others also in Horrid Form. However, a vampire in Horrid Form who is trying to intimidate someone may substitute Strength for a Social Attribute. Damage inflicted in brawling combat increases by one due to the jagged ridges and bony knobs creasing the creature's hands.

••••• Bloodform

A vampire with this power can physically transform all or part of her body into sentient vitae. This blood is in all respects identical to the vampire's normal vitae; she can use it to nourish herself or others, create ghouls, or establish blood bonds. If all this blood is imbibed or otherwise destroyed, the vampire meets Final Death.

System: The vampire may transform all or part of herself as she deems fit. Each leg can turn into two blood points worth of vitae, as can the torso; each arm, the head, and the abdomen convert to one blood point each. The blood can be reconverted to the body part, provided it is in contact with the vampire. If the blood has been utilized or destroyed, the vampire must spend a number of blood points equal to what was originally created to regrow the missing body part.

A vampire entirely in this form may not be staked, cut, bludgeoned, or pierced, but can be burned or exposed to the sun. The vampire may ooze along, drip up walls, and flow through the narrowest cracks, as though she were in Tenebrous Form (p. 190).

Mental Disciplines may be used, provided no eye contact or vocal utterance is necessary, although the vampire can perceive her surroundings just fine (but the perceptions are always centered on the largest pool of blood). If a vampire in this form "washes" over a mortal or animal, that mortal must make a Courage roll (difficulty 8) or fly into a panic.

••••• • Chiropteran Marauder

Similar to Horrid Form, the Chiropteran Marauder is a terrifying, bipedal bat, bearing a wickedly fanged maw and veined, leathery wings. This power confers all of the benefits of the Horrid Form, in addition to a few others. The mere sight of the marauder is enough to make mortals or weak-willed vampires flee in horror.

System: The vampire gains all the effects of the Horrid Form. Further, the Marauder's fluted wings allow flight at 25 mph (40 kph), during which the vampire may carry, but not manipulate, objects no larger than it can hold in its hands. If the player chooses to, she may make a Strength + Medicine roll (difficulty 6) to extend bony claws at the ends of the vampire's wings. These claws inflict Strength +2 aggravated damage. Also, the vampire subtracts two from all hearing-based Perception rolls (though he adds one to vision- based

Wits and Perception rolls). Assuming the mantle of the Chiropteran Marauder costs three blood points.

••••• • Blood of Acid

At this level of mastery, the vampire has converted his blood to a viscous acid. Any blood he consumes likewise becomes acid, which is corrosive enough to burn human (and vampiric flesh) as well as wood. This effect is particularly potent when the vampire assumes the Bloodform. One of the side effects of this power is the complete inability to create new vampires and ghouls, or give blood to another vampire — the acid would corrode them as they drank it. The obvious benefit, however, is that would-be diablerists are likewise unable to devour the Cainite's blood.

System: Each acidified blood point that comes in contact with something other than the vampire himself does five dice worth of aggravated damage. If the vampire is injured in combat, his blood may spatter on an opponent — foes must make Dexterity + Athletics rolls to avoid the blood, which must be accomplished by splitting their dice pools. (Unless an opponent knows the vampire has this power, she's unlikely to split her dice pool on her first attack, which causes many Tzimisce to cackle with glee.)

••••• •• Cocoon

The Cainite can form an opaque cocoon from blood and other fluids excreted from her body. The cocoon hardens after a few moments, turning into a tough, white shell. This cocoon provides considerable protection to the vampire, even shielding her from sunlight and, to a limited degree, fire.

System: A vampire may only cocoon herself, and the process takes 10 minutes. Additionally, creating a cocoon costs three blood points. The cocoon offers complete protection from sunlight, and provides a number of dice of soak equal to twice the vampire's unmodified Stamina against all damage, aggravated or otherwise. It lasts as long as the Cainite wishes, and she may dissolve it at her whim, emerging from a pulpy, bloody paste. A vampire contained within a cocoon may still use mental Disciplines that do not require eye contact or other conditions to be met.

••••• ••• Breath of the Dragon

The vampire becomes like one of the terrible draculs of the Old World, able to exhale a deadly gout of flame. This flame does not hurt the vampire himself, though he may become trapped in flames if it engulfs flammable objects.

System: The flaming cloud affects a six-foot area, doing two dice of aggravated damage to anyone in the flames' circumference. This fire may cause combustible items to ignite, and it may ignite victims who suffer fire damage as per the fire rules on page 297.

••••• •••• Earth's Vast Haven

This power, developed in the nights when the Tzimisce were the terrible masters of Eastern Europe, allows the vampire to sink into and disperse himself through the ground. Unlike the Protean power of Earth Meld, however, the vampire actually dissolves his body into the ground; nothing short of a wide-area explosion can affect him, and he may not be dug up bodily. In addition, from sunset to sunrise, the vampire may see and hear everything happening in his environment through his mystical connection to the land. The mere fact that this power exists terrifies many Tzimisce, who are secretly unsure of whether or not the diablerie of their Antediluvian was successful.

System: This power costs six blood points to activate, and it lasts as long as the vampire wishes to remain contained within the soil. As per the Cocoon, the vampire may use mental Disciplines that do not require physical solvency or eye contact. He may communicate mentally with anyone who wanders into the area under which he rests.





Chapter Five: Rules

"For surely it is better to rule in the darkness than to humble myself falsely in the light."

- The Erciyes Fragments

It may seem odd for a "storytelling game" to have a specific set of rules that govern how the story plays out, but remember that the "game" portion of the hobby shares equal billing with the "storytelling" aspect.

Game rules exist to impart a sense of fairness among the story participants. When two players attempt to have an interaction with the world, they know they're doing it with the same opportunity, if not the same chances of success. They may have different dice pools, for example, or different modifiers affecting what they're trying to accomplish, but ultimately, they're interacting with the world on consistent terms they know will be consistent.

The dice, then, are the agents of fate, not an arbitrary rules system that changes depending on who's adjudicating the action. Dramatic fear and uncertainty come from using the rules wisely in conjunction with the situations created by the Storyteller.

Luckily, **Vampire** uses only a few basic rules to get things done, but these rules can have countless permutations in the context of the game. This chapter covers the very basics, such as rolling dice; more specific, detail-oriented rules can be found throughout the book. Don't worry about mastering all the permutations at once — learn these basic rules first, and then everything else will come naturally.

The Golden Rule

After twenty years, this is still the most important rule of all, and the only real rule worth following: *The rules are what you make of them.* You should fashion this game into whatever you need it to be. Whether you're running a nearly diceless chronicle of in-character socialization or a long-running tactical campaign with each player controlling a small coterie of vampires, if the rules in this book interfere with your enjoyment of the game, *change them.* The world is far too big — it can't be reflected accurately in any set of inflexible rules. This book is nothing more than a collection of guidelines, suggested but not mandatory ways of capturing the World of Darkness in the format of a game. You're the arbiter of what works best in your game — mutually determined in play with the Storyteller and other players — and you're free to use, alter, abuse, or ignore these rules at your leisure. Besides, there are scores of fan communities online that delight in tinkering with the rules to get just the experience they want, and the exact rule you're looking for may be just a Google search away.

Rolling Dice

Vampire uses 10-sided dice. You can find these in most game stores or through online retailers, or use a number of software options (including quite a few apps for smartphones). The Storyteller may need a number of dice; players need plenty as well, but can share among themselves. Ten dice are all that a beginning character will need at a given time.

You roll dice whenever the outcome of an action is in doubt or the Storyteller thinks there's a chance your character might fail. Your character's strengths and weaknesses affect the number of dice you roll, and thus directly affect your chances of success. While the dice are present to give a sense of chance or destiny to a situation that calls for a roll, they do so objectively for everyone, so that every player has a fair shake to succeed at her character's actions, or to fail interestingly.

That last bit is important. If the potential for failure isn't interesting, the Storyteller should question whether a roll is even necessary. Calling for a roll slows down the pace of the game session. Moderating the pace of the story can be one of the Storyteller's best techniques, but Storytellers shouldn't toss a dice roll into the proceedings just to alter the tempo. If a roll of the dice doesn't create multiple possible interesting outcomes, there's not much benefit in calling for one. At the Storyteller's discretion, a situation might not need a roll to proceed with a reasonable outcome.

Consider the use of dice rolls in the following examples:

The characters find themselves in the back room of a nightclub where an unmarked envelope contains a clue critical to the plot. Initially, this seems like a situation that would require, say, a Wits + Investigation roll, but with further consideration, the characters should probably ultimately find the envelope without the Storyteller necessitating a dice roll. If the characters don't find the critical clue, after all, the story can't progress. Does the Storyteller really want to trust the entire future of the storyline to whether or not the dice turn up in the players' favor? In fact, with a little different planning, the Storyteller could probably have avoided this situation altogether, perhaps rewarding the players' characters with the envelope at the conclusion of some other challenge — say, among the belongings of a ghoul they overpower or in the library of the Primogen while they're snooping around her haven.

The characters engage in combat with a Storyteller character: This is perhaps the archetypal example of using dice to generate a situation of chance and tension. Here, the outcome isn't pre-ordained, nor is it paced at the sole outcome of the Storyteller's choice. Combat (and, indeed, most forms of conflict) occur at the whim of the dice so the players feel risk. They don't have story immunity guaranteeing their success or survival. They may ace the engagement — or they may end up staked, bound, and in the cellar of the Tremere diablerist.

A character conducts occult research into a necromantic ritual: This is an example of what would almost certainly be an extended action (see p. 251). The role of the dice here determines, as is the function of the extended action rules, how long the occult research actually takes. Does the occultist have a burst of insight and complete his blasphemous ritual in a single month? Or do his grisly depredations take half a year to yield their ghastly results?

Actions

Over the course of a game, a character will do many things. Some of these tasks are considered *actions*, while others aren't. Actions are anything that might produce an interesting outcome to the direction the story takes. Trying to use a Discipline on the Prince, hiding in the shadows to ambush a rival pack, scaling a cemetery wall, attempting to forge a damning note from the Toreador Primogen, rending one's claws through the guts of a frenzied Tzimisce — these are all examples of actions. One action typically takes one turn to complete. (See p. 254 for more information on increments of game time.)

In most cases, speaking and conversations aren't considered actions. Although interesting developments may certainly arise from things the Kindred say to one another or to the other residents of the World of Darkness, talking is typically free in terms of game mechanics. The Storyteller may rule otherwise, such as whether a vampire manages to scream out the location where the Methuselah has the ghouls trapped before the sunlight burns him to ash, but for the most part, the game places as few limitations as possible on communication among players and characters.

It's easy enough to attempt an action — just tell the Storyteller what your character's trying to do and how she plans to go about it. Most actions — cross-

ing the street or loading a pistol, for instance — are easy enough to be considered automatically successful. However, if you're trying to cross a four-lane highway full of speeding trucks, or trying to reload while you're hanging from a fire escape by one hand, there's a chance you might fail. So when there's reasonable doubt whether an action will succeed or not, you may have to roll dice to determine the results.

If you need only one success to accomplish an action, the action in question is called a *simple action*. Actions that require more successes or longer periods of time to complete are called *extended actions*. See p. 251 for more information on extended actions.

Reflexive Actions

In some cases, taking a particular significant action doesn't actually take any appreciable amount of time. These actions often come as a result of or are triggered by other actions. In game terms, these are called *reflexive actions*, and performing one may break the normal sequence of play and action resolution. A reflexive action doesn't require "taking an action" as described above to accomplish. Your character can perform one whenever the opportunity arises, and may also take his normal action, without any penalty.

For instance, spending a blood point to increase an Attribute is considered to take less than a second of game time — no dice are rolled, and your character can do this while doing something else. Soaking — withstanding the damage from an attack — is likewise a reflexive action. Making a Humanity roll is a reflexive action, though it may well lead to other, standard actions.

In most cases, the only prerequisite for performing a reflexive action is that the character be conscious (or otherwise capable of choosing to take the action, in the case of dream sequences or other deviations from consciousness that still allow choice) in order to choose to do so. Unless otherwise specified, a character may perform any number of reflexive actions, and they don't get in the way of anything else she may want to do in a turn.

Ratings

Although your character's personality is limited only by your imagination, his capabilities are defined by his Traits — all of his innate and learned aptitudes and abilities. Each Trait is described by a "dot" rating of 1 to 5 (usually); a 1 in a Trait is barely competent, while a 5 is the pinnacle of human achievement. Most people's Traits range from 1 to 3; a 4 in a Trait indicates an exceptional person, while a 5 is nearly incomparable — among humans, at any rate. Think of this as similar to the "star" rating system of movie reviews and restaurants — a 1 is barely passable while a 5 is superb. It's also possible to have a zero in a Trait, which usually represents a skill that the character never learned, but some exceptions (such as the hideous Nosferatu's lack of an Appearance Trait) do occur.

x	Abysmal
•	Poor
••	Average
•••	Good
••••	Exceptional
•••••	Superb

Dice Pools

Whenever you roll dice, you roll one die for every dot your character possesses in the appropriate Trait. For instance, if your character is trying to find something and he has three dots in Perception, you would roll three dice. However, you almost never simply roll the number of dice you have in an Attribute. Raw potential is modified by skill, after all, and so the most common rolls in the game involve adding the dice gained from an Attribute to the dice gained from an Ability.

For instance, if your character were trying to trick the Nosferatu elder's ghoul into revealing her master's location, the Storyteller might have you roll Manipulation + Subterfuge: an Attribute plus an Ability. In this case, you might take three dice for your Manipulation of 3, plus as many dice as your character has in Subterfuge — say, two — so you get two more dice from that. Thus, you roll a total of five dice to determine your character's success or failure at confounding the ghoul. These dice are called the *dice pool*: the total number of dice you roll for a single action. Most often, you'll calculate a dice pool for only one action at a time, though you can modify it to be able to perform multiple tasks in a turn (for more information, see "Multiple Actions," below).

Not every roll requires an Ability to be added to an Attribute. For example, lifting an object is a pure application of Strength alone, while a Humanity roll to



test for moral degradation obviously draws its dice pool solely from the Humanity Trait.

If your dice pool involves a Trait whose maximum rating is 10 (such as Humanity, Path, or Willpower), you can't add any other Traits to your dice pool. It's effectively impossible for a normal human being to have more than 10 dice in a dice pool.

Elder vampires, on the other hand.…

Multiple Actions

Occasionally, a player will want her character to perform more than one action in a turn. For example, a character may be trying to search through a notebook to find a password while creeping stealthily through a hallway, or might be trying to sidestep an incoming attack while firing a pistol into her assailant's gut. In such situations, the player can attempt actions normally, though all actions become more difficult as the character's attention is split among them.

The player declares the total number of actions he wishes his character to attempt and determines which of those dice pools is the smallest. He may then allocate that number dice among the actions as he sees fit.

Example: *You want your character to hang a sharp right turn in a stolen taxi cab while simultaneously screaming at the surprised cabbie in the passenger seat to calm the hell down or you'll tear him in half. This is a Dexterity + Drive roll (for which your character has seven dice) and a Charisma + Intimidation roll (for which your character has five dice). Five dice is the smaller dice pool, and you may thus divide five dice among the number of actions you want to take. That is, you may allocate these five dice as you see fit between the driving maneuver and intimidating the cabbie.*

At the Storyteller's discretion, certain action combinations that are wildly disparate may incur a difficulty increase (see below) on top of the split dice pool limitations. Composing a stirring poem while showering an enemy with a hail of bullets is a task not lightly undertaken. As well, at the Storyteller's discretion, splitting dice pools to a certain degree may well just be plain impossible.

Vampires with the Discipline of Celerity (p. 142) may take multiple actions without subtracting dice from their dice pools. These extra actions may not themselves be divided into multiple actions.

Difficulties

There's no point in rolling dice unless you know what results you're looking for. Whenever you try to perform an action, the Storyteller will decide on an appropriate *difficulty number* and tell you her decision. A difficulty is always a number between 2 and 10 (but generally between 3 and 9). Each time you score that number or higher on one of your dice, you're considered to have gained a *success*. For example, if an action's difficulty is a 6 and you roll a 3, 3, 8, 7 and 10, then you've scored three successes. The more you get, the better you do. You need only one success to perform most actions successfully, but that's considered a marginal success. If you score three or more, you succeed completely. Also, a result of a 10 is always a success, no matter the difficulty number.

The following charts should give you a good idea of how to combine difficulties and degrees of success.

Difficulties

Three	Trivial (scanning a small crowd for a familiar face)
Four	Easy (following a trail of blood)
Five	Straightforward (seducing some one who's already "in the mood")
Six	*Standard (firing a gun)*
Seven	Challenging (locating where those agonized whispers are coming from)
Eight	Difficult (convincing a cop that this isn't your cocaine)
Nine	Extremely difficult (walking a tightrope)

Naturally, the lower the difficulty, the easier it is to score successes, and vice versa. Six is the default difficulty, indicating actions neither exceptionally tricky nor exceptionally easy to accomplish. *If the Storyteller or rulebook ever calls for you to make a roll, but doesn't give you a specific difficulty number, assume the task is difficulty 6.*

Degrees of Success

One Success	Marginal (getting a broken refrigerator to keep running until the repairman arrives)
Two Successes	Moderate (making a handicraft that's ugly but useful)
Three	Complete (fixing something so that it's good as new)
Four	Exceptional (increasing your car's efficiency in the process of repairing it)
Five or More	Phenomenal (creating a masterwork)

The Storyteller is the final authority on how difficult attempted actions are — if the task seems impossible, he'll make the difficulty appropriately high, while if the task seems routinely easy, the difficulty will be low (if the Storyteller decides you even have to roll at all). A difficulty 3 task is so easy that it probably doesn't merit a die roll, but a fluke failure or extraordinary success might sometimes make it worth the chance.

At difficulty 10, the results curve becomes very anomalous – indeed, there are a few dice pools for which the likelihood of botching actually *increases* over having a *smaller* (and thus theoretically "worse") dice pool. Be careful when assigning such a high difficulty to an action.

Failure

If you score no successes on a roll, your character fails his attempted action: He misses his punch. The file is encrypted too well. The Prince doesn't believe her alibi. Failure, while usually disappointing, is not so catastrophic as a botch (below).

Example: *Your character is attempting to eavesdrop on the greasy-looking guy with a bag of pills who's talking to the blonde in the corner of the bar, and is trying to look nonchalant by the pool table. The Storyteller tells you to*

roll your character's Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). You roll and the dice turn up 2, 5, 6, 6, 4, 3 — no successes. The Storyteller rules that the greasy guy notices you making an awkward show of pretending to chalk your cue and stops talking to the girl, staring your character down instead. He doesn't draw a weapon or bolt for the back door, but whatever this deal is isn't going any further….

Storytellers, bear in mind that failure is simply that: failure. All it means is that the attempt didn't produce the desired result. Judge the narrative accordingly, but a failure probably doesn't in itself result in any harm to the character unless the circumstances would dictate such. A failed attempt to jump the gap between two buildings probably doesn't result in a breakneck plummet, but perhaps the character lands clumsily on a fire escape below the intended rooftop, or maybe she knocks the wind out of herself and is desperately hanging onto the ledge.

Botches

Bad luck can ruin anything. One more basic of a roll is a "botch." Whenever one of the dice comes up as a 1, it cancels out a success. Completely. Take the die showing 1 and one of the dice showing a success and set them aside. In this manner, an otherwise successful action may be reduced to failure.

Occasionally, truly bad fortune strikes. If none of your dice comes up a success, and one or more dice are dice showing 1, the roll is a botch. If you score at least one success, even if that success is canceled out and additional 1s remain, it's just a simple failure.

A botch is much worse than a normal failure — it's dramatic misfortune. For instance, rolling a botch when trying to fast-talk the Sheriff might make him think you'd better go see the Prince to explain yourself. Botching a Stealth roll when breaking into an apartment makes so much racket the neighbor calls the police. Botching an Animal Ken roll enrages the animal. Botching an Athletics roll means you gauged the width of the gap between the two buildings incorrectly... and look at all that chain-link fence and razor wire rising up to meet you. The Storyteller decides exactly what goes wrong; a botch may produce a minor inconvenience or might result in wholesale catastrophe.

Of course, some Storytellers may find that botches are cropping up a little too frequently in their chronicles (the laws of probability often warp around dice, as any veteran roleplayer can attest). In that case, it's the Storyteller's privilege to give everyone, player and Storyteller character alike, one botch "free" — in other words, the first botched roll of the session doesn't count. This rule tends to make unlife a little easier on the players — but then again, there's less chance of their enemies suffering a run of bad luck as well….

Example: *Your character is desperately fleeing from the Archbishop's most zealous Paladins, and all that's standing between him and the safety of his haven is a freight elevator that leads up to the service docks of the meatpacking plant. You roll your character's Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 8), hoping to outpace your pursuers to the elevator and get 9, 1, 1, 8, 1. The 1s outnumber the successes, but because you rolled any successes at all to begin with, the action simply fails. The Storyteller rules that you make it to the elevator — but it's two floors up.*

You dash toward the staircase, but you're not so lucky as the chase continues. The Stamina + Athletics dice come up 1, 3, 4, 3, 7. This time, not only did a "1" occur, but no successes were scored at all, so the action is a botch. The Storyteller rules that the Sabbat thought you might try to run away like a punk bitch, and backed a forklift into the stairwell, blocking it entirely. No choice but to turn around and face them….

Botching is a place where some creativity on the part of the Storyteller goes a long way. There's nothing wrong with having a botch signify a dropped gun or stalling out a car in a chase, but a botch might also be an odd fluke that happens at an incongruous time or a butterfly effect that may haunt the chronicle at a later point. Instead of dropping the gun, maybe a botched firearms roll signifies that the gun went off to close to the shooter's face, blinding or deafening her. Maybe the botched Drive roll suggests that, as the car fishtailed around the corner, the captive Toreador in the back seat made a break for it or the manila envelope full of the incriminating photos fell out the open window. Botches should create a new dramatic twist to the scene in which they occur. They don't have to be reliable pratfalls.

Automatic Success

Sometimes rolling dice is unnecessary, particularly when the task is a relatively simple one for a character, or when there's not much at dramatic stake to necessitate determining how well a character succeeds or fails. Remember, anything that streamlines play and reduces distractions is a good thing. **Vampire** employs a simple system for automatic successes, allowing you

to skip rolling for tasks that your character would find frankly mundane.

Simply put, if the number of dice in your dice pool is equal to or greater than the task's difficulty, your character automatically succeeds. No dice roll is necessary. Mind you, this does *not* work for all tasks, and *never* works in combat or other stressful situations. Furthermore, an automatic success is considered marginal, just as if you'd gotten only one success on the roll. If quality is an issue — the dramatic necessity mentioned earlier — you might want to roll the dice pool anyway to try for more successes (although you still risk potential failure). But for simple and often-repeated actions, this system works just fine.

There's another way to get an automatic success on a roll: Simply spend a Willpower point (p. 267). You can do this only once per turn, and since you have a limited supply of Willpower you can't do this too often, but it can certainly help when you're under pressure to succeed.

Trying It Again

Failure often produces stress, which often leads to further failure. If a character fails an action, he may usually try it again (after all, failing to pick a lock does not mean the character may never try to pick the lock again). In such cases, though, the Storyteller should increase the difficulty number of the second attempt by one. (Note that the Storyteller may choose not to increase this difficulty, at her discretion.) If the attempt is failed yet again, the difficulty of a third attempt should increase by two, and so on. Eventually, the difficulty will be so high that the character has no chance of succeeding: The lock is simply beyond her ability to pick and she's frustrated with the whole affair.

Examples of when to use this rule are: climbing a fence, searching a computer archive, or interrogating a prisoner. After all, if you couldn't find a handhold, discern the proper file name, or get the prisoner to talk the first time, there's a reasonable chance you might not be able to do it at all.

Sometimes the Storyteller shouldn't invoke this rule. For example, failing to shoot somebody with a gun, detect an ambush, or keep on another driver's tail are to be expected in stressful situations. Such failure does not automatically lead to frustration and failed future attempts. The intent with the Trying It Again rules is to increase the likelihood of either success *or* interesting failure.

Example: *Your character has been "asked" to do a little bit of liaising between an up-and-coming Ventrue and a pack of Gangrel who claim the domain the Ventrue wants as her own. You're meeting the pack's bigshot behind a coffee shop in an ethnic ghetto, and things aren't going well. You try to put a positive spin on the Ventrue's interest in the Gangrel domain, so the Storyteller suggests that you roll Wits + Streetwise (difficulty 6) to gracefully describe the Gangrel domain as a liability they'd be better off letting go. You roll the dice, but your effort fails, and the Gangrel leader objects to your characterization of his domain as a shit-stained urban blight. You try to make amends, but this time the Storyteller tells you the difficulty is 7. Your character has some backpedaling to do, but you can't backpedal so far that you make the Gangrel want to stay. Good luck.*

Complications

The preceding rules should be enough to get you going, and for chronicles that favor storytelling over dice-rolling, they might be all you ever need. However, they don't necessarily cover all instances — for example, what if you're trying to do something while a Storyteller character is actively trying to stop you? What if a fellow Tremere tries to help you uncover a ritual?

The various ways to complicate matters below are intended to bring extra color to games. You don't have to use them, but they might add more realism and suspense to your game.

The following complications are relatively simple and generic, usable to describe a wide variety of actions. For situation-specific complications, see Chapter Six.

Extended Actions

Sometimes completing a task takes longer than the increment of time in which the Storyteller chooses to conduct the scene. When you need multiple successes to score even a marginal success, you're undertaking an *extended action*. For example, a Nosferatu might spend all night listening in on a conversation between to scheming Kindred, or a Gangrel might be engaged in fleeing (or pursuing…) mortal police for a prolonged period of time.

In an extended action, you roll your dice pool over and over at subsequent intervals, trying to collect enough successes to succeed. For example, your character is trying to dig a temporary haven in the forest

floor, using only his bare hands. The Storyteller tells you that you need 15 successes to hollow out a den that provides sufficient protection from the sun. You'll eventually succeed, but the longer you go, the more chance there is of you botching and collapsing the tunnel. What's more, if you have only so many turns before dawn, the speed with which you finish your task becomes doubly important. The Storyteller in all cases is the final authority on which tasks are extended actions and which aren't.

You can usually take as many turns as you want to finish an extended action (but situations being what they are in **Vampire**, you won't always have that luxury). If you botch a roll, however, you probably have to start over again from scratch, and likely have some other resultant catastrophe to worry about. Depending on what you're trying to do, the Storyteller may even rule that you can't start over again at all; you've failed and that's that.

Because extended actions are often quite apropos for describing certain feats, they're used frequently in Chapter Six. However, because of the amount of dice-rolling involved, extended actions should probably be kept out of the more intense sessions of roleplaying.

Note that the interval for a roll in an extended action need not be only a turn. It can be any segment of game time as determined by the Storyteller. For example, a Giovanni searching tombs for corpses with special qualities might roll once to determine the progress made in a night's grave robbing. A Ventrue might attempt a long-term seduction of a rival's mortal daughter. Many protracted Discipline powers (like Conditioning) invoke extended actions that take place over a long period of time. For more information on time intervals and how they relate to game systems, see p. 254.

Example: *Veronica Abbey-Roth is trying to drum up a large portion of capital for a certain upcoming project of hers. Even though she has Resources 4, the Storyteller rules that she'd have to liquidate much of her belongings to get the money she wants. So Veronica decides to play fast and dirty with her money, running a number of illegal operations and playing a very intricate game with the stock market to raise the money she needs. The Storyteller decides that for Veronica to reach her goal, Lynn will have to score 18 successes on an extended Wits + Finance roll (difficulty 7 — this is an intrinsically tricky way to earn money). What's more, since this sort of thing takes time, she can make only one roll per night of game time.*

Veronica has Wits 3 and Finance 4, so Lynn rolls seven dice each night. She gets three successes on her first roll — things are opening up nicely. On her second roll, she gets two successes, for a total of five. Unfortunately, luck isn't with her on the third roll. She gets 3, 4, 1, 6, 4, 1, 6 — a botch! The Storyteller rules that one of Veronica's brokers has gone sour, and she's actually lost money on the transaction. But the efforts of three nights' work have been neatly condensed into five minutes or so of real time. As the game continues, Veronica is left with a tighter budget for a while, and the choice of trying again (and running the risk of attracting the Justice Department's attention) or abandoning her grandiose plot….

Resisted Actions

A simple difficulty number might not be enough to represent a struggle between characters. For instance, you may try to batter down a door while a character on the other side tries to hold it closed. In such a case, you'd make a *resisted roll* — each of you rolls dice against a difficulty (often determined by one of your opponent's Traits), and the person who scores the most successes wins.

However, you're considered to score only as many successes as *the amount by which you exceed your opponent's successes*. In other words, the opponent's successes eliminate your own, just as 1s do. If, for example, you score four successes and your opponent scores three, you're considered to have only one success: a marginal accomplishment. It's difficult to achieve an outstanding success on a resisted action simply because someone else is working to prevent you from achieving your objective. Even if your opponent can't beat you, he can still diminish the effect of your efforts.

Some actions (debating an opponent in front of an assembled Elysium, a cat-and-mouse pursuit) may be both extended and resisted. In such cases, one or the other of the opponents must achieve a certain number of successes to succeed. Each success above the rival's total number in a given turn is added to a running tally. The first to achieve the designated number of successes wins the contest.

Example: *Veronica, prowling for trouble at the latest Camarilla soiree, has determined by night's end to spite her rival, a Ventrue by the name of Giselle. Giselle arrived at the fête with her latest childe in tow: Tony, a talented and delicious young man with a medical license and a much-vaunted pedigree. Veronica decides that there would be nothing more amusing than stealing Giselle's*

childe away from her for the evening — of course, that'll take some doing, as Giselle will be watching him like a hawk.

Lynn (Veronica's player) and the Storyteller roleplay out much of the initial three-way conversation (as well as the covert knife-edged glances) between Veronica, Giselle, and Tony. Finally, the Storyteller has Lynn roll Veronica's Manipulation (3) + Subterfuge (3), resisted by Giselle's Manipulation (3) + Subterfuge (4). Lynn rolls six dice versus a difficulty of 7 (Giselle's Manipulation + Subterfuge). The Storyteller rolls Giselle's seven dice versus difficulty 6 (Veronica's Manipulation + Subterfuge). Lynn manages to score four successes, while Giselle remarkably manages only three. Giselle's successes subtract from Lynn's, leaving Lynn with one success. Tony opts to make the rounds with Veronica, although her marginal success means he casts a few longing glances Giselle's way….

Teamwork

You don't always have to go it alone. If the situation warrants (usually during an extended action such as staking out a suspected Sabbat or decoding an Aramaic inscription), characters can work together to collect successes. If the Storyteller decides that teamwork is possible for the task in question, two or more characters can make rolls separately and add their successes together. Their players do this by each rolling their own character's appropriate dice pool (they do not combine their Traits into one dice pool).

Teamwork can be effective in many situations — restraining the frenzied Gangrel, gathering some physical resource, or doing research in the library, for instance. However, it can actually prove to be a hindrance in certain situations (including most social interaction such as fast-talking or seducing a subject, where too many people can overwhelm a single subject). As well, one person's botch can bollix the whole attempt.

Using the Storyteller Dice Pool System

One of the greatest strengths of the Storyteller system is its flexibility. Storytellers should keep the versatile nature of the core dice pool rule system in mind when establishing challenges and resolving conflict. A given situation might have multiple possible resolutions under the dice pool system. For example, a car chase might be resolved using the contested action system, or it might be resolved with extended actions, with each participant in the chase "racing" to accumulate a number of successes before the other.

The best advice to Storytellers here is to use what best suits the pacing and objectives of the story. If the players are getting antsy, let them roll some dice. If they're more interested in the interpersonal relations of the session, use a simpler resolution with less attention to dice rolls.

With a few examples aside (remember, rules exist to let every player know that the playing field is equal),

Action	Example	Description
Simple	Dodging a sinkhole, sensing an ambush	Task is completed with one roll. The Storyteller announces the difficulty and the players roll dice. Automatic success is possible.
Extended	Mountain climbing, research	Task is completed when a given number of successes are obtained, which may require more than one roll (which provides more chances of botching).
Resisted	Shadowing	A contest of skill between two individuals. They compare their number of successes; the character with the most successes wins.
Extended and Resisted	Arm wrestling	As a resisted action; the contest requires a given number of successes and may take more than one turn to complete.

there's no "right" way to resolve a dramatic situation. Go with what feels right, what emphasizes your troupe's tastes for narrative or gameplay, and what gets the best response from everyone at the table. The system isn't a blunt instrument to be wielded by the Storyteller against the players at the table; it's the tool that you mutually employ to tell a thrilling story.

Time

Over the course of the game, time is presumed to pass as it would in the normal world — Tuesday follows Monday, month after month, and so on. However, there's no need to devote attention to every second ticking away. There's a huge difference between the speeds at which time in the game world and real time pass. Over a four-hour game session, a week, month, or even year might pass in the setting of the game — or the entire session might be spent detailing the events of an action-packed half-hour. You can play out a combat turn by turn, taking it in three-second increments, or you can let months pass away in a few minutes of real time. In the Storyteller system, the passage of time without players taking any real actions is called "downtime," and learning to use this little trick can help the pacing of a Storyteller's chronicle immensely.

To help maintain a general sense of the passage of time without resorting to tedious charts and the like, **Vampire** uses six basic units to describe game time:

• Turn — The amount of time you need to take a fairly simple action. This can range anywhere from three seconds to three minutes, depending on the pace of a given scene.

• Scene — Like the basic division of plays and movies, a scene is a compact period of action and interaction that takes place in a single location. This could be the storming of a Tremere chantry, or a moonlit conversation on a park bench. There are exactly as many turns in a scene as the scene requires — there might not even be any turns if the scene consists of nothing but dialogue and character interaction. As well, the length of a turn can vary from one scene to the next in a chronicle. A combat scene might have frenzied action with short turns, while a suspenseful scene might have a slower pace in which the turns culminate in a burst of revelation.

• Chapter — An independent part of a story, virtually always played out in one game session. It consists of any number of scenes interconnected by downtime (see below); essentially, like a chapter in a novel or an act in a play.

• Story — A full tale, complete with introduction, rising action, and climax. Some stories can take several chapters to complete. Others can be finished in one. Some short stories are effectively vignettes that are nothing more than a single scene.

• Chronicle — A series of stories connected by the characters themselves and their ongoing narrative, possibly even by a common theme or overarching plot.

• Downtime — Time that is "glossed over" with description rather than played out turn by turn or scene by scene. If the Storyteller says, "You wait in the foyer for four hours before the Prince's ghoul summons you," rather than actually letting the characters play out their wait, the Storyteller is considered to be invoking downtime. Downtime allows trivial or tedious passages of time to be played through quickly. If the Storyteller allows it, players may conduct simple, unchallenged activities during downtime — "You stop by your haven to pick up the Inquisitor's rosary before you arrive at the Prince's manor." Alternatively, a situation that begins as downtime might become a turn, scene, or even story if the players decide to undertake something dramatic in what the Storyteller thought would be glossed-over time. Finally, such bursts of downtime might be explored by players outside the troupe — see p. 361 for more.

Examples of Rolls

The Storyteller rules system is designed with flexibility in mind, and as a result, there are about 270 combinations of Attributes and Abilities. This daunting number is just the beginning, too — you can certainly use Hobby Talent, Professional Skill, and Expert Knowledge (see Chapter Three) to devise more Abilities if you think there's need. In this manner, you have a huge variety of rolls to simulate actions — whatever you think is most appropriate. The following examples of rolls are meant to give you some idea of the possibilities that might come up in a game.

• You want to conduct yourself flawlessly at the governor's formal dinner (and you can't actually eat anything). Roll Dexterity + Etiquette (difficulty 8).

• You're miles from your haven, and the sun will be up soon. Roll Wits + Survival (difficulty 7) to find shelter for the day.

• You try to distract the bodyguard with your left hand while surreptitiously slipping your knife back into your belt with your right. Roll Dexterity + Subterfuge (difficulty of the bodyguard's Perception + Alertness).

• You lock gazes with the gang leader, trying to cow him into submission before his gang — and he wants to do the same to you. Make a Charisma + Intimidation roll, resisted by his Charisma + Intimidation.

• The ritual requires three days of nonstop chanting. Can you stay awake even through the daylight hours to finish it? Roll Stamina + Occult (difficulty 9).

• You need to board up the door to your haven in record speed — and it needs to be durable, too. Roll Wits + Crafts (difficulty 7).

• You've got access to the chantry library for exactly one night — you'd better find the name you want quickly, but there are a *lot* of books here. Roll Wits + Occult (difficulty 8) every hour; you need to achieve 15 successes.

• It's not the message of the song, but it's how good you look singing it. Roll Appearance + Performance (difficulty 6) to have your choice of groupies.

• How long can you remain motionless in the bushes while the guards chat about the football game? Roll Stamina + Stealth (difficulty 7). Each success allows you to hold still for one hour.

• It would be foolish to threaten your rival openly while in the confines of Elysium. Roll Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty 8) to properly veil your threat without leaving her in doubt as to your intentions.

• Suddenly, a man pushes a crate out of the van you've been chasing — roll Wits + Drive (difficulty 6) to swerve out of the way in time.

• Can you distract the guard dogs while you slip in? Roll Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 8).

• Did she just threaten you? Roll Perception + Intimidation (difficulty 5) to figure out what that Lick meant by that comment.

• You try to get his attention by driving your knife through his hand and into the oak bar. Roll Strength + Melee (difficulty 6).

• You try to pull alongside the fleeing Mercedes so your friends can leap aboard. Make an extended Dexterity + Drive roll, resisted by the Mercedes driver's Wits + Drive. If you accumulate five total successes more than his total successes, you're in position. If he accumulates a total of five more successes than you get, he escapes.

• The new gang in town's been awfully good at picking out Kindred-run operations to take over. Roll Charisma + Streetwise (difficulty 8) to see what people know about them. The more successes you get, the more information you receive, but the legwork will take an entire night regardless.

• What sort of alarm system does this place have? Roll Perception + Larceny (difficulty 6).

• Whose story will the Prince believe — yours or your enemy's? Roll Manipulation + Expression, resisted by your rival's Manipulation + Expression.

• You try convincing the clerk of the court that you're an IRS auditor and that you need to see the court records. Roll Manipulation + Finance (difficulty 8).

• Can you read the German edition of *The Book of Nod* without losing something in the translation? Roll Intelligence + Academics (difficulty 8).

• You have to keep running if you're going to outdistance your pursuers. Make an extended Stamina + Athletics roll (difficulty 7); if you collect 15 successes, you've outlasted them.

• You need to convince the judge to release you before the sun rises. Roll Charisma + Law (difficulty 8) to make a plea eloquent enough.



Chapter Six: Systems and Drama

"Mortals thought they were fighting their own wars, but it is for us that they spilt their blood."

-The Book of Nod

While **Vampire**'s focus is on roleplaying and character interaction, dramatic scenes often involve some element of dice rolling. As Chapter Five shows, the basic Storyteller rules are designed to streamline this process as much as possible, allowing you to pay attention to the story. To assist you and the Storyteller further, this chapter covers more specific dice mechanics, including general dramatic systems, combat, injury, and recovery.

If, in your chronicles, you come up with a resolution system you like better, by all means use it, as discussed on p. 245 ("The Golden Rule"). Also — particularly when dealing with social actions like seductions and diplomacy — the dice should *never* get in the way of roleplaying. If a player has his character make a particularly inspired (or painful) speech, deliver a particularly smooth (or cheesy) opening line, or come up with a brilliant (or laughable) alibi, feel free to let the character succeed (or fail) automatically, regardless of what the dice and Traits say.

Dramatic Systems

The only things limiting your actions are your imagination and your character's skill. During a game session, characters — both player and Storyteller personalities — may attempt numerous diverse and complicated activities. The Storyteller is responsible for keeping all of this action organized while determining success or failure for all characters.

Dramatic systems simplify the Storyteller's job by supplying rules for a number of common activities. Generally, a character attempting to accomplish a task adds together an Attribute and an Ability. If a task falls within a character's specialty (p. 96), that character gains two successes in place instead of one for each "10" the player achieves on his roll.

Storytellers should, and will undoubtedly have to, invent their own dramatic systems for new situations. The list of systems below is in no way exhaustive, but provides a solid foundation on which to base events. Bear in mind that for rolls involving Talents and Skills, characters lacking a specific Ability may default to the Attribute on which the Ability is based (albeit at +1 difficulty for Skill-based actions).

Most of these systems involve taking one or more actions (p. 246) over one or more turns (p. 254). A number of these systems may be tried again if the first attempt is unsuccessful. Subsequent efforts may suffer

a difficulty penalty, at the Storyteller's discretion (see "Trying It Again," p. 251).

Automatic Feats

Automatic feats require the character to take an action, but don't involve a dice pool roll under most circumstances. The following are common automatic feats. Storytellers may decide that other feats are automatic, at their discretion.

• **Blood Use (Healing, Augmenting Attributes, etc.):** Vampire characters may spend blood to heal themselves. To do so, the character must concentrate and do nothing else for one full turn. A character may attempt to heal while performing other actions, but this requires success on a Stamina + Survival reflexive roll (difficulty 8). Failing this roll means the vampire loses all expended blood points with no effect, while a botch causes the vampire to lose both an additional blood point and an additional health level. Spending blood to raise Physical Attributes or power Disciplines may be done automatically, without the need for concentration. A character may spend an amount of vitae equal to her per-turn rating, as dictated by her Generation (p. 270).

• **Getting to Your Feet:** Characters may rise from the ground in one turn without making a roll. If a character wishes to get to her feet while doing something else in the same turn, she must take a multiple action (see "Multiple Actions," p. 248) with a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 4) to rise successfully.

• **Movement:** Characters may choose to walk, jog, or run. If walking, a character moves at seven yards/meters per turn. If jogging, a character moves at (12 + Dexterity) yards/meters per turn. If all-out running, a character moves at (20 + [3 x Dexterity]) yards/meters per turn.

Characters may move at up to half maximum running speed, then subsequently attack or perform another action; see p. 274 for particulars. Characters may also wish to move *while* taking another action. This is possible, but each yard or meter moved subtracts one from the other action's dice pool.

Note that injured characters (p. 282) cannot move at maximum speed.

• **Readying a Weapon:** This can involve drawing a weapon or reloading a gun with a prepared clip. In most cases, no roll is required, so long as the character takes no other action that turn. If the character wishes to ready a weapon while doing something else in the same turn, the player must reduce his dice pool (see "Multiple Actions," p. 248) and roll Dexterity + Melee or Firearms (difficulty 4) for the readying attempt.

• **Starting a Car:** This takes an action, but requires no roll.

• **Yielding:** The character allows the character with the next-highest initiative (p. 271) to act. She may still act at the end of the turn. If all characters (player and Storyteller) yield during a turn, no one does anything that turn.

Physical Feats

These systems cover actions involving the three Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina). These feats typically require a roll. Remember that Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence add dice to Physical Attributes when making many of these rolls.

• **Climbing [Dexterity + Athletics]**: When your character climbs an inclined surface (rocky slope, side of building), roll Dexterity + Athletics. Climbing is typically an extended roll. For an average climb with available handholds and nominal complications, your character moves 10 feet (three meters) for every success. The Storyteller adjusts this distance based on the climb's difficulty (easier: 15 feet/five meters per success; more difficult: five feet/two meters per success). The number of handholds, smoothness of the surface, and environmental factors can all affect rate of travel. A short, difficult climb may have the same difficulty as a long, easy climb. The extended action lasts until you've accumulated enough successes to reach the desired height. Botching a climbing roll can be bad: Your character may only slip or get stuck, or she may fall.

If the character activates the Protean power of Feral Claws, constructs bone spurs with the Vicissitude power of Bonecraft, or uses a similar power to assist them, all climbing difficulties are reduced by two.

• **Driving [Dexterity/Wits + Drive]:** A Drive roll isn't needed to steer a vehicle under normal circumstances, assuming your character has at least one dot in the Drive Skill. That said, bad weather, the vehicle's speed, obstacles, and complex maneuvers can challenge even the most competent drivers. Specific difficulties based on these circumstances are up to the Storyteller, but should increase as the conditions become more hazardous.

For example, driving in heavy rain is +1 difficulty, but going fast while also trying to lose pursuers increases the difficulty to +3. Similarly, maneuvering in heavy

traffic is +1, but doing so at a breakneck pace while avoiding pursuit bumps the difficulty to +3. A failed roll indicates trouble, requiring an additional roll to avoid crashing or losing control. Characters in control of a vehicle, and who have no dots in the Drive Skill, need a roll for almost every change in course or procedure. On a botch, the vehicle may spin out of control or worse.

Because different cars handle differently — some are designed for speed and handling while others are designed for safety — the following chart helps calculate the difficulty for any maneuver. Generally, for every 10 miles or 15 kilometers per hour over the safe driving speed of a vehicle, the difficulty of any maneuver is increased by one. Exceedingly challenging stunts and bad road conditions should also increase the difficulty accordingly. The *maximum* number of dice a driver can have in her dice pool when driving is equal to the maneuver rating of the vehicle. Simply put, even the best driver will have more trouble with a dump truck than she will with a Ferrari.

Vehicle	Safe Speed (mph/kph)	Max Speed (mph/kph)	Maneuver
6-Wheel Truck	60/95	90/145	3
Tank (modern)	60/95	100/160	4
Tank (WWII)	30/50	40/65	3
Bus	60/95	100/160	3
18-Wheeler	70/110	110/175	4
Sedan	70/110	120/195	5
Minivan	70/110	120/195	6
Compact	70/110	130/210	6
Sporty Compact	100/160	140/225	7
Sport Coupe	110/175	150/240	8
Sports Car	110/175	160/255	8
Exotic Car	130/210	190+/305+	9
Luxury Sedan	85/135	155/250	7
Sport Sedan	85/135	165/265	8
Midsize	75/120	125/200	6
SUV/ Crossover	70/110	115/185	6
Formula One Racer	140/225	240/385	10

• **Carrying Capacity [Strength]:** A character can carry 25 lbs/10 kg per point of Strength without penalty. Should a character exceed this total, every action involving physical skills incurs an automatic +1 difficulty due to the added weight. Also, every 25 lbs/10 kg over the limit halves the character's base movement (see "Movement," p. 258). A character bearing a total weight of double her Strength allocation can't move. This system is a guideline, intended to reflect being laden by bulk and weight, so the Storyteller should not call for an inventory accounting every time your character picks up a pen.

• **Hunting [Various]:** It is the nature of the vampire to hunt. For each hour the vampire spends searching for human prey, allow the player to make a roll against a difficulty based on the area in which the vampire hunts. The Attribute and Ability combination used should correspond to the method by which the player describes the character's hunting technique. For example, Appearance + Subterfuge might represent a lusty tryst at a nightclub that ends in one of the lovers slaking her thirst, Stamina + Athletics would suggest a harrowing chase across a swath of city parkland, and Wits + Streetwise might be interpreted as a deadly game of cat-and-mouse.

Area	Difficulty
Slum neighborhood/The Rack	4
Lower-income/bohemian	5
Downtown business district	6
Warehouse district	6
Suburb	7
Heavily patrolled area	8

Success on this roll indicates that the vampire has found and subdued prey, in a manner appropriate to her methods and the area. She may now ingest as many blood points as she wishes to take from the victim (or, if the Storyteller prefers, a single die's worth of blood points). Failure indicates that the hour is spent looking fruitlessly, while a botch indicates a complication (perhaps the character accidentally kills a vessel, picks up a disease, enters the domain of a rival vampire, or suffers assault from a street gang). If a botch does occur, the Storyteller should quickly set up the scene and let the character try to work her way out of trouble. Storytellers and players should both be creative in proposing and describing the hunt to make it dramatic and exciting. After all, finding prey isn't necessarily the hard part — it's holding on to one's Humanity or preserving the Masquerade when the Beast hungers.

If the character catches prey, but currently has fewer blood points in her body than [7 minus Self-Control or Instinct], the character is considered to be hungry and a frenzy check (p. 298) is necessary — Self-Control to see if the character frenzies, or Instinct to see if the character can control her frenzy while feeding. If the player fails this roll, the character continues to gorge on the vessel until she is completely sated (at full blood pool), the victim dies from blood loss, or she somehow manages to regain control of herself.

The Fame and Domain Backgrounds reduce difficulties of hunting rolls by one per dot (to a minimum of 3), while the Herd Background adds one die per dot in the Background (so long as one's herd could conceivably be in the area). However, Storytellers may increase hunting difficulties for particularly inhuman vampires (Nosferatu, some Gangrel, vampires with Humanity ratings of 4 or below, or who are on Paths of Enlightenment), as such monsters find it difficult to blend in with a crowd.

For more information on hunting scenes, see p. 365.

• **Intrusion [Dexterity/Perception + Larceny]:** Intrusion covers breaking and entering, evading simple security devices, picking locks, cracking safes — and preventing others from doing the same. When bypassing active security, your roll must succeed on the first attempt, and failure activates any alarms present (opening manual locks may be attempted multiple times, though). Intrusion rolls can range from 5 (standard locks) to 9 (Fort Knox), depending on a security system's complexity (the Storyteller decides the actual difficulty). Certain tasks might require a minimum level of Larceny Skill for the character to have any chance of succeeding (e.g., Larceny 1 might let you pick a simple lock, but not crack a safe). Bear in mind that most intrusion tasks require lockpicks or other appropriate tools. On a botch, the character's clumsy break-in attempt goes horribly awry.

Setting up security measures is a standard action, but multiple successes achieved in the effort increase the system's quality (essentially adding to the difficulty for it to be breached).

Note, here, that the Larceny Skill comes into question when evading the physical, mechanical aspects of the intrusion effort. Dealing with the technology behind the systems themselves involves the Technology Knowledge. The intrusion example is an example of getting into or out of somewhere, not rewiring alarm systems or confounding surveillance camera feeds.

• **Jumping [Strength, or Strength + Athletics for a running jump]:** Typically, jump rolls are made versus a difficulty of 3. Each success on a jump roll launches your character two feet/50 cm vertically or three feet/one meter horizontally. To jump successfully, a character must clear more distance than the distance between her and her destination. On a failure, the character fails to clear the required distance, but the player may make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (typically versus difficulty 6) to allow the character to grab onto a ledge or other safety as she falls. On a botch, your character may slip on the precipice, leap right into a wall, or fall to her doom.

If the player makes a Perception + Athletics roll (difficulty 6, three successes required) before attempting a jump, he may gauge exactly how many successes are needed to make the leap.

• **Lifting/Breaking [Strength]:** The following chart provides the minimum Strength needed to deadlift various weights or break objects without a die roll. Characters of lower Strength may roll to affect heavier weights than their Strength ratings allow for. The roll is made not with Strength, but with Willpower, and is difficulty 9. Each success advances the character by one level on the chart.

Strength	Feats	Lift (lbs/kg)
1	Crush a beer can	40/20
2	Break a wooden chair	100/45
3	Break down a wooden door	250/115
4	Break a wooden plank	400/180
5	Break open a metal fire door	650/295
6	Throw a motorcycle	800/360
7	Flip over a small car	900/410
8	Break a lead pipe	1000/455
9	Punch through a cement wall	1200/545
10	Rip open a steel drum	1500/680
11	Punch through 1"/2.5 cm thick sheet metal	2000/910
12	Break a metal lamp post	3000/1360
13	Throw a station wagon	4000/1815
14	Throw a van	5000/2265
15	Throw a truck	6000/2720

Characters can work together to lift an object. This is a "teamwork roll" for which the individual players roll separately and combine any resulting successes.

Lifting is all or nothing — if you fail the roll, nothing happens. At the Storyteller's discretion, your character's effective Strength may be raised if all she wants to do is drag something a short distance instead of pick it up. On a botch, your character may pull a muscle or drop the object on her own foot.

• **Opening/Closing [Strength]:** Opening a door with brute force calls for a Strength roll (difficulty 6 to 8, depending on the material of the door). A standard interior door requires only one success to bash open or slam shut. A reinforced door generally takes five successes. A vault door might take 10 or more successes. These successes may be handled as an extended action. While teamwork is possible (and recommended), a door can still be forced open through a single individual's repeated hammering. A botch causes a health level of lethal damage to your character's shoulder.

Certain doors (metal vault doors and the like) may require a Strength minimum just to make an attempt.

• **Pursuit [Dexterity + Athletics/Drive]:** Vampires must often pursue their terrified prey, and sometimes they themselves must flee. Generally, pursuit can be resolved automatically by using the formulas for calculating movement (p. 258); if one party is clearly faster than another, the faster party catches or evades the slower party eventually. However, dramatic situations may occur if two characters are of equal or nearly equal speeds, or if one character is slower but might lose the faster character or make it to safety before she catches him. In these cases, use the system below.

Basic pursuit is an extended action. The target starts with a number of free extra successes based on his distance from the pursuer. This breaks down as follows: on foot, one for every two yards/meters ahead of pursuers; in vehicles, one for every 10 yards/meters ahead of pursuers. For chases involving vampires and mortals, remember that mortals tire, but the undead do not.

The target and pursuers make the appropriate roll (depending on the type of pursuit) each turn, adding new successes to any successes rolled in previous turns. When the pursuer accumulates more total successes than the target has, she catches up and may take further actions to stop the chase. As the target accumulates successes, he gains distance from his pursuers and may use that lead to lose his opponents. Each success that the quarry accumulates beyond the pursuer's total acts as a +1 difficulty to any Perception roll a pursuer must make to remain on the target's tail. The Storyteller may call for the pursuer to make a Perception roll at any time (though not more than once each turn). If the pursuer fails this roll, her target is considered to

have slipped away (into the crowd, into a side street). On a botch, the pursuer loses her quarry immediately. If the quarry botches, he stumbles or ends up at a dead end.

• **Shadowing [Dexterity + Stealth/Drive]:** Shadowing someone requires that your character keep tabs on the target without necessarily catching her — without being noticed. At the Storyteller's discretion, or if the target suspects she's being pursued, the target's player can roll Perception + Alertness whenever she has a chance to spot her tail (the Storyteller decides when such an opportunity arises). The pursuer's player opposes this with a Dexterity + Stealth roll (or Dexterity + Drive, if the shadower is in a vehicle). The difficulty for both rolls is typically 6, but can be modified by conditions (heavy crowds, empty streets, etc.). The target must score at least one more success than her shadow does to spot the tail; if she does, she may act accordingly.

Shadowers who have trained together can combine their separate rolls into one success total.

• **Sneaking [Dexterity + Stealth]:** A sneaking character uses Dexterity + Stealth as a resisted action against Perception + Alertness rolls from anyone able to detect her passing. The difficulty of both rolls is typically 6. Unless observers score more successes than the sneaking character does, she passes undetected. Noise, unsecured gear, lack of cover, or large groups of observers can increase Stealth difficulty. Security devices, scanners, or superior vantage points may add dice to Perception + Alertness rolls. On a botch, the character stumbles into one of the people she's avoiding, accidentally walks into the open, or performs some other act that compromises her.

Note that vampires using the Obfuscate Discipline (p. 184) may not have to make rolls at all.

• **Swimming [Stamina + Athletics]:** Assuming your character can swim at all (being able to do so requires one dot of Athletics), long-distance or long-duration swimming requires successful swimming rolls versus a difficulty determined by water conditions. After all, although vampires can't drown, they are corpses and thus have little buoyancy. The first roll is necessary only after the first hour of sustained activity, and only one success is needed. If a roll fails, the character loses ground — perhaps pulled out of her way by a current. If a roll botches, she starts to sink, or might even be hit by a heedless motorboat.

Vampires caught in shallow water during the day will take damage from sunlight (assume that a submerged vampire has protection equivalent to being under cloud cover).

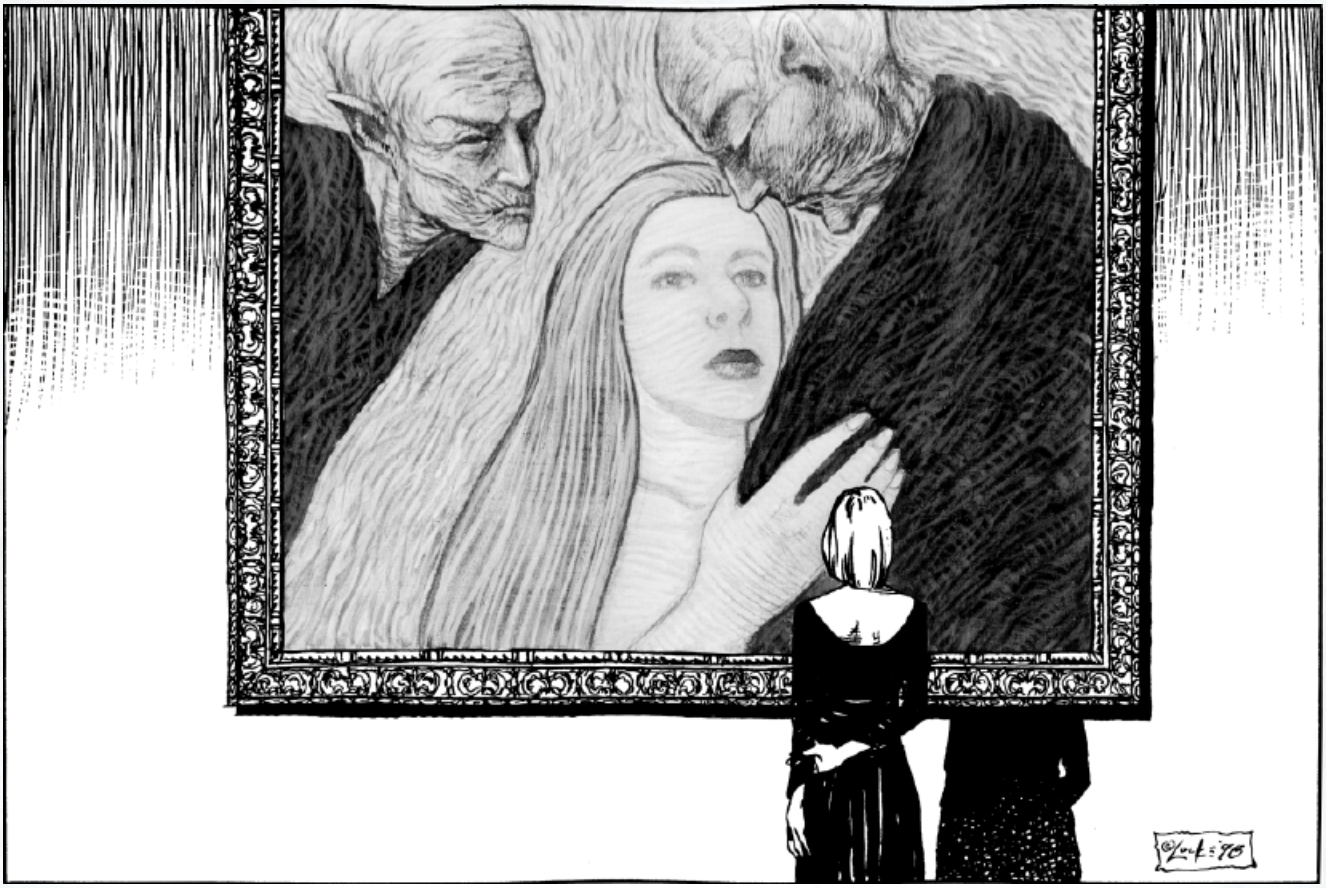
• **Throwing [Dexterity + Athletics]:** Objects (Molotov cocktails, knives, beer bottles) with a mass of two pounds/one kilogram or less can be thrown a distance of Strength x 5 yards/meters. For every additional two pounds/one kilogram of weight that an object has, this distance decreases by five yards/meters (particularly heavy objects don't go very far). As long as the object's mass doesn't reduce throwing distance to zero, your character can pick up and throw it. If an object can be lifted, but its mass reduces throwing distance to zero, the object can be hurled aside at best — about one yard or meter of distance. Obviously, if an object can't be lifted, it can't be thrown at all (refer instead to "Lifting/Breaking," p. 260).

The Storyteller may reduce throwing distances for particularly unwieldy objects or increase them for aerodynamic ones. Throwing an object with any degree of accuracy requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll versus difficulty 6 (to half maximum range) or 7 (half maximum to maximum range). This difficulty can be adjusted for wind conditions and other variables at the Storyteller's discretion. On a botch, your character may drop the object or strike a companion with it, or she might toss something that wasn't what she intended to throw, after all….

Mental Feats

These systems cover tasks involving the three Mental Attributes (Perception, Intelligence, and Wits), as well as tasks using the Virtues, Humanity and Paths, and Willpower. Mental tests can provide you with information about things your character knows but you, the player, don't. Still, you should depend on your creativity when solving problems — not on dice rolls.

• **Awakening [Perception, Humanity/Path]:** Vampires are nocturnal creatures and find it difficult to awaken during the day. A vampire disturbed in his haven while the sun is in the sky may roll Perception (+ Auspex rating, if the vampire has it) versus difficulty 8 to notice the disturbance. Upon stirring, the vampire must make a Humanity or Path roll (difficulty 8). Each success allows the vampire to act for one turn. Five successes mean the vampire is completely awake for the entire scene. Failure indicates the vampire slips back into slumber, but may make the Perception roll



to reawaken if circumstances allow. A botch means the vampire falls into deep sleep and will not awaken until sundown.

While active during the day, the vampire may have no more dice in any dice pool than his Humanity or Path rating.

• **Creation [variable]:** Some vampires were artists, musicians, writers, or other creative types in life. Others spend centuries trying to rekindle the spark of passion that undeath has taken from them. Certainly, the society of the Damned has gazed upon many wondrous (and horrific) works of art never seen by human eyes.

When trying to create something, a variety of rolls can be used, depending on what it is the character wishes to create. Perception (to come up with a subject worthy of expression) + Expression or Crafts (to capture the feeling in an artistic medium) is a common roll. In all cases, the player must decide the general parameters of what she wants her character to create — a haiku about roses, a portrait of the Prince, an epigram for the Archbishop's sermon, etc.

The difficulty is variable, depending on the nature of the creation (it's easier to write a limerick than a Petrarchan sonnet). The number of successes governs the quality of the creation: With one success, the character creates a mediocre, uninspired, but not terrible work, while with five successes the character creates a literary or artistic masterpiece. Some works (novels, large sculptures, vast murals) might require extended success rolls. On a botch, the character creates what she knows is the greatest work ever known to Kindred or kine (while everyone else who sees it immediately realizes what crap it actually is), or perhaps she embarrasses a patron, leaves out a pivotal figure, or goes off on a tangent that neglects her original intent and is thus unsuitable for her original purposes.

At the Storyteller's discretion, a vampire who creates a particularly inspired masterwork might be eligible for a rise in Humanity or certain Paths, via experience points. Likewise, a creative epiphany may be suitable for working through and curing a derangement (see p. 290).

• **Computer Use [Intelligence/Wits + Computer]:** Most business and political transactions involve the use of computers, which can give neonates a surprising advantage in the Jyhad. In times when almost everyone carries some sort of computer, the edge truly belongs to those who can collect information as it is needed, as well as quickly disseminating it. Haughty elders may

sneer at fledglings hunched over their smartphones instead of dispensing bon mots at Elysium, but if those fledglings are using social media to coordinate an ambush on one of those hated elders once court comes to a close, it's undeniable that a little computer savvy can even the odds that formerly favored the elders greatly.

Generally, Computer rolls are those that collect, display, or transfer information. Creating physical results (like remotely turning off a security system or activating a restricted elevator) is usually the purview of the Technology Knowledge. Of course, a single end result can sometimes be achieved by multiple methods.

Using computers typically falls under two distinct types of behavior.

The first type is comparatively benign or personal use. Tasks such as performing research, writing software, building a website, or participating in social networks can involve Computer in their dice pools if using the computer is the primary component of the action. For example, performing search-engine research on a topic might invoke an Intelligence + Computers roll to yield facts, while a botch would turn up completely misleading information. In most cases, these won't see much stressful dice-pool action unless performed in bizarre circumstances or with devices the user isn't familiar with. Additionally, what constitutes a computer can vary wildly, from a netbook in a cafe to a smartphone on the go to a traditional desktop machine.

Storytellers, life in a modern world inherently involves a certain quantity of computer use, so ask if it's really necessary to have a player roll to check his email unless there are interesting dramatic outcomes of failure. Note, too, that in some cases, even though the character is using a computer, the Computer Knowledge might not be the relevant Ability. For example, a player trying to join an online community of vampire hunters is probably using Wits + Subterfuge or Charisma + Expression, even though she's at a keyboard.

The second type of behavior is generally referred to as "hacking." In game terms, hacking is subverting computer security to obtain information that someone has made secure in order to control that information. Even more broadly, hacking can also describe turning a device or computer program against or beyond its original intent. Often, the result of this latter type of hacking is also to gain information, but in some cases, the hacker seeks to create a specific result. He might display a message on a screen that wouldn't normally receive it or create a nonexistent mortgage on the Ventrue Primogen's haven and marking it as in foreclosure. Resolve these situations in the same way as information-driven hacking, for the sake of simplicity.

A would-be hacker's player rolls Intelligence or Wits + Computer versus a variable difficulty (6 for standard systems, up to 9 for complicated situations like corporate server clusters, old government mainframes, and the like). Successes indicate the number of dice (up to the normal dice pool) that can be rolled to interact with the system once it's been breached.

Actively blocking a hacker is a resisted action; the opponent with the most successes wins. On a botch, the character may alert security to her presence or even reveal her identity to the system she's trying to breach.

Remember, too, that hacking is almost always an extended action. Storytellers, set the number of successes for extended actions via hacking high — it's all too tempting for players to use this as the "do anything I want because, you know, computers" Ability. It should take far more than a single success to evict a Kindred from her haven or to delete one's own birth records, for example.

• **Investigation [Perception + Investigation]:** Any search for clues, evidence, or hidden contraband involves Investigation. The Storyteller may add to the difficulty of investigations involving obscure clues or particularly well-concealed objects. One success reveals basic details, while multiple successes provide detailed information and may even allow deductions based on physical evidence. On a botch, obvious clues are missed or even destroyed accidentally.

• **Repair [Dexterity/Perception + Crafts]:** Depending on the precise specialty, the Crafts Skill allows for repairs of everything from pottery to automobile engines (though not computers). Before repairing a device that's on the fritz, your character must identify its problems (accomplished as a standard research roll; see below). Then, if repair is required, the Storyteller sets the difficulty of the repair roll. This difficulty depends on the problem's severity, whether the proper tools or any replacement parts are on hand, and if adverse conditions exist. An inspired research roll may offset these factors somewhat. A simple tire change is difficulty 4, while rebuilding an entire engine might be difficulty 9. Basic repairs take at least a few turns to complete. More complex repairs are extended actions that last 10 minutes for each success needed. On a botch, your character may simply waste time and a new part, or may make the problem worse.

• **Research [Intelligence + Academics/Occult/Science]:** Research is performed when searching computer databases for historical facts, when looking for obscure references in ancient documents, or when trying to learn the true name of a Methuselah. In all cases, the number of successes achieved determines the amount of information discovered; one success gives you at least basic information, while extra successes provide more details. The Storyteller may assign a high difficulty for particularly obscure data. On a botch, your character may not find anything at all or may uncover completely erroneous information.

• **Tracking [Perception + Survival]:** Unlike shadowing, tracking requires you to follow physical evidence to find a target. Discovering footprints, broken twigs, blood trails, or other physical signs leads the tracker right to the subject. Following such a trail is a standard action; multiple successes provide extra information (subject's rate of speed, estimated weight, number of people followed). The quarry can cover her tracks through a successful Wits + Survival roll. Each success on this roll adds one to the difficulty of tracking her. Abnormal weather, poor tracking conditions (city streets, Elysium), and a shortage of time also add to tracking difficulty. On a botch, your character not only loses the trail, but destroys the quarry's signs of passage.

Social Feats

These systems cover tasks involving the three Social Attributes (Charisma, Manipulation, and Appearance). Roleplaying usually supersedes any Social skill roll, for better or worse. Storytellers may ignore the Social systems when a player exhibits particularly good, or excruciatingly bad, roleplaying.

• **Carousing [Charisma + Empathy]:** You influence others (particularly potential vessels) to relax and have fun. This might include showing a potential ally a good time, loosening an informant's tongue, or making instant drinking buddies who come to your aid when a brawl starts. The difficulty is typically 6 (most people can be persuaded to loosen up, regardless of intellect or will), though it might be higher in the case of large (or surly) groups. Certain Natures (Bon Vivant, Curmudgeon) can also influence the roll's difficulty. On a botch, your character comes off as an obnoxious boor, or people begin to question why your character hasn't touched her own food and drink.…

• **Credibility [Manipulation/Perception + Subterfuge]:** The Subterfuge Talent is used with Manipulation when perpetrating a scam or with Perception when trying to detect one (a scam can range from impersonating the authorities to using forged papers). All parties involved, whether detecting the lie or telling it, make an appropriate roll (typically difficulty 7). The scam's "marks" must roll higher than the perpetrator to detect any deception. False credentials and other convincing props may add to the difficulty of uncovering the dupe, while teamwork may help reveal the scam. Hacking and/or intrusion rolls may be called for to pull off an inspired scam successfully. On a botch, the entire plan falls apart.

• **Fast-Talk [Manipulation + Subterfuge]:** When there's no time for subtlety, baffle them with nonsense. The target can be overwhelmed with a rapid succession of almost-believable half-truths. Hopefully, the subject believes anything she hears just to get away from the babble — or becomes so annoyed that she ignores your character completely. This is a resisted action — your character's Manipulation + Subterfuge against the target's Willpower. The difficulty of both rolls is typically 6, and whoever scores more successes wins. On a tie, more babbling is needed. On a botch, your character goes too far, angering the target and rambling without effect.

• **Interrogation [Manipulation + Empathy/Intimidation]:** Anyone can ask questions. With interrogation, you ask questions and have leverage. Interrogating someone peacefully (Manipulation + Empathy) involves asking strategic questions designed to reveal specific facts. This method is a resisted action between your character's Manipulation + Empathy and the subject's Willpower. Both actions are typically made against a difficulty of 6. Rolls are made at key points during questioning, probably every few minutes or at the end of an interrogation session.

Violent interrogation (Manipulation + Intimidation) involves torturing the victim's mind and/or body until she reveals what she knows. This is a resisted action between your character's Manipulation + Intimidation and the target's Stamina + 3 or Willpower (whichever is higher). Rolls are made every minute or turn, depending on the type of torture used. The subject loses a health level for every turn of physical torture, or one temporary Willpower point per turn of mental torture. The combined effect of physical and mental torture has devastating results. A botched roll can destroy the subject's body or mind.

Two or more interrogators can work together, combining successes; this works even if one interrogator

is using Empathy while another is using Intimidation (the classic "good cop/bad cop" ploy).

Whatever the interrogation method used, if you roll more successes in the resisted action, the target divulges additional information for each extra success rolled. If your extra successes exceed the victim's permanent Willpower rating, she folds completely and reveals everything she knows. The extent and relevance of shared information are up to the Storyteller (details are often skewed to reflect what the subject knows or by what she thinks her interrogator wants to hear).

• **Intimidation [Strength/Manipulation + Intimidation]:** Intimidation has two effects. Intimidation's passive effect doesn't involve a roll; it simply gives your character plenty of space — whether on a bus or in a bar. The higher your Intimidation rating, the wider the berth that others give him.

Intimidation's active application works through subtlety or outright threat. Subtlety is based on a *perceived* threat (losing one's job, being arrested, pain and agony later in life). Roll Manipulation + Intimidation in a resisted action against the subject's Willpower (difficulty 6 for both rolls); the target must get more successes or be effectively cowed.

The blatant form of intimidation involves direct physical threat. In this case, you may roll Strength + Intimidation in a resisted roll (difficulty 6) against either the subject's Willpower or her Strength + Intimidation (whichever is higher). On a botch, your character looks patently ridiculous and doesn't impress anyone in attendance for the rest of the scene.

• **Oration [Charisma + Leadership]:** From a general's rousing speeches to a politician's slick double-talk, the capacity to sway the masses creates and destroys empires. When your character speaks to an audience, from a small board meeting to a large crowd, roll Charisma + Leadership. Difficulty is typically 6; the Storyteller may increase the difficulty for a huge, cynical, dispassionate, or openly hostile audience. Oration is hit or miss — your character either succeeds or fails. On a botch, your character may damage her reputation or even be assaulted by the audience.

If the character has time to prepare a speech beforehand, the Storyteller may roll the character's Intelligence + Expression (difficulty 7). Success on this roll reduces the subsequent Charisma + Leadership difficulty by one. Failure has no effect, while a botch actually increases the Charisma + Leadership difficulty (the character inserts a gaffe into the speech).

• **Performance [Charisma + Performance]:** Vampires are certainly egotistical creatures, and some among their number are actors, poets, musicians, or other sorts of entertainers. When a character performs live before an audience, roll Charisma + Performance (difficulty 7). As with oration, the audience's mood can increase the difficulty, as can the performance's complexity. One success indicates an enjoyable, if uninspired, effort, while additional successes make the performance a truly memorable event to even the surliest crowd. On a botch, your character forgets lines, hits the wrong chord, or otherwise flubs.

• **Seduction [variable]:** Vampires are master seducers, for their very sustenance often depends on coaxing potential prey into an intimate liaison. The particular situation and style of the seduction determine which Ability is used.

Seduction is an involved process involving several different rolls and Abilities:

• First roll (approach/opening remarks): The player rolls Appearance + Subterfuge versus a difficulty equal to the subject's Wits + 3. Each success beyond the first adds one die to the vampire's dice pool for the second roll. A failure means the subject expresses his disinterest; a botch means the subject might grow disgusted or angry.

• Second roll (witty repartee): The player rolls Wits + Subterfuge versus a difficulty equal to the subject's Intelligence + 3. Again, each success beyond the initial one adds one die to the dice pool for the final roll. If the roll fails, the subject breaks off the contact, but might prove receptive at a later date (after all, the first impression was good).

• Third roll (suggestive/intimate conversation): The player rolls Charisma + Empathy versus a difficulty of the subject's Perception + 3. If the third roll succeeds, the subject is enamored with the character and agrees to accompany her to a private spot. What happens next is best handled with roleplaying.

On a botch, the vampire likely ends up with a drink in her face.

Spending Willpower

Willpower is one of the most active and important Traits in **Vampire**. Because there are so many ways to expend, regain, and use Willpower, it fluctuates more than any other Trait (besides blood pool) in the game.

Willpower is a very versatile Trait, so make sure you understand how to use it.

• A player may spend one of her character's Willpower points to gain an automatic success on a single action. Only one point of Willpower may be used in a single turn in this manner, but the success is guaranteed and may not be canceled, even by botches. By using Willpower in this way, it is possible to succeed at a given action simply by concentrating. For extended rolls, these extra successes may make the critical difference between accomplishment and failure.

Note: You must declare that you are spending a Willpower point *before* you make an actual roll for a character's action; you can't retroactively cancel a botch by spending a Willpower point at the last minute. Also, the Storyteller may declare that a Willpower point may not be spent on a given action (such as attacking in combat).

• Sometimes, the Storyteller may rule that a character automatically takes some action based on instinct or urge — for example, stepping back from a chasm or leaping away from a patch of sunlight filtering through a window. The Storyteller may allow a player to spend a Willpower point and avoid taking this reactive maneuver. It should be noted that the impulse may return at the Storyteller's discretion; a player may need to spend multiple Willpower points over the course of a few turns to stay on task. Sometimes the urge may be overcome by the force of the character's will; at other times, the character has no choice but to follow his instinct (i.e., the character runs out of Willpower points or no longer wishes to expend them).

• A Willpower point may be spent to prevent a derangement from manifesting, with the Storyteller's permission. Eventually, if enough Willpower points are spent (as determined by the Storyteller), the derangement may be overcome and eliminated, as enough denial of the derangement remedies the aberration. Malkavians may never overcome their initial derangement, though Willpower may be spent to deny it for a short period of time.

• By spending a Willpower point, wound penalties can be ignored for one turn. This allows a character to override pain and injury in order to take one last-ditch action. However, an incapacitated or torpored character may not spend Willpower in this manner.

Regaining Willpower

Willpower may be recovered as well as spent. The following situations earn the character back a point or more of Willpower, though a character's Willpower pool may never exceed her Willpower rating. The only way to increase a character's Willpower *rating* is through experience-point expenditure.

Generally, a character's Willpower pool may be replenished whenever the character fulfills a goal or has an opportunity to restore her self-confidence. Ultimately, specific instances of Willpower restoration are up to the Storyteller. For this reason, Storytellers are advised to be prudent in allowing characters to regain Willpower; it is a powerful and versatile Trait, and permitting players to rely on it too much strips much of the challenge from a story.

• Characters' Willpower pools replenish fully at the end of a given story (and that's *story*, not *session*). The Storyteller may restrict this by requiring that the characters achieve (or partially achieve) a goal or otherwise boost their self-esteem. For example, if the characters didn't destroy a powerful and corrupt elder but did manage to obstruct his immediate plans, allow them to replenish their Willpower pools.

• (Storyteller's Option) Characters regain one Willpower point each night when they first rise. This is easy on the bookkeeping, and allows a steady stream of Willpower replenishment (not to mention the fact that players are already writing on that part of the character sheet when they mark off their nightly blood consumption).

• (Storyteller's Option) If a character attains some extraordinary goal or fulfills an outstanding objective, the Storyteller may reward her with a point of Willpower. For example, if a character manages to deter a team of vampire-hunters from her sire's haven, the Storyteller may award a Willpower point to that character.

• (Storyteller's Option) If a character behaves in a manner that fulfills her Nature Archetype, the Storyteller may reward the character with one to three Willpower points (as stated in the Archetype descriptions). For example, if a Rebel character rabidly opposes a powerful elder, and that elder is later revealed to be a Sabbat spy, that character may be given a point of Willpower.

Storytellers are encouraged to create their own systems or modify our systems to suit their troupe's style of play. Indeed, the manner in which a Storyteller allows, or refuses to allow, Willpower replenishment can determine the overall mood of the chronicle.



Using Blood Pool

Vampires must subtract one blood point from their blood pools every night, whether they rise for the evening or not, as the unnatural magics animating their dead bodies consume the vitae they have taken from their prey. Blood points may also be spent in a variety of ways, and may be replenished only by consuming blood.

Blood pool also affects Self-Control (or Instinct) rolls, which come into play when a character's frenzy becomes imminent. A player may never roll more dice for a Self-Control or Instinct roll than the character has blood pool. For example, if a character has only two blood points left, her player may roll only two dice for a Self-Control roll, even if the character's Self-Control rating is 4. Voracious vampires just don't fight the Beast very well.

Spending Blood Pool

As previously mentioned, every vampire expends one blood point each night when she awakens, whether or not she actually goes out and about. Characters may also use blood points in a variety of other ways. A vampire may spend only a certain number of blood points per turn; this number is dependent on the vampire's Generation. See the Generation chart (p. 270) to determine this number.

• A vampire may spend one blood point to heal one normal (bashing or lethal) health level of damage. Characters must be resting and relatively inactive for this healing to take place, though this recovery is rapid: One blood point per turn may be spent to heal one health level, though vampires of lower Generations may heal as many health levels per turn as they can spend blood points.

Note that blood expenditure is the *only* way that vampires can heal wounds. Just as their immortality prevents the Kindred from aging and dying naturally, so it also inhibits the recuperative processes natural to a living body.

• A player may spend one blood point to increase a single Physical Attribute (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina) by one dot for the duration of the scene. The player must announce at the beginning of the turn that he is doing this. A player may spend as many blood points on increasing Physical Attributes as the vampire may use in a turn (based upon Generation), but may only freely increase these Traits up to *one higher* than their gen-

erational maximum (i.e., a Tenth-Generation vampire may increase Traits to a maximum of 6). With effort, a character may increase a Physical Attribute to above this limit, but each dot above the limit lasts for only three turns after the character stops spending blood. This enables vampires to perform truly amazing physical feats, such as throwing cars, moving preternaturally quickly, and withstanding blows that would fell trees.

Note: No character may increase Physical Attributes above 10.

• A vampire may give a number of blood points to another Kindred, thereby enabling the recipient to use the blood as if it were her own. This is often a grisly prospect, as the "donor" must open his own vein and physically deliver the blood to the needy Kindred. Of course, if a vampire is ever in a situation in which she *needs* blood, she's likely all out of it herself, and may frenzy and take too much from the donor. Blood gifts should be given with care.

If a vampire (or mortal) partakes of another Kindred's blood three times, she becomes bound to that vampire through the mystical properties of vitae. This is known as the blood bond. For more on blood bonds, see p. 286.

• A vampire may gift a mortal or animal with a dose of his vitae, allowing the mortal in question to inject or ingest it. For so long as the mortal retains the Kindred vitae in her system, she is considered a ghoul (see the Appendix, p. 496, for more on ghouls).

• Though most vampires (with the exception of Nosferatu) appear much as they did in life, they still display certain corpselike features; for example, their skin is unnaturally cold and grows more ashen with age, and they do not breathe. By spending a variable number of blood points, a vampire may will himself to appear more human for a scene: flushing his skin, drawing breath, even becoming capable of engaging in sexual intercourse (this last, while helpful in certain types of feeding, in no way means that the vampire may inseminate a mortal or become pregnant; a corpse is still a corpse, after all). Performing these actions for a scene requires an expenditure of blood points equal to (8 minus Humanity); thus, Kindred with Humanity ratings of 8 or higher may accomplish these feats automatically, while vampires with low Humanity find the process exceedingly arduous.

Only vampires with Humanity may use blood in this manner; vampires on a Path have forsaken their human sides entirely.

• Blood may be spent to fuel certain vampiric Disciplines. Consult Chapter Four or Chapter Ten to see which individual powers require blood expenditure.

Earning Blood Pool

Vampires replenish blood pool by taking it from others. "Others" need not be human, though a vampire who is too squeamish to take sustenance from the kine is often ridiculed by his peers — vampires are predators, after all, no matter how unnatural.

Drinking blood is a risky proposition. As vampires gorge on the vitae of their victims, there is always the chance that they may take too much. Unhygienic vampires may communicate disease by exposing a vessel to bacteria and viruses carried in other blood that still stains their fangs. A vampire may take only 20 percent of a vessel's blood (2 blood points for a normal human) and leave it relatively safe. Taking half of a vessel's blood necessitates hospitalization for that vessel. Taking all a vessel's blood will kill it.

A vampire may take up to three blood points from a given vessel in a turn. The shorter the turn, the more forcefully the Kindred steals the vitae. It is generally impossible to take more than three blood points from a vessel in three seconds (the shortest a turn gets), though some Nosferatu with hideously distended mouths are able to take more through sheer surface area bleed. Most vampires drink their victim's blood slowly, so as to savor the luscious fluid and draw as much pleasure as possible out of the experience.

Once the Kindred breaks her vessel's skin with her fangs, that vessel no longer resists the vampire (if he did in the first place). Indeed, the ecstasy caused by the vampire's bite is called the Kiss, and it engenders as much exquisite, subtly painful pleasure in vampires as it does in mortals. Exceptionally strong-willed mortals (9+ Willpower) may continue to resist, but even these vessels eventually succumb to the pleasure. Some Kindred and kine even develop lusts for the Kiss and actively seek out those who will drink their blood.

Note: While Kindred find the Kiss pleasurable, they may resist it more readily than mortals can. Any Kindred, regardless of Willpower, may make a Self-Control/Instinct roll (difficulty 8) to avoid succumbing to the Kiss. This enables vampiric victims of diablerie (p. 293) to have a chance at fighting back.

Wounded characters typically have less blood than healthy characters. Assume that a normal-sized human has one fewer blood point in his system for each health level of damage he currently suffers. Mortals regain one

blood point per day (unless, of course, they are infused with vitae from some other source). Vampires do not lose blood points to wounds in this manner, though they often spend blood to heal wounds they have suffered.

The blood of animals is not as nourishing as the blood of humans. Though an animal may physically have a greater volume of blood than a man, vampires draw less sustenance from it. Hence, animals have fewer blood *points*, even if they have more blood.

Old blood is never as nourishing as fresh blood. In fact, many vampires refuse to drink old blood, whether it comes from human corpses, blood banks, or a vampire's private reserve. However, the blood of other vampires, particularly elders, is quite potent. When drinking from elder vampires, each blood point taken may be so concentrated that it is actually worth two — or more! — normal blood points in use. Thus it is possible to obtain a vast amount of blood points by partaking of elder blood, though such prized vitae is rarely available to neonates or even ancillae. Essentially, elders have greater blood pools not because they are bodily larger than younger vampires, but because the blood they ingest is more concentrated in their ancient veins. Werewolf blood is similarly potent.

Vessel	Blood Pool
Vampire	10+
Werewolf	20
Average human	10
Child	5
Cow	5
Dog	2
Cat	1
Plasma bag	1
Bird	1/2
Bat/Rat	1/4

Generation	Max. Trait Rating	Blood Pool Max.	Blood Points/Turn
Third	10	???	???
Fourth	9	50	10
Fifth	8	40	8
Sixth	7	30	6
Seventh	6	20	4
Eighth	5	15	3
Ninth	5	14	2
Tenth	5	13	1
Eleventh	5	12	1
Twelfth	5	11	1
Thirteenth +	5	10	1

Max Trait Rating: This indicates the highest permanent Trait rating (excluding Humanity/Path ratings and Willpower ratings) a vampire of the given Generation can have. This is especially important with regard to Disciplines and Attributes.

Blood Pool Max: The maximum number of blood points a vampire may keep in her system. Remember that elder vampires concentrate their blood — while the *volume* of blood in their bodies is no greater than any other vampire's, each pint of blood is *worth* more than one point.

Blood Points/Turn: This indicates how many blood points a vampire can spend in a single turn.

Combat Systems

Combat in **Vampire** attempts to capture the drama of violent conflict without downplaying its grim reality. Every effort has been made to create a system has the feeling of dynamic, vicious combat while still leaving room for the unique (and often spectacular) elements that vampires bring to it.

The Storyteller should be flexible when arbitrating combat situations; no rules can fully reflect the variety of situations encountered in warfare. If these systems slow the game or cause bickering, don't use them. Combat systems are meant to add depth to the game, not create conflict between the players and the Storyteller.

Types of Combat

There are two types of combat, each involving the same basic system with minor differences:

- **Close Combat:** This covers unarmed combat (Dexterity + Brawl) and melee (Dexterity + Melee). Unarmed combat can involve a down-and-dirty bar brawl or an honorable test of skill. Opponents must be within touching distance (one yard/meter) to engage in unarmed combat. Melee involves handheld weapons, from broken bottles to swords. Opponents must be within two yards/meters of each other to engage in melee.
- **Ranged Combat:** Armed combat using projectile weapons — pistols, rifles, shotguns, etc. Opponents must normally be within sight (and weapon range) of each other to engage in a firefight.

Combat Turns

In combat, many things happen at virtually the same time. Since this can make things a bit sticky in a game, combat is divided into a series of three-second turns. Each combat turn has three stages — *Initiative*, *Attack*, and *Resolution* — to make it easier to keep track of things.

Stage One: Initiative

This stage organizes the turn and is when you declare your character's action. Various actions are possible — anything from leaping behind a wall to shouting a warning. You must declare what your character does, in as much detail as the Storyteller requires.

Everyone, player and Storyteller character alike, rolls one die and adds it to their *initiative rating* (Dexterity + Wits); the character with the highest result acts first, with the remaining characters acting in decreasing order of result. (Storytellers looking for a slightly faster or more predictable system can choose to use Dexterity + Wits + 6 for each character's initiative, forgoing the die roll.) If two characters get the same total, the one with the higher initiative rating goes first. If initiative ratings are also the same, the two characters act simultaneously. Wound penalties subtract directly from a character's initiative rating, while Celerity dots that aren't being used for extra actions add to it (see Celerity, p. 142).

Although you declare your character's action now (including stating that your character delays her action to see what someone else does), you wait until the *attack* stage to implement that action. At this time, you must also state if any multiple actions will be performed, if Disciplines will be activated, and/or if Willpower points will be spent. Characters declare in reverse order of initiative, thus giving faster characters the opportunity to react to slower characters' actions.

All of your character's actions are staged at her rank in the order of initiative. There are three exceptions to this rule: The first is if your character delays her action, in which case her maneuvers happen when she finally takes action. Your character may act at any time after her designated order in the initiative, even to interrupt another, slower character's action. If two charac-

Describing the Scene

Before each turn, the Storyteller should describe the scene from each character's perspective. Sometimes this will be a wrap-up of the last turn, making what occurred clear to all players. This constant description is essential to avoid confusion.

This is the Storyteller's chance to organize and arrange events so that all goes smoothly when the players interact with the environment she has created. The Storyteller should make her descriptions as interesting as possible, leaving open all sorts of possibilities for characters' actions.

ters both delay their actions, and both finally act at the same time, the one with the higher initiative rating for the turn acts first.

The second breach of the initiative order occurs in the case of a defensive action (see "Aborting Actions" and "Defensive Maneuvers," both on p. 274), which your character may perform at any time as long as she has an action left.

Finally, all additional actions that turn (including actions gained through Celerity) occur at the end of the turn. If two or more characters take multiple actions, the actions occur in order of initiative rating. An exception is made for defensive multiple actions, such as multiple dodges, which happen when they need to happen in order to avert attack.

Stage Two: Attack

Attacks are the meat of the combat turn. An action's success or failure and potential impact on the target are determined at this stage. You use a certain Attribute/Ability combination depending on the type of combat in which your character is engaged:

• **Close Combat:** Use Dexterity + Brawl (unarmed) or Dexterity + Melee (armed).

• **Ranged Combat:** Use Dexterity + Firearms (guns) or Dexterity + Athletics (thrown weapons).

Remember, if your character doesn't have points in the necessary Ability, simply default to the Attribute on which it's based (in most cases, Dexterity).

In ranged combat, your weapon may modify your dice pool or difficulty (due to rate of fire, a targeting scope, etc.); check the weapon's statistics for details.

Most attacks are made versus difficulty 6. This can be adjusted for situational modifiers (long range, cramped quarters), but the default attack roll is versus 6. If you get no successes, the character fails her attack and inflicts no damage. If you botch, not only does the attack fail, but something nasty happens: The weapon jams or explodes, the blade breaks, an ally is hit, and so on.

Stage Three: Resolution

During this stage, you determine the damage inflicted by your character's attack, and the Storyteller describes what occurs in the turn. Resolution is a mixture of game and story; it's more interesting for players to hear "Your claws rip through his bowels; he screams in pain, dropping his gun as he clutches his bloody abdomen" than simply "Uh, he loses four health levels." Attack and damage rolls are merely ways of describing what happens in the story, and it's important to maintain the narrative of combat even as you make the die roll.

Normally, additional successes gained on a Trait roll simply mean that you do exceptionally well. In combat, each extra success you get on an attack roll equals an additional die you add automatically to your damage dice pool. This creates cinematic and often fatal combat.

Damage Types

All attacks have specific damage ratings, indicating the number of dice to roll for the attack's damage (called the *damage dice pool*). Some damage dice pools are based on the attacker's Strength, while others are based on the weapon used. Damage dice rolls are made versus difficulty 6. Each success on the damage roll inflicts one health level of damage on the target. However, the damage applied may be one of three types:

• **Bashing:** Bashing damage comprises punches and other blunt trauma that are less likely to kill a victim (especially a vampire) instantly. All characters use their full Stamina ratings to resist bashing effects, and the damage heals fairly quickly. Bashing damage is applied to the Health boxes on your character sheet with a "/."

• **Lethal:** Attacks meant to cause immediate and fatal injury to the target. Mortals may not use Stamina to resist lethal effects, and the damage takes quite a while to heal. Vampires may resist lethal damage with their Stamina. Lethal damage is applied to the Health boxes on your vampire's character sheet with a "X."

• **Aggravated:** Certain types of attacks are deadly even to the undead. Fire, sunlight, and the teeth and claws of vampires, werewolves, and other supernatural beings are considered aggravated damage. Aggravated damage cannot be soaked except with Fortitude, and it takes quite a while to heal. Aggravated damage is applied to the Health boxes on your character sheet with an asterisk ("*").

Damage dice pools can never be reduced to lower than one die; any attack that strikes its target has at least a small chance of inflicting damage before a soak roll is made. Moreover, damage effect rolls cannot botch; a botched roll simply means the attack glances harmlessly off the target. Specifics on applying damage effects are described on pp. 284-285.

Soak

Characters can resist a certain degree of physical punishment; this is called *soaking* damage. Your char-

acter's soak dice pool is equal to her Stamina. A normal human can soak only bashing damage (this reflects the body's natural resilience to such attacks). A vampire (or other supernatural being) is tougher, and can thus use soak dice against lethal damage. Aggravated damage may be soaked only with the Discipline of Fortitude. Fortitude also adds to the defender's soak rating against bashing or lethal damage (so a character with Stamina 3 and Fortitude 2 has five soak dice against bashing and lethal damage, but only two soak dice against aggravated damage).

Combat Summary Chart

Stage One: Initiative

• Roll initiative (or add 6 to the initiative rating). Everyone declares their actions. The character with the highest initiative performs her action first. Actions can be delayed to any time later in the order of initiative.

• Declare any multiple actions, reducing dice pools accordingly. Declare Discipline activation and Willpower expenditure.

Stage Two: Attack

• For unarmed close-combat attacks, roll Dexterity + Brawl.

• For armed close-combat attacks, roll Dexterity + Melee.

• For ranged combat, roll Dexterity + Firearms (guns) or Dexterity + Athletics (thrown weapons).

• A character can abort to a defensive action (block, dodge, parry) at any time before her action is performed, as long as you make a successful Willpower roll (or a Willpower point is spent).

Stage Three: Resolution

• Determine total damage effect (weapon type or maneuver), adding any extra dice gained from successes on the attack roll.

• Targets may attempt to soak damage, if possible.



After an attack hits and inflicts damage, the defender may make a soak roll to resist. This is considered a reflexive action; characters need not take an action or split a dice pool to soak. Unless otherwise stated, soak rolls are made versus difficulty 6. Each soak success subtracts one die from the total damage inflicted. As with damage rolls, soak rolls may not botch, only fail.

Armor

Armor adds to your character's soak. The armor's rating combines with your base soak for purposes of reducing damage. Light armor offers a small amount of protection, but doesn't greatly hinder mobility. Heavy armor provides a lot of protection, but can restrict flexibility.

Armor protects against bashing, lethal, and aggravated damage from teeth and claws; it does not protect against fire or sunlight. Armor is not indestructible. If the damage rolled in a single attack equals twice the armor's rating, the armor is destroyed.

Armor types, their ratings, and other specifics are described on p. 280.

Combat Maneuvers

These maneuvers give you a variety of choices in combat. Roleplaying combat is more entertaining if you can visualize your character's moves instead of simply rolling dice. Most of these maneuvers take one action to execute.

General Maneuvers

• **Aborting Actions:** You can abandon your character's declared action in favor of a defensive action as long as your character hasn't acted in the turn. Actions that can take the place of a previously declared action include block, dodge, and parry. A successful Willpower roll versus difficulty 6 (or the expenditure of a Willpower point) is required for a character to abort an action and perform a defensive one instead. When spending Willpower for an abort maneuver, a character may declare the Willpower expenditure at the time of the abort. A Willpower roll to abort is considered a reflexive action. (See "Defensive Maneuvers," below, for descriptions of block, dodge, and parry.)

• **Ambush:** Ambushes involve surprising a target to get in a decisive first strike. The attacker rolls Dexterity + Stealth in a resisted action against the target's Perception + Alertness. If the attacker scores more successes, she can stage one free attack on the target; she then adds any extra successes from the resisted roll to her attack dice pool. On a tie, the attacker still attacks first, although the target may perform a defensive maneuver. If the defender gets more successes, he spots the ambush, and both parties determine initiative normally. Targets already involved in combat cannot be ambushed.

• **Blind Fighting/Fire:** Staging attacks while blind (or in pitch darkness) usually incurs a +2 difficulty, and ranged attacks cannot be accurately made at all. Powers such as Heightened Senses (p. 134) and Eyes of the Beast (p. 199) mitigate this penalty.

• **Flank and Rear Attacks:** Characters attacking targets from the flank gain an additional attack die. Characters attacking from the rear gain two additional attack dice.

• **Movement:** A character may move half of her running distance (see "Movement," p. 258) and still take an action in a turn. Other maneuvers such as leaping or tumbling may be considered separate actions, depending on their complexity.

• **Multiple Actions:** If you declare multiple actions, declare the total number of actions you wish to attempt and determine which of the dice pools is the smallest. Then, divide that number of dice between all of your actions. If a character performs *only* defensive actions in a turn, use the appropriate block, dodge, or parry system. See Chapter Five, p. 248 for more information.

• **Targeting:** Aiming for a specific location incurs an added difficulty, but can bypass armor or cover, or can result in an increased damage effect. The Storyteller should consider special results beyond a simple increase in damage, depending on the attack and the target.

Target Size	Difficulty	Damage
Medium (limb, briefcase)	+1	No modifier
Small (hand, head, cellphone)	+2	+1
Precise (eye, heart, lock)	+3	+2

Defensive Maneuvers

It's a given that your character tries to avoid being hit in combat — that's why everyone makes attack rolls to try to hit you. Sometimes, though, *all* your character wants to do is avoid attacks. You may announce a de-

Maneuver Characteristics

Maneuvers are typically performed versus difficulty 6. Maneuvers with specific combat effects may modify your attack roll, difficulty, or damage dice pool.

Traits: The Trait combination used for the action taken. If your character doesn't have a rating in the needed Ability, default to its base Attribute.

Accuracy: The dice added to the roll to hit an opponent. A "+3" adds three dice to the dice pool for that attack.

Difficulty: Any additions or subtractions to an attack's difficulty (which is most often 6). A "+2" means the difficulty of an attack, if initially 6, is increased to 8.

Damage: The damage dice pool used.

fensive action at any time before your character's opponent makes an attack roll, as long as your character has an action left to perform. You can declare a defensive action on your character's turn in the initiative, or can even *abort* to a defensive maneuver. You must make a successful Willpower roll (or may simply spend one point of Willpower) to abort. If the Willpower roll fails, your character must carry out the action that you declared originally.

There are three types of defensive actions: block, dodge, and parry. Your character can defend against virtually any kind of attack with these three maneuvers. However, your character may not be able to avoid every single attack that's directed at her. She can't dodge when there's no room to maneuver, and she can't block or parry if she doesn't know an attack is coming.

Each defensive maneuver uses the same basic system: The defensive action is a resisted roll against the opponent's attack roll. Unless the attacker gets more total successes, he misses. If the attacker gets more successes, those that he achieves in excess of the defender's successes, if any, are used to hit (the attacker doesn't necessarily use all the successes he rolled). So if the defender has fewer successes than the attacker does, the defender's maneuver can still reduce the effectiveness of the attack, even if the maneuver can't counteract it completely.

- **Block:** A Dexterity + Brawl maneuver using your character's own body to deflect a hand-to-hand bashing attack. Lethal and aggravated attacks cannot be blocked unless the defender has Fortitude or is wearing armor.

- **Dodge:** A Dexterity + Athletics maneuver useful for avoiding attacks of all types. Your character bobs and weaves to avoid Melee or Brawl attacks (if there's no room to maneuver, she must block or parry instead). In gunfights, your character moves at least one yard/meter and ends up behind cover (if there's no room to maneuver or no cover available, she can drop to the ground). If your character remains under cover or prone, cover rules apply against further Firearms attacks (see "Cover," p. 278).

- **Parry:** A Dexterity + Melee maneuver using a weapon to block a Brawl or Melee attack. If a character makes a Brawl attack and the defender parries with a weapon that normally causes lethal damage, the attacker can actually be hurt by a successful parry. If the defender rolls more successes than the attacker does in the resisted action, the defender rolls the weapon's base damage plus the parry's extra successes as a damage dice pool against the attacker.

Block, dodge, and parry can be performed as part of a multiple action in your character's turn (punching then blocking, shooting then dodging, parrying then striking). Using a multiple action to act and defend is advantageous because your character can still accomplish something in a turn besides avoiding attacks.

Rather than having to divide your dice pool among multiple defensive actions, you may declare that your character spends an entire turn defending. The normal multiple-action rules are not used in this case. Instead, you have a full dice pool for the first defensive action, but lose one die, cumulatively, for each subsequent defense action made in the same turn. It is still difficult to avoid several incoming attacks, but not as difficult as trying to attempt multiple things at once.

Remember that any actions, including defensive ones, versus multiple attackers still suffer difficulty penalties (see "Multiple Opponents," p. 276).

Close Combat Maneuvers

This is simply a listing of the common maneuvers used in close combat; feel free to develop your own

moves (with the Storyteller's approval). All hand-to-hand attacks inflict bashing damage unless stated otherwise. The damage inflicted by melee attacks depends on the weapon type (see the Melee Weapons Chart, p. 280). It is typically lethal, though clubs and other blunt instruments inflict bashing damage. All references to Strength also gain the benefit of Potence, as detailed on p. 192.

Difficulty and damage for these maneuvers may be modified at the Storyteller's discretion, depending on the combat style the character uses. As always, drama and excitement take precedence over rules systems.

• **Bite:** This maneuver is available only to vampires (or other supernatural creatures with sharp teeth, such as werewolves). A bite maneuver is a "combat" bite, intended to cause damage rather than drain blood. Bite damage is aggravated. To use a bite attack, the vampire must first perform a successful clinch, hold, or tackle maneuver (see below). On the turn following the successful attack, the player may declare the bite attempt and make a roll using the modifiers below.

Alternatively, a player can declare her vampire's bite to be a "Kiss" attack. A Kiss is resolved in the same way as a normal bite, but inflicts no health levels of damage. Upon connecting with a Kiss, the vampire may begin to drain the victim's blood at the normal rate, and the victim is typically helpless to resist (see p. 269 for specifics). Following the Kiss, a vampire may, if she chooses, lick the puncture wound of the Kiss closed, thereby removing any evidence that she has fed.

Traits: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: +1 **Damage:** Strength +1

• **Claw:** This attack is available to vampires with claws, such as those from the Protean power of Feral Claws or bone spurs constructed with the Vicissitude power of Bonecraft. A few other supernatural creatures, such as werewolves, also have claws. A claw attack inflicts aggravated damage (if Feral Claws) or lethal damage (if a Vicissitude-constructed weapon).

Traits: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Strength +1

• **Clinch:** On a successful attack roll, the attacker goes into a clinch with the target. In the first turn, the attacker may roll Strength damage. In each subsequent turn, combatants act on their orders in the initiative. A combatant can inflict Strength damage automatically or attempt to escape the clinch. No other actions are allowed until one combatant breaks free. To escape a clinch, make a resisted Strength + Brawl roll against the opponent. If the escaping character has more successes, she breaks free; if not, the characters continue to grapple in the next turn.

Traits: Strength + Brawl **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Strength

• **Disarm:** To strike an opponent's weapon, the attacker must make an attack roll at +1 difficulty. If successful, the attacker rolls damage normally. If successes rolled exceed the opponent's Strength rating, the opponent takes no damage but is disarmed. A botch usually means the attacker drops her own weapon or is struck by her target's weapon.

Traits: Dexterity + Melee **Difficulty:** +1
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Special

• **Hold:** This attack inflicts no damage, as the intent is to immobilize rather than injure the subject. On a successful roll, the attacker holds the target until the subject's next action. At that time, both combatants roll resisted Strength + Brawl actions; the subject remains immobilized (able to take no other action) until she rolls more successes than the attacker does.

Traits: Strength + Brawl **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** None

• **Kick:** Kicks range from simple front kicks to aerial spins. The base attack is at +1 difficulty and inflicts the attacker's Strength +1 in damage. These ratings may be modified further at the Storyteller's discretion, increasing in damage and/or difficulty as the maneuver increases in complexity.

Ability: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** +1
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Strength +1

• **Multiple Opponents:** A character who battles multiple opponents in close combat suffers attack and defense difficulties of +1, cumulative, for each opponent after the first (to a maximum of +4).

• **Strike:** The attacker lashes out with a fist. The base attack is a standard action and inflicts the character's Strength in damage. The Storyteller may adjust the difficulty and/or damage depending on the type of punch: hook, jab, haymaker, karate strike.

Traits: Dexterity + Brawl **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Strength

• **Sweep:** The attacker uses her own legs to knock the legs out from under her opponent. The target takes Strength damage and must roll Dexterity + Athletics

(difficulty 8) or suffer a knockdown (see "Maneuver Complications," p. 279).

The attacker can also use a staff, chain, or similar implement to perform a sweep. The effect is the same, although the target takes damage per the weapon type.

Traits: Dexterity + Brawl/Melee **Difficulty:** +1
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Str; knockdown

• **Tackle:** The attacker rushes her opponent, tackling him to the ground. The attack roll is at +1 difficulty, and the maneuver inflicts Strength +1 damage. Additionally, both combatants must roll Dexterity + Athletics (difficulty 7) or suffer a knockdown (see "Maneuver Complications," p. 279). Even if the target's Athletics roll succeeds, he is unbalanced, suffering +1 difficulty to his actions for the next turn.

Traits: Strength + Brawl **Difficulty:** +1
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Strength +1

• **Weapon Length:** It is difficult to get in range with a punch or knife if someone else is wielding a sword or staff. A character being fended off with a longer weapon must close in one yard/meter before striking, losing a die from her attack roll in the process.

• **Weapon Strike:** A slashing blow, thrust, or jab, depending on the weapon used. See the Melee Weapons Chart, p. 280, for particulars.

Traits: Dexterity + Melee **Difficulty:** Normal
Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Weapon type

Ranged Combat Maneuvers

Many physical conflicts involve ranged weapons. The following maneuvers allow for a number of useful actions during a firefight. Don't feel limited by this list; if the need arises, try developing a new maneuver (at the Storyteller's discretion). Refer to the Ranged Weapons Chart, p. 281, for specific information.

• **Aiming:** The attacker adds one die to her attack dice pool on a single shot for each turn spent aiming. The maximum number of dice that can be added in this way is equal to the character's Perception, and a character must have Firearms 1 or better to use this maneuver. A scope adds two more dice to the attacker's pool in the first turn of aiming (in addition to those added for Perception). The attacker may do nothing but aim during this time. Additionally, it isn't possible to aim at a target that is moving faster than a walk.



• **Automatic Fire:** The weapon unloads its entire ammunition clip in one attack against a single target. The attacker makes a single roll, adding 10 dice to her accuracy. However, the attack roll is at a +2 difficulty due to the weapon's recoil. Extra successes add to the damage dice pool, which is still treated as equivalent to one bullet. An attacker using automatic fire may not target a specific area of the body.

This attack is permissible only if the weapon's clip is at least half-full to begin with.

Traits: Dexterity + Firearms **Difficulty:** +2

Accuracy: +10 **Damage:** Special

• **Cover:** Cover increases an attacker's difficulty to hit a target (and often the target's ability to fire back). Difficulty penalties for hitting a target under various types of cover are listed below. A character who fires back from behind cover is also at something of a disadvantage to hit, as he exposes himself and ducks back under protection. Firearms attacks made by a defender who is under cover are at one lower difficulty than listed below. (If a listed difficulty is +1, then the defender suffers no penalty to make attacks from under that cover.) If your character hides behind a wall, attackers' Firearms rolls have a +2 difficulty. Your character's attacks staged from behind that wall are at +1 difficulty.

Note that difficulties for combatants who are both under cover are cumulative. If one combatant is prone and one is behind a wall, attacks staged by the prone character are at +2 difficulty, while attacks staged by the character behind the wall are also at +2 difficulty.

Cover Type	Difficulty Increase
Light (lying prone)	+1
Good (behind wall)	+2
Superior (only head exposed)	+3

• **Multiple Shots:** An attacker with a fast firearm may try to take more than one shot in a turn. The attacker can divide his attack dice pool by how many shots she wants to fire at a similar number of targets, up to the weapon's rate of fire (multiple attacks against the same target are covered under maneuvers like "Automatic Fire" and "Three-Round Burst"). Each attack is then rolled separately.

Ability: Dexterity + Firearms **Difficulty:** Normal

Accuracy: Special **Damage:** Weapon type

• **Range:** The Ranged Weapons Chart (p. 281) lists each weapon's short range; attacks made at that range are versus difficulty 6. Twice that listing is the weapon's maximum range. Attacks made up to maximum range are versus difficulty 8. Attacks made at targets within two meters are considered *point blank*. Point-blank shots are made versus difficulty 4.

• **Reloading:** Reloading takes one full turn and requires the character's concentration. Like any other maneuver, reloading can be performed as part of a multiple action.

• **Strafing:** Instead of aiming at one target, fully-automatic weapons can be fired across an area. Strafing adds 10 dice to accuracy on a standard attack roll, and empties the clip. A maximum of three yards/meters can be covered with this maneuver.

The attacker divides any successes gained on the attack roll evenly among all targets in the covered area (successes assigned to hit an individual are added to that target's damage dice pool, as well). If only one target is within range or the area of effect, only half the successes affect him. The attacker then assigns any leftover successes as she desires. If fewer successes are rolled than there are targets, only one may be assigned per target until they are all allocated.

Dodge rolls against strafing are at +1 difficulty.

Ability: Dexterity + Firearms **Difficulty:** +2

Accuracy: +10 **Damage:** Special

• **Three-Round Burst:** The attacker gains two additional dice on a single attack roll, and expends three shots from the weapon's clip. Only certain weapons may perform this maneuver; see the Ranged Weapons Chart for particulars. Attacks are made at +1 difficulty due to recoil. As with automatic fire, the damage dice pool is based on one bullet from the weapon in question.

Ability: Dexterity + Firearms **Difficulty:** +1

Accuracy: +2 **Damage:** Weapon type

• **Two Weapons:** Firing two weapons is considered performing a multiple action, complete with dividing the dice of the lowest pool between two different targets. Additionally, the attacker suffers +1 difficulty for the attack with her off-hand (unless she's ambidextrous). Each attack is rolled and resolved separately — multiple attacks made against the same target are covered by maneuvers such as "Automatic Fire" and "Three-Round Burst."

Ability: Dexterity + Firearms **Difficulty:** +1/off-hand

Accuracy: Normal **Damage:** Weapon type

Maneuver Complications

The following are common combat complications. The Storyteller should add any others as the situation warrants.

• **Blinded:** Add two dice to attack rolls made against a blinded target. Furthermore, blind characters are at +2 difficulty on all actions.

• **Dazed:** If, in a single attack, the attacker rolls a number of damage successes greater than the target's Stamina (for mortals) or Stamina + 2 (for vampires and other supernatural beings), the victim is dazed. The target must spend her next available turn shaking off the attack's effects. Only damage successes that penetrate the defender's soak attempt count toward this total.

• **Immobilization:** Add two dice to attack rolls made on an immobilized (i.e., held by someone or something) but still struggling target. Attacks hit automatically if the target is completely immobilized (tied up, staked, or otherwise paralyzed).

• **Knockdown:** The victim falls down. After suffering a knockdown, the subject makes a Dexterity + Athletics roll. If successful, she may get back on her

Close Combat Maneuvers Table

Maneuver	Traits	Accuracy	Difficulty	Damage
Bite	Dex + Brawl	+1	Normal	Str +1 (A)
Block	Dex + Brawl	Special	Normal	None (R)
Claw	Dex + Brawl	Normal	Normal	Str +1 (A)
Clinch	Str + Brawl	Normal	Normal	Str (C)
Disarm	Dex + Melee	Normal	+1	Special
Dodge	Dex + Athletics	Special	Normal	None (R)
Hold	Str + Brawl	Normal	Normal	None (C)
Kick	Dex + Brawl	Normal	+1	Str +1
Parry	Dex + Melee	Special	Normal	None (R)
Strike	Dex + Brawl	Normal	Normal	Str
Sweep	Dex + Brawl/Melee	Normal	+1	Str (K)
Tackle	Str + Brawl	Normal	+1	Str +1 (K)
Weapon Strike	Dex + Melee	Normal	Normal	Weapon

(A): The maneuver inflicts aggravated damage.

(C): The maneuver carries over on successive turns.

(K): The maneuver causes knockdown.

(R): The maneuver reduces an opponent's attack successes.

Ranged Combat Maneuvers Table

Maneuver	Traits	Accuracy	Difficulty	Damage
Automatic Fire	Dex + Firearms	+10	+2	Special
Multiple Shots	Dex + Firearms	Special	Normal	Weapon
Strafing	Dex + Firearms	+10	+2	Special
3-Round Burst	Dex + Firearms	+2	+1	Weapon
Two Weapons	Dex + Firearms	Normal	+1/off-hand	Weapon

feet immediately, but her initiative is reduced by two in the next turn. On a failed roll, the subject spends her next action climbing to her feet, if she chooses to rise. On a botch, she lands particularly hard or at a severe angle, taking an automatic health level of bashing damage.

Maneuvers like tackle and sweep are intended to knock an opponent down. However, an especially powerful attack of any kind may send the target to the ground. Such instances are best left to the Storyteller's discretion, and should occur only when appropriately cinematic or suitable to the story.

• **Stake Through Heart:** A vampire can indeed be incapacitated by the classic wooden stake of legend. However, the legends err on one point: A Kindred impaled through the heart with a wooden stake is not destroyed, but merely paralyzed until the stake is removed.

To stake a vampire, an attacker must target the heart (difficulty 9). If the attack succeeds and inflicts at least three health levels of damage, the target is immobilized. An immobilized victim is conscious (and may use perception powers, such as those in the Auspex Discipline), but may not move or spend blood points.

Armor Chart

Class	Armor Rating	Penalty
Class One (reinforced clothing)	1	0
Class Two (armor T-shirt)	2	1
Class Three (Kevlar vest)	3	1
Class Four (flak jacket)	4	2
Class Five (full riot gear)	5	3

Armor adds its rating to the character's soak dice pool against bashing damage, lethal damage, and aggravated damage from fangs and claws. It does not protect against fire or sunlight. However, armor also subtracts a number of dice from dice pools related to bodily coordination and agility (most Dexterity-based dice pools). This is reflected in the penalty listing. Attackers may make targeting rolls to hit unprotected portions of a defender and thus ignore the armor (Storyteller assigns difficulty penalty — typically +1 or +2).

Melee Weapons Chart

Weapon	Damage	Conceal
Sap+	Strength +1	P
Club+	Strength +2	T
Knife	Strength +1	J
Sword	Strength +2	T
Axe	Strength +3	N
Stake*	Strength +1	T

+ Denotes a blunt object. Blunt objects inflict bashing damage unless targeted at the head (see "Targeting," p. 274). Head shots inflict lethal damage.

* May paralyze a vampire if driven through the heart. The attacker must target the heart (difficulty 9) and score three damage successes.

Ranged Weapons Chart

Type	Damage	Range	Rate	Capacity	Conceal
Example					
Revolver, Lt.	4	12	3	6	P
SW Bodyguard (.38 Special)					
Revolver, Hvy.	6	35	2	6	J
Ruger Redhawk (.44 Magnum)					
Pistol, Lt.	4	20	4	15+1	P
HK USP (9mm)					
Pistol, Hvy.	5	25	3	13+1	J
Springfield XDM (.45 ACP)					
Rifle	8	200	1	3+1	N
Beretta Tikka T3 (30.06)					
SMG, Small*	4	20	3	17+1	J
Glock 18 (9mm)					
SMG, Large*	4	50	3	30+1	T
HK MP5 (9mm)					
Assault Rifle*	7	150	3	30+1	N
FN SCAR (5.56mm)					
Shotgun	8	20	1	5+1	T
Remington 870 (12-Gauge)					
Shotgun, Semi-auto	8	20	3	6+1	T
Benelli M4 Super 90 (12-Gauge)					
Crossbow**	5	20	1	1	T

Damage: Indicates the damage dice pool. Against mortals, firearms are considered lethal damage. Versus vampires, firearms are considered bashing damage unless the head is targeted (see "Targeting," p. 274), in which case the damage is considered lethal.
Range: This is the practical shot range in yards or meters. Weapons may be fired at twice this distance, but the attacks are considered long range (difficulty 8).
Rate: The maximum number of bullets or three-round bursts the gun can fire in a single turn. This rate does not apply to full-auto or spray attacks.
Capacity: The number of shells a gun can hold. The +1 indicates a bullet can be held in the chamber, ready to fire.
Concealment: P = Can be carried in the pocket; J = Can be hidden in a jacket; T = Can be hidden in a trenchcoat; N = Cannot be concealed on the person at all.

*Indicates the weapon is capable of three-round bursts, full auto, and sprays.

**The crossbow is included for characters who wish to try staking an opponent. Crossbows require five turns to reload. Unless the crossbow is aimed at the head or heart, it inflicts bashing damage on Kindred. It inflicts lethal damage versus mortals.

Health

As mentioned in Chapter Three, your character has a Health Trait comprising seven health levels. Although vampires are immortal and do not die naturally, sufficient injury can incapacitate them, drive them into lengthy periods of dormancy, or even kill them once more (this time for good).

The Health Chart

The Health chart on the character sheet helps you track your character's current physical condition. It also lists the penalty imposed on your dice pool for each level of injury that your character sustains. As your character suffers more injuries, her health declines until she becomes incapacitated or dies.

Every character has seven health levels, ranging from Bruised to Incapacitated. Characters can also be in full health (with no health levels checked off), in torpor, or dead. When an attacker scores a success on a damage roll, your character takes one health level of damage. This is marked on your character sheet in the appropriate box, although the mark you make depends on the type of damage inflicted (see "Applying Damage," below).

The number to the left of the lowest marked box indicates your current dice penalty. As your character gets more and more battered, it's increasingly difficult for him to perform even the simplest of tasks. The dice penalty is subtracted from your dice pool for every action (except reflexive actions such as soak) until the wound heals.

The penalty also indicates impaired movement. For convenience, we reprint the Health chart from Chapter Three.

• **Incapacitated:** The stage immediately before torpor, incapacitation differs from unconsciousness in that your character collapses from the combined effects

Health Levels

Health Level	Dice Pool Penalty	Movement Penalty
Bruised	0	Character is only bruised and suffers no dice pool penalties due to damage.
Hurt	-1	Character is superficially hurt and suffers no movement hindrance.
Injured	-1	Character suffers minor injuries and movement is mildly inhibited (halve maximum running speed).
Wounded	-2	Character suffers significant damage and may not run (though he may still walk). At this level, a character may only move or attack; he always loses dice when moving and attacking in the same turn.
Mauled	-2	Character is badly injured and may only hobble about (three yards/meters per turn).
Crippled	-5	Character is catastrophically injured and may only crawl (one yard/meter per turn).
Incapacitated		Character is incapable of movement and is likely unconscious. Incapacitated vampires with no blood in their bodies enter torpor.
Torpor		Character enters a deathlike trance. He may do nothing, not even spend blood, until a period of time has passed.
Final Death		Character is killed permanently.



of physical trauma and pain. She falls to the ground and may do nothing except spend blood points to heal damage. Further damage suffered by an incapacitated vampire sends her into torpor or, if the damage is aggravated, inflicts Final Death on her.

• **Torpor:** Torpor is the deathlike sleep common to the undead, particularly among ancient vampires. Torpor may be entered voluntarily (certain undead, weary of the current age, enter torpor in hopes of reawakening in a more hospitable time) or involuntarily (through wounds or loss of blood). Once in torpor, a character remains dormant for a period of time depending on her Humanity or Path rating.

As mentioned, characters with zero blood points in their blood pools begin to lose health levels each time the rules call for them to spend blood. When a vampire falls below Incapacitated in this fashion, she enters torpor. There she will remain until someone feeds her at least a blood point. If this happens, she may rise, regardless of Humanity or Path rating. This sort of revivification works only for vampires who enter torpor from blood loss.

Vampires who enter torpor due to wounds must rest for a period depending on their Humanity or Path rating:

Humanity/Path	Length of Torpor
10	One day
9	Three days
8	One week
7	Two weeks
6	One month
5	One year
4	One decade
3	Five decades
2	One century
1	Five centuries
0	Millennium+

Following this period of rest, the player may spend a blood point and make an Awakening roll (p. 262) for her character to rise. If the vampire has no blood in her body, she may not rise until she is fed; if the player fails the Awakening roll, she may spend another

blood point and make an Awakening roll the following night. If the vampire rises successfully, she is considered Crippled and should either spend blood or hunt immediately.

A character may enter torpor voluntarily. This state resembles the character's normal daily rest, but is a deeper form of slumber and should not be entered into lightly. A vampire in voluntary torpor may rise after half the mandatory time period for involuntary torpor, but must make an Awakening roll to do so. A torpid vampire may ignore the nightly need for blood; she is effectively in hibernation.

Mortals have no torpor rating; if reduced below Incapacitated, they die.

• **Final Death:** If a vampire is at the Incapacitated health level or in torpor and takes one more level of aggravated damage, he dies permanently. A player's character who meets Final Death is removed from the game; the player must create a new character if she wishes to continue play.

An incapacitated or torpid vampire may also be sent to Final Death through massive amounts of bashing or lethal trauma (decapitated, trapped under a 10-ton rock, fed into a wood chipper, caught at ground zero of an explosion, crushed by deep-sea pressure, etc.). Typically, this damage must be enough to destroy or dismember the corpse beyond repair.

Optional Rule: Extras

To make large fights cinematic and easy to manage, assign "extra" Storyteller characters only four health levels: Hurt -1, Maimed -3, Incapacitated, and Dead. Extras are nameless (usually mortal or ghoul) thugs whom characters run into from time to time, not key Storyteller characters. They're diversions who are usually controlled by the more important enemies whom your characters are really after. These extras are a plot device, and shouldn't interfere with the main story. After taking a few lumps, extras retreat, surrender, or fall over so the real action can get underway.

Applying Damage

There are three damage types in **Vampire**. Bashing damage includes all forms of temporary injury — from punches, clubs, and other blunt trauma. Vampires, and only vampires, consider firearms attacks to be bashing damage as well — unless the bullets are aimed at the head (difficulty 8), in which case they are considered lethal. Vampires can suffer bashing damage, but consider it more of an annoyance than anything else. Lethal damage covers permanent, killing wounds. Humans die easily from lethal injury, and even the undead can be traumatized by massive amounts of lethal damage. Finally, aggravated damage includes those forces even other vampires fear — fire, sunlight, and the teeth and claws of their own kind.

All types of injuries are cumulative, and the combined injury determines your character's current health level. Specifics on each type of damage are provided below.

Bashing and lethal damage differ in their effects, but for vampires, both types of damage are considered *normal*. Bashing damage is recorded as a slash ("/") in the appropriate Health chart box, while lethal damage is marked with an "X." Aggravated damage is marked with an asterisk ("*") for each level inflicted. Aggravated damage always gets marked above lethal, which gets marked above bashing. So if you mark a level of lethal damage in the Bruised box, and take one aggravated health level later on, "move down" the lethal level to the Hurt box by marking that box with a "X." The aggravated level is then noted by simply drawing another line through the Bruised box, turning it into "*." Bashing and lethal levels taken after aggravated levels are simply drawn in on the next open box. Normal damage isn't as severe as aggravated, so it's always marked last and healed first (see below).

Health

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

Bashing Damage

Bashing damage covers all forms of injury that aren't likely to kill instantly and that fade relatively quickly. Most forms of hand-to-hand combat — punches, clinches, kicks, tackles, and the like — inflict bashing damage. Bashing damage generally impairs less than lethal damage does, and heals faster.

Vampires are relatively unaffected by bashing damage — a punch to the gut has little effect on the undead. However, massive concussive trauma can send a vampire into torpor.

Mortals may soak bashing damage with their Stamina, while vampires may also soak bashing damage with their Stamina (+ Fortitude, if they have that Discipline). After the soak roll, any bashing damage applied to a vampire is halved (round down) — the Kindred's corpselike bodies simply don't bruise and break like the kine's.

If your character falls to Incapacitated and then takes another level of bashing damage, she enters torpor (p. 283). If your character falls to Incapacitated due to bashing damage but then takes a level of aggravated damage, she meets Final Death.

Lethal Damage

Lethal damage is just that — lethal, at least to mortals. Even vampires take a sword-wielder seriously — a vampire who is hacked to bits or decapitated will die the Final Death, though not as readily as a mortal. Knives, bullets, swords, and the like all cause lethal wounds. At the Storyteller's option, blunt attacks aimed at a vital body part such as a kidney (difficulty 8 or 9 to target) can cause lethal damage, particularly versus mortals.

Lethal damage is intended to cause immediate and grievous injury. For the kine, lethal injuries take a long time to heal and usually require medical attention for any hope of recovery. For well-fed vampires, knife wounds, shotgun blasts, and the like are simply annoying.

Mortal characters may not soak lethal damage at all — all such damage is applied directly to their health levels. Kindred characters may soak lethal damage normally with Stamina (+ Fortitude, if they have it). Lethal damage that penetrates the soak roll is applied normally to their health levels. However, lethal damage is considered normal for the purpose of healing, so vampires may easily nullify lethal damage by spending blood points.

When your character's Health boxes fill to Incapacitated and she takes a further level of lethal damage, she enters torpor (p. 283). If your character is reduced to Incapacitated via lethal damage, and she takes a further level of aggravated damage, she meets Final Death.

Aggravated Damage

Certain attacks are anathema to the undead. Fire and the rays of the sun inflict terrible wounds on the undead, as can the teeth and claws of other vampires (and werewolves or other supernatural creatures).

As mentioned, each level of aggravated damage should be marked with an "*" on the Health chart. Aggravated damage may not be soaked except with the Discipline of Fortitude. Moreover, aggravated damage is far more difficult to heal. A level of aggravated damage may be healed only with a full day of rest and the expenditure of five blood points (though a vampire may, at the end of the full day's rest, cure additional aggravated health levels by spending an additional five blood points and one Willpower point per extra aggravated health level to be healed). Worst of all, a vampire who loses his last health level due to aggravated damage meets Final Death — his eternal life ends at last, and he goes to whatever awaits him beyond the grave.

Mortals may ignore sunlight, but still take damage from fire, fangs, and claws. Aggravated damage to mortals is treated as lethal wounds instead.

Mortals' Healing Times

Though the power of their Blood enables vampires to heal most wounds instantly, mortal "licksticks" are not so fortunate. The following systems allow Storytellers to simulate the effects of damage on vampires' mortal foes, friends… and prey.

Like vampires, mortals have seven health levels and suffer dice pool penalties for wounds. Unlike vampires, mortals can heal their wounds only through time, rest, and medical care. Moreover, mortals have no "torpor" state; any amount of damage below the Incapacitated level kills them. Mortals can soak bashing damage, but cannot soak lethal or aggravated damage (though mortals take no damage from sunlight).

Each level of damage to a mortal (whether bashing or lethal) must be healed individually. Thus, if a mortal takes enough bashing damage to reduce him to Incapacitated, he spends a full 12 hours in a delirious state before healing to Crippled. Healing that level takes six hours, and so on.

Healing Bashing Damage

Bashing damage up to the Wounded level can be cared for without medical skill; these wounds heal on their own,

without treatment. Bashing damage beyond Wounded may have deeper consequences. A mortal's vision or hearing may be altered due to a concussion, she may suffer excruciating pain from internal bruising, or she may experience some other extreme discomfort. These effects can be negated if the mortal receives adequate medical attention.

Health Level	Recovery Time
Bruised to Wounded	One hour
Maimed	Three hours
Crippled	Six hours
Incapacitated	12 hours

Once bashing levels reach Incapacitated, mortals fall unconscious, but do not sink below Incapacitated… yet. However, any further bashing wounds are X'd over previous bashing ones, making them lethal. At that point, recovery is handled as lethal damage. In this way, a mortal can be slowly beaten to death.

Healing Lethal Damage

Lethal damage of any sort can be deadly — that's why it's called lethal. Lethal wounds that go unattended may continue to bleed until the mortal passes out and dies from blood loss. Other dangers can also arise from infection, cellular damage, or broken limbs. (Aggravated damage is considered to be lethal to a mortal.)

Any lethal damage past Hurt requires medical treatment to prevent further harm. Untreated lethal wounds worsen by one level of lethal damage per day. When a mortal sustains lethal damage down to Incapacitated, he's one health level away from death. If he takes one more wound (whether bashing or lethal), he dies.

If the individual is at Maimed or higher, he may recover with rest over the times listed below. However, if the mortal is Crippled or Incapacitated, no recovery is possible unless he receives medical attention. Indeed, at Incapacitated the individual is comatose at worse and delirious at best, and could still die.

Health Level	Recovery Time
Bruised	One day
Hurt	Three days
Injured	One week
Wounded	One month
Maimed	Two months
Crippled	Three months
Incapacitated	Five months

States of Being

The World of Darkness is a hostile place. The dangers inherent to such an uncivilized environment are many, and they inflict the same kinds of harm that combat does. In addition, a vampire's greatest enemy lies within, in the form of the Beast. Whether a vampire suffers the fiery grip of frenzy or the slow descent into monstrousness, the Beast is ever willing to batter the Damned.

The following systems present a variety of ways that characters can suffer injury, whether physical, mental, or emotional. As well, this section presents a couple of rare and precious ways whereby the Damned can hope to rise above their state.

Blood Bond

One of the most wondrous and terrible properties of Kindred vitae is its ability to enslave nearly any being who drinks of it three times. Each sip of a particular Kindred's blood gives the Kindred in question a greater emotional hold over the drinker. If a being drinks three times, on three separate nights, from the same Kindred, she falls victim to a state known as the blood bond. A vampire who holds a blood bond over another being is said to be that victim's regnant, while the being subordinate to the bond is called the thrall.

Put simply, the blood bond is one of the most potent emotional sensations known. A blood-bound victim is absolutely devoted to her regnant and will do nearly anything for him. Even the most potent uses of Dominate cannot overcome the thrall's feelings for her regnant; only true love stands a chance against the bond, and even that is not a sure thing.

The blood bond is most commonly used to ensnare mortals and ghouls, but Kindred can bind each other as well. Such is the blood bond's power that a mighty elder can be bound to a lowly neonate; in this respect, the blood of a Thirteenth-Generation fledgling is (presumably) as strong as that of Caine himself. As such, the blood bond forms an essential strategy in the Jyhad; some Ancients are said to hold dozens of influential Kindred in secret thrall.

- **First drink:** The drinker begins to experience intermittent but strong feelings about the vampire. She may dream of him, or find herself "coincidentally" frequenting places where he might show up. There is no mechanical effect at this stage, but it should be roleplayed. All childer have this level of bond toward their

sires, for the Embrace itself forces one drink upon the childer; they may love their "parents," hate them, or both, but are rarely indifferent toward them.

• **Second drink:** The drinker's feelings grow strong enough to influence her behavior. Though she is by no means enslaved to the vampire, he is definitely an important figure in her life. She may act as she pleases, but might have to make a Willpower roll to take actions directly harmful to the vampire. The vampire's influence is such that he can persuade or command her with little effort (Social rolls against the thrall are at -1 difficulty).

• **Third drink:** Full-scale blood bond. At this level, the drinker is more or less completely bound to the vampire. He is the most important person in her life; lovers, relatives, and even children become secondary to her all-consuming passion.

At this level, a regnant may use the Dominate Discipline on a thrall, even without the benefit of eye contact. Merely hearing the regnant's voice is enough. Additionally, should the thrall try to resist the Dominate (or similar mental control power) for some reason, the difficulty of such resistance is increased by two. Naturally, a higher-Generation vampire still cannot use Dominate on a lower-Generation thrall.

The blood bond is true love, albeit a twisted and perverse version of it. Ultimately, we can't reduce the vagaries of love down to a simple "yes/no" system. Some thralls (particularly people with Conformist or other dependent Natures, or with Willpower 5 or less) will commit any act, including suicide or murder, for their beloved; other characters have certain core principles that they will not violate.

A full blood bond, once formed, is nearly inviolate. Once bound, a thrall is under the sway of her regnant and her regnant only. She cannot be bound again by another vampire unless the first blood bond wears away "naturally." A vampire can experience lesser (one- and two-drink) bonds toward several individuals; indeed, many Kindred enjoy such bonds, as they create artificial passion in their dead hearts. Upon the formation of a full blood bond, though, all lesser sensations are wiped away. Vampire lovers occasionally enter into mutual blood bonds with each other; this is the closest thing the undead can feel to true love. Even this sensation can turn to disgust or hate over the centuries, though, and in any event few Kindred trust each other enough to initiate it.



A blood bond is a mighty force, but it is at its most potent when perpetually reinforced with further drinks. Feeding a thrall often reinforces the bond, while depriving a thrall of vitae may cause the bond to grow tepid over time. Like any other relationship, treatment and courtesy play a part in the dynamics of the bond. A thrall who is treated well and fed often will likely fall even more deeply in love, while a thrall who is degraded and humiliated may find resentment and anger eating away at the bond.

It is possible, though difficult, for a vampire to temporarily resist a blood bond. Doing so requires the player to make a Willpower roll (difficulty is typically 8, though this can be modified depending on the regnant's treatment and the thrall's Nature) and accumulate a number of successes equal to the number of times the thrall has partaken of the regnant's blood, to a maximum of difficulty 9. The thrall must then spend a Willpower point. Upon doing so, the bond is negated for a variable amount of time: from one scene (if the thrall merely wishes to plot against the regnant, deliver confidential information to an enemy, etc.) to one turn (if the thrall wishes to attack the regnant physically). The thrall can continue to expend Willpower to extend the duration of "freedom," but once she ceases doing so, the blood bond resumes at full force.

A blood bond can be broken, though this requires the thrall to not only avoid the regnant entirely for an extended period of time, but also spend great amounts of Willpower to overcome the addiction. As a general rule, a thrall who neither sees nor feeds from her regnant for a period of (12 - Willpower) months finds her bond reduced by one level (so, a fully bound thrall with a Willpower of 5 has her blood bond reduced to the equivalent of two drinks if she goes seven straight months without any contact with the regnant). If the bond is reduced to zero in this fashion (a feat typically accompanied by the expenditure of a great deal of Willpower on the thrall's part, as she resists the gnawing urge to seek out her sire), it is nullified entirely.

Another, though somewhat less certain, way to be rid of the bond is to kill the regnant. Such a choice is extremely perilous on many levels, and makes no guarantees that everything will go smoothly. Those who have been released by such means claim the bond shatters like spun glass upon the moment of the regnant's Final Death. The thrall's Nature may play a large part in whether the control is completely ended, though, and such aftermath is best left in the hands of the Storyteller.

The Vaulderie

The vampires of the Sabbat take their nightly struggle seriously — so seriously that they tolerate no dissent in their ranks. From the lowliest new recruit to the most exalted Cainite, the Sabbat ensure loyalty to one another through a bloody rite known as the Vaulderie.

The Vaulderie is similar to a blood bond, though it differs in intent and function. No Sabbat would ever voluntarily succumb to a blood bond, reasoning that such bonds are the tools the elders use to enslave their childer. Rather, the Sabbat swear the Vaulderie to each other, bonding themselves to the pack instead of an individual, and, thus, to the Sabbat's greater cause.

Those who are ignorant of the Vaulderie's finer details believe it to be a simple commingling of vampire vitae in a vessel and the subsequent drinking of it. In truth, the matter is far more mystical. To start the ritual, the priest takes a tool used specifically for the Vaulderie and nothing else and cuts her wrist. The ritual cutting tool could be a small knife, silver straight razor, or awl. To impart more gravity to the rite, many packs use elaborate ritual bloodletters decorated with engraved swirls, spirals, or blood droplets. The priest then bleeds into a vessel and passes the cutting device to each Sabbat member present, who pierces his own flesh and bleeds into the chalice. The vessel is then passed around the pack until everyone has poured their blood in, before the priest recites an incantation over it, consecrating it as a terrible sacrament before every member of the pack draws a draught.

Vaulderies take place at any time — before assaults, during important Sabbat gatherings, at the initiation or Creation Rites of new members, and almost infallibly at pack gatherings. This rite is perhaps the foundation of the Sect, and it is afforded the most reverent status.

The result of this rite is known as a Vinculum, or blood-tie. These ties connect each member of the pack to one another, engendering a mutual loyalty in addition to bolstering pack morale. Because of the mystical nature of the Vaulderie, however, Vinculi are imperfect — what one pack member feels toward another one night may pale in comparison to what he feels toward her the next. Vinculum ratings may change every time the rite is observed.

Without the Vaulderie, the Sabbat would probably collapse under its own weight and dogma — the chaos and anarchy that follows the Sect would erode what little organization it has without the loyalty and sympathy created by the rite. Those who refuse the Vaulderie or oppose it are not viewed favorably by other

Sabbat. Vampires who refuse to partake of the Vaulderie at least monthly suffer ostracism from the pack at best — and may be destroyed outright at worst.

The first time a character observes the Vaulderie (or during creation of a Sabbat character), roll a die for each character whose vitae is part of the rite. That number reflects the Vinculum the character feels toward the individual whose blood she ingested; see the chart for effects generated by individual Vinculi. Every time a new member participates in the Vaulderie, each player should roll a die and record the score for her Vinculum rating toward that character.

Afterwards, each time the pack partakes of the Vaulderie, each player should roll one die for each of her Vinculi. If the result is higher than the Vinculum score, increase that Vinculum score by one (to a maximum of 10). If the result is a 1, lower the Vinculum score by one (to a minimum of 1).

It bears mention that, like the emotions engendered by blood bonds, these feelings are artificial, as they are created through ingestion of blood. It is quite possible for a character to utterly hate someone for whom she would risk her unlife, just as it is possible to have immense love for someone who has little in the way of Vinculum. Players are encouraged to explore the full range of these complexities in their packs through roleplaying.

At times, a character may be at odds with herself over how to react to a given situation because of Vinculi she possesses toward another vampire. In cases such as these, the player should decide which party her character would favor outside the Vinculum. The character then rolls a number of dice for each party equal to her Vinculum score for that individual against a difficulty of 5 (for the party favored regardless of Vinculum) or 7 (for all other parties). The individual who receives the greatest number of successes earns the character's aid. Such is the nature of the Damned and the Vinculum — a character who knows better may sometimes be forced into an obviously bad course of action by following her emotions. Storytellers should consider Vinculum rolls for matters of dramatic significance, but too much reliance on Vinculum rolls may leave players upset at being railroaded by dice rolls.

The Vaulderie can also corrode existing blood bonds. Multiple draughts of the Vaulderie may be required, but sooner or later, the pack's blood will overcome all but the most potent of vampiric vitae. A vampire wishing to break a blood bond via Vaulderie must have no more than one blood point in his blood pool, and must

Vinculum Ratings

Vinculum	Effect
10	You will readily give your life — or take the life of another — for the individual.
9	You will do practically anything for him, including putting yourself in great danger.
8	You will gladly offer resources or influential assistance to the individual.
7	You may put yourself at moderate risk of harm for the individual and, depending on your code of ethics, may kill for him.
6	You feel strongly for the individual and help him even if it inconveniences you. You will gladly fight for the individual.
5	You respect the individual and help him out so long as it's no huge risk or bother.
4	You will aid the individual as long as it doesn't involve risk or anything out of your way.
3	You are loyal to the individual as long as that loyalty doesn't interfere with your own designs.
2	You have a minor sense of kinship toward the individual, but you're not going to go out of your way to help him unless something's in it for you.
1	Fuck 'em. This isn't necessarily hostility, but you don't care about this person on a Vinculum level, though you may on a personal level.

ingest six points of Vaulderie vitae. At that point, the old blood bond fades rapidly, replaced almost as quickly by Vinculi toward those whose blood composed the Vaulderie. On the other hand, a vampire attempting to replace Vinculi with a new blood bond is in for a disappointment — unless her blood is powerfully potent, Vinculi may not be so easily erased. Unlike normal blood bonds, Vinculi do not fade over time — a Vinculum left after a Vaulderie with a vampire in nights hundreds of years past is still as potent as the night it arose. Indeed, many elder Sabbat have vast webs of Vinculi connecting them to Sect members across the world.

Derangements

Derangements are behaviors that are created when the mind is forced to confront intolerable or conflicting feelings, such as overwhelming terror or profound guilt. When the mind is faced with impressions or emotions that it cannot reconcile, it attempts to ease the inner conflict by stimulating behavior such as megalomania, bulimia, or hysteria to provide an outlet for the tension and stress that the conflict generates.

Vampires or mortals receive derangements under conditions of intense terror, guilt, or anxiety. If a player botches a Virtue or Willpower roll (for example, when confronted with Rötschreck), the Storyteller may decide that the experience causes a derangement in the character. Other examples of derangement-inducing events include killing a loved one while in a frenzy, being buried alive as part of a Sabbat ritual, or seeing hundreds of years of careful scheming dashed in an instant of bad luck. Generally, any experience that causes intense and unpleasant emotion or thoroughly violates a character's beliefs or ethics is severe enough to cause a derangement. The Storyteller determines which derangement a character receives, working with the player to choose (or create) one appropriate to the character's personality and the circumstances of the event that caused the disorder.

It must be noted that people who are "crazy" are neither funny nor arbitrary in their actions. Insanity is frightening to those who are watching someone rage against unseen presences or hoard rotten meat to feed to the monsters that live next door; even something as harmless-sounding as talking to an invisible rabbit can become disturbing to observers. The insane, however, are only responding to a pattern known to them, stimuli that they perceive in their own minds. To their skewed perceptions, what's happening to them is perfectly normal. Your vampire's derangement is there for a reason, whether he's a Malkavian who resided at Bedlam before his Embrace or a Ventrue pack member who escaped from five months of torture at the hands of an Inquisitor. What stimuli is his insanity inflicting on him, and how is he reacting to what's happening? The player should work with his Storyteller to create a pattern of provocations for his derangement, and then decide how his character reacts to such provocation.

Derangements are a challenge to roleplay, without question, but a little time and care can result in an experience that is dramatic for all involved.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar individuals suffer from severe mood swings, sometimes resulting from severe trauma or anxiety. Victims may be upbeat and confident one moment, then uncontrollably lethargic and pessimistic the next.

Kindred with this derangement are constantly on a hair trigger, never knowing when the next mood swing will strike. Whenever the vampire fails a task, the Storyteller has the option of secretly making a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) for the character. If the character fails the roll, she lapses into depression. Additionally, the vampire will go into depression whenever one of her rolls is botched, or if her blood pool ever drops below 2. The Storyteller should roll a die to determine how many scenes the character remains depressed, keeping the number a secret.

Vampires in a depressive state have their Willpower ratings halved (minimum 1). In addition, the vampire may not access her blood pool to raise Attributes. Upon emerging from the depressive state, the character is energetic, relentlessly upbeat and active (obsessively so) for a number of scenes proportionate to the time spent in depression. When a vampire is in this manic state, the difficulty of all rolls to resist frenzy is raised by one.

Bulimia

Individuals with bulimia assuage their guilt and insecurity by indulging in activities that comfort them — in this case, consuming food. A bulimic will eat tremendous amounts of food when subjected to stress, then empty her stomach through drastic measures so she can eat still more.

In the case of vampires with this derangement, the need to feed is a means of relieving the fear and anxiety endemic to the World of Darkness. A bulimic vampire may feed four or more times a night — gorging herself, burning the blood in pointless (or not so pointless) activity, then starting the cycle again.

A vampire with bulimia gets hungry much more quickly than other vampires do. When feeding, a bulimic vampire must make a Conscience or Conviction roll (difficulty 7). If she fails the roll, she feeds until her blood pool is full, whether the vampire needs the extra blood or not. A vampire who is forcibly kept from feeding risks frenzy (make a frenzy roll, difficulty 6). The difficulty increases by one for every 15 minutes that she is prevented from drinking.

Fugue

Victims suffering from fugue experience "blackouts" and loss of memory. When subjected to stress, the individual begins a specific, rigid set of behaviors to remove the stressful symptoms. This differs from multiple personalities, as the individual in the grip of a fugue has no separate personality, but is on a form of "autopilot" similar to sleepwalking.

Kindred suffering from this derangement require a Willpower roll when subjected to extreme stress or pressure (difficulty 8). If the roll fails, the player must roleplay her character's trancelike state; otherwise, control of the character passes to the Storyteller for a number of scenes determined by the roll of a die. During this period, the Storyteller may have the character act as she sees fit to remove the source of the stress. At the end of the fugue, the character "regains consciousness" with no memory of her actions.

Hysteria

A person in the grip of hysteria is unable to control her emotions, suffering severe mood swings and violent fits when subjected to stress or anxiety.

Hysterical Kindred must make frenzy checks whenever subjected to stress or pressure. The difficulties of these rolls are normally 6, increasing to 8 if the stress is sudden or especially severe. Additionally, any action that results in a botch causes the vampire to frenzy automatically.

Megalomania

Individuals with this derangement are obsessed with accumulating power and wealth, salving their insecurities by becoming the most potent individuals in their environment. Such individuals are invariably arrogant and supremely sure of their abilities, convinced of their own inherent superiority. The means of achieving their status can take many forms, from devious conspiracies to outright brutality. Any individual of equal or higher status than the victim is perceived to be "competition."



Kindred with this derangement constantly struggle to rise to the height of power and influence, by whatever means necessary. In a megalomaniac's view, there are only two classes of people: those who are weaker, and those who do not deserve the power they have and must be made weaker. This belief extends to everyone around the vampire, including members of her own coterie. This derangement lends an extra die to all of the victim's Willpower rolls, due to her towering sense of superiority.

If a megalomaniacal vampire is presented with a realistic chance to diablerize a more potent Kindred, she will be sorely tempted. A Willpower roll (difficulty 9) is needed for the vampire to avoid taking "what is rightfully hers."

Multiple Personalities

The trauma that spawns this derangement fractures the victim's personality into one or more additional personas, allowing the victim to deny her trauma or any actions the trauma causes by placing the blame on "someone else." Each personality is created to respond to certain emotional stimuli — an abused person might develop a tough-as-nails survivor personality, create a "protector," or even become a murderer in order to deny the abuse she is suffering. In most cases none of the personalities is aware of the others, and they come and go through the victim's mind in response to specific situations or conditions.

When a vampire suffers this derangement, the Storyteller and the player must agree upon how many and what kind of personalities develop, and the situations that trigger their dominance in the victim. Each personality should be relevant to the trauma that causes it. Not only is each personality distinct, but in the case of Kindred, the different personalities might believe themselves to be from different Clans and sires.

Kindred with multiple personalities can manifest different Abilities and even Virtues for each of their personalities, but it is the Storyteller's responsibility to determine the specific details.

Obsessive-Compulsive

The trauma, guilt, or inner conflict that causes this derangement forces the individual to focus nearly all of her attention and energy onto a single repetitive behavior or action. Obsession relates to an individual's desire to control her environment — keeping clean, keeping an area quiet and peaceful, or keeping undesirable individuals from an area, for example. A compulsion is an action or set of actions that an individual is driven to perform to soothe her anxieties: for example, placing objects in an exact order, or feeding from a mortal in a precise, ritualistic fashion.

Vampires with an obsessive-compulsive derangement must determine a set of specific actions or behaviors, as described above, and follow them to the exclusion of all else. The effects of obsessive-compulsive behavior can be negated for the course of one scene by spending a temporary Willpower point. The difficulty of any attempt to coerce or Dominate a vampire into ceasing her behavior is raised by one. If a vampire is forcibly prevented from adhering to her derangement, she automatically frenzies.

Paranoia

The victim of paranoia believes that her misery and insecurity stem from external persecution and hostility. Paranoid individuals obsess about their persecution complexes, often creating vast and intricate conspiracy theories to explain who is tormenting them and why. Anyone or anything perceived to be "one of them" is often subjected to violence.

Kindred who suffer from paranoia have difficulty with social interaction; the difficulties of all dice rolls involving interaction are increased by one. They are distrustful and suspicious of everyone, even their own blood-bound progeny. The slightest hint of suspicious behavior is enough to provoke a frenzy roll, with the difficulty relative to the degree of the behavior. This paranoia may even extend to complex and rigorous feeding practices, to keep "them" from contaminating the vampire's food supply.

Sanguinary Animism

This derangement is unique to the Kindred, a response to vampires' deep-seated guilt regarding the act of feeding on the blood of mortals. Kindred with this derangement believe that they do not merely consume victims' blood, but their souls as well, which are then made a part of the vampire's consciousness. In the hours after feeding, the vampire hears the voice of her victim inside her head and feels a tirade of "memories" from the victim's mind — all created by the vampire's subconscious. In extreme cases, this sense of possession can drive a Kindred to carry out actions on behalf of her victims. Diablerie would be particularly unwise for an animist. Whenever a vampire with this derangement feeds on a mortal, a Willpower roll is needed (difficulty 6, or 9 if she drains the mortal to the point of death). If the roll succeeds, she is tormented by the "memories"

of the person whose soul she has partially consumed, but is still able to function normally. If the roll fails, then the images in her mind are so strong that it is akin to having a second personality inside her, an angry and reproachful personality that seeks to cause harm to the vampire and her associates. The player must roleplay this state as if the mind of her victim in control. During the moments just before dawn, control reverts to the vampire.

Schizophrenia

Conflicting, unresolveable sets of feelings and impulses can cause a victim to develop schizophrenia, which manifests as a withdrawal from reality, violent changes in behavior, and hallucinations. Roleplaying this derangement requires careful thought, because the player must determine a general set of behaviors relevant to the trauma that caused the derangement. The hallucinations, bizarre behavior, and unseen voices stem from a terrible inner conflict that the individual cannot resolve. The player needs to establish a firm idea of what that conflict is and then rationalize what kind of behavior this conflict will cause.

Kindred with this derangement are unpredictable and dangerous. In situations that trigger a vampire's inner conflict, the difficulties of all rolls to resist or direct frenzy increase by three, and the vampire loses three dice from all Willpower rolls.

Deterioration

A vampire who is staked or otherwise paralyzed continues to spend blood at the rate of one point per night. If the vampire is further deprived of blood, the decaying process that unlife has held at bay begins again. A vampire with no blood begins consuming all excess moisture within his body at a rate of one health level per day. As the process continues, the vampire begins to resemble a mummified corpse. At first the vampire appears merely emaciated, but as the body is completely dehydrated, the meat and ligaments, along with the mostly useless organs within the body, begin to wither. By the seventh day, when the character has reached Incapacitated on the Health chart, the character's eyes shrivel within his skull, the tendons and ligaments within the body draw painfully tight, the gums recede from the teeth, and the lips draw back in a death rictus. At this point, the character enters torpor.

Once in torpor, the character cannot rise unless supplied with enough blood to bring him back to Injured on the Health chart (at least four blood points). A vampire emerging from this state is ravenous to the point of insanity, and will attack whatever source of blood is closest, regardless of any emotional ties.

Leaving a vampire staked until he reaches this near-death state, then reviving him with just enough blood to prolong the agony, is a favorite method of torture for both mortal hunters and the Sabbat. Most vampires undergoing this form of torture suffer permanent mental damage as a result.

Diablerie

There is one thing that elder Kindred dread even more than fire or the light of the sun. This is the sin known as diablerie. Among Camarilla society, diablerie is the ultimate crime; those who practice it are subject to the harshest punishments imaginable. It is as loathed and feared as cannibalism is among mortal society. The vampires of the Sabbat are said to indulge in diablerie freely, which is yet another reason why Camarilla elders hate them so.

Quite simply, diablerie is the act of feeding on a vampire in the way that a vampire feeds on a mortal. In so doing, not only does the murderer consume the victim's blood (and vampire blood is far, far sweeter than even the tastiest mortal's), but the victim's power as well. By stealing the life of a vampire closer to Caine, the vampire can permanently enrich his own vitae. In this manner even the youngest vampire can gain the power of the elders.

Elders know the crime as the Amaranth; in olden nights, it is said, an amaranth flower was presented to the victim a week before he was to be hunted. Kindred legend tells many dark tales of murderous childer betraying and cannibalizing their own sires, and it is for this reason more than any other that elder Kindred harbor such distrust for the neonates among them. Indeed, the great Jyhad itself may well have its roots in this eternal and savage struggle for power.

Committing Diablerie

A vampire seeking to commit diablerie must drain all the blood from his Kindred victim. Following this act, the vampire must continue to suck, for (according to Kindred legend) the very soul is withdrawn from the victim's body and taken into the diablerist's. The effort involved in diablerie is monumental, for the vampiric soul is a greedy thing and clings tenaciously to unlife, hoping to regenerate its body and rise once again.

Once a vampire's body has been drained of all blood, the true struggle begins. The diablerist's player makes an extended Strength roll (difficulty 9). Each success inflicts one automatic health level on the victim (the victim cannot soak, and damage is considered aggravated). When all the victim's health levels have been drained, the victim's essence is taken into the attacker and the emptied body begins decaying immediately.

A vampire committing diablerie is quite vulnerable to attack. Total concentration goes into the struggle to draw forth the essence of the victim, and stopping for even a moment ruins the chance of capturing the spirit. All attacks against a vampire attempting diablerie are made versus a difficulty of 2.

The Rewards of Diablerie

Upon successful completion of diablerie, the diablerist is overwhelmed by euphoria, and a Self-Control/Instinct roll is necessary (difficulty 10 minus the character's Humanity or Path rating) to avoid losing control. The sensation is akin to orgasm, but much more powerful — so powerful, in fact, that certain Kindred are addicted to the sensation. All other Kindred fear these vampires for their addiction to the pleasures of Amaranth makes them a threat to everyone. Even vampires too weak to provide additional power are devoured for the simple pleasure of the act.

The true benefit of diablerie becomes evident if the diablerist feeds on the vitae of a vampire of lower Generation (e.g., if a Ninth-Generation vampire commits diablerie on a Seventh-Generation vampire). The diablerist literally steals the power and potency of the victim's own blood, and thus permanently lowers her own Generation by one, bringing her closer to the mythical power of Caine. All benefits of the lowered Generation — a larger and more potent blood pool, the ability to Dominate more Kindred and, in some cases, the ability to increase Traits above 5 — are bestowed upon the vampire.

If the victim was of far greater power (five or more Generation levels) than the diablerist, the Storyteller may rule that the predator lowers her Generation by more than one step. This is particularly likely if the victim was ancient (two millennia or more). It would not be unreasonable for a Twelfth-Generation neonate who drank the blood of a 3000-year-old member of the Fifth Generation to advance three or even more Generation steps. Ultimately, this decision rests in the Storyteller's hands.

Moreover, drinking the vitae of elder vampires can induce a temporary increase in the diablerist's Discipline levels (by one, two, or even more dots), as the potent blood augments the predator's own mystic arts. If the elder vampire was several Generations removed from the diablerist's own Generation, the effects can seem miraculous, even if they are short lived. These increased powers last for a single scene, unless the Storyteller decides otherwise.

To commit diablerie, the diablerist must take blood directly and immediately from the victim; the blood may not be stored and used later. Moreover, only one diablerist may commit the act on a given victim; a pack of neonates cannot swarm around an elder like hungry sharks, no matter how potent the victim's blood.

The Perils of Diablerie

Committing diablerie seems like the perfect crime to many power-hungry neonates. There is no body left when the deed is done, as most vampires over a decade old quickly rot into unrecognizable mounds of carrion. Without solid evidence, it's difficult for even the most despotic Prince to make an outright accusation of murder. But those who commit the atrocity soon learn that diablerists wear the evidence of their crime on their very souls. Vampires with the Auspex Discipline can detect a diablerist by using Aura Perception. The stolen energies of the victim mingle with the energies of the diablerist, leaving thick black marks running through the diablerist's aura. These marks stand out as clearly as motor oil on a crystal-clear pond, covering the softer colors of the vampire's own aura and betraying the crime.

Not all vampires know of diablerie or the stains it leaves behind. Many younger Kindred might simply question the odd discoloration on the vampire's aura. Most elder vampires understand what the stains mean, though, and could well call for the diablerist's immediate punishment or use the information as blackmail at a later date. These marks remain in evidence for a number of years equal to the difference between the victim's Generation and the diablerist's original Generation (mimimum one year, even if the victim was higher Generation). In example, if a Twelfth-Generation vampire drinks the blood of a Ninth-Generation vampire (becoming Eleventh Generation in the process), the evidence remains on his aura for three years.

Additionally, practitioners of Thaumaturgy can use the Path of Blood to detect the diablerist's sin, even centuries after the crime was committed. For that reason, in particular, practitioners of the Amaranth fear the Tremere.

Even those without special perceptions often sense a "taint" about the diablerist. For one month per Generation removed from the victim, a diablerist gives off a "vibe" that leaves more sensitive Kindred unsettled. The Kindred in question may not actually know what the diablerist did, but they'll feel uncomfortable around him just the same. A player whose vampire comes in contact with a diablerist may make a Perception roll (difficulty of 12 minus the sensing vampire's Humanity rating — vampires with high Humanity are more aware of such things) to notice that something about the diablerist just "doesn't feel right." Followers of alternate Paths of morality (see Chapter Ten) generally fail to notice the unusual sensation, as they are no longer attuned to their emotions in the same way. The Storyteller has final say in these matters.

A few rumors speak of diablerists displaying certain mannerisms of their late victims, particularly if the victims were of great psychic fortitude (Willpower 10) and of much stronger Blood than their murderers. If this is true, and the soul of a particularly mighty undead can manifest in the body of its killer, the implications are frightening, particularly in light of the Jyhad.

Such is the horror of diablerie that, according to most elders, even a blood hunt is no grounds for its practice. Hunters may drink a victim's blood, even to the last drop, but may not continue the process of diablerie once the victim is drained. Indeed, by decree of the Inner Circle, only a sire is permitted to diablerize her childe, and then only during a blood hunt. In practice, many younger Kindred take every opportunity a blood hunt's chaos affords, and Princes may look the other way if the criminal was heinous enough.

Lastly, for Camarilla vampires and others who adhere to the way of Humanity, there is the loss of Humanity to consider. Diablerie is worse than murder: The Amaranth literally absorbs the victim's soul, destroying any chance of the victim finding peace in the afterlife. Such a heinous crime strips a minimum of one Humanity dot from the character's Humanity rating. Additionally, for extremely vicious attacks, the Storyteller might require a Conscience roll (difficulty 8). Failure means the loss of an additional Humanity point, while a botch could well mean the loss of even more.

Disease

There are certain advantages to being a walking corpse. One of the biggest is a natural immunity to most diseases. AIDS, SARS, cancer, syphilis, and other illnesses mean little or nothing to the undead.

But immunity to disease doesn't mean the vampires can ignore diseases. Any illness that can be transmitted by the blood is a potential problem for vampires, because they can carry the illness and transmit it from victim to victim. Indeed, several Kindred have become active carriers for HIV. By drinking from someone infected with HIV and then feeding on different victims, these vampires have helped to spread a particularly virulent infection.

In some fiefdoms, any vampire found carrying such a blood-borne disease is locked away for the good of the herd. In rare cases such carriers have even been put to Final Death for spreading disease. Such plague-dogs are frowned upon heavily in the Camarilla, for not only does disease threaten the human populace, but victims of the disease might speak of their affiliation with vampires, putting the Masquerade in grave danger. Even the vampires of the Sabbat, with their lack of concern for the herd, have begun to consider regulations regarding disease carriers.

An Intelligence + Medicine roll (difficulty 7) will allow characters to detect the presence of blood-related diseases. On a failed roll, the vampire does not notice the symptoms and exposes himself to disease (Stamina roll, difficulty 6, to avoid). A botch indicates the character feeds sloppily and automatically becomes a carrier for the disease.

Kindred legends speak of certain plagues potent enough to affect vampires. Very few vampires have any knowledge of such ailments, and those who do are highly prized. Despite the Kindred's formidable powers, they are ill-prepared to handle the occasional illness that can cause them harm.

Electrocution

Vampires are not nearly so affected by simple electricity as are mortals. Nonetheless, electrocution might occasionally prove a danger. The strength of the electrical flow determines the amount of lethal damage a character takes from electrocution. She suffers the damage effect noted below each turn until contact with the source is severed (Strength roll to pull away; difficulty 5 for vampires, 9 for mortals). Vampires may soak this damage normally, but, if a soak roll is botched, the damage is considered aggravated — the vampire's bloodstream and brain are fried.

Electrical damage is a lethal effect, and armor doesn't protect against it (depending on the subject's defenses, the circumstance, and the Storyteller's decision).

Health Levels/Turn	Electrical Source
One	Minor; wall socket
Two	Major; protective fence
Three	Severe; vehicle battery, junction box
Four	Fatal; main feed line, subway rail

If a mortal character is subjected to significant amounts of electrical damage (that reduce her to Incapacitated), she may suffer permanent damage. This can be physical impairment (reduced Physical Attributes), permanent memory loss, brain damage (reduced Mental Attributes), or disfigurement (reduced Appearance). Specifics are up to the Storyteller.

Faith

According to Kindred legend, the Curse of Caine has made all vampires forever outcast in the eyes of God. This might or might not be the case, but it is quite true that symbols or persons of great religious faith can cause discomfort or even harm to the Damned.

Most mortals, even supposedly devout ones, lack the ability to affect the Kindred with faith alone. However, certain mortals — those with the True Faith Trait — can use their devotion as a defense or weapon against vampires. See page 372 for further information.

Falling

Even vampires can suffer great damage from falling significant distances. The Storyteller rolls one die of bashing damage for every 10 feet or 3 meters (rounded down) that your character falls before hitting something solid.

Falling damage may be soaked normally. Landing on sharp objects can change the damage from bashing to lethal at the Storyteller's discretion.

If your character plummets 100 feet (30 meters) or more, she reaches terminal velocity. The damage effect reaches a maximum of 10 dice at this point, and it is considered lethal damage. Additionally, any armor your character wears in a terminal-velocity fall functions at only half its rating (rounded down), since it's not designed for this sort of punishment.



Fire and Burns

Vampires fear fire, for it is one of the few things that can end their immortal existences. Fire damage is aggravated and ignores armor; it may be soaked only with Fortitude. A fire's size determines the levels of aggravated damage a character endures per turn, while its heat determines the difficulty of the Fortitude soak roll. A character suffers the full damage effect for each turn that she's in contact with the flames; she must leave the area and/or put out any fire on her to stop taking damage. All damage inflicted by fire is automatically successful unless soaked (i.e., a character trapped in a bonfire takes two *automatic* health levels of damage per turn, not the results of two damage *dice* per turn).

Soak Difficulty	Heat of Fire
3	Heat of a candle (first-degree burns)
5	Heat of a torch (second-degree burns)
7	Heat of a Bunsen burner (third-degree burns)
8	Heat of an electrical fire
9	Heat of a chemical fire
10	Molten metal

Health Levels/Turn	Size of Fire
One	Torch; a part of the body is exposed to flame
Two	Bonfire; half of the body is exposed to flame
Three	Raging inferno; entire body is engulfed in flame

If your character falls to Maimed, she is scarred temporarily by the flames (reduce Appearance by one until her wounds recover to Bruised). If she is reduced to Crippled or Incapacitated by the fire, the burns cover the majority of her body, reducing Appearance by two.

Frenzy and Rötschreck

Trapped within the false civility of the Camarilla and the forced camaraderie of the Sabbat, there is a hidden truth: Vampires are monsters, possessed of an inner Beast. Though, like humans, they have the capability to overrule their baser instincts, sometimes they fail. When this occurs, the Hunger and the Beast become uncontrollable, and no one is safe from their excesses. Older vampires refer to the ensuing savage fits as "succumbing to the Beast Within." Younger Kindred refer to these outbursts simply as *frenzies*.

The Nature of the Beast

During a frenzy, a character literally — and usually unwillingly — gives into the darkest instincts of the vampiric nature. The character is consumed with rage or hunger, unable — or unwilling — to consider the effects of any action. Friends, foes, lovers, ethics: None of these things matter to a vampire in frenzy. If a vampire in frenzy is hungry, he will feed from whoever is closest without regard for the vessel's well-being. If the vampire is angry, he will do everything in his power to destroy the cause of his anger. A vampire struck by fear will commit any atrocity to remove himself from the source of his terror, regardless of the consequences. The character completely surrenders to the basest aspects of his Nature, shunting aside the Demeanor most commonly presented to those around him. He is, in short, the Beast.

In the Camarilla, succumbing to frenzy is seen as weakness, a humiliating loss of control. Vampires who frenzy often, and especially in public, run the risk of social rejection or worse. Though many among the Camarilla Kindred are monsters through and through, the laws of the Masquerade and simple civility require that the Beast be kept in check; those who cannot do so are not vampires, but animals, and should be put down for the good of all. Among the Sabbat, frenzy is seen as a natural urge, like mortals' needs for food and sex. Sabbat vampires deride the Camarilla's attitude toward frenzy as that of weak-willed fools who cannot accept their true predatory nature. Accordingly, Sabbat typically seek not to prevent frenzy, but to control it and use it to their advantage.

A frenzy can be induced by many things, but great rage or hunger are the most common provocations. It is dangerous to deny or humiliate the undead. For

this reason, vampires of the Camarilla commonly veil slights and threats in webs of double-talk and subtlety, lest they suddenly trigger an outburst in Elysium or conclave. Ultimately, the Storyteller can call for a vampire to make a frenzy roll at any time, whenever he feels the character might have cause to lose control.

A vampire in frenzy gains several temporary benefits from the state. Vampires in frenzy completely ignore all dice pool penalties inflicted by injury, until the frenzy ends. Once the frenzy is finished, the pain comes back and the crippling effects of the wounds take hold again. All difficulties to Dominate or otherwise mentally control a frenzied character are increased by two, and all difficulties to resist the effects of such mental control are reduced by two. The character never needs Willpower rolls to accomplish a feat, because the rage fueling the vampire's actions is both a catalyst to heightened state of mind and a barrier against unwanted intrusions. Lastly, characters in frenzy are immune to the detrimental effects of Rötschreck.

Systems

The rules for handling a frenzy are deliberately vague, and the Storyteller is encouraged to make whatever changes she deems necessary to accommodate her chronicle.

In some cases, Kindred can manage to overcome the urge to frenzy. A vampire on the verge of frenzy must make a Self-Control roll against a variable difficulty. (Vampires with the Instinct Virtue always frenzy — see p. 315 for more). The difficulty is often 6 to 8, but if trying to overcome the urge to commit a blatantly evil act, the vampire's player can roll against a difficulty of (9 minus Conscience) instead. The character must score five successes to completely overcome the desires for violence, but even one success halts the frenzy temporarily. For each success below five, the character can resist the urge to frenzy for one turn. After this duration expires, the character may try again to gain extra successes and thus continue to resist the frenzy. Once five successes are acquired, over a longer or shorter period, the vampire resists the Beast's urges.

Failure means the character goes into an emotional rampage, doing exactly what she wants to do with no worries of later repercussions. Botching the Self-Control roll means the character remains in a frenzy until the Storyteller decides otherwise, and (at the Storyteller's discretion) she may gain a derangement related to the frenzy.

The following list shows common stimuli that can incite a frenzy, and the typical difficulty for a character to resist. If the frenzy has the potential to cause the vampire to commit an atrocity (killing a child or other innocent, for example), the Storyteller can rule that the difficulty is (9 minus Conscience or Conviction) instead.

Provocation	Difficulty
Smell of blood (when hungry)	3 (or higher in extreme cases)
Sight of blood (when hungry)	4 (or higher in extreme cases)
Being harassed	4
Life-threatening situation	4
Malicious taunts	4
Physical provocation	6
Taste of blood (when hungry)	6 (or higher in extreme cases)
Loved one in danger	7
Outright public humiliation	8

Note: The Storyteller has final say in what can or cannot provoke a frenzy. In some cases the Storyteller might completely ignore what the players feel should send their characters into a rage, and instead have some minor event cause a frenzy. This is commonly done in situations where the Storyteller feels a frenzy can make a point about a character's personality, or enhance the events of a story.

Roleplaying Frenzy

Characters in a frenzy are not themselves — or, more accurately, reveal more of themselves than they normally would. They will do anything to sate their hunger or destroy the source of the frenzy, even attacking other players' characters. Characters in a frenzy generally attack their enemies first, but if no enemies are present, friends are perfectly acceptable fodder for their baser instincts. Even lovers and family can fall victim to vampires in frenzy. The character might feel remorse and hideous guilt later, but while the frenzy occurs, nothing matters save the immediate gratification of the character's desires. This can lead to subsequent degeneration checks (p. 309). Therefore, repeated frenzies

can prove very detrimental to a vampire's Humanity or Path.

Some players might feel hesitant about roleplaying a frenzy, but such is the nature of the vampire. Players are encouraged to portray the frenzy effectively. A player whose character is in the midst of frenzy may choose to spend a Willpower point. This enables him to control one action of his character for one turn. In this manner, a vampire may give her victim-to-be a chance to run, or an offending mortal the chance to stammer out an apology. This moment of self-control lasts for only a turn, possibly two; it does not stop the frenzy, but only allows the character to control it slightly. As Storyteller, if a frenzied character takes an action you deem inappropriate, you may allow the action, but rule that the character has just spent a Willpower point to take the action.

The Storyteller decides how long any frenzy lasts, but one scene typically suffices. If a character is knocked unconscious or trapped alone for an extended period, the odds are good she will eventually regain control of herself.

Rötschreck: The Red Fear

Though there are few things that can kill a vampire — and though many among the Damned claim to loathe their immortality — certain sources of injury frighten all vampires. Sunlight and fire can bring about a terrified flight-or-fight mentality. While under the spell of this *Rötschreck*, a vampire flees in blind panic from the source of her fear, frantically lashing out at anything in her way regardless of any personal attachments or affiliations. Rötschreck is in most ways similar to any other frenzy; just as the Beast sometimes seizes control in times of anger, so it does in times of great fear.

Relatively innocuous stimuli, or stimuli directly under the character's control, are unlikely to induce Rötschreck. For example, a character who sees a lit cigarette in a nightclub, or a screened-in fireplace in an ally's home, might grow uneasy, but is unlikely to succumb to the Red Fear. If that same cigarette is pointed threateningly at the vampire, though, or the fireplace suddenly flares up…

A vampire seeking to avoid Rötschreck requires a Courage roll. As with frenzy, five successes must be accumulated to ignore the Beast completely, though fewer successes enable the vampire to overcome her fear for a greater or lesser period of time. Failure means the vampire flees madly from the danger, making a beeline for safety and tearing apart anything or anyone that gets in her way. Any attempt to restrain a vampire suffering from Rötschreck results in an immediate attack, just as if the character were in frenzy. One Willpower point may be spent to maintain control for one turn.

A character who is the victim of a botched Courage roll immediately frenzies and remains in a frenzy until the Storyteller decides otherwise.

Provocation	Difficulty
Lighting a cigarette	3
Sight of a torch	5
Bonfire	6
Obscured sunlight	7
Being burned	7
Direct sunlight	8
Trapped in burning building	9

Golconda and Other Means of Salvation

For most Kindred, to be vampire is to be eternally Damned. Many legends speak of vampirism as the curse not only of Caine, but of the Devil himself. To become vampire means being forever forsaken by God and man, and so an unlife of horror leads, at last, to an afterlife in hell. Even those vampires who scorn such "superstition" nonetheless see a secular hell of sorts in their Beast, their Hunger, and the all-consuming ennui that comes with centuries of existence.

It is not surprising, then, that some Kindred speak of a state of being whereby they may transcend their eternal hunger and rage. Vampires who attain this state, which is called Golconda, are said to have mastered the Beast to such an extent that it no longer controls their actions. While still tied to the need for blood, vampires in Golconda need far less of it than their ravenous kin. Moreover, they are able to quell the urges of the Beast to such an extent that they need never fear losing control to it. They are no longer properly Kindred, but a different, higher species of creature entirely.

As the stories go, Golconda is known only to a few among the undead, and these no longer participate in the Jyhad or the society of their kind. They live in the wild places, at one with the beasts of the field and the birds of the sky. Even the werewolves leave the masters

of Golconda be. Vampires in Golconda occasionally enter the larger society of undead, seeking disciples whom they can guide along the path to Golconda — but only in secret, for they wish nothing to do with the Jyhad. A few stories say that one of the Antediluvians has found the path to Golconda, and that this being seeks both to bring other Damned into Golconda's grace and to frustrate the schemes of its rivals. In truth, none will — or can — say.

Among the Camarilla, Golconda is seen as a pleasant but ultimately whimsical fable — an allegory for maintaining one's Humanity, but nothing more than that. Some among the Inconnu are said to possess the secrets of Golconda, and to aid actively in its attainment — then again, there are many rumors concerning these recluses. The Sabbat, by contrast, scorn Golconda and its seekers as unworthy vampires. Wolves, they say, should not seek to emulate sheep.

Storytellers are free to include Golconda in their chronicles, and players may pursue it if they choose. Attaining Golconda, though, cannot be simulated with charts or experience points. It is as ephemeral, yet as powerful, as love or self-acceptance, and its attainment should be the focus of an entire chronicle. In general, characters learn of Golconda only after spending some time among the undead, for Golconda lore is spread in puzzling riddles and whispered from seeker to seeker. Many vampires never hear of it at all.

Pursuit of Golconda entails not only seeking out cryptic lore, but also seeking the truth in the vampire's own being. It is certain that vampires who wish to attain Golconda must feel — and display — remorse. The greater a vampire's sins, the greater the penance necessary. Vampires wishing to enter Golconda must seek out the families of old victims and make amends, protect those weaker than they, and try to make the World of Darkness a better place. This inevitably entails maintaining one's Humanity and spending Willpower to commit good deeds (and avoid monstrous ones) whenever possible. (Vampires on Paths of Enlightenment are believed to be unable to achieve Golconda.)

As mentioned, attaining Golconda should come only at the end of a long and arduous chronicle (spanning months, if not years, of real time). During this chronicle, characters must meet certain criteria. They must attain Humanity ratings of 7 or higher and Conscience ratings of 4 or higher, and they must maintain those ratings over lengthy periods. They must seek always to overcome the worst effects of frenzy, fighting the urge and spending Willpower points if necessary to avoid committing atrocities. Moreover, they must consistently display penitent, abstinent, and honorable behavior over dozens of stories. Power, indiscriminate feeding, and the games of the Jyhad are to be avoided by vampires seeking the higher path.

Typically, at about the midpoint of the chronicle, prospective Golconda-seekers travel in search of a mentor reputed to harbor the secrets of Golconda. If they find a mentor, the vampires must prove themselves worthy through the undertaking of quests and answering of riddles. Such tasks often lead the questers through grave perils to both body and soul.

The culmination of the chronicle comes when a worthy vampire undergoes a ritual called the Suspire. Sometimes the vampire is approached by others already in Golconda, who guide the vampire through the test; other times, the mentor conducts the Suspire; still other times, the vampire travels into the wilderness and undergoes the Suspire alone. The precise effects of the ritual are unknown (and in the Storyteller's hands), save that it involves a perilous journey into the world of dreams and, ultimately, into the vampire's own soul. It is extraordinarily difficult, and many vampires fail to survive it with unlives or sanity intact. Still others return from the Suspire whole, but having forever failed to gain Golconda. There are no second chances, and so perhaps the lot of the latter is the most bitter of all.

Should a vampire actually gain this legendary state, the effects are most miraculous. Foremost among them is a total immunity to frenzy or Rötschreck. The vampire will never again commit an evil act at the Beast's urging (though the player can still choose to sin, the dice will never again force a character to do wrong). Though a vampire in Golconda must drink vitae, he need never fear inadvertently taking too much from a victim.

In addition, the character does not need to drink blood as often. The character loses only one blood point per week rather than one blood point per night. He must still spend blood normally to power Disciplines, heal wounds, etc.

Furthermore, a vampire in Golconda partly transcends the Curse binding his own Blood to the fount of Caine. In so doing, he may increase any Trait to as high as 10, regardless of Generation. His blood pool remains as it was, though.

A vampire in Golconda must maintain rigid standards of physical and mental purity. Should his Humanity rating ever slip below 7, or his Conscience rating ever fall below 4, the vampire loses all benefits of Golconda, including heightened Traits.



Becoming Mortal

Besides the tales of Golconda, certain legends among the Kindred speak of vampires who have thrown off the Curse of Caine completely and become mortal once more. No vampire seems to actually know any of their kind who has done such a thing; all such tales involve "the lover of my grandsire's ally" or "the childe of a distant Prince" or some other indeterminate figure. The catalysts behind such a change can be anything from slaying one's sire to finding true love to sacrificing oneself unselfishly for another (and becoming mortal in the dying). Most Kindred, cynical and jaded as they are, scoff at such tales — then again, acts of true love or unselfish sacrifice in the world of the Damned are rare indeed. Ultimately, the truth of such things is up to the Storyteller.

Poisons and Drugs

As undead, vampires have little fear of conventional poisons. However, they may succumb to poisons or drugs contained within the bloodstream of their victims. Indeed, certain vampires actively seek out victims under the influence of alcohol or drugs to receive a vicarious buzz.

Following are some examples of what might happen if a vampire were to drink the blood of a poisoned or drugged victim. A vampire with low Willpower (4 or less) and/or an appropriate Nature (Bon Vivant, Child) might risk addiction to a certain substance, but this is unlikely. In general, the effects of most drugs on vampires are far less than their effects on humans.

- **Alcohol:** The vampire subtracts one from Dexterity and Intelligence dice pools for every two drinks' worth of alcohol in his victims' blood. This effect fades at the rate of one die per hour, as the alcohol purges itself from the bloodstream.

- **Cocaine/meth/speed:** Vampires with the Celerity Discipline gain an extra level of the Discipline for (10 minus Stamina) minutes after drinking. Difficulties to resist or control frenzy are increased by one.

- **Hallucinogens:** The vampire lowers all dice pools by one to three (inability to concentrate). He suffers effects similar to the Level Two Dementation power The Haunting. Depending on the precise nature of the "trip," he may gain extra dice in one particular Ability (such as Awareness) or find his Auspex Discipline raised by a dot or more. The effects last for (8 minus Stamina) hours.

• **Heroin/morphine/barbiturates:** The vampire subtracts two from Dexterity and all Ability dice pools for (10 minus Stamina) minutes, and experiences a dream-like state for (12 minus Stamina) hours. Difficulties of frenzy rolls are decreased by one.

• **Marijuana:** The vampire experiences a slightly altered perception of time, as well as a one-die reduction to Perception dice pools. Difficulties of frenzy rolls are decreased by one, due to the calming effect of the drug. The effects last for about half an hour.

• **Poison:** The vampire subtracts one from all dice pools and takes from one to three levels of lethal damage per scene or even turn, depending on the intensity of the poison. Few poisons have any real effect on the undead, and most inflict a fixed maximum amount of damage before wearing off. The vampire may purge the blood at his normal expenditure rate, and the effects heal automatically within minutes to hours after purging the blood.

• **Salmonella (food poisoning):** The vampire becomes nauseated, unable to consume more blood (roll Stamina, difficulty 6, to overcome), and suffers one health level of bashing damage. The effects last about a day.

Sunlight

Sunlight, even more than fire, is deadly to vampires. Even diffuse sunlight running through a heavy curtain can cause burns, and direct sunlight sears to ash all but the most powerful vampires. Unless a character has Fortitude, the rays of the sun cause burns. Characters with Fortitude (and *only* characters with Fortitude) may attempt to soak sun damage, using a soak dice pool equal to the level of the Discipline. The difficulty to soak the damage depends on the intensity of the light, while the amount of damage taken depends on the amount of protection between the vampire's skin and the sunlight.

No part of a vampire is immune to the rays of the sun. Any character looking into direct sunlight is blinded instantly, her retinas burned by the illumination. Fortunately for vampires, the light reflected from the moon is not strong enough to inflict any serious damage, though some suffer the equivalent of mild sunburn if they are exposed to the light of a full moon and aren't wearing any protective gear.

As with fire, sunlight inflicts automatic damage per turn unless soaked.

Soak Difficulty	Intensity of Light
3	Faint light coming through a closed curtain; heavy cloud cover; twilight
5	Fully protected by heavy clothes, sunglasses, gloves, and a wide-brimmed hat
7	Indirect light coming through a window or light curtains
9	Outside on a cloudy day; hit by one ray of direct light; catching the sun's reflection in a mirror
10	Direct rays from an unobscured sun

Health Levels/Turn	Exposure
One	Small part of body exposed — a hand or part of the face
Two	Large part of body exposed — a leg, an arm, or the whole head
Three	Fifty percent or more of the body exposed — wearing thin clothing

Temperature Extremes

Vampires, being undead, suffer little from the privations of temperature. However, very high (200+ °F or 100+ °C) temperatures might have the same effects as fire, at the Storyteller's discretion. Vampires suffering from extreme cold might be forced to spend additional blood points or suffer from the effects of frostbite (-1 or more to Dexterity-based dice pools). In general, though, vampires should not suffer greatly from most "normal" temperature fluctuations.

Example of Play

[Joseph has gathered Kelley, Michelle, and David together for a **Vampire** story. Joseph is the Storyteller. Kelley plays Jillian Brand, a Toreador dilettante; Michelle plays DMZ, a Gangrel gangbanger/would-be Anarch; and David plays MortyxX, a loathsome Nosferatu ex-coroner. The three have gathered to investigate strange activities in the Barrens of the inner city, activities which have led to the disappearance of Jillian's sire Miranda, open warfare among DMZ's gangsta allies, and the firebombing of a Nosferatu tenement-aerie. The three characters, realizing that fate has thrown them together, have agreed to meet at a popular Kindred nightclub.]

[Kelley arrives a few minutes before the other players, so, to pass the time, she and Joseph launch into a one-on-one storytelling exercise involving Jillian's interaction with her herd.]

An hour after sundown. Jillian lies pale and languorous on velvet sheets, entwined in the romance-novel-model arms of Miguel, her latest doll. His mouth on her neck is simultaneously enticing and vaguely irritating, his breath pungent and mammalian; she twists her head about to dislodge him, presses her lips to his waiting ones, nibbles at his lower lip and then slowly sinks her teeth into the fleshy bit.

A sharp intake of breath — from him, not her — as she sucks. Muttered exclamation of pain.

"There, there, sweetness," she mutters abstractedly, kissing the wound closed. "Such a brave lad you are. See. Just a love bite." She rolls up, assuming a sitting position. This wasn't distracting her. Images of Miranda superimposed themselves over the kine's vapid features. "Now, M, lie back. Jill has errands to attend to this evening. Perhaps we should rendezvous at… no, I might be out a while. Sleep, dearest, then go home, and I'll call you sometime." Miguel gives a bovine grunt of half-conscious assent, already sinking into slumber.

[Michelle and David arrive, so Joseph and Kelley cut their freestyle roleplay short and begin the game as a whole.]

Jillian drives herself — even with all eternity ahead of her, there's nothing like effortlessly whipping a BMW down a busy thoroughfare — to the agreed-upon spot, valet-parks, and waves to the bouncer in lieu of paying. Even by mortal standards, this club has seen an absurd number of incarnations, so it's a perfect rendezvous for younger Licks seeking to avoid the attentions of their change-wary elders. Now it plays techno, or dubstep, or whatever the children are listening to this week. There's the amusingly named DMZ, uncharacteristically early, face set in that sullen pout that signifies vulnerability hidden under faux indifference. It's only a so-so hunting mechanism for mortals, better when coupled with the ability to eviscerate prey with a backhand swat.

[Joseph sits back, sets the scene at the club, and watches as Kelley, Michelle, and David guide their characters through a little roleplaying and one-upsmanship.]

Jillian saunters over as DMZ sneers. Normally, she loves baiting the shrill little Anarch, but she's too anxious about Miranda. Besides, a cursory aura-glance reveals that the Gangrel's not in the mood to lose a duel of repartee, so Jillian decides to come right to the point. "Any news on what's up?"

"Shit." DMZ dry-spits in disgust at the dance floor. "Not a goddamn one of the motherfuckers is saying anything. All anybody knows is that some motherfuckers with extreme firepower are setting up shop, no connections to anyone known, and fuck any boundaries." DMZ sniffs at the air, in the manner of a dog. "I smell a bad time rising in this city. Maybe time to move on."

"Werewolves'd make sushi of you, flavor it with that chip on your shoulder." It's MortyxX, creeping up on them as usual, presumably just crawled up out of whatever hellhole he rested in during the day. Jillian can barely make him out; shadows mercifully cloak the patchwork thing he calls a body, revealing only the odd lump or appendage bent in decidedly unnatural fashion.

"Ahh… I thought the place smelled of formaldehyde," Jillian mutters.

"What you smell, sweetie, is a lead as to what's going on, which is more than any of the rest of you've got. But if you're going to cop an attitude…" MortyxX seems to shrug in the shadows, then turn his bulk away.

"Go on, then, Rat," Jillian says. "Who'll help you? The Prince? Unlikely. The rest of your foul brood? You're doing this to earn status with your sewermates, not toady to 'em. Why don't you just spit out what you've got so we can move on?"

"Well, then. A little bird in a certain shipping company tells me that, while all this hubbub's been going on, trucks have been driving over to, and unloading crates at, the Devil's Playground — that abandoned tenement turned squatter zone. Now what use would a bunch of crackheads and derelicts have for crates full of stuff — right on the borders of a war zone in your turf, Anarch?"

"Crates of what?"

"Don't know. Mysterious how the invoices just up and disappeared. I caught a glimpse of some of the boxes in a temporary — sunproof — storage facility. Big enough for weapons — or your sire, Jill, or maybe just pieces of her."

"That's all you've got? Strictly circum—" Jillian halts in midsentence as MortyxX holds up a distinctive purple scarf.

"Interesting how things get left lying around," MortyxX says. "I seem to recall your sire wearing this little trinket to one of those high-society soirees I wasn't invited to but crashed anyway. What's it doing in a rundown and dirty warehouse? And why are Kindred being moved through the middle of a gangland battleground — unless someone's got a decided use for something they've got — like their blood?"

There's no more to say. The three leave the club and hop in Jillian's car. Jillian spins the BMW into town, taking care to avoid the Avenue — where their movements will be plain as day to gossiping Harpies — and discreetly circumventing the Five Bowers region — *de facto* territory of Candlemas, a Lunatic of great age and uncertain humors.

[Because the players state that they wish to avoid notice from the Kindred community as a whole, the Storyteller has Jillian roll Wits + Stealth (difficulty 5) to avoid scrutiny. She rolls three dice for her Wits, plus one for her Stealth rating of 1, and gets one success.]

The neighborhoods deteriorate around them — prime Anarch hunting grounds. Jillian, not wanting to park her car close to the Devil's Playground or alert anyone within the building, parks the car on a deserted side street, praying that no one trashes the vehicle while she's away. The three Kindred get out, walking through an urban version of purgatory. Sirens wail in the distance, groans echo from nearby alleyways, and once a chopper swoops over the blighted zone.

"Nice neighborhood you live in, Z," Jillian mutters.

"Fuck you, you skanky bitch!" DMZ retorts. "What the fuck would you know about having a neighborhood, since you get handed everything on both sides of life?"

"Oh, spare me the—" Jillian's rebuttal is interrupted as the disgusted MortyxX, eschewing subtlety, walks out right under a flickering streetlight — an action, Jillian notes, that flouts the Prince's law more meaningfully than all of DMZ's posturing — and brazenly snatches a woman off the street.

[While they walk through the adjoining tenements to the Devil's Playground, David, realizing that MortyxX is low on blood, asks Joseph if he can make a hunting roll. Joseph says okay, but decides to raise the difficulty by one — after all, MortyxX's attention is elsewhere. The difficulty is 5 — they're more or less in red-light central — and MortyxX has a Perception rating of 3. He rolls 1, 9, 8 — one success total. Prey is in the area, and Joseph decides to act out the hunt.]

The woman, obviously a prostitute, screeches and beats at MortyxX's implacable talons. "Get yer damn hands off me, asshole. You want a blow job, it's gonna be—" The glassy-eyed woman catches a glimpse of MortyxX's lump of a face under the streetlight. "What the fuck is that, some kinda mask, or are you just—"

"It isn't a mask, you stupid, dead bitch," MortyxX hisses, and wrenches her neck with one hand. The vertebrae separate with a crack that would have churned Jillian's stomach in her breathing days. Pressing the spasming body against the alley wall and the horrified face to his own, MortyxX gnaws away at the corpse's skin in a parody of passion, then sucks luridly at the tatters of the face. In the nearby buildings, lights flicker prudently off.

[Because MortyxX so greatly overpowers his victim, the Storyteller dispenses with combat rolls, simply allowing MortyxX to kill the girl. MortyxX still retains Humanity, though, and murder is a gross violation of the Hierarchy of Sins (covered in Chapter Ten). Joseph calls for David to make a Humanity roll, using MortyxX's Conscience rating (2) versus a difficulty of 8. David scores 3 and 9 — one success. MortyxX is gripped with a sense of the pointlessness of the slaughter, and will probably dream of the girl for days afterward. He does not lose a point of Humanity — this time.]

[Figuring the woman might be on drugs or have a disease, Joseph decides to secretly roll a die — 1 to 5,

she's sick or on something, 6 to 10, she's clean. The roll comes up 8, so MortyxX is no filthier than usual.]

Leaving the corpse twisted in a dumpster, MortyxX leads the trio two more blocks, then motions them around a corner. In front of them, the edifice known as the Devil's Playground looms against the dead gray sky. Fires crackle on the rooftop, and laughter reverberates from broken doorways whose gaping interiors dance with fireflies of blue flame.

DMZ gives a long, low whistle. "My sire told me that when the Sabbat came to his city in the '50s, they lit fires everywhere. Burned the damn Primogen hall down under cover of a race riot. Bastards love to burn shit."

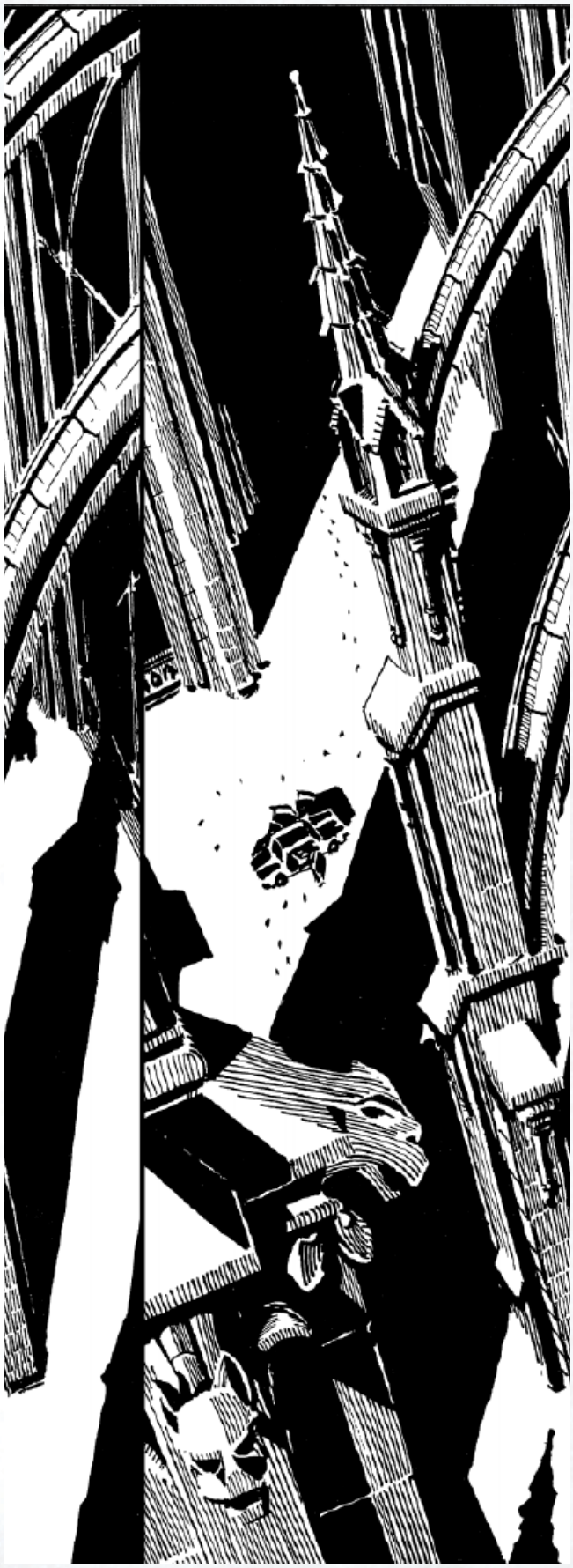
The three Kindred carefully begin walking around the sides of the tenement, staying close to the shadows. As Jillian walks, though, her foot crunches on something that hisses at her — a huge rat! Jillian yelps, startled, and answering shouts echo from one of the tenement's broken doorways.

[The coterie decides to sneak around the sides of the building, looking for an entrance or anything else of relevance. MortyxX, not wishing to be invisible to his companions, eschews Obfuscate. Joseph calls for the trio to make Dexterity + Stealth rolls versus difficulty 7. David rolls MortyxX's Dexterity (3) + Stealth (3) and scores 2, 8, 4, 8, 4, 5 — two successes. Michelle rolls DMZ's Dexterity (4) and Wits (2) and scores 9, 1, 7, 5, 5, 5 — one success. Kelley, though, after totaling Jillian's Dexterity (2) and Stealth (1), rolls 1, 5, 4 — a botch!]

Three figures emerge from the doorway, knives in hand. The huge, shambling shapes lumber toward the vampires, and Jillian's Heightened Senses smell the distinctive scent of augmented vitae characteristic of ghouls.

[Joseph calls for Kelley, Michelle, and David to make initiative rolls for their characters. Kelley adds Jillian's Dexterity (2) to her Wits (3) and rolls a die, scoring 5, for a total of 10. David totals MortyxX's Dexterity (3) and Wits (3), then rolls a 9, for an exceptional 16. Michelle does the same thing for DMZ's Dexterity (4) and Wits (2), as well as her Celerity (1), then rolls a 7, scoring 12. Joseph, rolling for all the ghouls at once, scores a 6 and adds it to the ghouls' Dexterity (3) + Wits (2). The ghouls will go on 11.]

[Now actions are declared, in reverse order of initiative. Kelley, speaking for Jillian, decides that she will spend a blood point to raise her Stamina to 3 (a reflexive action), then use her Presence power of Dread Gaze



on the ghoul closest to her. Joseph decides that the ghouls will split up, one ghoul for each player's character. Michelle, for her part, says that DMZ will spend a blood point to extrude her Talons of the Beast — an automatic action — then launch herself at the ghoul closest to her. Finally, David declares MortyxX's intent to run back into a nearby alley, at which point he hopes to be able to use his Obfuscate power of Unseen Presence.]

MortyxX springs back toward the shadows of the alley whence he'd just emerged, leading a ghoul in pursuit. Snarling with fury, DMZ pounces toward another ghoul, baring fangs and claws as she leaps. Jillian, meanwhile, composes herself, doing her best to evoke her unearthly powers of Presence as her assailant balls a meaty fist and shambles toward her, grinning.

DMZ and the ghoul meet in the middle of the deserted street. Ducking beneath the ghoul's swing, DMZ slashes frantically, and disembowels the ghoul in one blow. The ghoul wails, a high, piercing shriek, and drops to the ground. DMZ snarls, a predator's cry, and dips her fanged maw toward her fallen foe… then thinks better of it and shakes off the haze of bloodlust.

The ghoul chasing MortyxX runs into the alley after the Nosferatu, but sees only empty shadows. Meanwhile, Jillian stands firmly as the last creature cocks a fist and slams it into her gut. She staggers back, but the undead are seldom hindered by such blows. "Is that the best you can do, sweetness?" she purrs, then contorts her face into a mask of rage and hisses at the ghoul. Like a building hit by a wrecking ball, the creature falls to the ground, sobbing, in front of his much smaller assailant.

[Now the resolution phase of the turn begins. MortyxX is fastest, and he's simply moving, so Joseph allows the action to take place unhindered. Next goes DMZ, who activates her Protean power, moves into combat range — without penalty, since the ghouls are less than half his movement maximum away — and slashes at her opponent. Michelle takes eight dice for DMZ's Dexterity (4) + Brawl (3) + one dot of Celerity, and rolls versus difficulty 6, scoring a 3, 1, 10, 9, 7, 4, 3, and 6. The "1" cancels out the "10," but that still leaves a respectable three successes. Because the ghoul was not attempting to dodge, Michelle rolls DMZ's damage pool — 3 (for Strength) + 1 (for a claw) + 2 (for the extra successes over the one needed to hit). Furthermore, because Talons of the Beast inflict aggravated damage, the ghoul cannot hope to soak the damage unless he has the Fortitude Discipline (he doesn't). The dice come up 10, 8, 8, 9, 6, 6! Six successes — enough to drop the ghoul from Healthy to Crippled in one strike. Though technically the ghoul is still in the fight, Joseph decides that such damage more than suffices to dispatch the lowly minion. The ghoul sinks to his feet, dead or soon to be.]

[However, Joseph does decide that such a quick kill might be enough to provoke a blood-frenzy in the vampire. He tells Michelle to roll DMZ's Self-Control rating (2) versus a difficulty of 5. Michelle rolls a 2 and 5 — one success, and barely that. DMZ manages to rein in her Beast, but only just.]

[The ghoul chasing MortyxX continues his pursuit. Because MortyxX reaches shadow, and Joseph thinks it would be dramatic for him to turn the tables on his pursuers, he tells David that he'll allow the Obfuscate power's use if she makes a successful Wits + Stealth roll (difficulty 8). David takes six dice (for MortyxX's Wits of 3 + Stealth of 3) and rolls 2, 1, 10, 9, 8, 6. The "1" cancels the "10," but David still scores two successes. The ghoul chases MortyxX into the alley's mouth… and sees no one.]

[Meanwhile, the ghoul swings at Jillian, who elects not to dodge (in hopes of making her Dread Gaze all the more intimidating). The ghoul has a Dexterity of 3 and a Brawl of 2, so he rolls five dice versus difficulty 6 to hit. He rolls 5, 1, 9, 6, 5 — because the "1" cancels out the "9," the ghoul scores only one success, not enough to add damage successes to the punch. Still, he's a strong fellow (3) and has a dot of Potence, so he rolls four dice for a punch. His damage roll (versus difficulty 6) comes up 7, 3, 8, 2 — three successes, pretty good. Jillian attempts to soak and fails outright, rolling 4, 1, 9. However, because Jillian is undead and concussive trauma means relatively little to her, she halves the result to one level. The punch drops her to Bruised, but doesn't cause her to suffer any wound penalties. Kelley says that Jillian laughs in the ghoul's face, then hisses menacingly.]

[Because Jillian basically shrugged off a strong man's full-on punch, Joseph elects to reduce the difficulty of her Dread Gaze roll by one. Kelley rolls Jillian's Charisma (3) + Intimidation (2) versus a difficulty of only 4. She scores 3, 10, 10, 9, 6 — easily enough to cow the ghoul. The ghoul shrieks, then drops into a fetal ball, sobbing.]

[And so the combat continues, until one side or the other wins. Are the ghouls indeed minions of the Sabbat? Will Jill find her sire, or are they being led into an elaborate trap? Is MortyxX trustworthy at all, or is he stringing them along? Only a continuation of the story will answer any of these questions.]




Vanitas Triumpho

Chapter Seven: Morality

"Rape me into ashes if you will. I can take it."
- Rachel Dolium, *Revelations of the Dark Mother*

Morality is integral to **Vampire**. "A Beast I am, lest a Beast I become" has been an iconic phrase for the game, and summarizes the struggle between morality and monstrosity. The curse of vampirism can strip away the character's mortal nature, and the character's Humanity is a vital part of the game. Even those Cainites who have shed their human morality to follow a new Path of Enlightenment often do so as a specific refutation of Humanity. A vampire without any form of morality is nothing more than a mindless killer enslaved by her thirst for vitae, so Humanity and Paths are an intimate part of every **Vampire** character. Humanity and Paths, unlike most other Traits, are rated on a scale of 1 to 10.

Degeneration

Despite all efforts to the contrary, a vampire is going to succumb to moral failure sooner or later in his unlife. Willfully or otherwise (ethics are particularly hard to maintain in frenzy), a vampire occasionally commits an atrocity and risks losing to the Beast. If the character feels remorse for his actions, he knows that his morality is still intact. If he commits a wrongful act and callously disregards it, however, his resistance to the Beast is obviously waning.

One of the most important themes of **Vampire** is the Kindred's struggle to retain their souls and avoid the clutches of the Beast. Thus, it is extremely important to use morality in a consistent, dramatic manner. If the Storyteller allows the players to (sometimes literally) get away with murder, the story will suffer as one of the tragedies of vampiric existence vanishes. If the Storyteller is too strict with the morality rules, though, all the characters will be ravening, blood-gorged maniacs by the end of the first session. Keeping a handle on morality is a hard thing to do, but the degeneration system is designed to help that. (Since most vampires are on Humanity, from this point forward we'll talk exclusively in those terms — special rules for those on Paths of Enlightenment start on p. 313.)

The system is simple: Whenever a character takes an action that the Storyteller decides is morally questionable, the character may suffer degeneration — a permanent loss of Humanity. If degeneration is a possibility, the player whose character commits the act should make a Conscience roll for that character. The difficulty is 8 — reprehensible acts are hard to justify

— though the Storyteller may modify this. Willpower may not be spent for an automatic success on this roll — all the ego in the world won't protect a character from guilt.

If the player makes the roll with even one success, the character loses no Humanity — he feels enough remorse or somehow manages to justify his transgression. If he fails the roll, the character loses a point of Humanity. If the player botches, the character loses a point of both Humanity and Conscience, and also gains a derangement, decided upon by the Storyteller. Obviously, morality is not something a Kindred can afford to take lightly. Remember that a vampire whose Humanity drops to zero becomes a character controlled by the Storyteller.

On the Brink

A Storyteller should always warn a player before she takes an action that may cause degeneration. Players should understand the consequences of their characters' actions, and should have the opportunity to enjoy making the decision. Likewise, a player whose character is in frenzy should be told when the character is about to do something heinous. (Remember, though, that a player may spend a point of Willpower in order to stave off the pangs of frenzy for a turn.) Players should not be allowed to think they can get away with anything. Make it obvious that a roll may become necessary if vicious characters persist in committing self-centered deeds. Likewise, don't bait and switch. If you warn them that a roll is imminent, go through with it, or you risk ruining the mechanic's usefulness.

Using Hierarchies of Sin

Degeneration checks may seem arbitrary or ill-defined. To some degree, they are, but this is intentional. Moreover, degeneration checks are not random so much as they are subjective. A Storyteller has carte blanche to monitor character morality in her chronicle. This is a huge responsibility for the Storyteller, but one that ultimately makes for a great deal of tragedy and horror, as the characters gradually descend into a state of utter monstrosity though they desperately rail against it. Storytellers, beware — players should never feel that you are screwing them out of Humanity or, consequently, their characters. Use degeneration checks consistently but sparingly, lest the tragedy erode to an incessant series of failed die rolls.

To lend a sense of order to degeneration checks, consult the Hierarchy of Sin for Humanity on p. 312. (Other Paths use Hierarchies of Sin as well, though their ideas of "sin" are different.) Whenever a character commits a dubious act, see how that action relates to the hierarchy. If the action is at or below the level of the character's Humanity rating, a roll is warranted — as a character falls further down the Humanity scale, she becomes increasingly callous, and minor peccadilloes cease to bother her. The use of the term "violation" in the hierarchy is deliberately vague, to aid the Storyteller. A violation may be anything questionable, and is presented to avoid inclining the scale toward any single transgression. Violation may be killing, callous injury, rape (what do you think taking blood by force is?), or any other villainy.

Bearing

A vampire's morality has a direct impact on her bearing — a feeling the Kindred unconsciously projects. The greater the vampire's Humanity or Path rating, the stronger this tendency is. For example, vampires on Humanity have a bearing of normalcy; the humane connection that such vampires hold keeps them from seeming strange and terrifying to mortals.

Generally, a vampire's bearing has little or no direct effect on her nightly activities — it's only a vague impression. Very high or low morality ratings impose a bonus or penalty to specific rolls associated with the character's bearing — for Humanity, the bearing modifier affects Social rolls for appearing normal and winning sympathy. These modifiers can affect rolls used for Disciplines, where relevant. Paths of Enlightenment have their own bearings, which are listed with each Path description.

Humanity/Path Rating	Bearing Modifier
10	-2 difficulty
9-8	-1 difficulty
7-4	no modifier
3-2	+1 difficulty
1	+2 difficulty

It seems hard to slide to the lowest echelons of the scale, but consider the prominence of the Beast as Humanity falters. Sooner or later, the character will be committing depravity outside her own volition. The Storyteller is free to decree that characters of low Humanity (4 or less) occasionally act according to various urges and impulses that must be resisted with Conscience rolls or Willpower expenditure. This is the crux of **Vampire** — how closely can the character walk with the Beast before it drags her into damnation?

Humanity

Let's make one thing clear: just because a vampire follows the Path of Humanity doesn't mean she is a friendly, congenial saint. Vampires are predators by nature, and Humanity only gifts them with the ability to pretend they're not. It is an internal charade that protects a Kindred from herself, much as the Masquerade protects vampires from the mortals outside.

Unfortunately, the very nature of existence as a vampire is anathema to one's Humanity. As the centuries wear on, the Beast takes hold, and Kindred become less and less concerned with the wellbeing of the kine (after all, they'll die eventually, anyway). As such, characters are likely to lose Humanity over the course of the game.

Mortals also typically follow the Path of Humanity, though this is largely out of ignorance: They don't know they can be anything else. As such, this mechanical system for morality rarely comes into play for them. Certainly, some mortals — rapists, murderers, and the like — have low Humanity ratings, but they have no Beast roiling within them, as do the Kindred. It is possible for a vampire with a high Humanity rating to be more humane than some mortals are!

X	Monstrous
•	Horrific
••	Bestial
•••	Cold
••••	Unfeeling
•••••	Distant
••••• •	Removed
••••• ••	Normal
••••• •••	Caring
••••• ••••	Compassionate
••••• •••••	Saintly

Effects of Humanity

A Kindred's Humanity rating reflects how much of a character's mortal nature remains despite the curse of Caine. It influences how well a character may deny her vampiric state, as well as how effectively she may pass for mortal.

• Vampires sleep unnaturally deeply and are loath to rise even if presented with danger. Vampires with higher Humanity rise earlier in the evening than vampires with lower Humanity ratings. Also, if a Kindred is forced to act during the day, the maximum dice pool he may employ for any action is equal to his Humanity rating.

• Humanity also affects a character's Virtues. Whenever a certain Virtue is called into question, a player may not roll more dice for a Virtue than her character has dots in Humanity. Obviously, as the character sinks ever more deeply into the arms of damnation, questions of morality and self-preservation mean less and less. As Humanity depletes, the character creeps slowly toward the night when she loses all self-control.

• The length of time a Kindred spends in torpor (p. 283) relates directly to his Humanity rating. A vampire with low Humanity remains in torpor for a longer time than a vampire with a higher Humanity rating.

• Humanity determines how human a character appears and how easily she may pass among the populace. Vampires with low Humanity acquire unnatural and disturbing features like sunken eyes, perpetual snarls, and bestial countenances (a reflection of the vampire's bearing — see the sidebar on the previous page).

• If a character's Humanity rating ever drops to zero, that persona is no longer suitable for use as a player's character. Completely controlled by his Beast, the character is mindless and falls under the Storyteller's control.

Humanity ratings fluctuate based upon the Hierarchy of Sin — if a vampire accidentally or purposefully commits an act rated lower than her Humanity rating, she must roll her Conscience Trait to see whether she accepts the act (and thus loses Humanity) or feels remorse and maintains her current level. Humanity may be raised only by spending experience points on it.

The Downward Spiral

Vampires are monsters, and even a Kindred with the highest of Humanity ratings is nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing. Nonetheless, as Human-

ity erodes, vampires not only become capable of, but also actively pursue, ever more depraved acts. It is in a vampire's nature to hunt and kill, and eventually every vampire finds himself holding the corpse of a vessel he had not intended to murder.

It is important, then, to know how vampires change as their Humanity ratings deteriorate. Vampires' behavior, even under the auspices of Humanity, may become so utterly depraved and alien that the very thought of her causes discomfort in others. After all, a low Humanity rating indicates that very little connects the Kindred with her mortal origins.

Humanity 10-8

Kindred with Humanity ratings this high are, ironically, more human than human. Many fledgling vampires sometimes adhere to codes more rigorous than they ever held in life, as a reaction against becoming a predator. Older Kindred scoff at this practice, laughing at the thought of newly whelped neonates cowering beneath fire escapes and subsisting on the foul blood of rats, vainly rebelling against their murderous natures.

In truth, vampires who maintain high ratings in Humanity are rare, as every Kindred must kill sooner or later. Vampires with high Humanity are almost unbearable by their peers, who find frustration in their perceived naiveté and self-righteousness; most Kindred prefer to suffer through unlife without kicking themselves. High Humanity ratings indicate aversion to killing and even distaste for taking more vitae than is necessary. Though not necessarily passive or preachy, Kindred with high Humanity uphold excruciatingly exacting standards, and often have very clearly defined concepts of moral right and wrong.

Hierarchy of Sin – Humanity

Humanity	Moral Guideline
10	Selfish thoughts
9	Minor selfish acts
8	Injury to another (accidental or otherwise)
7	Theft
6	Accidental violation (drinking a vessel dry out of starvation)
5	Intentional property damage
4	Impassioned violation (manslaughter, killing a vessel in frenzy)
3	Planned violation (outright murder, savored exsanguination)
2	Casual violation (thoughtless killing, feeding past satiation)
1	Utter perversion or heinous acts

Humanity 7

Most human beings have Humanity ratings of 7 or so, so vampires at this level of Humanity can usually manage to pass for mortals. Vampires with 7 Humanity typically subscribe to "normal" social mores — it's not acceptable to hurt or kill another person, it's wrong to steal something that another person owns, but sometimes the speed limit is just too damn slow. The vampire is still concerned with the natural rights of others at this stage of morality, though more than a little selfishness shines through.

Humanity 6-5

People die. Stuff breaks. A vampire below the cultural human norm has little difficulty with the fact that she needs blood to survive, and she does what needs to be done to get it. Though she won't necessarily go out of her way to destroy property or end a victim's life, she accepts that sometimes that's what fate has in store for some folks. Though not constantly horrid, Kindred at this stage of Humanity are certainly at least mildly unpleasant to be around. Their laissez-faire attitudes toward others' rights offend many more moral individuals.

Humanity 4

The vampire begins an inevitable slide into urge indulgence. A Humanity of 4 indicates that killing is acceptable to this Kindred, so long as his victim is "deserving." Many vampire elders hover around this level of Humanity, if they haven't adopted some other moral code. Destruction, theft, injury — these are all tools, rather than taboos, for a vampire with Humanity 4. The vampire's own agenda becomes paramount at this point, and screw whoever gets in the way.

Humanity 3-2

The lives and property of others are irrelevant to a Kindred this far gone. The vampire likely indulges twisted pleasures and aberrant whims, which may in-

clude any manner of atrocity. Perversion, callous murder, mutilation of victims, and wickedness for its own sake are the hallmarks of a Kindred with very low Humanity. Few vampires maintain ratings this low and lower for very long — their damnation is all but certain at this point. Physical changes show up at this stage; while not hideous in the sense of the Nosferatu or certain Gangrel, the vampire acquires a pallid, corpselike, and noticeably unwholesome aspect.

Humanity 1

Only nominally sentient, Kindred with Humanity 1 teeter on the edge of oblivion. Little matters to vampires this far gone, even their own desires outside of sustenance and rest. There is literally nothing a vampire with Humanity 1 won't do, and only a few tattered shreds of ego stand between him and complete devolution. Many who attain this stage find themselves no longer capable of coherent speech, and spend their nights gibbering blasphemy in their gore-spattered havens.

Humanity 0

Must sleep. Must feed. Must kill. Players may not run characters with Humanity 0. Vampires at this stage are completely lost to the Beast.

Alternate Virtues and Paths of Enlightenment

Some vampires forgo the petty mortal concerns embodied by the concept of Humanity. These Kindred reason that they are no longer human, so they have no need to apply the sentiments of the living to themselves.

Whether or not a Kindred chooses to follow the moral tenets of Humanity, some sort of behavioral system must exist. To accept utter randomness is to invite the Beast to rule, and no vampire wishes to sink into the clutches of mindless depravity. Even those vampires who plumb the depths of immorality have some ethical bulwark they use to anchor themselves against the Beast.

Kindred who voluntarily abandon Humanity follow behavioral codes known as Paths of Enlightenment. While mechanically similar to Humanity, these codes have very little — in fact, sometimes nothing — to do with the mores of mortal culture. Adopting a Path of Enlightenment means giving up everything that matters to a "normal" person (or indeed, many vampires).

Only those Cainites who have truly abandoned themselves to the dark majesty of vampirism follow Paths, and rarely do any turn back. Players may choose between a variety of different Paths (at the Storyteller's discretion). It is important to know a few things before you commit to a Path of Enlightenment, however.

• **Paths are exclusive**. Few Kindred are initiated into the secrets of the Paths. Most vampires — even those of the independent Clans and the Sabbat — follow the ways of Humanity; they simply tend to degenerate to very low levels over time. Not just anyone can follow a Path; becoming such an inhuman creature requires discipline and spiritual strength, albeit of a distinctly alien sort. A person seeking to join a Path must have the capacity to discard her human nature, as well as the fortitude to survive the process.

• **Paths are utterly inhuman**. Players wishing their characters to adopt Paths of Enlightenment are in for extremely demanding roleplaying experiences. These are codes of immortal ethics that Kindred have spent hundreds of years, if not millennia, studying. It's fine and good to have a Lasombra character following the Path of Night, but the player will have to devote an enormous amount of energy toward understanding how that character really thinks.

• **Paths shock conventional moralities**. Paths use game systems similar to Humanity, but the codes that constitute these ideas emphasize such alien ideals that mortal characters observing an adherent is likely to be put off. Some codes espouse killing, while others cannot be bothered with it. Indeed, some codes are so selfish that even thinking about helping others constitutes a moral failure.

These Paths are here to illustrate how utterly inhuman and removed the Kindred are from humankind, and to give them spiritual protection from the talons of the Beast. Use the Paths when the story or character demands them, not to free the characters from penalties for wanton murder or perversion.

Systems

Characters on Paths of Enlightenment use the same systems for degeneration as characters who still subscribe to Humanity. Each Path has its own Hierarchy of Sin, which functions the same as the one on p. 312. Some Paths are so far removed from conventional hu-



man morality that concepts like Conscience and Self-Control do not apply to them at all. For these codes of ethics, different Virtues apply. Depending upon which Path a character follows, Conscience may be replaced by the Virtue of Conviction, while Self-Control may be replaced by the Virtue of Instinct. No character may have both Conscience and Conviction or Self-Control and Instinct. Which Virtues the character actually possesses depends upon which Path he follows. Remember, however, that all characters have Courage, regardless of Path.

Conviction

The Conviction Virtue quantifies a character's ability to maintain a sense of reason when faced with desire, suffering, or need. Conviction represents the reconciliation of the predatory urge with the character's capacity for atrocity.

As opposed to Conscience, which deals with remorse and atonement for Path transgressions, a character with Conviction recognizes his failure and plans to overcome it. Conviction is completely inhuman; the character who has this Trait can no longer pass for human under anything but the most cursory of scrutiny. Creatures who can sense the Beast (vampires, werewolves, etc.) immediately recognize someone with the Conviction Virtue for what he truly is: a monster. Like Conscience, Conviction comes into question when a character must check for degeneration.

•	Steady
••	Determined
•••	Driven
••••	Brutal
•••••	Completely self-assured

Instinct

The Instinct Virtue refers to a character's ability to control the Beast by familiarity rather than denial. It allows characters to "ride the wave" of frenzy and emotional excess by keeping a close rein on their passion, rather than letting passion control them. As atavistic as Conviction, Instinct is the Virtue of a monster who accepts his nature rather than maintaining a sense of human compassion.

Instinct allows the character to harness the Beast's destructive power; a character with high Instinct is primal and turbulent. A player rolls Instinct when attempting to control a character's existing frenzy.

When a character who possesses the Instinct Virtue faces frenzy, she always enters the frenzy, unless the difficulty to avoid it is less than her Instinct Trait, in which case she may choose whether or not to frenzy. Thereafter, for the duration of the frenzy, the character is wholly under the Beast's sway, and must be run by the player (or controlled by the Storyteller) in an appropriate fashion. Any time the player wishes the character to consciously take an action (known as "riding the wave"), she must roll Instinct against the difficulty to avoid the frenzy. Frenzies affect the character normally (including ignoring wound penalties, etc.), though she may sometimes exert a bit of control while so enraged.

•	Intuitive
••	Feral
•••	Bestial
••••	Visceral
•••••	Primal

Creating a Path Follower

If a player wishes to create a beginning character on a Path, a few changes in the character-creation rules take place.

• Alternate Virtues begin at zero: While every human (and thus every recently Embraced Kindred) has a modicum of their "natural" Virtues, vampiric Virtues must be learned from the ground up. So, while a character with Conscience, Self-Control, and Courage is created with one free dot in each Virtue, then has seven points to spend on Virtues, a character with Conviction, Self-Control, and Courage begins with only two free dots (in Self-Control and Courage). A character with Conviction, Instinct, and Courage begins with only one free dot (in Courage). All characters receive seven points to spend, but must use points to buy the inhuman Virtues to at least 1. This may seem unfair, but shunting off one's human nature is not undertaken lightly. Even monsters are not created overnight.

• A vampire following a Path of Enlightenment must begin the game with a Willpower Trait of 5, minimum: This can be achieved by spending points on Courage or raising Willpower with freebie points. Beings of lesser ego simply do not have the spiritual vigor needed to break down their souls and rebuild them from the ground up.

• Beginning characters may not start the game with Path ratings above 5: If the combination of the character's Virtues would indicate a Path rating of higher than 5, simply record "5." Likewise, freebie points may not be spent to increase a beginning character's Path rating above 5, either. Beginning character vampires who subscribe to these codes still have only 25 or fewer years of experience as Kindred — hardly enough time to master the rigors of inhuman codes of behavior. (Players starting with older characters may start with increased Path ratings at Storyteller discretion.)

• In all other ways, unless otherwise specified, inhuman Paths and Virtues are used like their human counterparts. So, if a roll calls for the player to use Perception + Self-Control, and the character has Instinct, roll Perception + Instinct. Mechanically the Virtues often fulfill the same purpose, even if some of the application differs.

Switching from Humanity to a Path

A character may also elect to eschew his human nature in favor of a Path. This is exceedingly difficult, and those who fail find themselves permanently soulscarred as a result.

A character seeking to switch from Humanity to a Path must have a Humanity rating of 3 or below, as well as ratings of 1 in whichever Virtue or Virtues are to change to their counterparts. For example, a vampire seeking to follow a Path espousing Conviction and Instinct must have Conscience and Self-Control ratings of 1.

During the chronicle, a candidate is typically approached by a Kindred already on the Path; in this sense, Paths resemble secret fraternal orders, approaching candidates they deem worthy rather than being open to solicitation. This process should be roleplayed. If the character chooses to initiate himself toward the Path, he begins a program of rigorous study, and a vampire already on the Path is assigned as the initiate's mentor. An initiate spends at least a year in contemplation and study of the Path's ways. During this time, the initiate must forcibly degenerate his human Virtues, dropping them to "acceptable" levels (Humanity 3 or below, ratings of 1 in appropriate Virtues), if he has not done so already.

The vampire then undertakes a test, which can be roleplayed by the player and Storyteller. This test can involve study of forbidden lore, answering of riddles, completion of ordeals and tasks, or whatever else the Storyteller deems appropriate for the given Path. However, part of the test always involves the vampire committing an act that, in human terms, would be viewed

as an atrocity. Such a deed is undertaken not for the sake of mindless evil, but rather to impart a lesson about the character's nature in relation to the Path.

Following the completion of the test, the character makes a Willpower roll. If the character's Humanity is 3, the difficulty of the roll is 8. If the character's Humanity is 2, the difficulty is 7, and if the character's Humanity is 1, the difficulty is 6. Willpower may not be spent to gain automatic successes on this roll. If the character succeeds, he sheds his human nature and the Virtues that accompany it, gains ratings of 1 in all appropriate Path Virtues, and gains a Path rating of 1. If the character earns three or more successes, he experiences a profound (if twisted) enlightenment, gaining a Path rating of 2.

If the character fails the roll, he commits a stupid, pointless atrocity without gaining any corresponding understanding. He loses a point of Humanity, fails to attain the rudiments of the Path, but may reattempt the test (at a difficulty appropriate to his lowered Humanity Trait) in a month's time. If the character botches the roll, he loses a point of Humanity and may not reattempt the test for an entire year.

Should a character be driven to Humanity zero in this fashion, his soul is lost to the Beast, and the character is permanently taken over by the Storyteller.

The Path of Blood

Nickname: Dervishes

Virtues: Conviction and Self-Control

Bearing: Resolve. Followers of the Path of Blood know the seriousness of their task and are incredibly dedicated to it. Their aura modifier affects Willpower rolls.

Basic Beliefs: This Path is practiced almost exclusively by the assassins of Clan Assamite, although only vampires who demonstrate true loyalty to the Clan learn its harsh code. The founding principle of this Path explains that the children of Caine (or Khayyin, as the Assamites refer to him) are wicked failures, fit primarily to bring the brood of Haqim (the Assamites' name for their own Clan founder) closer to "the One," a state of mystical transcendence. Haqim instructs his childer to salvage or strike down Khayyin's other childer to destroy the taint they inflict on the world.

Assamites on this Path follow two basic precepts. First and foremost, the Clan seeks to convince other Kindred of their flawed, cursed nature, and thus convert them to the service of those on the Path. Kindred as a whole are a blight upon the earth, and only by upholding Haqim's righteous code can they redeem themselves. Should vampires resist attempts at conversion, the Assamites kill them. Before they were cursed, Assamites would diablerize their victims, using the blood of the fallen to lower their Generations and thus return to Haqim's bounty. Now, unable to drink the blood of other vampires, they instead collect blood from vampires as payment, using that to follow Haqim's directives until the night when the curse upon them can be lifted. Although they are not inherently psychotic murderers, Assamites on the Path of Blood place little value on the unlives of other Kindred, and must have good reason not to slay most vampires with whom they come in contact. Vampires on this Path pose a serious threat to other Kindred around them, and do not frequently associate with non-Assamite Kindred. Blood is blood, however, and Assamites are not so fatuous as to disregard the value of the vast web of Kindred society.

Few young Assamites follow this Path or even know of its existence — Clan Assamite conspires to keep its beliefs secret from most other Kindred of the world. Hundreds of years ago, the Assamites' bloodthirsty ways united all other Children of Caine against them, and they are loath to face the concerted opposition of Khayyin's bastard brood again. As such, only the most accomplished and able Assamites learn this Path's tenets.

The Ethics of the Path

- Faithfully follow the teachings of Haqim.
- Mortals are beneath the notice of vampires. Feed from them only when necessary.
- Lose no opportunity to obtain Kindred blood of any Generation. The power of the Blood shall ensure the clan's victory.
- Withstand the Beast's fury — failing to master oneself results in lessened prowess.
- Seek knowledge that may aid the Clan in its war on the cursed spawn of Khayyin.
- Extend the glory of Haqim's cause to other Kindred. Should they refuse, use them to further your own journey back to Khayyin's grace.

History

The Assamites practiced an early version of this Path for hundreds of years before the formations of the Camarilla and Sabbat. Their bloodlust led them

into open conflict with powerful elder Kindred, who desperately sought to stifle the marauding diablerists. The Assamites found themselves in the same situation as the Anarchs during the time of the Anarch Revolt, and the Camarilla levied a curse on the Clan, making it impossible for the Assamites to consume Kindred vitae. For centuries, the Clan have followed a debased version of the Path, crippled by its members' inability to commit diablerie directly.

Current Practices

The fatal nature of this Path with regard to other Kindred stands behind much of the fear and mistrust of Clan Assamite. Predominantly practiced by proven ancillae and elders of the Clan, the Path of Blood leads these beings into direct conflict with non-Assamite vampires. Kindred on the Path of Blood gracefully attempt to convince other Kindred of their "one true way," so a few individuals from other Clans also support this Path.

Practitioners of little understanding seek merely to follow the teachings of Haqim, doing so without question. However, those of greater wisdom seek to explore just what "becoming One" entails. By taking the cursed blood of the Antediluvians and their spawn, the followers of the Path hope to concentrate the curse of Khayyin in the hands of those who will use it responsibly (namely, the Assamite Clan). In such a way, according to Path doctrine, can the great endgame of Gehenna be averted. Accordingly, Assamite Ancients practice rigorous purity and meditation, and rumors of a Golconda-like state among these beings have recently trickled into the larger Kindred community.

Description of Followers

Study, proselytism, and selective strikes against the rest of the Kindred world occupy the nights of Kindred on this Path. Fanatical in their quest, the Assassins bring Final Death to those who would get in the way of collecting the blood payments or sending a portion of those payments back to their sires and leaders in Alamut. Mostly, however, Assamites seek to convert those of high Generation, as they are farther removed from their progenitors and, thus, the taint of evil.

Path of Blood Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Killing a mortal for sustenance	Human blood is nourishing to the body, but the murder of lessers is poison to the soul.
9	Breaking a word of honor to a Clanmate	Solidarity is important to the Assamites' holy cause.
8	Refusing to offer a non-Assamite an opportunity to convert	The childer of Khayyin are accursed and must be saved.
7	Failing to destroy an unrepentant Kindred outside the Clan	Those who do not accept Haqim's teachings forfeit their unlives.
6	Succumbing to frenzy	Haqim teaches ascendance, not indulgence.
5	Failing to pursue the lore of Khayyin	To oppose one's enemies successfully, one must learn all about them.
4	Failing to demand blood as payment	Other members of the Clan may benefit from such vitae, no matter how diluted.
3	Refusal to aid a more advanced member of the Path	To act selfishly is to fall into the snares of Khayyin's pawn.
2	Failing to tithe blood	Haqim has decreed this as paramount to his childer's cause.
1	Acting against another Assamite	This is treason to the Path and the Clan.

Following the Path

This Path espouses the liberal practice of Kindred murder and the acquisition of blood. More enlightened Kindred on the Path of Blood also seek to uncover lore and knowledge that may lead them to a key to remove the Tremere ritual that cripples them. As such, vampires who follow the Path of Blood are not mindless monsters murdering Kindred in the streets, but would-be saviors of the entire world. All Kindred on the Path of Blood strive to attain "Oneness" with the mythical Haqim, though few who have reached this lofty goal deign to explain its nature. Most Dervishes believe that Oneness resembles Golconda, or another state wherein vampires can cast off their curse and revel in their Cainite natures.

Common Abilities: Combat and occult Abilities aid followers in their pursuit of the Path's principles. Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Intimidation, and Occult are among the Abilities prized by Path of Blood supporters.

Preferred Disciplines: This Path lends itself to the refinement of Quietus, Obfuscate, and Celerity. Some followers cultivate knowledge of Thaumaturgy to aid them in their quests.

Path of Blood, Post-Curse

If you are playing an Assamite who is not under the effects of the Tremere ritual (and thus, using the weakness listed in the sidebar on p. 428), the Path of Blood demands that the Dervish must diablerize Kindred when they have the opportunity instead of sharing their payments of blood with the Clan. As such, the 4 rating for the Hierarchy of Sin is replaced with "Failing to pursue lesser blood," and the 2 rating is replaced with "Failing to take an opportunity to lower one's Generation."

The Path of the Bones

Nickname: Gravediggers

Virtues: Conviction and Self-Control

Bearing: Silence. The Gravediggers, accustomed as they are to long hours of quiet study and contemplation of the grave, radiate the stillness of death. The bearing modifier applies to rolls involving Stealth and attempts to go unnoticed.

Basic Beliefs: The Path of the Bones, it is believed, grew out of a warped code upheld by the morbid vampires who sired the Giovanni: Human, Kindred, or otherwise, every being sooner or later ends up in death's arms. The most ardent followers of this Path espouse "giving oneself over to the comprehension of life's inevitable end." Vampires who follow this Path seek the knowledge of precisely what death is: Is it simply the end of life? The transition of the soul to what lies after life? Is it the end of the soul's desire to exist? These questions haunt the followers of the Path of the Bones each night.

Many vampires believe that the Path of the Bones is a degenerate Path that encourages followers to participate in all manner of murder and deviance. Those who uphold the Path and those who are familiar with it, however, know that it involves itself with a pursuit of life's — and unlife's — meaning. Followers of the Path seek to understand death's nature and purpose, and thus the roles individuals play in the greater scheme of the world. Mortality is inevitable, except for vampires, who have somehow managed to cheat the cycle.

Kindred nature, however, is generally outside the avenues this Path explores. It is truly a scholar's code, as the Kindred who follow it forsake even their own comfort to advance their understanding of mortality's mysteries. These Kindred are not necessarily cruel — they merely value comprehension more than human life.

At its simplest, the Path of the Bones seeks to define not only what death is, but also its meaning to those who have escaped it. It is a Path of knowledge and power, and many who support it learn to wield great influence over the living and dead alike. Many among the Path become quite erudite in the ways of ghosts, but even these odd beings fail to answer many of the Gravediggers' questions — what, for example, happens to a ghost that resolves its psychic struggle or discorporates into the void?

The Ethics of the Path

- Study death in all its permutations.
- Determine when death occurs; define it.
- Search for a purpose for death and the life that prefaces it.
- Quantify the differences of death by various causes.
- Achieve a comfort with death and unlife — distinguish between damnation and salvation.
- Hasten death's arrival, should it seem to be unnaturally delayed.

History

This Path grew out of a moral code upheld by the Cappadocians, whom the Giovanni destroyed in their bid for greater power. A select few Giovanni saw more than a means to an end in their practice of Necromancy, and upheld the rituals and studies of their forebears. Although the Path is not widely practiced among the Clan, followers of its precepts pioneered most of the Giovanni's advances in Necromancy.

Current Practices

Elder members of Clan Giovanni follow this Path, as do those with a sincere interest in improving their necromantic knowledge for a purpose other than temporal power. Giovanni who uphold the Path of the Bones rarely deal with mortals, as their grim inquisitiveness often proves fatal for mortals with whom they come in contact.

Description of Followers

Vampires on this Path are genuinely curious, wishing to learn exactly what purpose individuals serve. Thanatology is more a science than a philosophy to Kindred on the Path of the Bones. This Path is quite introspective, and greedy Giovanni rarely follow it, preferring the more materially comfortable outlook of Humanity. Gravediggers support the Giovanni family primarily through the knowledge they bring it, rather than through advancing the political aims of the Clan.

Following the Path

Vampires who subscribe to the tenets of the Path of the Bones should be detached yet inquisitive. Although they are not cavalier about death, Gravediggers seldom aid anyone about to die, preferring to watch and learn. Less fatalistic vampires may take issue with this, and the Kindred on this Path will not act against them should they seek to aid the dying individual. Obviously, their time has not yet come.

Path of the Bones Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Showing a fear of death	Fear inhibits learning.
9	Failing to study an occurrence of death	Refusal to learn indicates refusal to understand.
8	Accidental killing	There is no opportunity to gain insight.
7	Postponing feeding when hungry	Denial of the self serves no greater purpose.
6	Succumbing to frenzy	The Beast is irrational, and emotion serves little to advance understanding.
5	Refusing to kill when an opportunity presents itself	Experimentation proves theory, and without proof, there is no conclusion.
4	Making a decision based on emotion rather than logic	Vampires are dead; so, too, are their emotions.
3	Inconveniencing oneself for another's benefit	Death is inevitable; what meaning does easing another's doomed discomfort have?
2	Needlessly preventing a death	One must not prevent the cycle, but should learn from it.
1	Actively preventing a death	Such emotional ties befit humans, not Kindred.



Common Abilities: Kindred on this Path naturally specialize in those proficiencies that advance their macabre research. Knowledges are favored, particularly in the realms of Medicine, Occult, and Science.

Preferred Disciplines: Followers of this Path obviously favor Necromancy, and also refine their aptitude with Auspex. As well, certain elders of the Path are rumored to have developed unique mystic arts related to the study of death.

Path of Death and the Soul

During the formation of the Sabbat, the Tzimisce took similar inspiration from the Cappadocians and created a variant Path called Death and the Soul. The Sabbat claim their version of the Path is distinct, but most outside observers have difficulty telling the difference between adherents of Path of the Bones and Path of Death and the Soul. As such, the mechanics for both Paths are functionally identical.

The Path of Caine

Nickname: Noddists

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Faith. The righteousness of the Cainite is apparent to all. The bearing modifier affects all rolls that rely on the vampire's image as a devout Kindred and scholar of Caine's teachings.

Basic Beliefs: Scholars of nights long past, in seeking keys to the nature of vampiric existence, pursued fragments of knowledge from the *Book of Nod*. Drawing upon the history from that book as well as other esoteric sources, Cainite scholars concluded that only Caine, as the first vampire, is the paragon of vampiric nature. The Noddists seek to become more like Caine, in order to discover the limits and powers of the undead form. By learning from Caine's example, the Noddists claim, one can understand the true nature of vampirism and how vampiric existence differs from one's mortal life.

Noddists seek knowledge and history, recording the experiences of Caine, so that they may learn from his

example. To them, Caine's life reveals the mystery of the vampiric curse; by understanding the undead form, they transcend their mortal weaknesses. They prize any knowledge about the vampiric condition, but the writings and stories of the First Vampire form the core of Noddist lore. As Caine was marked and cast out from mortal society, the Noddists believe that he exemplifies most keenly the differences between vampires and humans. Therefore, this Path's adherents cast aside their humanity as inadequate and useless, emulating Caine's exile and seeking new rules to govern their predatory drives.

The heart of the Path of Caine lies in the exemplification of vampiric nature: The questions of existence, the limits of the vampiric form and the changes wrought by the Embrace all drive the Noddists into endless speculation, debate, and research. Scholarship and historical insight are valuable, but the vampire must simultaneously develop spiritually and physically, to explore the limits of his undead form. Diablerie serves as more than a simple theft of power; it allows the practitioner to learn from the experiences of other undead, thereby developing greater understanding. Other vampires lose themselves in attempts to save lost humanity or find meaning in obscure philosophy. The Path of Caine, instead, finds meaning in the fundamentals of vampirism.

The Path of Caine is demanding and rigorous; few vampires follow its tenets in the modern nights. This Path places a high emphasis on scholarship, insight, and personal discipline. With the eternal patience attributed to Caine, say the followers of the Path, comes the opportunity to slowly refine oneself.

The Ethics of the Path

• Search for the history of Caine. Learn from his actions.

• Develop your willpower and predatory instinct. The Beast, like the rest of the vampiric form, may be mastered.

• Take the vitae of the unworthy so that you may become closer to Caine. Temper this accrual with an understanding of your own potential so that you do not take the Curse for granted.

• Adapt to the needs of your new condition; cast aside your lost humanity.

• Study your abilities and the abilities of Caine to discover what belongs within you. Examine the limits and meanings of vampirism.

History

The Path of Caine developed in the early 16th century as vampires sought new insights into personal enlightenment during the Renaissance. Many vampires felt the need for a system of self-improvement that circumvented the limitations of humanistic beliefs, as human morality conflicted with vampiric nature. This Path gained a great following over the next 200 years, as many vampires viewed Caine as an ideal figure. Following the Enlightenment, this Path began to decline in favor of newer Paths. Few vampires maintained the discipline and studiousness necessary to uphold this Path, so it dwindled to a small but devoted following. The remaining Noddists maintained a respected place in the Sabbat and continued to recruit from the most intellectual and insightful prospects. As the modern Sabbat selects more fledglings based on their individual potential and achievement, this Path has experienced an influx of new followers.

Current Practices

This Path appeals to some of the most introspective and reflective of vampires, but all Sabbat subscribe to parts of the theory (if not the practice) of this Path. Followers focus on personal growth, but also lead missions to garner hidden knowledge and powerful elder vitae. Additionally, many of this Path's students often oversee and participate in rituals and plays celebrating the history of vampirism. Noddists are loath to Embrace randomly, instead choosing recruits from promising mortals. Recently, many Noddists have eschewed scholarship in favor of traveling, experiencing the world and emulating Caine's wanderings. Many of these "adventurous" Noddists travel the globe to chase bits of information and experience the variety of vampiric existence.

Description of Followers

Noddists are often reserved and educated, with a strong knowledge of history and a drive for self-awareness. Followers of the Path are not inquisitive in the sense of seeking deductive answers to problems; rather, they study traditions and historical events in hopes of finding solutions for their questions. Cainites who espouse this Path often display a great deal of self-mastery. Additionally, Noddists tend to engage in debate with other vampires, to discern how other Cainites experience the Curse. Noddists tend to assume positions of spiritual authority in the Sabbat, as Pack Priests or Bishops. Many other Cainites find followers of this Path haughty and vain.

Following the Path

Sons and Daughters of Caine should always seek information regarding the vampiric condition, through experience, personal growth, and the pursuit of occult lore. Diablerie, development of Disciplines, and self-mastery are all valid means of refining the vampiric form. Noddists rarely engage in politics, choosing instead to acquire new information and experiences. They also serve as priests who lead vampires to seek awareness — and development — of their undead condition. Those on this Path lead by example, embracing their monstrous natures and striving to attune themselves to their differences from humans, then helping other vampires do the same. Noddists do not hesitate to share their insights, so that all vampires have the opportunity to become closer to Caine, though they hoard dangerous secrets to prevent misuse.

Common Abilities: Vampires who adhere to the Path of Caine are studious and philosophical. Followers primarily favor Knowledges — especially Occult — but Noddists are expected to be capable of developing the vampiric form to its greatest potential, so Survival, Melee, and Athletics are encouraged. Additionally, those who would engage in debate prefer Expression, Subterfuge, and Leadership.

Preferred Disciplines: Followers of the Path of Caine prefer those Disciplines considered "natural" to vampires, such as Auspex and Presence. Disciplines that augment the physical form — Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence — are particularly valuable. Some Noddists dislike the use of Disciplines that are not expressly noted in the *Book of Nod*, such as Thaumaturgy and Serpentis, claiming that these Disciplines do not conform to Caine's development. Other followers of the Path claim that such Disciplines simply represent a heightened mastery of the vampiric condition. Most Cainites of this Path learn only the Disciplines listed by Caine in the early fragments of the *Book of Nod*.

Path of Caine Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Failing to engage in research or study each night, regardless of circumstances	The search for truth requires dedication.
9	Failing to instruct other vampires in the Path of Caine	All vampires must have the opportunity to explore their potential.
8	Befriending or co-existing with mortals	Caine was separated from mortals, as all vampires should be.
7	Showing disrespect to other students of Caine	All of the Children of Caine deserve the respect due their heritage, as long as they strive to understand themselves.
6	Failing to ride the wave in frenzy	Direct the Beast; do not be directed by it.
5	Succumbing to Rötschreck	Master your fear. Terror is for lesser beings.
4	Failing to diablerize a "humane" vampire	Those who do not explore their potential forfeit that potential.
3	Failing to regularly test the limits of abilities and Disciplines	Develop your capabilities to their limits in order to discern your true nature.
2	Failing to pursue lore about vampirism when the opportunity arises	Every scrap of knowledge adds a piece to the puzzle of undead existence.
1	Denying vampiric needs (by refusing to feed, showing compassion, or failing to learn about one's vampiric abilities)	To be a vampire, one must satisfy a vampire's needs.

The Path of Cathari

Nickname: Albigensians

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Seduction. The Cathari are temptation incarnate, and they have an uncanny knack for knowing the desires of others. The bearing modifier affects rolls to tempt and seduce others.

Basic Beliefs: The Path of Cathari sprang from the Catharist heresy of the Middle Ages. A dualistic philosophy, Cathar doctrine holds that the world was created in equal parts by a good ("light") creator responsible for virtue and spirit, and an evil ("dark") creator who fashioned the material world and its vices. The original Cathars believed the soul to be the root of all that is pure in humanity, while the material body was a shell in the corrupt physical world. Cathars pointed to the noble aspects of the spirit — compassion, sacrifice, honesty, and the like — as proof that the only true good lay in the ephemeral. The material world, with its suffering and misery, bore obvious flaws and imperfections. After much persecution, this dualistic doctrine vanished from the mortal world, crushed by papal declarations of heresy. Over the years, the vampires who favored tenets of the philosophy adopted it as their own.

According to the vampires who follow this Path, the undead are minions of the evil creator, given eternal existence to tempt others with the lures of the material world. Followers of the Path believe that they fulfill a destiny as creatures tied to the physical world through vampiric immortality. Because vampires have been denied the spiritual realms of death, the Albigensians reason that they must serve the vices of the physical realm. Therefore, they seek to spread evil and corruption, seeing iniquity as their natural state.

The Albigensians have perfected a code of evils in which to indulge, however. Theirs is not a Path of pointless amorality. Taking the beliefs of the original Cathar priests and twisting them, these vampires deliberately search for means of spreading evil. They pursue sins of greed, lust, and pride avidly. Cathars seek material wealth and comforts, and they encourage others to do the same. A vampire can serve his proper purpose only by embracing the flaws inherent to his form and to the world, and accepting his duties as a purveyor of vice. Followers of the Path of Cathari thus ironically find spirituality in depravity.

The Ethics of the Path

- Indulge in vice. Wealth, sensuality, and material power are hallmarks of the physical world.
- Lead others to temptation. It is your role to promote the depravity of the world.
- Grant the Curse of Caine to those with great passion. Undeath is an evil curse, but those with great conviction can use it well.
- The entire material world and its denizens are corrupt. Expect betrayal and wickedness.
- Your role as a creature of evil is predestined. Accept it and fulfill your purpose.
- Death simply leads to reincarnation. Mortals return after you kill them. However, you should avoid Final Death, since you will return as a mortal if you die.

History

The Path of Cathari grew out of the aftermath of the Albigensian Crusade in the 13th century. The Manicheanist beliefs in dualism influenced some members of the Church, leading to a 30-year war that many believe led to the creation of the mortal Inquisition. After Albigensian vampires resurfaced following the crusade, they developed this moral system out of the logical consequences of their philosophy, seeing vampires as tied to the mortal world and therefore purveyors of evil, while the spirits of humans possessed the only potential for good. Soon, many vampires took it upon themselves to fulfill their "duty" as providers of the mortal world's corruption. Over the intervening years, the Path changed to include broader philosophies and less formal religious overtones. The Path continued to prove adaptable, keeping the core belief of vampires as traffickers in the vices of the material world. Quite a few vampires find purpose in the business of pleasure — and damnation.

Current Practices

The Albigensians lead others to temptation, despoiling the purity of the spirit. Neonates and elders alike can be found among the Albigensians. Many practitioners see the fast-paced, decaying modern world as a sign of success for the forces of the evil creator, and they seek out ever more challenging converts among mortals and vampires alike.

Description of Followers

Albigensians are hedonistic and impulsive, but they believe that they serve a purpose. The followers of this

Path of Cathari Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Exercising restraint	One's purpose is excess, not moderation.
9	Showing trust	Use or be used.
8	Failing to pass on the Curse to the passionately wicked or virtuous	The depraved can serve evil better as vampires; the virtuous can be overcome by the Curse.
7	Failing to ride the wave in frenzy	The Beast, as well as the higher self, must be indulged.
6	Acting against another Albigensian	Those of like purpose should fulfill that purpose, not quarrel among themselves.
5	Impassioned killing	Murder achieves no greater end; dead men cannot sully their souls.
4	Sacrificing gratification for someone else's convenience	Promote physical pleasures, not altruistic achievements.
3	Refraining from indulgence	The material world is a place for the gratification of the flesh.
2	Arbitrary killing	Killing a mortal prevents his bringing about his own damnation.
1	Encouraging others to exercise restraint	Vampires are creatures of evil; the vampire's purpose is to corrupt, not save.

Path are not lazy; rather, they undertake their duties with fanatical abandon. Each Albigensian considers it his duty to embody the vices of the material world and to share those comforts and pleasures with others. The Cathari encourage others to explore their monstrous natures and to spread hedonism among mortals.

Following the Path

Cathari are usually quite passionate, devoted to vulgarity and pleasure. They see the mortal world as a vast playground wherein they may satiate their base urges and encourage others to do likewise. Believing themselves to be agents of immorality, the followers of this Path are often highly social, befriending and using others to serve their sinful purposes.

Common Abilities: Followers of the Path of Cathari indulge freely in vices and materialism, and they seek to spread these excesses. Thus, Social Abilities like Subterfuge and Streetwise are most useful. Some Albigensians also use Finance and Bureaucracy to earn money, making their unlives more luxurious. A few of the more studious followers of the Path indulge in Occult knowledge and Academics in order to study the roots of the Path.

Preferred Disciplines: Albigensians prefer Disciplines that allow them to fulfill their grim purpose. Dominate and Presence are most valued for the ability to coerce mortals into cooperation. They regard the Discipline of Animalism highly as well, due to its reflection in Biblical powers, from which the followers of this Path take some of their beliefs.

The Path of the Feral Heart

Nickname: Beasts

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Menace. Those in the presence of a Beast know that she is a true hunter, just as deer do when confronting a wolf. The bearing modifier applies to rolls aimed at terrifying or cowing an opponent.

Basic Beliefs: Vampires are the ultimate hunters — immortal and invulnerable. The Beast Within is merely the expression of the predator's instinct. To deny one's atavistic impulses is to go against the dictates of nature, or so this Path's followers believe. A vampire

can only survive by adhering to her inner character and accepting the monstrous drives that accompany the unliving state. Though the Beasts do not revel in their predations, neither do they avoid them. By learning to accept the role of hunter, thereby acknowledging the proper role of the unliving, a vampire becomes like an animal: feral, predatory, but ultimately in her proper place.

A follower of this Path feels that the Beast is a natural part of being a vampire and that its needs must be satiated. Still, the vampire is intelligent, and a cunning hunter is a more effective one. Therefore, it is important to strike a balance between Beast and Man — the feral cunning and vicious instincts of the vampire are excellent survival tools, tempered by the reasoning and insight of the mind. By satiating the Beast's urges from time to time, the vampire ironically gains a greater degree of personal control.

Vampires on the Path of the Feral Heart (sometimes called the Path of the Beast) have little use for the trappings of civilization or education. Modern transportation and weaponry is unnecessary, for the unliving form provides the necessary tools to stalk and kill. Subterfuge and politics are trivial concerns; politicking does not bring blood to one's throat. Vampires are made to hunt and kill, and the followers of this Path excel at both.

The Ethics of the Path

- Survival is your first concern.
- Politics or technology simply get in the way of the hunt.
- Learn to strike a balance with your Beast. Engage in the brutal actions necessary to survive, but retain your intelligence and cunning.
- The "natural world" is an illusion. All things must live according to their forms, and even civilization is natural because it is the form of humanity.
- Although fire can kill you, you must master your fear so that you can kill those who would use it against you.
- Whether running alone or with a pack, your loyalties must be absolute. You have no time for shifting allegiances.

History

The Path of the Feral Heart seems to have grown out of ancient codes by which vampiric berserkers accepted their animalistic nature. Espoused originally by the Gangrel, the Path spread to a few other vampires who learned to elevate their predatory ways. This Path was never a popular one, but its constituency remained constant throughout the ages. The Path has changed relatively little over the years. Beasts see no real need to "adapt" the Path to a more modern age.

Current Practices

Beasts have no real organization, and they rarely engage in any sort of concerted rituals or traditions. Some few nomads, though, exist as wandering hunters. When Beasts meet, they often indulge in the Gangrel practice of sharing stories or indulging in a little practice combat. Beasts also serve as frighteningly effective assassins; their loyalty, once given, is unquestionable. Beasts who feel that a particular individual is a threat to themselves or their pack are relentless in hunting and destroying the opposition.

Description of Followers

Most Beasts care little for fashion or attire, instead choosing functional clothing that serves well while hunting. Some Beasts even disdain ornamentation and clothing completely, though these are rare. Followers of this Path often have a great attunement to their senses, and such individuals are often noted carefully listening to and watching their surroundings at all times, or even staying in constant slow motion and sniffing at the air so as to avoid hidden adversaries. Many Gangrel follow this Path, and they invariably have animalistic features that they do not bother to conceal.

Following the Path

Beasts must always recognize and indulge in their predatory natures. Followers of this Path therefore strive to develop their prowess as hunters. A Beast has little desire to use the trappings of technology, believing that the vampiric form provides him with all of the powers necessary to survive. Indulgence in politics is frowned upon, as there are more important matters to handle; force is a simpler and often more effective tool. Mercy and compassion have no place in the predator's heart, and enemies must be harshly destroyed while allies and packmates are protected, as they in turn protect the individual. Beasts do not kill whimsically, but when killing is necessary, there must be no hesitation.

Common Abilities: Not surprisingly, most Beasts are highly skilled trackers and hunters. Survival is paramount among these vampires, as well as Brawl and Athletics. Animal Ken is common, though a Beast

Path of the Feral Heart Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Hunting with means other than your own vampiric powers	The perfect hunter needs no tools.
9	Engaging in politics	Political struggles do not yield sustenance.
8	Remaining in the presence of fire or sunlight, except to kill an enemy	There is no sense in courting Final Death.
7	Acting in an overly cruel manner	Death is natural; feeding is natural. Torture and cruelty are not.
6	Failing to hunt when hungry	The vampire's purpose is to feed.
5	Failing to support your pack or allies	Support your family, and it will support you.
4	Killing without need	A dead vessel may not be fed from in the future.
3	Failing to follow one's instincts	Instinct is the basis of predatory nature.
2	Killing a creature other than for survival	A kill's purpose is sustenance.
1	Refusing to kill to survive	Vampires are hunters; everyone else is the hunted.

is just as likely to feed upon an animal as to emulate it. Because they are in touch with their inner natures, many followers of this Path develop a great deal of Empathy — not that they feel any pity for their prey, but rather they intuitively understand the motives of their victims. Intimidation is also fairly common, for the simmering fury just below the surface of the Beast's outward calm is truly terrifying.

Preferred Disciplines: Disciplines are a matter of survival for followers of this Path. Animalism is useful in learning from lesser predators and for feeding. Fortitude is valued, as Beasts must be rugged enough to survive any conditions. The natural weapons and hunting benefits of Protean are likewise considered valuable, and some Beasts learn Obfuscate or Celerity to become faster and cagier hunters.

The Path of Honorable Accord

Nickname: Knights

Virtues: Conscience and Self-Control

Bearing: Devotion. The Knights keep their word, and are very difficult to sway from their duty. The bearing modifier affects rolls to resist attempts to manipulate or force them to go against their given purpose.

Basic Beliefs: In a world rife with corruption, malevolence, and insanity, some vampires find direction through a firm and unyielding code of personal conduct. These vampires do not delve into philosophical questions of existence or wanton indulgence of their monstrous sides. Instead, they focus upon one singu-

The Path of Harmony

In past nights, the Path of the Feral Heart was known as the Path of Harmony, espousing a strong connection to nature and to the predatory characteristics of individual vampires. Although a Harmonist feels no remorse for doing what he must do by nature (hunting, feeding, and killing) he tempers these actions with an understanding of his place in the natural world. As a result, Harmonists espouse the virtues of Conscience, rather than Conviction.

lar principle: honor. Order, fairness, and duty are the watchwords of these undead, and though still monstrous, they abide by standards of conduct that are rigidly understandable.

To a follower of this Path, unlife must be given direction and purpose. These vampires choose honor as their guiding hand. By focusing on firm rules and personal boundaries, the Knights keep the rage of the Beast at bay. Accepting a duty and fulfilling its obligations provides the Knights with goals to achieve. Bound by their codes of honor, these vampires uphold causes with the utmost devotion, even to the ends of their unlives.

Make no mistake; the vampires who follow this Path are not compassionate or humane in any sense. Indeed, they see humans as little more than chattel or food, and undeserving of the considerations of honor that are bestowed upon other vampires. Even so, a Knight will never willingly break his given word or renege on an agreement, as doing so would be a disgrace to personal honor. The subject of commitment matters little to a follower of this Path. It is the strength of the commitment and the unyielding determination that is important.

Many of the beliefs of the followers of this Path mirror the feudal codes of chivalry or the bushido of the samurai. Knights gladly suffer Final Death before showing cowardice or betraying their allies. Similarly, this Path's soldiers uphold the policies of their Sects and organizations with fanatical zeal. Pitted against an unyielding or recalcitrant foe, a solitary Knight is a fatalistic and deadly warrior.



The Ethics of the Path

- Always keep your word and honor your agreements.
- Never show cowardice. Overcome your fears.
- Duty comes before personal matters.
- Treat your equals and betters fairly and equitably. The dishonorable are beneath your contempt.
- Always repay your debts.
- Support your comrades-at-arms in all things, except where they counsel treachery.

History

The Path of Honorable Accord grew out of bygone nights, as vampires of the Dark Ages grappled with the problems of human morality by finding a harsh and unyielding code of conduct to replace the ethics of mankind. Sabbat followers of the Path turned their loyalty

to the idealism of the Sect and the letter of the Code of Milan, in the process acquiring the moniker "followers of the Code." There are also some Camarilla Archons and Alastors who follow the Path, loyal agents reserved for the most dangerous or difficult missions. A rare few Camarilla elders, primarily Ventrue, hold on to the precepts of this Path from their nights of vampiric, medieval chivalry.

Bound by loyalty to the ideals of their Sects, combined with a strong sense of duty and honor, the Knights fought to uphold the unity of both the Camarilla and the Sabbat over the centuries. Now, the Path of Honorable Accord forms the backbone of the Sabbat. The dedicated Knights are the core of the Sect, serving the ideals of the Sabbat with inhuman devotion.

Current Practices

Followers of the Path of Honorable Accord have always placed a high value on ritual and ceremony. As a whole, the followers of the Path seek to knit together disparate factions under the common banner of loyalty to a cause. Although alternately ignored or derided by followers of other Paths, the Knights are a stern example of the best qualities of any vampire, and they cannot be faulted by their brethren. Knights do not often take leadership positions (as they find the political duplicity appalling), though they are at the forefront of many battles, showing courage and discipline unmatched by any other soldiers among the undead.

Description of Followers

Knights are by turns cold and aloof, yet honorable and trustworthy. A Knight never goes back on his word and always honors his agreements. He does not shirk his duty or flee from battle. Still, he is far from humane: The Knight sees humans as a resource, just as another warrior might see a fine warhorse as admirable but far from an equitable associate. Many of this Path's followers display a grim and taciturn image, but the Knights are capable of humor and joviality — they simply find that duty outweighs personal gratification.

Following the Path

A follower of the Path of Honorable Accord must always keep honor foremost in his mind. A Knight cannot act rashly or in haste; he must always be aware of the nature and consequences of his actions. The devout student of this Path must hold onto courage and discipline at all times while he seeks to dispense justice and fairness. The true Knight fights and dies for his cause.

Common Abilities: Knights study Melee, Brawl, and Athletics. Leadership and Expression are valued assets, as the Knight is often called upon to mediate disputes

Path of Honorable Accord Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Failing to uphold all the precepts of your group	True duty to a cause requires sterling character.
9	Failing to show hospitality to your allies	Hospitality and generosity are the wealth of the soul.
8	Associating with the dishonorable	Serve as an example, but do not be dragged into pettiness.
7	Failing to participate in your group's rituals	Tradition and ritual are important parts of heritage.
6	Disobeying your leader	Loyalty is the keystone of hierarchy.
5	Failing to protect your allies	Defend those who are worthy of your esteem.
4	Placing personal concerns over duty	Duty is the vampire's purpose.
3	Showing cowardice	Honor lies in fighting for a cause, not in fleeing it.
2	Killing without reason	Life and death are God's to decree.
1	Breaking your word or oath; failing to honor an agreement	To break one's oath is to be without the honor that defines existence.

fairly. Similarly, Investigation and Law can help to discern truth and justice.

Preferred Disciplines: Fortitude and Presence are considered the epitome of the Knightly way; these vampires are stalwart in defense and eloquent in discourse. Since so many Knights follow a martial destiny in the turbulent modern nights, Potence is fairly common as well. The Salubri *antitribu* of the Sabbat also develop the puissant abilities of Valeren.

The Path of Lilith

Nickname: Bahari, Lilins

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Tribulation. The Bahari see enlightenment through pain and conflict, and they learn to turn pain to their advantage. The bearing modifier affects rolls impacted by their own wound penalties.

Basic Beliefs: Considered heretical by most Cainites of the Sabbat, the fragments of Lilith's teachings — sometimes erroneously referred to as the Lilith Cycle — showcase an elaborate history and an alternate tale of Creation itself. Cast out from the first garden for the crimes of elevating herself with the Fruits of Knowledge and Life, and for seeking to be equal to both man and God, Lilith wandered the unformed and barren world, becoming a power of creation equaling the deities of old. Through tribulation and pain she discovered the ways of survival; by fire and thorn she created her own garden, a mirror of the suffering and enlightenment that she endured. The architect of Caine's power, the creator of magick, and the mother to gods, Lilith watered the seeds of wisdom with her own blood, which empowered anyone to walk through the fire and swim through the frost to come to the revelation of ultimate freedom and self-empowerment.

Claiming followers among vampires and other denizens of the hidden world, the Bahari practice the ancient ways handed down by Lilith. By following the image of the mother-goddess, they raise themselves from the status of children. Like a parent disciplining an errant child, Lilith passes on a legacy of pain that teaches, and so the Bahari seek to overcome the weaknesses of their blind, helpless births, ascending to understanding and power. By walking in fire, impaling themselves on thorns and blades, suffering deprivation, and plunging into icy water, the Bahari excite their bodies and minds to true sensation, and open their consciousness to the entirety of the world. From the dizzying heights of comprehension, at the needlepoint of pain, they learn the true measure of creation, that they may take the formless stuff of the world and cast it in a new image.

Make no mistake, the Bahari have little room for compassion or conscience. They fully believe that one must grasp the blade of enlightenment — and suffer its lacerations — before rising to the truth. Those who do not have the will or the insight to learn through suffering are chaff, cast aside sadly but unhesitatingly. No time or resource is wasted on those who do not have the overpowering need to suffer, change, and grow. The Hierophants, the vampire-priests of Lilith, choose those who have heard Lilith's song and punish, flagellate, and excoriate them until they arrive on the cusp of seething awareness. Only then are the tears brushed away with lover's care, the wounds comforted, and the supplicants brought into the fullness of Lilith's glorious Path.

The Ethics of the Path

- Only through pain are we elevated.
- Be teacher, torturer, and lover to any who seek enlightenment.
- Practice what you learn. Wisdom is meaningless unless it accompanies action.
- Cultivate a garden, that you may show the power of your own creation.
- Seek out those on the border of awareness and initiate them.
- Gather with your brothers and sisters to share your learning and anguish.

History

According to apocryphal tales, the cult of Lilith started when a vampire Methuselah, searching for ancient artifacts in Africa some millennia ago, discovered strange writings purported to tell of the Dark Mother. Although this Cainite could not acquire the artifacts, he carried with him the knowledge of what he had seen. Soundly defeated by the mortal and demonic guardians of the writings, he retreated to gather others to him with the knowledge and insight to delve into the mysteries pieced together from the fragments. Over the years, followers of the Path of Lilith slowly spread their archaic knowledge, drawing in small numbers of erudite and mystically curious vampires. The Path eventually took on aspects of religion as it absorbed the rituals and ceremonies of its followers' native lands.

The Path of Lilith never had very much of a following in the Sabbat, where the antithetical Path of Caine took sway, but enough followers existed to ensure that the Path survived. Indeed, even some elders of the Camarilla came to follow the Path. As rumors of Gehenna grow, more vampires are drawn to the apocryphal teachings of this Path. The visions of Caine as a blundering fool, cursed with incredible power that he refuses to understand, draw together vampires who seek an alternate means to survive the End Times. Through the auspices of the Dark Mother, they hope to rise above their Cainite nature and become untouchable to the Antediluvians.

Current Practices

Modem Bahari inherit many of the traditions of their ancient forebears. The followers of this Path rarely discard rituals or beliefs, for only true understanding of all of the world's mysteries can unlock the door to enlightenment. As such, the Bahari employ many and varied rites of worship. They often cultivate the hidden knowledge of alien cultures, and they are quick to absorb and adapt new and different occult practices. Because of this openness, Bahari engage in a loose network of vampires who trade lore and mystical knowledge, even dealing with wizards, ghosts, and other keepers of ancient secrets. Bahari often practice rituals that are bizarre even by the standards of the Sabbat, and though they are loyal as long as they may continue to practice their rites, the final loyalty of all Bahari is ultimately to themselves.

Description of Followers

Bahari live fast-paced, hectic unlives, constantly striving for the next change and the next learning experience. Anything that shocks or outrages the sensibilities of others is fair game, since there is always the hope of pushing someone beyond the boundaries of the banal. Bahari cherish the development of personal understanding, so followers of this Path can be found equally among the squalid and the wealthy. When moving among mortals, Bahari are flamboyant and mysterious. In their ceremonies, they often wear flowing, open cloaks and ceremonial masks of wood or bone.

Contrary to some beliefs, this Path is not exclusively followed by women, although they do make up a majority of its practitioners. Anyone who throws away the caul of childish ignorance for painful maturity is welcome in the circle of Lilith.

Path of Lilith Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Feeding immediately when hungry	Deprivation and hunger taught Lilith to survive.
9	Pursuing temporal wealth or power	True wealth comes from inside, not from money or influence.
8	Not correcting the errors of others regarding Caine and Lilith	Caine was a murderer, traitor, and fool who deserves no reverence.
7	Feeling remorse for bringing pain to someone	Pain and suffering help others to learn and grow.
6	Failing to participate in a Bahari ritual	The rituals handed down through time contain clues to awakening.
5	Fearing death	Death is simply an inevitable change to a new form of existence.
4	Killing a living or unliving being	Death denies one the chance to transcend.
3	Not seeking out the teachings of Lilith	Lilith hid her works in many places; they must be found.
2	Failing to dispense pain and anguish	Be a teacher through the pain.
1	Shunning pain	Only through pain are we reborn.To shun pain is to embrace ignorance.

Following the Path

A Lilin breaks with convention, flouting "accepted society" in order to force others to re-evaluate their views of the world. With the branding-iron and the scourge, the Cainite brings painful lessons that, if survived, make the postulant stronger. Those who hover on the edge of awareness are watched carefully for the final soul-wrenching revelation that brings them strength. To visit pain and even death is the greatest gift that can be given, for through these trials the individual comes to understand herself. Each must discover her own inward seeds of Knowledge and Life, so as to become a universe unto herself and an architect of creation. The garden, the symbol of life shaped and cultivated with care, is the manifestation of the Bahari's devotion to expressing what she has created and learned.

Common Abilities: Medicine, an understanding of the body in order to dispense pain without killing, is first and foremost among a Lilin's skills. As mystics of the ancient secrets, Occult is crucial. Academics and Science are also valuable tools in the search for truth.

Preferred Disciplines: Lilith is said to have invoked various powers in herself as she walked the unformed earth, powers that aided in her survival. Bahari often emulate these powers, focusing upon the Disciplines of Animalism, Celerity, Fortitude, and Obfuscate.

The Path of Metamorphosis

Nickname: Metamorphosists

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Inhumanity. Metamorphosists work steadily to become something other than human. Bearing modifiers apply to Intimidation, as well as any Manipulation rolls that can be positively affected by frightening the target.

Basic Beliefs: The world is made up of evolutionary chains. Animals are below humans, who are below the Kindred. The metaphysical, arcane members of Clan Tzimisce follow this Path, which focuses on defining and attaining the state of being beyond the curse of vampirism. Citing their transformative use of Vicissitude, the Tzimisce believe they have the potential to transcend the constraints of the flesh. Hearing Metamorphosist Fiends speak, however, reveals the true monstrosity of their philosophy. They believe that the next step is a state akin to apotheosis, and they will do anything — *anything* — to achieve it.

The Tzimisce are characteristically thorough in their study of this Path's ideals. By coordinating their experiments on living, dead, and undead subjects (as well as other curiosities they may come across, like werewolves or the errant faerie), the Fiends have formed complex theories as to precisely what the next step in vampiric transcendence is. The solitary and suspicious Tzimisce rarely compare notes, however, and the Path's development suffers as each follower spends much of her unlife learning the rudiments that other Kindred have already deciphered.

The Ethics of the Path

- Learn the characteristics of all stages of life and death.
- One should not concern oneself overly with mortals — they are a step below the Kindred, not above them.
- Do not share knowledge with others, as it is too valuable to trust to flawed creatures.
- Indulge the Beast and deny it; true comprehension of unlife requires a broad range of experience.
- One should alter and augment one's body — changing the flesh may pave the way toward changing the soul.
- Do not heed the needs or desires of others, as their lack of introspection may distract even the keenest intellect.

History

The Tzimisce have researched this Path in their solitary way for literally thousands of years. They have always been creatures of tremendous mystical potential; the followers of this Path seek to realize that potential. Followers of this Path relate very little to the world outside themselves, and many relate this fact to the inexorable decline of the Clan itself.

Current Practices

Most Metamorphosists claim membership in the Sabbat but pay it little more than lip service, involved as they are in more esoteric pursuits. In truth, this Path predates any Sect, and Kindred committing themselves to it subscribe to beliefs and creeds far older than petty notions of Kindred politics.

Path of Metamorphosis Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Postponing feeding when hungry	Hunger causes distraction.
9	Indulging in pleasure	Hedonism deters one from greater ends.
8	Asking another for knowledge	The lessons of Metamorphosis are secrets that must be uncovered, not copied.
7	Sharing knowledge with another	Knowledge must be learned, not simply illustrated.
6	Refusing to kill when knowledge may be gained from it	Before transcending death, the Metamorphosist must understand it.
5	Failing to ride out a frenzy	A Kindred must know the Beast to transcend it.
4	Considering the needs of others	Those who cannot be bothered to attain Metamorphosis are beneath one's attention.
3	Failure to experiment, even at risk to oneself	The Path can be understood only through empirical research.
2	Neglecting to alter one's own body	Physical change must be attained before any more significant metamorphosis.
1	Exhibiting compassion for others	The fates of others drag one into devolution, not transcendence.

Description of Followers

Followers of the Path of Metamorphosis are truly some of the most alien creatures any Kindred could meet. Metamorphosists are cold, utterly inhuman, and exactingly scientific. Their concerns are metaphysical rather than ethical, and it is precisely this frame of mind that leads many to believe that the Metamorphosists have literally begun their transformation into something else. Some take this a step further by altering their flesh in various means until they no longer have a recognizable gender or look even remotely human.

Following the Path

Metamorphosists conduct all manner of bizarre experiments, most of which take place far from others' eyes. It is a distant, lonely philosophy, removed from any needs other than the matter of sustenance. Followers should be heedless of others around them, existing only to satisfy their personal concerns.

Common Abilities: This Path concerns itself almost exclusively with Knowledges, particularly those of Occult, Medicine, and Science. Many Metamorphosists also specialize Academics in areas such as philosophy and theology in hopes of uncovering secrets unexplored in larger fields of study.

Preferred Disciplines: The Tzimisce Metamorphosists favor attention to their unique powers of Vicissitude. Thaumaturgy and Auspex are also highly prized.

The Path of Night

Nickname: Nihilists

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Darkness. Nihilists give off a faint air of inner darkness, inspiring those around them to dwell on their darkest fears and thoughts. Their bearing modifier applies to any attempts to bring out a victim's inner darkness, such as eliciting dirty secrets from a well-respected politician or convincing a saint to break her vow of chastity.

Basic Beliefs: Those vampires who follow the Path of Night wholly accept their damnation; indeed, they believe that, as vampires, it is their preordained role to act as agents of damnation. Unlife is nothing without pain, and misery enjoys company. This Path is prac-

ticed largely by young Kindred of Clan Lasombra, who gladly mortify their own souls in the interests of bringing atrocity to the world.

The Path of Night borrows heavily from Catholic dogma, though it concerns itself more with abandonment and damnation than redemption. The vampire's purpose in unlife, according to this Path, is to scourge the Earth, to act as an agent of evil and, thus, ultimately to do the bidding of the greater powers that dictate good and evil alike. No one lives without original sin, and those who follow this Path are beholden to expose and exacerbate that sin. Life and unlife are varying states of damnation; those who fail to realize their full potential are lost sheep, suitable only for slaughter.

This is one of the most terrible Paths in existence, as it concerns itself with the outright and intentional persecution of others. Its followers are more than mere bullies or sadists, however. One who receives the curse of Caine is bound by fate and duty to wreak vengeance upon the Children of Seth. In so doing, vampires on this Path hope that, by fulfilling the roles meant for them, they can transcend those roles and find ultimate peace. This final goal aside, though, the Path of Night is a Path of hostility and antagonism, and the company of those who follow it is extremely hard to abide.

The Ethics of the Path

- Leave no being untouched by your taint.
- Tempt and horrify those around you; the weak will fall, while the strong will be tempered by your testing of them.
- Inspire others to accept their inner darkness.
- Experience every sensation imaginable, and then some.
- Death is a means, not an end.
- Kindred, as souls damned by God, fulfill their purpose by preying upon mortals.

History

Few, if any, have certifiably chronicled this Path's inception or evolution. By varying accounts the outgrowth of medieval death cults, Satanic cabals, debased Methuselahs, or the practices upheld by Adam's first wife Lilith and her children, the Path of Night has been forsaken by most Kindred with any sense of Humanity at all. Some suspect a coterie of Lasombra known as the Black Angels foment dissension among the Clan, turning impressionable Keeper neonates down the Path's unwholesome trail.



Current Practices

No sin is too vile for a follower of this Path to indulge, and no trust is too sacred to break. Kindred on the Path of Night tie their fates very closely to mortals, who bear the brunt of their depredations. As harbingers of damnation, the Nihilists cull the secret fears and sorrows of humans around them, inflicting these terrors upon the kine as the whim takes them.

Ironically, vampires on this Path often have great reverence for those whom they perceive as truly "good" or "blessed." Indeed, one infamous Keeper, who plagued a family of witch-hunters down three generations and was finally destroyed by a scion of the line, is rumored to have praised his destroyer for her resolve.

Description of Followers

This Path is upheld almost exclusively by Lasombra, though the Keepers find occasional converts among other Clans. Lasombra who follow this Path are held in low regard by many other Keepers, as there is no room for nobility on this Path. While most Lasombra maintain other codes of morality drawn from the Sabbat, the ones who follow this Path are true fiends.

Following the Path

Vampires on the Path of Night terrorize their victims, a term which may apply to anyone to whom the Nihilist is drawn. Kindred on this Path are loath to kill — that removes potential targets, though they are not above doing so if the death may cause great grief to others or if preventing it would inconvenience their own existence. To some degree, the Nihilists shepherd the kine, showing them what may await them if they are unrepentant. However, no follower of this Path would openly admit such a thing. In their own minds, they are devils, pure and simple.

Common Abilities: Kindred on this Path specialize in Abilities that allow them to torment others. Brawl, Intimidation, Melee, and Medicine (for physiological knowledge) all have their value.

Preferred Disciplines: Followers of this Path cultivate Obtenebration for the sheer terror it inspires, as well as Potence for the pain it allows one to inflict.

Path of Night Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Killing a mortal for food	Dead mortals feel no dread.
9	Acting in the interests of another	There is no time to fulfill petty agendas.
8	Failing to be innovative in one's depredations	Familiarity for one's vile acts breeds contempt for them in others, and they may soon fail to shock.
7	Asking aid of another	Those who cannot provide for themselves fulfill their ends poorly.
6	Accidental killing	God has made Kindred horrors, not murderers.
5	Bowing to another Kindred's will	The games of the Jyhad are diversions from the Damned's true purpose.
4	Intentional or impassioned killing	Death serves no one; it merely deprives one of a victim.
3	Aiding another	Compassion has no place in a vampire's undead heart.
2	Accepting another's claim to superiority	All Kindred are equal under God's plan.
1	Repenting one's behavior	The Kindred's purpose is to cause repentance, not to practice it.

The Path of Paradox

Nickname: Shilmulo (a Romani word for vampire)

Virtues: Conviction and Self-Control

Bearing: Confidence. The Shilmulo believe that they are in the exact place and time they are meant to be, doing what they are meant to do — and it shows. The bearing modifier applies to attempts to manipulate or lead others.

Basic Beliefs: Inspired by Hinduism and upheld predominantly by vampires of the Ravnos Clan, the Path of Paradox concerns itself with the vampires' karmic duty to continue the grand cycle of ages. According to the Path of Paradox, Kindred are locked perpetually outside the illusory cycle of the universe (maya). Whereas most beings are reincarnated through samsara, a continual "entanglement" in the cycle of rebirth, Kindred have eluded that cycle. Every individual has his own purpose, or svadharma, according to the Path of Paradox, although vampires, excluded from the cycle, have lost theirs. In place of the dharma they once followed, each Kindred must now try to advance maya, hopefully understanding it in the process and finally penetrating the great illusions that shroud Ultimate Truth from their eyes.

The means by which the Ravnos undertake this cyclical advancement, however, is by selective deception. Other vampires look upon the Ravnos as untrustworthy, and can hardly be expected to take the advice of the Deceivers. As such, the Ravnos have had to resort to elaborate ruses in order to get other vampires — or, indeed, anyone with whom they come in contact at all — to undertake a course of action. Ravnos vampires see their undead state as a curse, like many other Kindred do. However, the Ravnos believe this is due to their failure to understand maya. Other Kindred, also removed from the karmic wheel, often fail to realize the necessity of their return to the cycle. Shilmulo understand this — and expedite their return by destroying them.

The Ethics of the Path

- Embrace only if absolutely necessary, and then only from the jati (family line).
- Interpret the svadharma of others and aid them in their fulfillment of it.
- Destroy other Kindred, for they are unnatural to maya.
- Erase karmic debt, dispel maya's illusions and return to the samsara.
- Use deception to achieve your ends, as others bear the fault of distrust.
- Confuse the Antediluvians by returning their childer to the cycle.

History

This Path arose among the Ravnos during the latter nights of the Roman Empire. The deceit the Ravnos command is even believed by some to have played a major role in the collapse of the empire. The Path, according to many Ravnos, had become debased shortly after Rome's collapse and had remained so for hundreds of years until a stirring (and secret) event contrived to encourage the Ravnos to rethink their ways.

Current Practices

It is too simple a conceit to say that the Ravnos destroy vampires and burn karma. In fact, the Path of Paradox is arduous and demanding. Many of the Ravnos' deceptions are, in reality, complicated tests designed to cause the subject to reveal hidden aspects of herself. Thus, the Ravnos travel the world, ousted by ignorant Kindred who fail to realize the necessity of the Shilmulo's duties.

Description of Followers

Most followers of this Path are Ravnos, though small numbers of Malkavians and Gangrel adhere to the Path. Increasingly cosmopolitan Kindred have surfaced among the Ravnos Clan, indicating that either the Ravnos pay little heed to their code or that jati are more extended than one might think.

Following the Path

Kindred on the Path of Paradox commonly hold other vampires in contempt, believing that they ignorantly or arrogantly refuse to seek their reintroduction to the cycle. As such, the Ravnos have taken the responsibility upon their shoulders to do it for them. This may require concocting complex webs of deception in order to ascertain what a given person's svadharma is, or simply destroying a vampire and placing her back in the cycle, where a new svadharma awaits.

Common Abilities: Kindred on this Path focus on Abilities that allow them to gain advantage over others, such as Alertness, Empathy, Subterfuge, Stealth, and Investigation.

Path of Paradox Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Embracing a woman	Women should be bearers of life, not death.
9	Embracing outside the jati	Most others fail to comprehend the depth of the Paradox philosophy.
8	Destroying another Shilmulo	Charity does not, as is widely believed, begin at home.
7	Killing a mortal for sustenance	Death robs a person of the ability to fulfill their svadharma.
6	Failing to destroy a vampire on another Path	Those who cannot see the true way should be returned to a productive role in the cycle.
5	Killing a mortal for reasons other than survival	A person may not have achieved her svadharma, and preventing such is anathema.
4	Failure to aid another's svadharma	The gods have set this as the Shilmulo's purpose.
3	Allowing one's Sect affairs to take precedence over one's dharma	One's allegiance should be to the gods, not one's companions.
2	Becoming blood bound	One may never destroy one's regnant, which is the whole purpose of this Path.
1	Embracing needlessly or out of personal desire	One must return others to the cycle, not extract them from it.

Preferred Disciplines: Followers of this Path practice Chimerstry in order to dupe their subjects and as a means of manipulating the illusions intrinsic to maya. Shilmulo favor Fortitude as well, to protect themselves from their subjects' ire. Many also master Auspex, with which they may better divine hidden secrets.

The Path of Power and the Inner Voice

Nickname: Unifiers

Virtues: Conviction and Instinct

Bearing: Command. Unifiers are destined for power, and they know it. Those around them can feel their commanding presence. Their bearing modifier affects rolls to command or lead others.

Basic Beliefs: When given eternal life, incredible power, and inhuman thirsts, the only true existence is as an undying overlord. There is no use in pining for lost humanity or in secreting oneself away to study arcane lore; vampires are without honor or compassion. The role of a vampire is the role of a master.

The followers of this Path see the exercise of power and control as the best reason for vampiric existence. Control of the self and of the external world is the only goal worth pursuing. To this end, a vampire must develop her abilities, extend her influence and play her pawns. By bending the world to her will, the vampire creates order and stability. Every form of power, influence, or control can be used to further some end. Therefore, Unifiers seek all forms of power, whether political, material, or spiritual.

Unifiers follow their own insight when exercising their authority. Although this Path is highly concerned with temporal power, it is also quite spiritual; Unifiers are avid pursuers of wisdom and enlightenment. Of course, all such knowledge ultimately turns to the pursuit of personal power. By understanding oneself, it is possible to begin to describe the motivations of others. True understanding, therefore, allows the vampire to unlock the secrets of enemies and allies alike, to carefully dissect any situation and discern the most proper course of action. From such judgments, the vampire decides upon the most favorable means of taking or keeping control.

The followers of this Path are rightly feared and respected. No adherent to this Path tolerates weakness

or failure; punishment is swift and often fatal. Indeed, punishment serves not only to remonstrate the offender, but as an example to others. Thus, Unifiers have no mercy or compassion. Sabbat packs with Unifier Ducti are Darwinian in the extreme.

Unifiers are consummate politicians and strategists. Although blood bonds and emotional ties can motivate followers, the pragmatic students of this philosophy recognize that such measures can be fought and compromised. Thus, vampires of this Path believe that control should only be woven through methods that cannot be subverted: Pain, rage, desire, and depravity are key among their tools. A recruit who serves out of loyalty can be bought; a follower who serves out of duty can be blackmailed; an adherent who serves out of love can be disillusioned. Therefore, fear and respect for power, anger, and hate directed towards one's enemies, the fulfillment of lust and the lessons of pain make the most persuasive directives.

The Ethics of the Path

• Do not tolerate failure — including your own. Punish it visibly and harshly.

• Be sporadic in your rewards. Drive your followers to excel, but never let them assume that reward follows excellence.

• Strive for control by any means. Dominate the world around you and bend it to your will.

• Use the most effective tool for any undertaking. Hate, fear, and anger are key among these tools, but feign benevolence.

• Show respect to those in authority, but replace them when they falter.

• Deal from a position of power. Do not show weakness.

History

The Path of Power and the Inner Voice supposedly started with a Lasombra by the name of Lord Marcus, in the early 16th century. The Path's constant push to develop power and influence led to many followers who devoutly supported the Sabbat in its early nights, and as such, many of the Path's adherents assumed positions of authority during the formation of the Sabbat. Even tonight, the Path is well-respected within the Sabbat, and some of its precepts have even started to gain grudging acceptance among the power-hungry and jaded elders of the Camarilla.

Modern nights have seen an explosion of membership in this Path. Though always popular, the Path has attracted many new followers from the expanding ranks of the Sabbat. The sheer ruthlessness and shrewdness of many of these recruits is responsible for the slow evolution of the Path from a respectable but dictatorial philosophy into a Path of iron-fisted, Machiavellian social tyranny.

Current Practices

Followers of the Path of Power and the Inner Voice do not have an organized association, but they do engage in many similar practices. All Unifiers participate in War Parties and blood hunts, often assuming roles of leadership. Various displays of willpower are a means to demonstrate power and self-mastery, so Unifiers participate in many such rituals or opportunities as well.

Description of Followers

Unifiers are driven, confident, and even megalomaniacal. The need for control combined with introspection makes followers of this Path into corrupt and brutish tyrants. Some followers of the Path espouse dictatorship, but the truly enlightened use martial philosophy and an understanding of psychology to incite their followers. The typical Unifier accepts no excuses, drives himself and his subjects mercilessly, and shows no pity or compassion for failure.

Following the Path

A Unifier accepts no defeat. The appearance of benevolence is useful, but all failure must be punished eventually. The follower of the Path must always strive to control the situations around him and heed his own judgment. Respect should be given to those in positions of authority, but those who falter must be cast down and replaced. Followers of this Path seek wealth, influence, and support. Rule should be achieved by any means necessary — when alliances or honor are useful, they are used, but otherwise, fear and hate are more appropriate. The Unifier constantly seeks out means of developing his own capabilities and furthering his own agenda.

Common Abilities: Leadership, Intimidation, Politics, Subterfuge, and similar Abilities are highly appropriate to followers of this Path. Unifiers often make a study of some sort of combat prowess, be it Brawl or Melee, in order to back up their authority. Empathy can also highlight the way to inner awareness.

Path of Power and the Inner Voice Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Denying responsibility for your actions	Dereliction of responsibility is a failure to lead properly.
9	Treating your underlings poorly	Reward competence as an incentive, but do so sparingly.
8	Failing to respect your superiors	Give the respect that is due, that you might learn something in turn.
7	Helping others when it is not to your advantage	Always gain something from your actions.
6	Accepting defeat	Succeed, or die.
5	Failing to kill when it's in your interests	Do not hesitate to eliminate those who would stand against you.
4	Submitting to the error of others	Be right and you will be vindicated. Follow a fool and you will suffer for it.
3	Not using the most effective tools for control	Power must be seized. Be iron-fisted and resolute.
2	Not punishing failure	Failure is instructive only when used as a negative example.
1	Turning down the opportunity for power	Personal power is the means to all ends.

Preferred Disciplines: Dominate and Presence are most valued among the Unifiers for their ability to exert direct control. Unifiers place emphasis on other Disciplines according to their own means of gathering power. All Unifiers invariably seek to develop their natural Disciplines to their fullest potential.

The Path of Typhon

Nickname: Theophidians (only among themselves; the outside world knows them as Corrupters or by the Followers of Set nickname, Serpents)

Virtues: Conviction and Self-Control

Bearing: Devotion. The Theophidians do everything with an eye to how they might best serve Set. The bearing modifier aids in attempts to win converts and in rolls to resist powers based on other faiths (such as True Faith – see p. 372).

Basic Beliefs: Vampires who follow the Path of Typhon have a truly sinister purpose in mind. Theophidians seek the resurrection of their patron and father, Set. Though most vampires view Set simply as a mythical member of the Third Generation, Theophidian doctrine teaches that Set was, in fact, a divine being even before his Embrace. Indeed, Theophidians view Caine as a lesser being than Set, and claim that Set in fact allowed Caine to Embrace him so that he might use the descendants of Caine to strike at his divine counterparts, such as the mythical Gaia and Lilith. In this manner Set and the Setites fulfill their place in the universe, acting as agents of entropy and breaking down the old so that the new may blossom.

Accordingly, this Path preaches the importance of influence and control. Many Setites on the surface appear to be little more than pimps, pushers, and fixers; in truth, they are much more. Setites commonly view other individuals as tools or resources to be used. By gaining control over others, the Setites may exploit them to fulfill their own ends. Thus, rather than owing those who provide them with information or services, the Setites reverse the role, and instead have their marks come to them first.

Followers of this Path revere Set as something more than a vampire — Set is attributed a deified status, almost a literal translation of the Egyptian god of the

Underworld. Ways to achieve this reincarnation differ, and for this reason, the Followers of Set extend their influence in hopes of finding information wherever it resides.

The Ethics of the Path

- Gather information, secret or otherwise, and learn how it applies to the resurrection of Set.
- Contribute to the Clan's greater goal of reviving its slumbering master.
- Bring others under your sway, increasing your influence and capability.
- Subjugate the Beast, as its reckless wiles serve only itself.
- Maintain a veil of secrecy, for others look poorly upon this Path's methods.
- Look for Set's hidden signs and act upon them.

History

Theophidians claim a history dating back to nights before the First City. Whether or not this is true is a matter of much debate, especially among detractors. Nevertheless, the widespread presence of human myths that mimic the relationship between Set and Osiris lends credence to its longevity. For millennia, the Theophidians have plied their degenerate trade from back alleys to holy temples and everywhere in between. Many leaders among the Kindred and kine alike owe their acquisition of power to the followers of this Path, though the prices they have paid are high.

Current Practices

Theophidians support no Sect other than their own Clan, though some Setites have forsaken the resurrection of Set and actually oppose his quest from the ranks of the Sabbat. Many followers of this Path cultivate blood cults of devout followers and indenture legions of desperate individuals to themselves. While the Theophidians are not averse to doing "dirty work" themselves — quite the contrary — they reason that, with others serving their purposes, they can accomplish much more. Thus, followers of this Path play many roles: seekers, fixers, scholars, courtesans, and harvesters of souls.

Description of Followers

The Theophidians are frequently social chameleons, given their need to move through many different circles. They are smooth, ingratiating, and wholly inspired by their greater cause. Followers of this Path rarely ask



favors of others; they prefer to help satisfy the desires of others and then call in favors. It is this side that non-Setite Kindred see most frequently and despise; they publicly decry the vice-peddling and corruption of the Followers of Set as breaches of the Masquerade or the puppetry of the Ancients. The Setites know the truth, however: Other Kindred are loath to acknowledge the desires that a canny Theophidian can satisfy. Clever Setites have even managed to convince non-Setite Kindred to follow this Path after long periods of corruption, dependency, and debasement.

Following the Path

Followers of the Path of Typhon are first and foremost seekers of arcane lore, though their keen social graces also make them silver-tongued diplomats. These Kindred are also insidious, working their way into existing vampire societies with serpentine façades of false identities and cadres of loyal followers. The eldest Theophidian in a given locale often erects a temple to Set in some out-of-the-way place to better serve the slumbering god.

Common Abilities: Any Ability that helps the Kindred achieve her end is prized by the followers of this Path. As such, the Theophidians have very diverse and capable members. Abilities of particular favor among the Setites include Empathy, Intimidation, Streetwise, Subterfuge, Performance, Academics, Investigation, and Politics.

Preferred Disciplines: Theophidians are masters of the reptilian Discipline of Serpentis, though their dealings with others inspire them to pursue the Setite Clan Disciplines of Presence and Obfuscate.

Path of Typhon Hierarchy of Sins

Rating	Moral Guideline	Rationale
10	Pursuing one's own indulgences instead of another's	The slide into vice is a tool, not a recreation.
9	Refusing to aid another follower of the Path	Teams work more efficiently than individuals to raise Set.
8	Failing to destroy a vampire in Golconda	Those who have transcended their desires cannot brought under sway.
7	Failing to observe Setite religious ritual	You must not deny Set his due.
6	Failing to undermine the current social order in favor of the Setites	Other Kindred are purposeless or misled, and this indolence delays Set's revival.
5	Failing to do whatever is necessary to corrupt another	The more individuals in the Setites' debt, the better.
4	Failing to pursue arcane knowledge	The mysteries of Set's resurrection may be hidden anywhere.
3	Obstructing another Setite's efforts	The ranks of the righteous are no place for petty power plays.
2	Failing to take advantage of another's weakness	Compassion has no place in Set's greater plans.
1	Refusing to aid in Set's resurrection	This is the purview of unbelievers.





BOOK THREE:
THE PERMUTATIONS

On the day when the moon runs as blood
and the sun rises black in the sky,
that is the day of the Damned,
when Caine's children will rise again.

And the world will turn cold
and unclean things will boil up from the ground
and great storms will roll,
lightning will light fires,
animals will fester
and their bodies, twisted, will fall.

So, too, our Grandsires will rise from the ground.

They will break their fast on the first part of us.

They will consume us whole.



Chapter Eight: Storytelling

"I gave a cry of anguish at this terrible curse and tore at my flesh. I wept blood. I caught the tears in a cup and drank them."

- The Book of Nod

Tell me a story.

Forget about the pages of rules and the handfuls of dice. Close the book, turn out the lights, and tell me a story about dark desires and relentless hunger. I'll tell you about a vampire, about her talents and her weaknesses, and you tell me what kind of challenges she faces, what rewards or perils come her way. You plan the twists and turns the story will take, and I will tell you how the vampire navigates them. Neither of us will quite know how the story ultimately ends, or how the vampire will arrive there.

That is the challenge of storytelling. **Vampire** is about the inner struggle between humanity and monstrosity in the face of unfettered power and eternal life. No mortal law binds the Kindred, and no moral code restrains them. Only fading passions or ideals nurtured in mortal life keep a vampire from indulging her horrific nature, and those memories become harder and harder to recall as the years stretch into centuries. In short, **Vampire** is about the characters and how they develop — or wither — in the face of tragedy and temptation. Can a mortal steeped in religious faith reconcile her deeply-held beliefs with her lust for blood? Can a vampire resist the temptation to Embrace her lover rather than face an eternity of loneliness? The Beast awaits any Kindred who surrenders herself completely to her predatory urges. The Storyteller draws on the characters' backgrounds, hopes, and ambitions to create stories that challenge their — and their players' — convictions and beliefs. As a result, taking on the role of a Storyteller in a **Vampire** game is demanding, requiring careful thought and background work to build character-driven chronicles and stories. You must create a world that is a nightmare reflection of our own, erotic and grotesque, exhilarating and horrifying. You must evoke the thrill of inhuman power and a fear of what might happen if the character ever loses control. And you can't let the characters just keep to themselves and survive off daring thefts from the local blood bank. The night air is thick with the intrigues of the elders, and the ancillae manipulate neonates as they see fit, promising great rewards — and even greater risks.

Storytelling sounds like a lot to manage all at once, and it is at first. Fortunately, the Storyteller doesn't have to do it all herself. The secret to successful storytelling is actually the work of the players. Fulfilling the expectations and interests of a chronicle's players is the first trick to creating the game's setting. Then — if the chronicle and its overall story have been carefully developed — the actions of the characters, both good

and bad, will have consequences that in turn spawn further stories. Never forget: The more the players are involved with what happens in a chronicle, the less work you, the Storyteller, must take upon yourself. You aren't supposed to do it all alone. The Storyteller should have as much fun with the game as the players.

This chapter illustrates the process of creating and running a **Vampire** chronicle, and offers advice for making the most out of the individual stories that carry the chronicle along. Building a detailed and cohesive background, a world for your players to hunt in, begins with input from your players and your own ideas for what kind of an overall story you would like to tell. Once you have decided on the details of the setting, the next step is creating characters to fill it, again keeping in mind the kind of overarching story you want to tell. After the characters are in place, you can then get to writing the chronicle in earnest, working out the intrigues and events that move the overall story along and draw on each character's goals and motivations. Finally, we offer some techniques to use when running the chronicle, advice to keep each evening of gaming engaging and fresh.

The First, Fleeting Glimpse

It starts with a couple of ideas. You read through the book, and some things jump out at you. Maybe it's the concept of a haughty Prince ruling a city with an oppressive hand, the image of an Archbishop in robes preaching to a legion of inhuman monsters, or perhaps you like the idea of a band of Anarchs making their own rules and living like wolves in the urban wilderness. Something catches your eye and sets off a spark in your mind, and you think, "This could make a cool chronicle." The question is, how do you turn these nebulous ideas into a well-rounded foundation for the stories you want to tell?

The first step begins with the players. Before you can really develop the foundation for your chronicle, you must have a strong grasp on what sorts of characters they want to play and how their concepts relate to your ideas. Suppose you are considering a chronicle set against the backdrop of a Prince's meteoric rise and fall in a large, important city. You might envision stories of intrigue, treachery, and the corrupting influence of great power. But what if one player has her heart set on playing a Nosferatu Anarch, and another wishes to be a fanatical, inhuman Toreador *antitribu*, neither of which is compatible with your overall concept? It's never a good idea to force a character concept on a player, because you want players to feel like they are contributing to the game and playing characters in whom they are really interested. At this point comes some amount of negotiation and compromise; perhaps you can interest them in your backdrop of political conflicts and double-dealing, but shift the focus of the chronicle to center instead on the characters' struggles to avoid the plots of their elders while pursuing their individual agendas. Or perhaps the Toreador might work better as an infiltrator for the Sabbat while the Anarch acts as an "ambassador" for his gang to the local court? The important point is to make sure that your ideas and the players' expectations are in synch before you even begin to develop the chronicle. This way they players can add their ideas to your own and make your job much easier in the long run.

Once everyone agrees on the general idea of the chronicle, the players can begin to create their characters and you can begin to create the world in which they will hunt. It's worthwhile to do this simultaneously, because it allows your ideas and theirs to play off one another, and might point you in directions that you could have missed otherwise. Suppose, for example, that a player wants her character to have been a government agent prior to her Embrace. You could then take this idea and expand upon it: The character worked for a covert division within the Department of Homeland Security, performing counterintelligence work that specifically investigates high-level corporate executives and politicians as potential terrorist plants. This division has in fact been subverted by a powerful vampire who uses it as a resource to gather influential information and hinder the activities of her rivals. To add yet another level of conflict, you might decide that this Primogen is now eyeing another member of the division for the Embrace, someone whom the character was close to as a mortal. You can then encourage the player to further develop the agency her character worked for, letting her provide details such as a history and important personalities that you blend into your world. This lets her flesh out her character, allows her to contribute to the game as a whole, and gives you valuable resource material for your chronicle. Get your players to go into a lot of detail when creating

their characters. Sit in with them during the creation process, and brainstorm about their backgrounds, then make the most of the information they come up with. They can provide you with a whole host of characters, situations, and conflicts that will be of use to you later. (The prelude is a great method for this — see p. 352 for more.)

It is important to take the characters' Backgrounds into account and develop them in detail. Encourage the purchase of Allies, Contacts, and Resources, then brainstorm with the player to flesh them out. Where do a character's Resources come from? Is she an heiress? Did she win the lottery? Did she stumble onto a drug deal gone sour and steal the bloodstained cash? What effect do these circumstances have on who the character is and her place in the chronicle? Likewise, Allies or Contacts are more than just dots on the character sheet — they are people with their own feelings and emotions. For instance, suppose a player wants her character to have a midlevel contact in the police department. Who is this contact, and how did the character establish this relationship? The contact might be the character's uncle, a veteran homicide detective who has a habit of asking pointed questions about the character's lifestyle and activities (particularly if he catches her at the scene of a recent murder!).

Each Background is an added dimension to the character concept, containing a wealth of ideas to inspire a Storyteller. How do the characters handle the sudden and irrevocable separation from everything they have ever known or loved? Do they fake their deaths, or simply walk away from their mortal lives? Do the characters leave loved ones who will go to any lengths to find them? Can the characters stay away from spouses or children, torn by love yet knowing what might happen one night when the Hunger overtakes them? These situations are some of the first dilemmas that the characters must face, and can influence their actions in many subtle ways. While it is always tempting to just gloss over the particulars of each character's Embrace and get on with "being a vampire," this leaves out a vital dimension in the character's struggle to maintain her humanity, and provides you with a fertile field to draw ideas and supporting characters.

Once you have determined a general direction for your chronicle and incorporated elements of the players' characters, you can make some decisions about the world in which their stories will take place.

A Dark and Deadly World

Before your chronicle can be written, there must be a stage where its actions can be played out. You need to create a setting for your stories, a world that supports the themes and ideas you want to explore in your chronicle and starkly illustrates the glories and terrors of undead existence. The world of the vampire is dark, dangerous, enigmatic, sensual, and rich in imagery. Consider these example guidelines when inventing the details of your world:

• **The Extinction of Virtue**: There are few illusions left in the World of Darkness. Centuries of greed and deceit (on the part of humans as well as Kindred) have eroded humanity's innocence. Cynicism and despair permeate everything. No one dares to believe in much of anything, because virtues like compassion and charity are just invitations to be victimized. A gentle soul and a loving heart are rare as diamonds, and as precious.

• **Blood and Money:** Life is cheap, and desperate people resort to violence out of frustration, fear, hatred, and greed. Crime is ever-present, and many families and neighborhoods adapt a siege mentality against the rest of the world. It's us or them.

• **No More Good Guys**: The world has lost its heroes. They were caught in sex scandals or taking bribes, or perhaps they fell victim to endemic urban violence. There is no strong leadership, no faith in politicians, and no belief in building a better tomorrow. People know better.

• **Haunted Houses**: Humanity is rotting from within, continuing a sad, slow decline, and symbols of its decay are everywhere in the weathered façades of Gothic churches and granite office buildings. Amid soulless towers of steel and glass sits an abandoned cathedral whose stained glass is rich with color and beauty from a time now lost. Such a place serves as a haunting reminder of what might have been, or could be again.

These points illustrate the essence of the World of Darkness, and they are important because they heighten the dilemmas that your characters face as they grapple with their fading humanity. Despair and resignation are all around them; violence and death are common. What is one more killing, one more lie? How much

difference can one person, even a vampire, make? This struggle is the source of the game's triumph and tragedy, and the decisions you make in developing your setting should take this into account. It is important to point out that you don't have to adhere religiously to these concepts, and the degree to which you emphasize them is strictly a matter of personal taste — for example, a game in which the Paths of Enlightenment are dominant might focus more on exaltation of this decay rather than the struggle with it. The only truly important thing to remember is that your environment should be one in which doing the right and honorable thing is difficult and daunting.

There is no limit to the possible physical locations you can choose for your chronicle — with enough imagination and forethought, a **Vampire** chronicle can be set anywhere from New York City to the Amazon Basin. The best locations are major cities, because they allow for a large population of vampires and are focal points for the money and power that most Kindred seek. Some Storytellers prefer to set their chronicles in dark reflections of their own hometowns, which allows them and their players to draw upon everyday knowledge to help envision the places that their characters visit. However, if you wish to locate your chronicle in a large city that you are unfamiliar with, feel free — the Internet has a wealth of useful information, which you can then reinterpret to suit your purposes. You aren't constrained to be faithful in every detail, though; this is the World of Darkness, and you can shape it any way you choose. You can even make a completely fictional city, one that can be crafted to be exactly what your chronicle needs.

As you map out the length and breadth of your locale, draw ideas from important city features, combining function with symbolism to make interesting images. For instance, an abandoned and decaying train station in the center of the city might make an ideal site for Elysium, with its high, vaulted halls and faded grandeur. A little-used cathedral might become a haven for the city's Caitiff, who are drawn to its symbolism of sanctuary and redemption. A half-built zoo could serve as the Sabbat's playground, or a block of skeletal construction sites could give the Nosferatu an aerie to look out over the streets. Vampires are territorial creatures, and the places they claim invariably mirror their individual character and attitudes. Again, don't let hard reality dissuade you from going with a cool idea; if you want your Prince to rule from a Victorian mansion but your city doesn't have one, make one and put it where you want. In **Vampire**, details always take a back seat to mood and imagery.

At this point you have three sources to draw on to build the setting of your chronicle: You have your own general ideas, you have all the details provided by your players during character creation, and you have at least some knowledge of the locale you have chosen. Now comes the time to develop your chronicle in detail.

Written in Blood

The chronicle is the overall story that the Storyteller wishes to tell with his players. It is made up of a series of smaller stories in which the player characters are the central figures. What happens in each individual story depends a lot on the course of the chronicle as a whole. It's this stage of development — deciding on the main thrust of that larger-scale story — that is the most demanding and time-consuming for the Storyteller.

Unlike many other open-ended roleplaying game "campaigns," **Vampire** chronicles often have a definite beginning, middle, and end. Accordingly, you need to detail this structure in advance in order to organize your thoughts, realize when to pick up the pace, and provide tension over the course of individual stories. A chronicle loses its focus and energy if there is no real end in sight; you want to close things off with a bang, not a whimper. A small journal, online wiki, or word processing document can help to hold notes and ideas as you outline the course of events in your chronicle. Don't try to keep it all in your head.

At this point, you have a pretty large amount of information to help guide your development of the chronicle. Now you have to flesh out the course the stories will take and blend all of the details into a workable whole. The first step is to choose a governing theme, the central idea that describes the basic plotline of the overall story. Themes are important because they let you focus the events and actions of your chronicle, giving it consistency and emotional resonance, which you can build to a climactic finale. Some suitable themes for **Vampire** chronicles were mentioned in Chapter One (pp. 14-15), but you may have some other ideas suitable for your own game.

Once you have chosen a theme (or themes!), you can begin to develop the course of events that your chronicle will take, from beginning to climax. Like any good story, a chronicle must have a satisfying climax to be truly effective, and if you know where the chronicle

is going, you will have much more confidence in your stories. Consider your initial ideas, the characters and themes you have chosen, and then flesh out the details of your chronicle as a rough outline of events.

For example, let's go back to the initial idea of a group of characters whose Embrace and unlife begin against the backdrop of a charismatic vampire's rise and fall as Prince of a city. You might decide on two themes for your chronicle: A War of Ages and Conspiracy. You like the idea of giving the characters a vision of the freedom and power that elder Kindred possess, then drawing them into an ever-tightening mesh of intrigue and deceit as they find themselves in a position to grab power and status by the side of the would-be Prince. Once in power, the façade of idealism and enlightenment falls away, and the new Prince proves to be every bit the despot that her predecessor was. The characters, for all their newfound influence, are trapped in a web of obligations and allegiances to the Prince and her other allies, no more free to do as they please than they were as neonates. As events worsen, rumbles of dissent spread throughout the city, and the characters must question not only their loyalty to the current regime, but also the worthiness of the Camarilla's philosophies as a whole. You want the chronicle to end in a blazing climax, during which the characters must decide whether to hold true to their loyalties for the sake of honor and principle, or to bring down the Prince they helped raise to power and choose a new course for the city.

Now you need to determine a rough outline sequence of events to get the characters to that point. Things should start out simply, because the characters will need some time to get acquainted with the city and its denizens. You decide that the first stories will center on each character's Embrace and relationship with their sires, challenging the characters to reconcile their new existences with the ties of their mortal lives. How the characters react to their new situation can spawn conflicts and goals that you can expand as subplots over the course of the chronicle. Along the way, the characters come into contact with some of the other Kindred in the city, before they are presented before the city's current Prince. You want to emphasize the atmosphere of unrest in the city as the Kindred chafe under the iron hand of a tyrant, so as the characters explore the city you plan for several encounters which will give them firsthand experience with the Prince's tyranny. They might witness the brutal excesses of Primogen who support the Prince, or their sires might call upon them



to carry messages of dissent to other powerful elders. Perhaps they might even become involved in a blood hunt, called on a hapless Kindred for a highly dubious offense.

Over the course of these incidents, the characters acquaint themselves with another Kindred — an ancilla who is cautious but eloquent in his opposition to the current order. The characters might listen and sympathize, they might denounce him, or the coterie might be torn along conflicting lines of loyalty and philosophy. As time passes, it becomes clear that this Kindred seeks to claim the title of Prince for himself. The characters stand to gain status and power by supporting the usurper, or lesser rewards from the current regime by exposing the rebellion. You choose to leave these events open-ended. The players are the central figures in the chronicle and should make their own decisions, according to their individual concepts and agendas.

Ultimately the rebellion must come to a head, and you choose, for the interests of the story, that the rebellion succeeds, thanks to (or in spite of) the characters' actions. Depending on the choices that they made, the characters must meet the challenges of the aftermath. Either they are powerful and influential members of the new order, or they are hounded and reviled as supporters of the old regime. How the characters cope with these changes occupies the latter half of the chronicle, as time progresses and the new Prince sheds his noble pretensions and is revealed as no less a tyrant than his predecessor. Now the characters have assumed the roles of the elders whom they envied as neonates, but find that such lofty heights are no less fraught with peril and constraints. In the end, the chronicle brings the characters full circle; depending on which choices they made in the beginning, they may find themselves part of the oppressive regime, or charismatic firebrands seeking support among the neonates for a rebellion of their own.

You now have a basic outline of the overall events in your chronicle. In addition to these major points, smaller plotlines will be spawned by the characters' personal goals and backgrounds. These subplots can be tied to the overall plot, or they may be entirely unconnected, contributing to the whole through character development and added conflict. For example, while the would-be usurper gathers his support to overthrow the Prince, he may have designs on Embracing a mortal in a key position of power at a company the Prince controls. This mortal in question happens to be a friend of one of the characters, or perhaps the characters might find themselves opposed to the Embrace on grounds of principle or personal philosophy. Some ideas for subplots suggest themselves at the beginning of your chronicle, provided by the characters' backgrounds and personalities. Others arise over the course of the game, as relationships and important decisions influence the course of events. Incorporate as many of these subplots into your chronicle as you feel comfortable with, because they provide alternate storylines that add dimension to the characters and the chronicle as a whole.

Other possibilities for chronicles and the themes they can explore include:

• **Search for Hidden Secrets**: The characters could be the brood of a single sire, or a coterie of individuals who must search out the millennia-old secrets of the Antediluvians and identify their schemes. Themes conducive to this kind of chronicle revolve around the quest for power and the manipulations of unseen forces, or the temptations that vast powers make upon the soul. The Storyteller can add elements of terror and suspense, as the characters draw closer to horrible secrets that perhaps no one — mortal or Kindred — was ever meant to know.

• **Live Free or Die**: The characters are a gang of Anarchs rebelling against the dictates of an overbearing, authoritarian Prince (or perhaps a pack of Loyalist chafing under an oppressive Archbishop). Perhaps they are outspoken in their defiance of the Kindred ruler, actively fomenting disobedience and an end to the established order. The Prince or Archbishop counters this by claiming that her authority alone keeps the enemy at bay, bringing order and stability, which the characters gravely threaten. Relevant themes for this kind of chronicle can include self-will versus an imposed order, or freedom of thought and expression in the face of oppression.

• **The Cold Company of Sharks**: The characters are high-society vampires scheming to gain power and status among the ancillae and elders of a city. Power politics, intrigue, and betrayal are the order of the day, as rivals welcome one another with cordial smiles while their underlings wage a silent, ruthless war on the city streets. This chronicle explores the potent themes of trust, friendship, loyalty, and the corrupting taste of power.

• **No Place Called Home**: The characters are refugees from a city torn apart by the intrigues of the Jyhad. They must find a new existence in a different

city, choosing to return to the heights of power they formerly enjoyed, or perhaps to exist in seclusion and shun the intrigues of the local Cainites. Then come indications that this city, too, is about to suffer the same fate as their former home. Do the characters attempt to take a stand and avert another disaster, or will they flee again? This chronicle can explore themes like courage and honor, friendship, or betrayal.

• **Conquistadors:** This chronicle tells of the triumph or tragedy of founding a new fiefdom in a distant city. At the bidding of either the Sabbat or the Camarilla (or acting without the blessing of either Sect), the characters must attempt to wrest the city from the forces, both human and supernatural, who might already claim it. Suitable themes for such a chronicle can be anything from the Jyhad to complex ideas revolving around the value of "progress" versus the value of an indigenous culture.

• **The Free City:** An ambitious council of Anarchs declare a city to be free and open to Kindred and kine alike, a place of peace where all can coexist. But can the dream work? The characters can be the agents working to build this daunting dream, making friends and allies out of former enemies. Then tragedy strikes — a misunderstanding (or outright sabotage) breaks the truce, and friend turns against friend. Themes of this chronicle can range from the poison of prejudice to themes of honor, courage, and compassion.

• **Golconda**: Rumors emerge of a mysterious stranger, newly arrived in the city, claiming to be a Methuselah who has found the way to Golconda. Does she speak the truth, or is she an agent of the Jyhad sent to divide the city at the bidding of her masters? The characters must find out, and along the way face the temptations of what the mysterious figure offers. Suitable themes for this chronicle can center on redemption, humanity, greed, loyalty, and compassion.

• **Angels of Mercy, Angels of Death**: The characters rebel against the teachings of their sires, horrified at what they have become and the means by which they were Embraced. Defiant and headstrong, they declare their own personal war against the creatures who spawned them, fighting for the sake of people who would see little difference between the Dark Angels and the forces they do battle with. Suitable themes for this chronicle may include honor, humanity, courage, prejudice, and betrayal.

• **Tale of Two Cities**: The characters are a coterie or pack of vampires who decide to defect to the opposing Sect. The characters must somehow make their way to their former enemies, show their interests are genuine, and overcome whatever challenges are necessary to be accepted into the new Sect. Then they are enlisted in a campaign to conquer their former home. Themes for this chronicle can include greed, love, friendship, betrayal, truth, and deceit.

Courts of Crimson and Alabaster

Once you have created your central themes and detailed the course of the chronicle, you are ready to get down to specifics about your setting and the Storyteller characters who exist there. The outline you have developed should give you a guideline as to which characters you need. For instance, in the example of the usurper Prince, the Storyteller would initially develop the major vampires of the city and their holdings, as well as details of the city's Elysium and the current Prince. As play progresses, the Storyteller can fill in details of the rest of the city's Kindred, from the up-and-comers to the disenfranchised Caitiff, as well as mortals who might play roles in the chronicle. The point is that you, as the Storyteller, should not feel like you have to generate a whole world in a single day. Figure out what you will need for the immediate point in the chronicle, develop those elements in detail, then work ahead to address your future needs.

Vampire works best with well-crafted Storyteller characters that make the chronicle potent and challenging with their actions. Storyteller characters are the heart and soul of a chronicle, giving your landscape life, action, and energy. Paint them in vivid detail, and act through them to evoke emotions and ideas in your players. The first Storyteller characters you are likely to create will be those generated by your players' character Backgrounds. This is a good place to start, because the players will help you brainstorm their affiliates' histories and characteristics. From there, the other Storyteller characters will either be logical needs for your chronicle, or will come through the ebb and flow of collaborative gameplay.

When creating your Storyteller characters, work along the following guidelines:

Envision the role: Each character performs a role in your chronicle, even down to the accountant who crosses a dark parking lot and falls prey to a charac-

ter's hunger. Establish what role the character is to play, then determine what qualities are necessary for the character to fulfill the role effectively. A victim embodies qualities of sympathy, terror, and pathos. An antagonist, on the other hand, evokes qualities of ruthlessness, or cleverness, or even brute belligerence.

Paint a picture: Envision what the character looks like, taking into account the qualities you have chosen. Pick out one or two characteristics that make the character interesting to you. If you are envisioning one of the characters' herd, for instance, the image of a tall, broad-shouldered man with a broken nose offers a memorable picture, and suggests other interesting images which have appeal. The picture of a brawler helpless in a smaller Kindred's embrace evokes the power and horror of the vampire.

Choose a name: Carefully chosen names enhance characters, while poor ones detract from the character image and can lessen the overall mood of the scenes in which the character appears. If we took the brawler from the example above and named him Poindexter or Dick Johnson, the players would have a hard time getting past the name, much less appreciating the character and his plight.

Age: A character's age is significant when creating vampire characters for your chronicle. Immortality wears away at all the ties that connect vampires to the mortal life they once knew. For the Kindred, each year separates them further from mortal society, as their experiences and ambitions broaden and their perspectives become increasingly alien. A vampire who has existed and schemed for millennia has no more regard for the mortal societies she coldly manipulates than a beekeeper has for his hives.

Personality: Choose one or two words that embody the character's personality. The Natures and Demeanors provided for character creation are a good starting point, but don't feel constrained by them — you can expand your repertoire of archetypes as needed. To make interesting characters, consider choosing personality types that seem to run counter to the "role" that you intend them to play in your chronicle. For example, if you are envisioning a master villain who will haunt the player characters at every turn, you could challenge the players' expectations and make the character friendly, outgoing, even compassionate — someone who believes that destroying the characters is a regretful necessity, but one that will benefit everyone in the long run.

Past History: Every significant character in your chronicle benefits from some amount of past history. What conflicts has the character faced; whom has she loved or hated? Are there enemies or former lovers out there who might cross paths with the players' characters at some point? Did the character have a mentor, and how did that relationship affect the character? Establish a character's past history in as much detail as you deem relevant to the chronicle. A character who performs very limited roles, like a street contact or a mortal family member, might not merit as much detail, whereas the course of a century-old Archbishop's existence could benefit from a record of the Kindred's past experiences.

Quirks: Everyone, mortal or Kindred, has quirky habits accumulated over time. Whether it's drinking milk right out of the carton or only feeding on a mortal to the music of *Die Fledermaus*, individual quirks further define characters and make them memorable.

Weaknesses: Nobody's perfect. All people have weaknesses or character flaws against which they struggle. This is especially important with regards to major adversaries. Villains who do nothing wrong, make no mistakes, and are afraid of nothing are not only discouraging but boring as well. Blind spots or flaws provide chinks in a villain's armor that the characters can exploit, or give an extra level of pathos to a heroic character who must battle not only external demons, but internal ones as well.

Statistics: Many Storytellers do this last. Storyteller characters do not have to be constructed along the careful lines of a player's character. You can assign a Storyteller character whatever dots and skills you wish. At the end of the day, though, if the characters aren't unique and interesting, the best set of numbers in the world won't do any good for your chronicle.

The Prelude

A person's past is the foundation on which his personality is built. For that reason, players often like to have some idea of their character's life before the Embrace, the better to understand who he is. The prelude is something of a one-on-one mini-story — just you and the player, roleplaying events from the character's life before the actual start of the chronicle. This serves as a storytelling device that can help detail his mortal existence and personality up until the point that the first story begins.

"You meet your old boyfriend for lunch at the old café you used to visit. The place has gone downhill since then — or maybe you just romanticized it in your memory. He's wearing a nice suit — apparently law's paying off well for him — but he looks ragged around the edges, like he hasn't been getting much sleep. Halfway through lunch, he admits to having problems with his wife. How do you respond?"

Each player undergoes the prelude alone with the Storyteller; the one-on-one format helps concentrate the feeling that the prelude is very personal — the character's past and his alone. It's possible for two characters to share part of a prelude, but this should be done only if they were friends and spent a lot of time together before the Embrace. Don't worry too much about neglecting the other players during the prelude; although you should certainly make every effort to involve everyone when the game proper begins, a little anticipation can whet the appetite for what's to come.

It's okay to take a much heavier hand in controlling the action. Give the player plenty of decisions to make, and don't spread them out over a long period of time — make him think quickly, so that he goes for the instinctive reaction. Unless you want to spend an entire evening on each character's prelude (which makes for more detailed characters), you should compress things so that the character gets a more concentrated feel of what his life was like. It's certainly potent that way.

Let the player explore both the setting and the rules during his prelude. He probably shouldn't get involved in any combat during the prelude; if it seems to be necessary, then simply describe the results of any fights. It won't do to kill the character before the game begins!

"It's a November afternoon, but it's already sliding into twilight. You were supposed to meet your sister at the park, but it's been half an hour and she still hasn't shown up. You hear a dog bark somewhere in the distance, and the sound suddenly makes you realize that you're all alone — there isn't another human being anywhere within view. Except one, maybe — a derelict, stumbling down the walk toward you. What do you do?"

You want to let the player explore the setting as well as the rules. Have him try out a few rolls. Let him swap a few Traits around if it becomes clear during the prelude that his Traits don't accurately reflect the character. Find out why he has the Backgrounds that he does — introduce his allies as characters, or visit his job (if any) to reinforce how he gets rent money.

It may seem odd to be playing through perfectly mundane scenes in the prelude, but these actually build a sense of normalcy that can be shattered when the supernatural takes the stage. Once you juxtapose the tedium of mortal life with the suddenly horrific attack, Embrace, and subsequent rebirth as a vampire, the dramatic tension of becoming one of the undead is exhilarating.

Even as you describe things, let the player interrupt with his own ideas and details concerning the events as they occur. Remember, you're telling this story together; the player is your partner in this. You can also throw in details that provoke the player's emotions — "Your girlfriend has tears in her eyes as she tells you that she's pregnant" — once the character becomes a vampire, he can't really be there for her or their baby anymore. **Vampire** is a horror game at heart, and the player must feel a profound sense of loss to truly understand what it's like to be one of the Damned.

"The shabby man shoves you against the subway doors. You try to scream, but there's nobody in the car to hear you. The lights flicker overhead. The noise of the train pounds in your ears, and the terrible reek of your attacker makes you want to faint. Then you feel his teeth in your neck, and the world starts to fade away."

Finally, don't forget that a character's Embrace should be roleplayed — this moment, more than anything else, can define how he will be changed by existence as a vampire. Play up the sensation of being watched. Build the tension of an unseen predator stalking the unwitting character. Although the player knows what's coming, he shouldn't know exactly how; describe the attack in great detail so that it seems all the more real and frightening. Carefully play through the transformation. Let the player feel the trauma of the change. Although you may still want to play out some details of the character's existence as a vampire before the chronicle opens, you want the player to remember the Embrace for a long time to come.

Questions and Answers

The following questions are meant to be used by the player as a springboard to fill out the character's background as much as possible. Even if there isn't time for a detailed prelude, players can try to answer as many of these questions as possible, either in writing or as part of a conversation with you and the other players at the table. You can also use them as a good guide for the kinds of details that a prelude should touch on.

How old are you?

When were you born? How old were you when you were Embraced? How long have you existed as a vampire? How old do you look? Are you more mature than you seem? Less?

What was unique about your childhood?

How did you spend your early years? How were your basic motivations and attitudes forged? Where did you go to school? Who were your immediate family? What is your clearest childhood memory? Did you go to high school? Did you have a hometown, or was your family constantly on the move? Did you go to college? Did you run away from home? Did you play sports? Did any of your childhood friendships last to adulthood?

What kind of person were you?

Were you a decent person, or were you an asshole? Were you popular? Did you have a family? How did you earn a living? Did you have any real friends? What kept you going from day to day? Will anyone miss you?

What was your first brush with the supernatural?

When did you realize you were being stalked? Did you believe in the occult before your Embrace? When did you first meet a vampire? Were you afraid? Disbelieving? Angry? What frightened you most?

How did the Embrace change you?

How did your sire catch you? Was the Embrace painful? Did you get a kinky pleasure out of it? Did the Hunger tear at you? Did it frighten you? Did it feel right? Are you grateful to your sire? Do you want to kill him for what he did to you?

Who was your sire, and how did he treat you?

What do you know of your sire? Was he abusive, arrogant, cryptic. or open? Why do you think he chose you? Did you even know your sire at all? How long did you stay with your sire? Did he teach you anything at all? How long was your "apprenticeship"? Where did you stay? Where did you go? Did you meet any other vampires during that time (such as the Prince or Archbishop)? Do you judge other vampires in general by your opinion of your sire? When did he teach you the laws of your Sect?

How did you meet the others in your coterie or pack?

Were you brought together by chance or design? Are you all of one Sect? Are you united in purpose and attitude? How long have you been together in the city? Did you know any of the others before the Embrace? Are your sires in cooperation, or are they rivals? What holds your coterie together when things are at their worst?

Where is your haven?

Where do you hide during the day? Do you have a permanent home at all? Do you stay in the place you inhabited in your mortal life? Do you hide in an abandoned building? The sewers? Do you have anyone to protect you during the day?

Do you retain any connections to your mortal life?

Are you presumed dead? Do you still watch over relatives from afar? Do you pretend to be still alive? Did you abandon your mortal existence entirely?

What are your habitual feeding grounds?

Whom do you feed upon, and where? Do you have a territory that you consider exclusively yours? Is your favorite hunting ground used by others? Do you compete with others? What is your preferred prey? Do you ever kill when you feed? Do you have a specific herd? Do you seduce your prey? Kidnap them? Assault them on the street? Do they come to you?

What motivates you?

Do you seek revenge on any enemies? Do you long to return to your mortal life? Do you have ambitions in Kindred society? If you could achieve anything in the world, what would it be?

Into the Fire

You have outlined the chronicle you want to tell, as well as built the world and detailed the characters who inhabit it. You have watched your players create their characters, helped them with their preludes, and enmeshed their ideas with your own to give the players their own stake in your creation. Now it's time to begin the tale. Here is where all that background work will pay off and let you concentrate on telling your stories in the best way you can.

With the outline of your chronicle in mind, establish the events that bring each character into the coterie, pack, or brood. Many Storytellers prefer simply to talk over these details, make some assumptions with the players, and then get right to the action. Others prefer going into detail, allowing both players and Storyteller to explore significant events in their characters' development. Introducing the characters to one another and watching their relationships forged over the course of the first story can give the players greater insight into the chemistry of the group and set the stage for possible conflicts.

The way in which a group of characters can be brought together depends in part on the type of coterie that they are to form. Some examples are:

• **The Sire's Ready Hand:** A powerful vampire has carefully chosen the characters to form a group of talented and efficient agents. Each individual is chosen for her talents and mortal connections and brought into the brood, though sometimes Kindred from other Clans can be "adopted" into the coterie if their abilities are particularly useful. Members of such a coterie are sometimes brought into the group against their wishes, usually through coercion or manipulation, which can be the nucleus of a story.

• **Spirits of Like Mind:** Vampires are by nature territorial and solitary creatures, but this doesn't mean that they cannot form relationships based on common interests and shared experiences. Such a coterie could comprise very diverse characters and Clans, linked together by a common belief or crisis. Suppose a group of neonates find themselves thrown together when their territories are raided by the Sabbat? Conversely, the characters might be relatively weak vampires who decide to ally themselves to carve out hunting grounds of their own in opposition to more powerful but solitary Kindred. More ambitious possibilities include banding together to supplant the city's controlling packs, resisting the perceived influence of the Jyhad, or protecting mortal society from the depredations of vampire manipulation. The storytelling advantages of such a coterie include possible conflicts and tensions stemming from the characters' sense of loyalty and friendship in the face of Clan/brood/pack ties.

• **The Wild Ones:** This is a classic coterie of neonate vampires who band together under a charismatic leader and defend their hunting grounds from all comers. Most such coteries are Anarchs who are giving the finger to the Prince, but this doesn't necessarily have to be the case. These coteries also lend themselves to chronicles in which the characters are a pack of diablerists, gaining power by stalking and slaying the city's elders. Diablerie can be a ticket to vast power, but exacts a cost on the characters' safety and souls.

• **By Your Command:** The characters are bound together at the behest of the Prince or Archbishop of the city, ostensibly to perform a specific task or responsibility. The ties that bind them together can be as informal as a promise and a handshake or as powerful as shared blood. With the exception of this unifying element, though, the characters can be entirely opposed to one another, even mortal foes. This is easily the most difficult kind of coterie to play, requiring hard work from players and Storyteller to find ways for the characters to put aside their differences and work together, but it can also make for some excellent storytelling.

• **The Outcasts:** The characters are pariahs, because of their actions or their status in society, and are thrown together simply because there is safety in numbers, and they have less reason to be haughty. This is the typical coterie for Caitiff, but it can apply to characters from any Clan. Perhaps the characters were set up by a powerful and mysterious rival, and they must come together to clear their names.

When uniting characters in a brood, coterie, or pack, some thought must be given beforehand as to whether or not conflict between characters will be permitted, or if mutually agreed-upon loyalty and good relations will be allowed to prevail. Vampires are creatures of ambition and manipulation, and even within a coterie, each Kindred is likely to have her own personal agenda based upon individual backgrounds and goals. When the individual agendas within a group are at cross-purposes, treachery and deception are powerful themes that the Storyteller can draw upon to starkly illustrate the ultimately solitary nature of each vampire.

Treachery within a coterie should not be forced upon the characters simply for the sake of the chronicle; in-

stead, by forming a group of vampires with potentially opposing personal goals, the Storyteller can set out the conditions to engender treachery and deception amongst the coterie, and then let events take their course. For example, consider a coterie containing a character who is a diablerist, feeding on the vitae of more powerful Kindred out of a sense of revenge, while another character in the same group is a Toreador who believes herself to be in love with a powerful Primogen. Yet another character in the coterie might have political aspirations and is eager to court allies among the city's elders. Will the diablerist manipulate the Toreador to ambush and destroy the Primogen? Conversely, might the Toreador be forced to betray the diablerist out of love for the Primogen? Or will the political aspirant manipulate them both, assisting in the destruction of the Primogen, then betraying the diablerist in hopes of filling the void left by the Primogen's destruction?

Creating Stories

There are several key elements to the storytelling process which you should consider when developing your stories. These are plot, conflict, setting, and mood.

Plot

The plot is the sequence of events and actions that the characters follow from beginning to end. One of the first questions you should ask yourself when sitting down to design a story is what the plot will be. Like your chronicle, you need to have a clear idea of where the story will go and how you will build the action to a satisfying end. There are two types of plots: Main plots are stories which are integral parts of your chronicle and move the overall story along, while subplots are unconnected stories which may or may not have anything to do with the chronicle, but provide entertaining diversions. The best way to run a chronicle is to intersperse subplots in between your main plots to give you some breathing room between major events, and to allow you to try out interesting ideas without significantly impacting the main story.

For your main plots, refer back to your chronicle outline and use it to suggest the next step that your story needs to take. Are the characters still getting their bearings in the city and meeting its inhabitants? Perhaps they should be sent as an envoy from their sire to another powerful vampire, where they might detect the first hints of unrest under the oppressive hand of the city's Prince, setting the stage for the themes you wish to explore. The outline that you created for the chronicle is there to give you guideposts in creating and directing the flow of your main plots.

With subplots, anything goes. Perhaps they encounter a band of vampire-hunters who make up for skill and knowledge with a little reckless enthusiasm and a lot of homemade weapons. If the characters are becoming a little cavalier about their undead existence, you can create a story involving a mortal family member or lover who has run afoul of the Kindred. Subplots are good for experimentation and as transition pieces between one major plot and another, or run parallel to the main story you are telling. If enough detail has been devoted to the creation of the players' characters, many of the stories you create can have additional complications for individual members of the coterie. By working a character's background (or current relationships) into your stories, you further enmesh the player's ideas into the chronicle and actively involve that player in telling the story.

Any plot should be able to have its central idea summed up in a few short sentences. For example:

- *The coterie is sent to negotiate terms with a nearby Prince, but the Nosferatu Primogen will attempt to capture them along the way.*
- *The characters are approached by a mysterious Caitiff who seeks their help to investigate some disappearances among the homeless herds.*
- *The characters' Ductus makes his move to depose the current Archbishop.*

If you cannot explain the main idea of the story in a couple of sentences, you are probably trying to do too much at one time. Focus your ideas into one or two central actions, and then develop the course of these events.

Conflict

After determining the plot for your story, you then must concentrate on the central conflict. Conflict is the obstacles or opposing forces that the characters must overcome to resolve the plot. Conflict can stem from many sources, both within and without the troupe. Suppose the characters' sire has ordered the coterie to eliminate several key mortal servants of a rival Kindred. The characters must overcome the mortals' bodyguards and other security measures, while working

within the restrictions of the Masquerade — and then there are ethical considerations. Characters with high Humanity could object to what is essentially a series of cold-blooded assassinations while those with low Humanity or on a Path may consider it merely efficient, which creates conflict both within the character group and without. More than any other kind of conflict, moral conflict presents the characters with an obstacle that they can't simply overcome with brute force. It makes them think, and that's the best kind of challenge there is.

Conflict can be created in any number of combinations. Some obvious sources include:

• **The Clash of Kindred**: Vampires are ever at odds with one another, competing for hunting grounds, political influence, and more.

• **The Feuds of Clans or Packs**: On a greater scale, the Clans or packs of a city often come into conflict over territory, resources, or simply prejudice. Internecine struggles within a Sect can be as vicious as any war between Sects.

• **The Onus of Authority**: Younger generations fear and resent the power of their elders, and Anarchs with attitude but little wisdom chafe under the rule of a Prince.

• **Trials of Tyranny**: Power corrupts. All too often the powerful Princes and Archbishops of a city abuse their authority for their own ends, causing all manner of tragedy.

• **The War of the Undead**: The Camarilla and the Sabbat represent different visions of the world, and the two are locked in a bitter battle for supremacy. Cities across Europe and America are battlegrounds for these longtime enemies.

• **The Terror of the Wilds**: The Kindred are not the only creatures to hunt the night. The wilderness is home to the werewolves, a race of shapeshifters whose rage is terrible to behold. From time to time their campaign against the Kindred finds its way onto their enemies' home streets.

• **The Weight of the Mask**: Maintaining the Masquerade is the one iron law of the Camarilla, one which even the most despotic Prince would not dare to break. Sometimes action must be taken to keep the secrets of the Kindred, and while the risks are great, the rewards can be greater.

• **Hounds and the Hunter**: Certain mortal agencies suspect the existence of vampires, and are determined to hunt them down.



• **The Soul of the Beast**: The Beast is real, raging, and wearing away at every vampire's self-control. The battle against the monster within is central to every vampire's existence, and is a universal conflict that should permeate every chronicle to some degree.

Setting and Mood

With the plot and its conflicts firmly in mind, you can consider the elements of the setting and mood for your story. Setting is as important a consideration for each story as it is for the chronicle as a whole; well-chosen details can evoke images and impressions that enhance the impact of the tale you want to tell. Try to make the setting echo the feelings that you find to be appropriate to the story. For instance, suppose you wish to have the characters enter the lair of a powerful Nosferatu. Because of the way you envision the lair and the creature who lives there, you want the players to feel a sense of helplessness and despair:

The steps of the shelter are crowded, even at midnight. Homeless derelicts sit singly or in small groups, muttering to one another and watching the street with furtive, glassy eyes. Past the weathered wooden doors is a wide hall filled with silent, still forms. Some sleep, clutching trash bags filled with their worldly belongings and wrapped in layers of grimy clothes. Others sit on the cots or against the walls, staring into space, their expressions lost, as if struggling to remember who they were and how they came to this cheerless existence. Across the room, past the cold and empty pots of the soup line, lies a dark doorway and the stairs that lead down into the vampire's chambers.

Creating the mood for the story (such as the ones presented on p. 15) goes hand-in-hand with choosing your setting, because it relates again to the kind of atmosphere you want to convey to the players. If the setting consists of evocative surroundings for the story, the mood is the way in which you choose to describe the surroundings, and the actions of the characters in them. The secret to evoking a proper mood is to emphasize details that paint the picture you want to convey, while minimizing others. For example:

(Fear) *The children stare at you with eyes that are glassy and round from shock. They scamper away as you approach, whimpering as they retreat into the shadows. All of them avoid the iron door looming at the other end of the cellar.*

(Anger) *Someone in the crowd screams, a sound of pure rage, and then a bottle smashes against the side of a car. A storefront window shatters, and then the sounds of fists and clubs thudding into flesh echo down the street.*

(Loneliness) *The theater had once seen days of glory; now its grand marquee is dark, and the windowpanes in the ticket booth are long since broken. Along one wall, yellowed posters linger under grimy glass panes, celebrating the premiere of blockbusters and sultry starlets now lost to time.*

(Despair) *They built the boardwalk at the turn of the century for lovers and children, with brightly painted carnival rides and seaside stands selling candy and confections, or offering prizes to tempt an eager suitor. Now the rides are rusted and dull, their skeletons creak in the cold sea air, and the only souls haunting the graffiti-stained shacks are the derelicts, caring for nothing more than a little shelter and a place to drink.*

A carefully-chosen setting and clear details hit the players in the gut, getting under their skin and giving them memorable images that make the gaming experience more tangible and immediate.

Scenes

Once you have a strong grasp of these elements, you have to put them together into individual scenes that hook the players, set the stage for the action, build the action to a climax, then resolve the story in a way that ties up any loose ends and sets the stage for the next story.

The Hook: The first step in any story is to involve the characters and pique their interest. The hook can be a stranger appealing to the characters for help, a summons to the court of the Prince, or the witnessing of a sudden and startling event. Storytellers should create their story hooks to appeal directly to the characters' personality and backgrounds. For instance, a character who was a detective in her mortal life can be drawn into a story by a baffling murder or theft that sets the events of the story in motion. If a character has political ambitions, she would be drawn into a story that hints at opportunities for advancement or leverage against her competition.

Setting the Stage: Once you have the characters interested, you have to draw them into the story and set out the challenges that lie ahead. Don't lay all your cards on the table at once; the best way to keep players curious is to give them only a piece of the puzzle at a time. Let them have a sense of what they need to accomplish, an immediate objective toward achiev-

ing their goal, and give them hints of what might lie beyond. If the players are smart, they will try to look ahead and figure out where their characters' actions will lead them. If not, they will be open to all sorts of plot twists and complications to make their unlives interesting.

For example, suppose the characters learn of a child who has been kidnapped by an unknown Kindred. The characters might be drawn to save the child for diverse personal reasons (one character might feel strongly about protecting children, another might be obsessed with feeding on the child, still another might want to rescue the child simply to thwart the plans of the kidnapper), but in the beginning, all the information they have is the child's identity and accounts describing the kidnapping. From there they must learn the identity of the kidnapper and the kidnapper's motives, which can add new implications to the story. What if the kidnapper is a powerful Primogen whose favor the characters have been courting for some time? Do they thwart his plans and forfeit their previous efforts?

Building the Action: As the players progress, the challenges the characters face should become increasingly difficult, with perhaps a few surprises thrown in to complicate things. When you design a story, throw in some hidden complications that the players don't know anything about and can be learned only with a little initiative and forethought. For example, the man the characters want to kidnap might have recently invested in several highly-paid bodyguards, or the Kindred who is supposed to be providing the characters with information and assistance might be blood-bound to someone else. Try to pull the rug out from under the players at least once during the story, though allow them the chance to head off the problem if they use their heads and are resourceful. As the difficulties increase and the tensions mount, you can build the action to a dramatic finale.

The Climax: Your ultimate finale must be worth the effort the characters went through to get there. This is a golden rule of storytelling. Anticlimaxes work fine in books, but not when a group of people has put in hours of effort to reach a goal. The more the players and their characters have to endure, the more dramatic the climax has to be, or they will come away disappointed.

Resolution: Also known as cause and effect, this is the point in the story where the characters see the effects of their actions and resolve any loose ends or questions which came up along the way. If possible, try to play out the aftermath of a story, letting the players see the consequences of their decisions and the effects of their characters' work. This denouement helps build the sense of a bigger picture while sustaining players' interest and curiosity.

Dancing with the Dead

It is not enough to design a good story — it must be well told, presented with detail and energy. When you tell your story, strive to make the most of the following qualities:

Description: Make each scene vivid with detail. The quality of your descriptions affects everything from the mood you want to convey to the action of a brutal firefight. Describe people, places, and activities in a way that engages all of your players' senses. It isn't enough to say, "After a few hours stalking the streets, you feed on a mortal leaving from work." Instead, say "The streets are rimed with patches of dirty gray ice, and a knife-sharp December wind howls between the tall buildings. You keep to the shadows, stalking the alleys and the silent parking garages — anywhere that a lone mortal might stray. You force your lungs to draw in great gusts of air, wincing at the reek of car exhaust and rotting trash while you search for the telltale hint of warm flesh and blood. Hunger sharpens your senses, narrowing your focus to one single set of impressions — the sight, sound, and smell of your prey. Suddenly you hear the hollow echo of footsteps, a single pair of feet crossing the concrete floor of a garage. The Hunger claws at you as you start to run." Sometimes it's better to gloss over an unimportant event and move on, but in general the more detail you can give, the easier the scene is to envision, and the more alive it becomes.

Characterization: Make your Storyteller characters individuals. This is much harder for you than for the players, because they only have one character to concentrate on, while you have an entire city. The amount of attention you can give to each character depends on how important she is to your chronicle. Major characters should be treated with all the depth and detail of a player's character. Get inside their heads and use their histories to determine what kind of personality that they might have. Give them hates, fears, and hobbies. For minor characters, single out a few distinguishing

characteristics. Make them absent-minded, or abrasive, or neurotic. Don't be afraid to use little quirks that you might observe about people in everyday life. Also, make your Kindred characters vampires. They are undead, their bodies pale and cold, and their personalities flavored by their origins in civilizations that are hundreds, even thousands of years old. Incorporate manners of speech, modes of dress, or customs that the character would have had ingrained into her in her mortal life.

Dialogue: This goes hand-in-hand with characterization, and it is possibly the most important skill a Storyteller must master. When characters talk to one another in the game, act out the conversation. You can bring out more depth to your characters and make the experience more immediate with dialogue, expression, and body language. Give each character a distinctive voice and mannerisms appropriate to her personality. Acting out dialogue doesn't come easily — it takes a quick mind and some improvisational skills, and a little bit of courage if you are self-conscious. Don't get stressed — you're playing a game with friends. Encourage the players to participate, even give an extra experience point at the end of each session for good interplay if you want. Conversation is an art and a skill, and it gets better with practice.

Action: The World of Darkness is cold and brutal, and vampires are the epitome of the human predator. Make your action scenes dynamic and explosive — bones crunch, blood sprays, guns thunder, and objects blow apart under a hail of bullets. Keep the dice-rolling in combat scenes to a minimum, interpret the results quickly, and then launch into pulse-pounding description. "The Brujah leaps over the bar with a howl and swings the bat one-handed at Clive. The aluminum club hits him in the mouth with a crunch of bone and a spray of blood and enamel, knocking Clive off his feet." The key element is the intensity of the experience. Don't be afraid to fudge results sometimes to keep the action and pace at a fever pitch.

Mystery: Keep the players guessing. Never show them the full picture of what is going on. One of the fundamental facts of Kindred existence is that knowledge is power and the key to survival. Nothing in the World of Darkness is quite what it appears to be, and it is good to emphasize this point with plot twists, betrayals, and hidden complications to your stories.

Influencing Events: **Vampire** is about telling a good story, which requires careful planning and an idea of where the events of your chronicle are leading. The problem is that sometimes the players will throw you a curve ball. Perhaps they will miss the obvious clue that will expose the central mystery of the chronicle, or maybe they will go in a totally unexpected direction and stumble onto a part of the story that they weren't supposed to deal with yet. Worse yet, one of them gets a lucky hit in battle and kills off the major villain whom you had planned to be their major adversary for the next 12 stories.

There are no easy solutions to these situations, but basically you have two courses of action to choose from: Roll with the punches and adapt to the changes, or use your godlike powers to avoid the problem entirely. The best rule of thumb is to fudge events directly only if it enhances the game as a whole. If the characters miss a vital piece of data, steer them back to it. If you would rather see your major villain killed off in a more dramatic way, fudge his soak rolls and let him limp away. Still, use this sparingly. It is your privilege as the Storyteller, but if you abuse it you will convince the players that their characters can't really succeed at anything, which ruins the game. The best stories are the ones told collaboratively, and the players should feel like they have a real impact on how each story unfolds.

Ten Pieces of Storytelling Advice

The art of storytelling is a process, like any artistic endeavor, and at first it seems like an overwhelming task. The main elements to remember, though, can be broken down into five "dos" and five "dont's": ten easy pieces of advice to keep in mind at the table.

Do:

- **Involve the Players Whenever Possible.** Incorporate their ideas and backgrounds into your city and chronicle. This will take some of the burden of world-building off your shoulders and give the players more of a stake in the story you are telling. Ultimately, the players should be the most important — though not necessarily the most powerful — denizens of your chronicle.

- **Accommodate the Players' Expectations.** It's their game too. You need to have some idea of what kind of game the players want to play before developing your chronicle.

• **Be Prepared.** You don't have to have everything worked out, but even some notes ahead of time works wonders, and gives you more time to spend at the table presenting the story to your players.

• **Prioritize Story over Rules.** Your tale shouldn't get held back by the rules. You can make or break the rules as you see fit, if doing so enhances the story and makes it more enjoyable for the players.

• **Use Description, Dialogue, and Action**. Make your world come alive with vibrant description, involving sights, smells, taste, and touch. Encourage roleplaying by acting out conversations, using different voices to individualize your characters. Keep the pace and intensity high with dynamic action.

Don't:

• **Overuse Stereotypes:** Every once in a while a stereotype helps to move the action along, but nothing drains the life out of your chronicle faster than an endless parade of identical, cardboard characters.

• **Forget the Payoff:** If the players work hard and make smart decisions, their characters' success must be in proportion to the challenges they have faced, or they will feel cheated.

• **Tell Them Everything:** Much of the challenge in a game is in the mystery, the parts of the story that you hold back for the players and their characters to discover on their own.

• **Abuse Your Power:** You are the final arbiter of events. Your word is law, but you cannot use this authority to beat the characters into doing what you want them to do. It is a game, it's for fun, and everyone should have a good time, whether it follows the script or not.

• **Panic:** If the players pull the rug out from under you, don't be afraid to call a break and take some time to collect your thoughts. Even veteran Storytellers sometimes need to take a moment and think about some new wrinkle they hadn't anticipated.

Storytelling Tips and Techniques

Movies, books, and television use a variety of tricks that can be adapted easily to the realm of dramatic storytelling. Directors, writers, and editors use techniques like these to heighten their story's clarity, to manipulate our emotions, and heighten our fears. These unique approaches give perspective and focus to parts of the stories that the tales' creators want to emphasize and underscore.

As Storytellers, we have our own techniques, too. These techniques provide you with similar benefits to those that creators of non-interactive media have. Storytellers are always looking for ways to make their games less static, more dramatically satisfying, and more distinctive. Here are some that have worked for **Vampire** Storytellers over the past twenty years, as well as some new ones based on what we've learned.

These tips and techniques can enrich your chronicle dramatically. Use your imagination and don't ever be afraid to try something new or different. They may not be easy but, because they make you think in emotional comparisons and contrasts, they'll add depth to a chronicle in ways that are poignant, visual, and fulfilling.

Downtimes

Downtime (sometimes called "blue-booking") is a storytelling technique that allows offstage action (also called "downtime") to be explored in greater depth. It's a solo participation technique in which a player tells the Storyteller, in narrative form, about what happens during a bit of offstage business. Often, interesting action takes place outside of the main plot line that you may wish to explore with a single player or with a small group of them. Downtime gives them a writing assignment to tell you, in first-person form, about what happens to their character offstage at that particular moment.

This technique doesn't have to be used only to keep direct and indirect actions secret. It can also be used to play out the details of more personal material, and even material that's adult-oriented and might be embarrassing to the rest of the group. (Sexual material can be played out this way, especially if the majority of the troupe is uncomfortable with it, but adult-oriented ma-

terial isn't just limited to sex.) Downtime can also be used to highlight a character's backstory and successfully keep the game from slowing down because not everyone is directly involved in the action.

Some players email or write down their downtimes to give directly to the Storyteller. Others keep blogs, wiki pages, or some other method of presenting their character downtimes in a way that other players (and even those who aren't playing in the chronicle) can read and enjoy. Whether this is acceptable to the other players or the Storyteller depends on the individual troupe — some prefer to keep information secret so as not to spoil the surprise, while others consider it more like a scene in which the other players are spectators rather than participants, allowing them to enjoy the ongoing story as audience members.

Cut Scenes

A cut scene is a storytelling technique that enhances a story by jumping between two bits of simultaneous action that can be directly related to each other, in direct opposition in emotion and tone or both. When used in horror or suspense, they're extremely effective if they juxtapose the monstrous nature of a specific plot point with something innocuous or even joyous. This technique underscores the horror and makes it seem even more terrible because it's contrasted with something that's pointedly not horrific. When used in a chronicle, a Storyteller can use a cut scene to enhance the direct action of the plot and quickly take it elsewhere — to another simultaneous bit of direct action that contrasts with the previous action. This enhances the emotional tone of the original scene and counterpoints it.

How do you use this technique in your chronicle? Maybe you want to underscore terror and despair as a particular character is Embraced. You could alternate the direct action, the Embrace, and all the stalker-versus-prey games that lead up to it, with scenes from the character's background, such as scenes of home, friendship, and love. By "quick-cutting" between images of death (the moment of capture, the tearing of clothing, fangs ripping into skin, the slow, tortuous draining of precious vitae) and scenes of life (horsing around in the grass with friends during a scrub football game, taking an erotically charged shower with a lover, laughing with friends at a Friday-night bar rendezvous), you can make the terror of Embrace all the more vivid and emphasize the fact that this loss is immediate and life-ending.



Try different approaches by enlisting the services of other players to play the "bit parts" in a scene; try using cut scenes to bring the metaphorical tone of your scene back to your chronicle's theme by making the "cut-to" images representative of that theme. Use them to show the similarities and differences between the player-characters and your Storyteller characters by cutting back and forth between your troupe's actions and the supporting cast's actions. Use your imagination, think about your theme, concept, and mood, and pick "cut-to" and "cut-from" images that represent your theme and concept visually and emotionally. By using this technique, you can draw the plot action and the emotional tone of your chronicle into a cohesive whole.

Cut scenes are very difficult to use without bogging down the story. They require great effort on the part of the Storyteller to handle the rapid shifts in perspective, and they require dedication on the part of the players to give the situation their full attention. Otherwise, the scene has the potential to fall flat or be awkward.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks are storytelling devices that take scenes that happened in the past and tell them in a whole, cohesive moment. While cut scenes can draw from backstory to underscore a particular piece of chronicle action happening in the now, flashbacks tell that past moment in its entirety. Flashbacks can also be complete stories themselves (stories that may not even be drawn from the pasts of the initial scene's characters) that tell something about what is happening to the characters now. Flashbacks are a technique of visual and emotional foreshadowing or allegory that works because they tell the direct scene's characters something about what is happening to them. You can use them to add flesh to the bones of your troupe characters' backgrounds by playing through them, as well as to foreshadow problems that your troupe characters' are facing.

Flashbacks can impart insight to the players by showing what happened to the flashback scene's participants. You can use flashbacks to give your troupe characters epiphanies and enlightenment, and you can connect those character insights to your chronicle's theme, concept, and mood. Flashbacks are a very valuable technique to use in horror because you can use them to impart a sense of immediate danger, despair, and fear. You can use them to show your troupe the face of the enemy, and add to their fear because they've seen what the enemy has done before. Additionally, they can be used to underscore direct chronicle action in much the same way that the cut scene can, but to tell an extended version of the contrasting action. Try different mixes — tell complete stories or whole singular scenes with dialogue. Try using them to tell related stories that contrast with your main story. It's up to you.

For instance, maybe the pack is in league with a particular up-and-comer in the local Sabbat hierarchy. The direct action of a certain scene involves the troupe meeting with the Archbishop to participate in a ritual at the Archbishop's haven where the up-and-comer plans to "expose" a rival as a traitor. Perhaps one of the characters is a Malkavian *antitribu* with Auspex and, after an interlude with the politico, he touches her shoulder to get her attention. This touch imparts a vision to the Malkavian that tells him a whole story about exactly what she's done to frame the rival for her own betrayal of the Archbishop. As the Storyteller, you use the flashback technique to draw all the other characters into a first person narrative of the betrayal and the frame-up. You play the real traitor and work to show a complete picture of her activity and pull your players into the action by simply assigning them the fill-in roles on the spot. After you use this technique to show what's happened in the past, you break the vision and pull the action back into the present by bringing the room back into direct focus. What you've done is shown, rather than told, the players that the politico is a lying, cheating bastard and a danger to the Archbishop in a way that's infinitely better than just telling the Malkavian that "your Auspex roll shows that the politico is the real traitor."

It's tricky, but it works.

Dream Sequences

The dream sequence is a storytelling device that uses the dream state to impart story information. Think about it: vampires dream just like everyone else (maybe more so, because the older they get, the longer they "sleep" in torpor), and dreams seek to purify the subconscious mind by emptying it of troubling, disturbing thoughts. While dreams can be pleasant, they can also be awful and terrifying. A character's slumber allows you, the Storyteller, to play all sorts of nasty, paranoid, heinous, or even uplifting and unlife-changing games that draw the characters' fears, hopes, and ambitions into the panorama of your chronicle. You can use dream images that are prophetic, foreshadowing something that will happen to the coterie, or you can use them as simple worries and fears that play out in a way that will never actually happen. Remember that

dreams are largely symbolic; sometimes they impart information in ways that are totally unintelligible.

A Storyteller can use dreams to spectacular effect. In a dream, you can show the characters their mistakes and magnify them. You can then show them their successes, and make those successes seem microscopic in comparison with their mistakes. Dreams are also a great vehicle for bringing in visual references to the Merits and Flaws your participants choose. Does one of the characters have the flaw Nightmares? Give him the flavor of the worst possible outcome of that Flaw amplified in a dreamscape. You can use dream sequences to impart a sense of purpose to your characters, or you can even use dreams to give the characters a particular challenge or quest. You can comfort a character with images of forgotten acquaintances living their lives happily and reach back to draw the character into close camaraderie for a bittersweet, nostalgic interlude, or you can tease him with weird, Dalí-esque images of everything he aspires to be as a vampire, placing his feet on that path for the first few tentative steps. Then, when night falls, you let them wake in a sheen of blood-sweat to tremble out of their havens and look at the enchanted picture of the world you've drawn for them with new insight… and paranoia.

Parallel Stories

This technique takes the players and puts them into the ancillary plot of the chronicle and lets them look at it from a different viewpoint. Parallel stories can also be used to tell a separate but connected story that runs alongside your main plot line.

Parallel stories are interesting because they give you and your troupe a breather from the primary plotline of your chronicle. It gives the story new life because it allows players to see their impact on the world through others' eyes. It also allows the players to change the face of the chronicle as they change their own faces under the guise of new personas. Parallel stories can also help support the emotional subtext of your chronicle by connecting those stories to a supporting cast drawn from the main characters' backgrounds. However, they work well in a variety of other instances as well.

Storytellers can give information from the main story to the parallel characters and then connect them to the main characters. Parallel stories' characters can create a sense of tension and opposition by placing themselves directly in the path of the players' main characters and giving the parallel characters a sense of what monsters the primary characters have become. For instance, the ancillary characters could be witch-hunters hot on the trail of the coterie, provided skilled storytelling allows the players to doubt the wellbeing of their original characters. This technique also allows the players to flesh out their ghouls, retainers, and childer and gives them insight into those supporting characters. In this way, a Storyteller can show the daylight hours, when the main characters are asleep, instead of simply skipping over the daytime.

Parallel stories also give another perspective to the results of certain Disciplines, like Dementation, by placing the player whose character caused the Dementation literally inside their victim's mind, painting the picture of what madness can be much more vividly. Additionally, a hunter chronicle can illustrate the sorts of lives that the coterie can never live — and, ironically, the obsession which drives the hunters, forever removing them from "normal" lives. Recognize the potential of this device for your chronicle, connect it to your theme and concept, and then let it illustrate the mood of the piece by comparison or contrast to the main plot action.

Boot Camp

Boot camp is a technique where the players play mortal characters for an extended period of time. It folds the characters' human backgrounds into the beginning of the chronicle more centrally than preludes often can. It can be viewed as an extended prelude because all the characters start play as mortals, and they very possibly play through a whole story arc as mortals. This technique has value because it adds substance to characters by forcing players to start their characters as people and exploring all the changes vampirism imposes on them. It's a more thorough way for your troupe to get a handle on their characters than by just starting them with a short prelude, because they must evolve as people and then evolve as vampires. It helps the players explain why their vampires are the way they are, without just assuming it. It isn't for everybody — many troupe members want to jump directly into the game as vampires — but with the right group, it adds layers of motivation to their characters by contrasting all things human with the Curse of Caine.

This is also a viable technique for introducing special Storyteller characters from the characters' backgrounds and letting those relationships evolve organically. It can show characters the faces of their sires prior to the Embrace and makes the hunt of predator and childe-to-be much more personal. Boot camp also spawns

ideas for individual plot hooks for every character in the coterie: It can sow the seeds of Characters' ambitions and carry rivalries from life to unlife. The process is much the same for the characters' allies. It lets the characters touch their human families and makes the loss of those families much more poignant, giving them a more immediate sense of how unattainable and how lost those former lives have become. Boot camp stories drive home the difference between Humanity and the Beast by letting characters experience the friends, family, love interests, etc. whom they might later be tempted to Embrace instead of abandoning.

Hunting Scenes

One of the most iconic scenes in a vampire story is when the vampire drinks blood from her victim. Just about any vampire novel, movie, or television show has a scene (or scenes) in which we witness how the vampire hunts and feeds. And yet, it's not always an easy scene to run for a **Vampire** game — if done poorly, it can be tedious, awkward, or leave the other players bored. So, rather than one technique you can use, as with the previous sections, we've given you a variety of options you can use, depending on what effect you're going for. You can stick with one method that your group likes, or change and adapt based on the current needs of your chronicle.

Quick-And-Dirty Scenes: The One-Roll Method

The default method for hunting is detailed in Chapter Six on p. 259. It basically boils down to a single dice roll — success means the vampire gets blood, while failure means she doesn't, and a botch introduces a complication. And, as a high-level scene, that works just fine. If your story is in the middle of a lot of different plots and twists and the players really just want to fuel up and get back into things, a quick dice roll or two combined with a short bit of narration does the trick. Unfortunately, this method can take a lot of the horror and monstrosity out of the act of drinking blood, turning it into merely numbers of points to be collected and spent as needed.

Detailed Scenes: The Three-Stage Hunt

In some situations, you might want to have the player go through each step of the hunt, playing through the conflict between hunter and prey. This method takes more time than the single-roll structure, but can be useful to help players get into the mindset of playing a vampire, to add a dash of complexity in an otherwise slow part of the story, or just to spend some more time digging into the nature of the hunt. In this case, you can break the scene down into three stages: the contact, the hunt, and the defeat.

The *contact* is the stage in which the vampire looks for and finds a suitable target — scanning a dance floor for a lonely date, looking for a homeless person in an alleyway, scouring through sewers for a stray animal, and so on. The roll itself depends on what method of hunting the vampire is using, but it likely uses Perception, since the vampire is merely trying to find an appropriate target that looks vulnerable at this point. The difficulty varies, but the table on p. 260 that puts the range of difficulty at 4-8 is a good basis. Failure means that an appropriate target isn't available that scene — either there's no one around, or all of the potential victims are too well-protected or too visible to easily feed from. A botch at this stage isn't too painful, probably indicating that security is unusually high, an unexpected party is going on, or there's some other factor that keeps the vampire from feeding successfully in that area for the rest of the night.

The *hunt* is when the vampire approaches and engages the victim, getting them into a position where the vampire can feed. At a nightclub, the vampire might use Subterfuge to flatter and seduce the victim into a private corner. In an alleyway, he might use Stealth to follow the homeless man into a dead end. And in the sewers, the vampire may use Animal Ken to be able to creep up on a rat without spooking it. The stakes are higher than the contact stage, but they aren't too high yet: failure means that something is preventing the victim from being easily fed upon (the club girl won't leave her friends, the homeless man gets hassled by a police officer, the rat scuttles back just out of reach), while a botch means that the victim avoids the approach, sending the vampire back to searching for a new victim.

Finally, the *defeat* is when the vampire feeds: she nuzzles the neck of the club girl, shoves the homeless man against the wall, or makes a grab for the rat. At this point, the risk is high — success means blood (as much as the vampire wants to take, although you can say the vampire can't have more blood points than the player scores successes), but failure means the victim escapes. A botch introduces a major complication at this point: the club kid screams and gets the attention of everyone on the dance floor, a policeman sees the assault and calls for backup, or the rat turns out to be some sort of were-creature.

One way to help keep other players involved in this kind of lengthy scene is to have them play the part of the victim and associated characters, similar to a flashback. The victim is roleplayed based on the vampire player's rolls. This can not only help to get more players involved, but also add a level of emotional intimacy to the scene as the other players help to add life to this encounter.

Poignant Scenes: Flashes of Life

If you want to introduce an element of humanity into the hunt, you can use this quick rule: For every success made on the hunting roll (either the one-roll scene or in stage three of the hunt), the player gets one image about the victim's life, some emotional snapshot that flashes through the victim's mind as they feel the blood leaving their body. These images can be like photographs spliced into the "film" of your game. Some examples:

- *A broken doll, dangling from a child's hand.*
- *The victim and his wife, laughing at the beach.*
- *Holding the hand of a loved one as she lies in a hospital bed.*
- *A beloved pet curled in the victim's lap.*

This isn't necessarily information the vampire would know (although some powers, such as Auspex and Thaumaturgy, might make it available) — the idea is to bring home to the player that their character is doing something terrible to a human being. You'll probably want to keep a list of random elements on hand to use for these scenes, so you don't have to improvise at the table.

For an additional level of emotional impact, you can organize the images based on the style of feeding the vampire is doing. An aggressive vampire attempting to intimidate his victim might result in scenes of violence from the victim's past, while a more seductive scene may bring uncomfortable moments of intimacy.

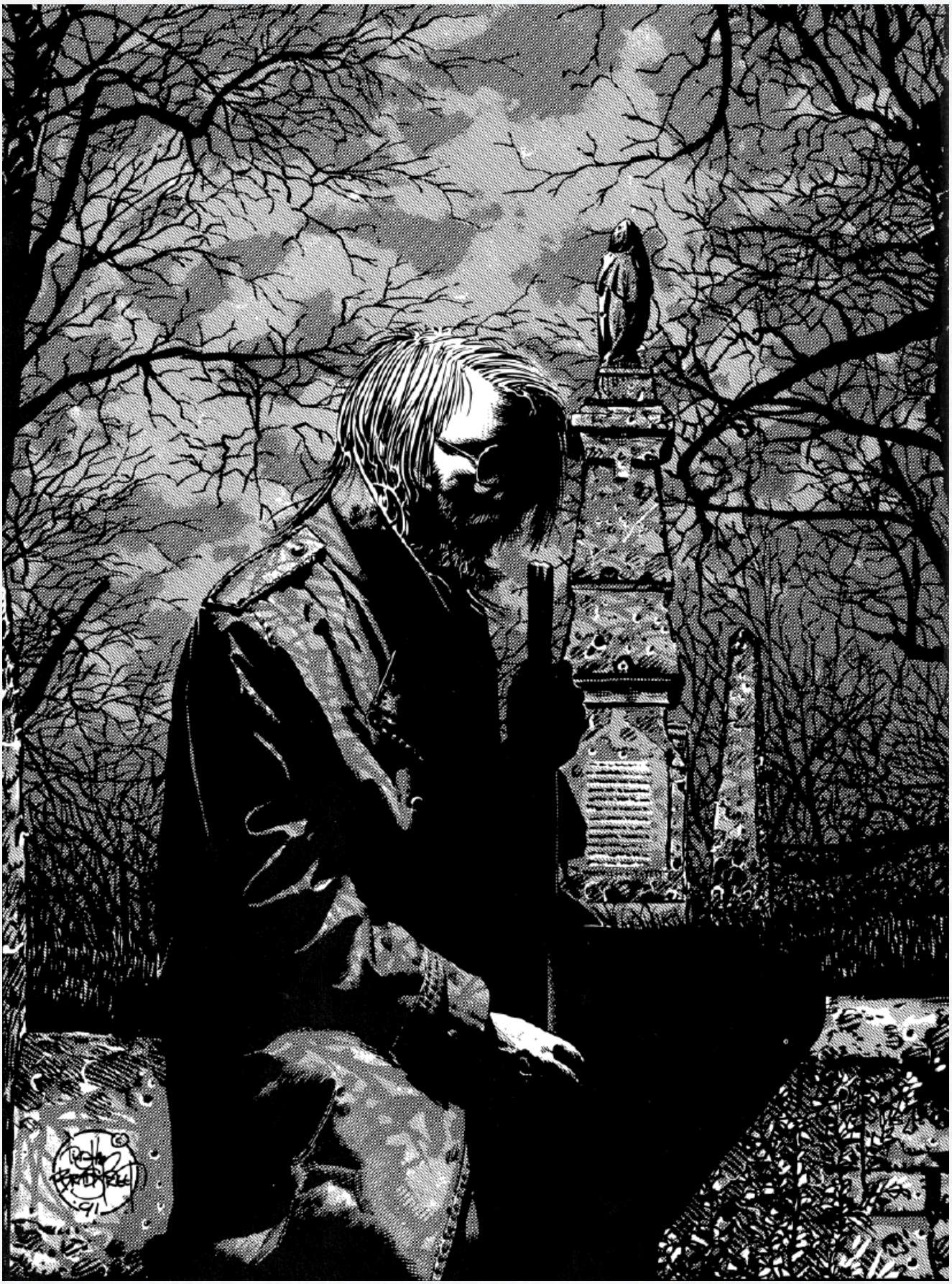
Narrative Scenes: Something Always Goes Wrong

If a player really wants his character to get blood, he can volunteer the vampire for a narrated feeding scene. Effectively, the player is choosing to forgo the dice roll for hunting, gaining as many blood points as the Storyteller will allow. In return, however, something in the hunting scene *will* go wrong, as if the vampire's player had rolled a botch. The scene should be played out as normal, but until the complication sets up, there's no need to roll the dice — the fate of the vampire is now set on a particular path. These scenes add a level of tension because they are usually called for by the player: The situation is desperate enough that the blood is necessary, and the player is willing to accept the consequences. It also ties into the undercurrent of nihilism in **Vampire** — there is no situation that can't get worse.

The Impact of Hunger

If you want hunting scenes to come up more often, you can press the issue of hunger (or, if the game has hit a lull, you can simple ask your players "Is anyone hungry?"). A hungry vampire is more inclined to hunt, even if they have more than one blood point remaining — a Kindred can generally be considered hungry when they have fewer blood points than (7 minus Self-Control or Instinct). There are a few ways in which you can encourage players to take their character's hunger into account.

First, you can simply have a persistent reminder. Give each character an index card or token, with one side labeled "Hungry" and the other side labeled "Satiated." The player makes a note on her sheet of what point her character goes hungry, and when that number is reached, she flips the card over to the "Hungry" side. This helps remind players (and the Storyteller) of the character's current state, and can also encourage players to portray their characters accordingly. If you need a little extra encouragement, you can try offering a reward, such as awarding a Willpower point because vampires that indulge in feeding while hungry reinforce their inherent vampiric nature. Or, you can impose a small penalty for failing to feed while hungry, such as making all Willpower rolls +1 difficulty because the vampire is too distracted with hunger to concentrate. For some groups, though, just the reminder is enough — it's easy to forget your vampire's needs when there's a lot of other stuff going on, and this is a good way to help track the vampire's thirst and let everyone get on with the rest of the game.





Chapter Nine: The Others

"There will come a time, in the last days, when the Moon-Beasts will grow uneasy… and so they will find us and they will kill us."

- The Book of Nod

The Kindred are not alone in calling the night their home. Other creatures prowl the shadows and stalk the dark places of the World of Darkness, and rarely are they the friends of either man or vampire. This chapter describes many of these fellow supernatural denizens. While most have plenty of reason to despise the Kindred (for reasons from territory dispute to ancient vendetta to a fundamental inability to understand each other), there's no guarantee that even the direst of enemies won't be able to find a common enemy or mutual interest. Storytellers, use these entries as dubious allies or implacable enemies at your discretion. The only constant that faces the Kindred with regard to the other night-dwellers is that nothing can be taken at face value.

Witch-Hunters

The Kindred remember the Burning Times. Before such things as the Camarilla and Sabbat existed, Cainites dwelled in a superstitious world of ignorant peasants, venal clergy, and decadent aristocracy. In that age of muck and misery, few Kindred saw any reason to heed the Tradition of the Masquerade, reasoning that mankind had enough of its own social problems to occupy them and would be powerless to resist local, feudal lords of decidedly darker origin.

The retribution of mortals was swift and bloody. Agents of the Church had no desire to see their flocks tormented by blood-drinking minions of the Adversary, and the nobles of the age guarded their own authority jealously. The Inquisition, an agency of the Holy Church tasked with extinguishing heresy, took upon itself the task of rooting out the scourge of the Damned. All across Europe, vampires found themselves seized in their havens, clapped into irons, and dragged before an Inquisitor — if not burned on the spot. The subsequent chaos stoked the War of Ages, as cagey elders sacrificed neonates in order to buy them time while crafty ancillae led the fires of the Inquisition to the doors of their sires for the same reason.

Some Kindred say that from the ashes of these fires rose the ivory towers of the Camarilla and the phoenix-wings of the wild Sabbat. Tonight, who can say how much of the secret history is truth or myth? What remains true is that there are those among the mortals, whether with the zeal of the Church, the righteousness of the governments of men, or the unquenchable thirst for knowledge of the occult, who seek out the Kindred for their own reasons.

The Society of Leopold

Historians think of the Inquisition as that frightening face the Catholic Church showed the world from 1231 to 1834. But Kindred know that the Inquisition didn't end in the 19th century, but endures to the present night, more fearsome than ever. Indeed, few mortals conjure dread among knowledgeable vampires the way modern Inquisitors do.

The public at large, and even some of the Church's highest officials — including the Pope — know nothing of the Inquisition's current activities, due to the organization's intense secrecy. The Society of Leopold, to which it's referred tonight, is primarily (but no longer exclusively) comprised of Roman Catholics. The Inquisition's "interfaith" membership devotes itself to the eradication of vampires and other supernatural entities, an agenda the Society pursued vigorously under the guidance of Monsignor Amelio Vittore. When the monsignor suffered a stroke, though, the Society had to deal with an internal crisis that had loomed gradually under his tenure.

During that time, the godlessness of modern existence had led all but the most hot-blooded Inquisitors to conclude that the Apocalypse was not (yet) imminent. However, every member of the Society felt certain that the Adversary's earthly forces would attach tremendous importance to this calendrical turning point and possibly carry out some devastating worldwide sacrilege. A similar fin de siècle gripped much of the mortal world, under such appellations as the "Y2K crisis" and fear of the Mayan doomsday of 2012.

While some Leopolders feared the Savior might never return (though none ever said so), all of them recognized the real and present threat that creatures of the darkness posed to humanity. Worse, the populace that Inquisitors risked their lives to protect seemed ready to emulate, even embrace, these evil beings. Morale in the Society also suffered because of the mounting controversy over torture, which the Monsignor himself had banned officially as an unacceptable Inquisitorial tool. Of course, unofficial and clandestine torture was the rule for some of the Society's members, who saw their war as otherwise unwinnable. All this fear and uncertainty combined to pave the way for a leader who was sure of herself and her techniques: onetime Austrian Ingrid Bauer, known behind her back as "The Original Iron Maiden."

Vampires never realized how relatively easy their unlives were during the previous leadership. Granted, through the years the venerable old Monsignor presided (directly or indirectly) over the destruction of many Cainites and ghouls, so the prevalent Kindred attitude toward the Inquisition then was general wariness. If you didn't irritate the Inquisition, they were likely to pass you by in favor of vampires brazen (or stupid) enough to antagonize the Society purposely. A few Kindred were even bold and clever enough to make the Inquisition their catspaw in the Jyhad.

Now, elders trade rumors of turncoat Inquisitors who betrayed their Cainite masters: a high-ranking Ventrue, her Lasombra rival, and a tiny sect of renegade Nosferatu of French lineage. These Kindred and more supposedly still languish in an unknown dungeon where they suffer tortures at witch-hunters' hands. Neonates whisper tales of coteries routed by sword-wielding Leopolders who display previously unknown fierceness and skill. Most troubling to the Kindred are recent reports of organized assaults against longtime havens, some of them lairs that had remained inviolate since the time of Queen Victoria.

Bauer, of course, is the force behind such activities. Only a handful of Kindred elders have enough information to make that link, however, as an exhaustive purge of disloyal elements from the Inquisition's ranks coincided with the new Inquisitor General's rise to power. The Society's Censors carted off nearly every member who was actively spying for the Kindred, a sizable percentage of individuals "sympathetic" to the plight of the Damned, and a few entirely innocent Leopolders who learned the true meaning of suffering for a cause. Only a handful of moles survived this "Inquisitors' Inquisition," and they now live in fear of their comrades and of belated discovery. For the most part, these spies have abandoned their undead patrons, fearing traps that might lead to the Society's oubliettes.

A new vigor prevails among most Inquisitors, but a familiar malaise endures as well — in a slightly different guise. Even as Bauer sees to it that braziers are lit, racks are oiled, and molten lead is at hand in Inquisition dungeons on five continents (Asia continues to defy the organization), the use of torture again becomes a thorny issue. Whereas before there was a vocal majority that wanted such methods reinstated, now there is a silent minority that agonizes over such practices. The real problem here is that these moral qualms are

actually eroding one of the Inquisition's most powerful weapons against vampires: True Faith. This quality, inherent to certain individuals, can repel a vampire without the need for crosses, holy water, or any other sacred emblem — in fact, in the hands of nonbelievers, such items are useless against Kindred. The Monsignor understood the soul-deadening, faith-damping effects of using torture against any creature, even an undead one. He saw the speedy destruction of vampires not as murder, but as a mercy; torture, however, he considered a descent into the enemy's repulsive cruelty.

Alas, Inquisitor General Bauer is immune to such qualms, convinced as she is of the rightness of her crusade and her methods alike. Interestingly, she is one of the rare Inquisitors with both extensive experience as a torturer and impressive True Faith. Even more worrisome, especially to the strong Catholic membership of the Order, are her claims that this "dualism" — her word — gives her an advantage over the creatures of the night. In their minds, the whole thing is not only morally perilous, but strangely redolent of the heresies of the centuries before the Burning Times.

In the eyes of some of its most orthodox and devout, the Society of Leopold has paid a price for choosing Bauer as its leader. True, she is waging the holy war against the Kindred and their ilk (she sees werewolves, among others, as vampires' tools) that most Inquisitors wanted — and needed — to fight. With the combat colleges she has established in Nevada's Black Rock Desert and in the Spanish Pyrenees, she is also improving the organization's readiness for that war. Now, many Inquisitors in the field carry a sword-cane or a "gladius dei" and are quite adept in their use. Bauer even personally instructs her subordinates in the proper techniques for organizing congregations into witch-hunting mobs, even to the point of using modern media and social networks.

Unfortunately, she is unable to address her troops' spiritual woes, which are substantial. Alcoholism, depression, and addiction to pornography are rife among Leopolders. Plus, it's undeniable that significant numbers of the Society's ethical elite have split from their fellows over the torture issue, though these highly moral individuals have yet to take any formal action against their fellows. As for Bauer herself, she has shown significant stress from the ongoing rigors of her position. In the time since her ascendancy, her hair has turned completely white, she has excommunicated some of her vocal opposition, and has annulled without their consent the marriages of lay members whose personal lives "intruded" upon their vigilance.

Inquisitor

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics (Theology) 3, Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Drive 1, Expression 2, Leadership 3, Melee (Sword-Cane) 3, Occult 3, Stealth 2

Humanity: 5 to 10 (Inquisitors can be holy or as depraved as the monsters they fight), **Willpower:** 9

Equipment: Sword-cane, rosaries, crucifix, stakes, Bible, propane torch

Note: A few Inquisitors have ratings of 1 or higher in the True Faith Trait. Such individuals usually, though not necessarily, have Humanity ratings of 9 or above.



True Faith

True Faith is a special Trait that only a few people in the World of Darkness possess. While many mortals are more or less devoted to a belief in some form of higher being or purpose, only a small number have the burning zeal, the profound conviction that can protect them against creatures like vampires. Note that, while most vampire legends portray the Damned being repelled by crosses and the like, Faith can manifest in any religious form. A devout Jew might be able to ward off vampires with her Star of David, or a Taoist might be able to intone special prayers, while a Christian lacking True Faith finds his crucifix impotent against the undead.

This Faith is not necessarily increased through experience. Certainly, it may rise as a result of a person's experience, but it is more vital than that, more a measure of conviction and strength of mind. Nor is it something that comes from outside the individual, from some God or angel. Whether or not their beliefs are correct, these people believe so unwaveringly that their own conviction protects them. At the Storyteller's discretion, Faith should rise or fall to reflect a person's religious certainty and zeal.

The Faith Trait has a rating of 1 to 5. Exactly what protection is afforded to the individual by the Trait depends on this rating, as described below. These are just guidelines, however. Storytellers should amend them as required to fit the tone of their chronicles, or to add drama to their stories.

• Any character with Faith may attempt to ward off vampires by brandishing a holy symbol or uttering prayers. The person rolls Faith against a difficulty equal to the vampire's current Willpower points. The number of successes indicates the number of steps backward the vampire is forced to take. If no successes are scored, the vampire need not step back but may not advance. A botch indicates that the vampire may advance unhindered. Further, if the cross, Bible, or other holy symbol is placed against the vampire's body, each success causes an aggravated health level of damage, burning into the flesh.

•• A mortal with a Faith rating of 2 or more may resist Dominate and similar vampiric mind-control powers by spending Willpower (one point protects for a few turns).

••• A person with a Faith of 3 or more may be able to sense the presence of a vampire, and can purchase the Awareness Skill. She need not consciously try to sense a vampire's presence, but must be in peaceful, quiet surroundings — perhaps alone in thought, praying, reading the Torah, meditating on the Bible, etc. The person will not sense the vampire's presence if she is preoccupied (e.g., arguing) or in a crowded, noisy place (jostled by a mob, in the midst of a raucous banquet, etc.). This ability is not infallible; the Storyteller should let the person sense the vampire only when it is dramatically convenient, or only after a successful Awareness roll. Note that the person cannot know exactly what she senses through her Faith; all that she will know is that something unclean or evil is nearby.

•••• The mortal may not be turned into a ghoul, and is immune to any mind-altering Disciplines such as Dominate, Presence, and Obfuscate.

••••• The person is so pure, so holy, that she can fill a vampire with self-loathing, disgust, terror, and even physical pain. Any vampire hearing the person pray, preach, or recite psalms, or who is touched by the faithful, may be forced to flee immediately. A vampire who is unable to flee is reduced to a gibbering wreck, flailing on the floor and screaming, sobbing, or begging forgiveness. To avoid fleeing, the vampire must either expend one Willpower point per turn or make a Stamina roll each turn (difficulty of 5 + her own Intelligence) — the *higher* the vampire's Intelligence, the higher the difficulty, as the more tortured and guilty she feels.

In theory, a mortal might have a Faith rating of greater than 5, but these people are one in a billion — the sort of people who are venerated as saints. They are unlikely to enter a chronicle, but their powers would be enormous.

There is actually one easy way for a vampire to detect a person with a Faith rating, other than bitter experience — the use of Aura Perception can find it. A mortal with Faith has her aura permanently altered so that she has a silver or gold "halo" around her body. The strength of the Faith determines the brightness of the halo.

Remember that Faith represents a person's total commitment to her beliefs. That person will act accordingly. Those with high Faith ratings may seem fanatical, even insane to those not of their religion.

Cainites do not normally have Faith ratings, although it is still possible (see the Merit on p. 494).

The U.S. Government

Government in the World of Darkness tends to be a nihilistic monolith that moves little as a whole, but which empowers numerous individually-motivated bureaus and organizations. Given the influences exerted by conspirators, secret societies, and assorted cabals — and these schemers are in addition to the vampire factions that fancy themselves masters of the puppet-masters — the efforts of all these manipulators largely cancel each other out or run afoul of things as mundane as bureaucratic incompetence or unswerving greed.

Miracles sometimes do occur in the midst of such chaos, though — or, as with the National Security Agency's discovery of the "Kindred menace," through a literal mechanism of chaos. By tortuous paths, the NSA, an information-monitoring arm of the US intelligence community, obtained devices that can distinguish vampires and ghouls from mortals. With astonishing alacrity and utter secrecy, the organization deployed these "chaoscopic scanners" in locations including Dulles International Airport, the Pentagon, the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the Capitol, and the White House, all behind the façades of new metal detectors. Significantly, no one outside the NSA is privy to the true nature of these added checkpoints, including the operators of the various metal detectors. Not even the President is aware that he and his staff are monitored daily by NSA operatives looking for so-called "negative bodies," a reference to Cainites' appearance when viewed through a chaoscope. Of the NSA's own personnel, only three people in decision-making positions know the truth: General Rex Shivers, Colonel Alec Riley, and Colonel George Johnstone. Add to them the actual monitoring staff, and the total comes to two dozen… and one of them is a rogue ghoul, acknowledging no master and using this information for his own purposes.

The NSA's discretion in this matter stems, in part, from established procedure. Spymasters, canny in their paranoia, trust no one, especially not their fellow agencies. Shivers' people aren't even sharing with their civilian counterparts at the NSA any information about governmental encroachment by these mysterious negative-body entities. Plus, there's the natural question of just how influential these inhuman infiltrators may be: Do they already control the FBI, the CIA, Congress, the Department of Homeland Security, the President? Most important, however, is the larger uncertainty implicit in that question: The NSA knows its discoveries aren't quite human, but the organization's members don't yet understand exactly what the negative bodies are.

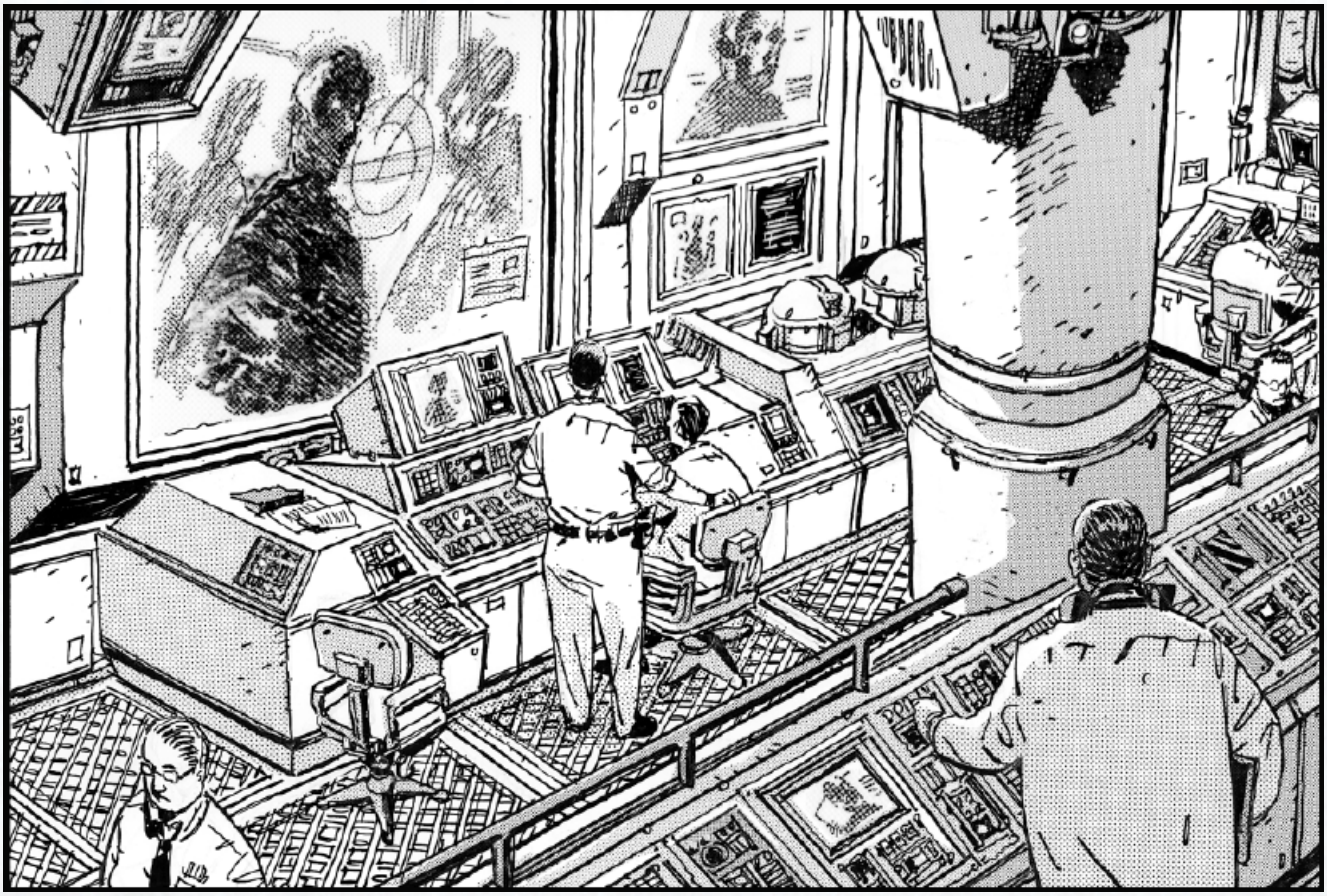
Hobbling these covert watchers is the rationality that spurred them to use the chaoscope, and that has plagued them since the first time NSA brass saw one of these machines demonstrated at the headquarters of the Paranormal Research Wing, a Vermont-based think tank. After General Shivers got a glimpse of ghosts cavorting in the Underworld, he suggested that PRW scientists had actually discovered some parallel dimension rather than an afterlife existence. He then ordered the PRW's security clearances hiked and, on a hunch, a streamlined version of the chaoscope to be installed at the White House. Four months and a billion dollars later, he was watching for things like the ones he'd seen at PRW. What he saw ultimately were ghouls and a vampire attending a state dinner, but viewed chaoscopically these creatures were easy to mistake for the disembodied dead Shivers had already glimpsed. The conclusion he reached was entirely reasonable — that his transdimensional entities were possessing Washington officials to manipulate the govern-

ment. Since then, that initial billion-dollar investment has ballooned into a two-billion-dollar-a-year budget, spent under the auspices of manpower, ongoing research, additional chaoscopy hardware, and R&D.

To some extent, the NSA's military triumvirate is "reinventing the wheel" with its expensive new toys. A great deal of money could have been saved if anyone had bothered to train infrared cameras on a few of those room-temperature Cainites. Even without such tools, Shivers' predecessor, General Arthur Clifford, had a far more accurate understanding of what the Kindred are. Unfortunately, that knowledge was mutual, and unknown Cainite elements were able to discredit Clifford and have him ousted. Thus, Shivers, Riley, and Johnstone rose to the top at NSA because they were skeptics regarding the supernatural — in contrast with the deluded, utterly credulous figure Clifford was made to seem at his downfall.

Nevertheless, Clifford's replacements now know a lot of the same things he knew — and then some — but they're interpreting the data quite differently. They're aware, for example, of their organization's traitors, operatives Bruce Higgins and Felicity Price. More importantly, the NSA has also identified the vampires who control these two pawns. The agency is already cataloging what it dubs "known extradimensionals" and their "normal" contacts. As the extent of Kindred influence in world commerce, media, and governance becomes clear to General Shivers and his staff, the "war of reconnaissance" the NSA is waging will seem ever more of a luxury. When that time comes, the NSA operatives who've been training in armored moon suits with aural inhibitors and mirrored faceplates will learn firsthand what they've been prepared to fight. And the Kindred will discover the folly of dismissing technology, just as the masters of that technology will discover that the world is full of stranger things than science and rationality can ever explain.

Of course, the other federal intelligence-gathering and law-enforcement agencies (and even out-of-the-loop civilian personnel within the NSA) are carrying on largely as they did before the advent of the chaoscope, given the covert nature of the device. At the DHS and the CIA, only scattered handfuls of agents (some of them moles placed years ago by the NSA's General Clifford) have the vaguest clue about super-



natural activity. The FBI's secret Special Affairs Department (also known as SAD), for example, lingers on only because of the undying support of Senator Jesse Grubbholb. After all, Arthur Clifford's fall hasn't made it any easier to get any above-board federal money for pursuing supernaturals. Similarly, this is what prevents the Department of Homeland Security from devoting significant attention to what its agents suspect are "domestic terrorists of paranormal radicalization." Bringing up anything of the sort at a briefing is an excellent way to find oneself laughed out of the department and reassigned to duty watching an ideological wall separating the US from Mexico "in case any chupacabras hop the fence," so Homeland Security agents with an interest in the Kindred have to make do with poaching intelligence where they can.

More's the pity, because the hunting in and around the bureaucracy alone would be incredible. At the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, several strategically placed individuals, most of them under vampiric sway, keep the lid on incidents that involve "suspicious" (i.e., Cainite) blood or corpses. The lack of blood-bound servitors here was a conscious effort by various Kindred masters to avoid entanglements with nosy epidemiologists, as vitae remains chemically distinct from mortal blood even in ghouls. However, that dodge also insulates these conspirators from chaoscopic detection. The devices are useless in identifying victims of Dominate and Presence. Still, it wouldn't take much for a key piece of evidence to slip past these guardians and allow the agency's legitimate disease detectives to glimpse the full picture.

At the state, county, and municipal levels of law enforcement, things look much like they do at the top: vast numbers of common cops, sheriffs, and state troopers trying to do their jobs, most of them utterly oblivious of the various factions that struggle nightly to co-opt, deflect, or otherwise influence the police. Ghoul cops exist, but they're pretty much beneath the NSA's radar. And, as at the top, the myriad efforts to preserve the Masquerade or uncover it, to detain this one or arrest that one often end in a wash, and the cops carry out their business as usual.

Government Agent

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Computer 1, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Investigation 4, Melee 2, Occult 1, Politics 2, Stealth 2

Humanity: 6 to 8, **Willpower:** 7

Equipment: Heavy pistol, black suit, sunglasses, badge and ID card, electronic surveillance devices

The Arcanum

This secret society's members are among the foremost mortal pursuers of supernatural knowledge in the World of Darkness. They are scholars, librarians, and archaeologists; epopts, Hermetics, and herbalists; Kabbalists, cryptographers, and students of the occult. Since the Victorian era, the Arcanum's academics and explorers have ventured into the world's oddest, most remote corners to learn everything they can about the unseen and the unknown.

Long ago, these mortals learned that the unseen and the unknown sometimes have very sharp teeth and most unsavory appetites. Arcanists also learned that vampires do not like being the objects of investigation, a fact harshly emphasized by Cainites' torching of the group's Boston Chapter House in 1910. The resulting loss of life and destruction of irreplaceable books (the latter perhaps more than the former) left the Arcanum wary of delving into Kindred secrets. Nonetheless, vampires remained a focus for the group's curiosity — and for its collective guilt. Various members argued over the years that turning a blind eye to the activities of vampires was complicity in genocide.

Lately, unbeknownst to most of their fellows, several Arcanists have taken action in this area. None of the organization's members qualify as fools, however, and few consider themselves warriors, so "action" in this context means the judicious synthesis and redirection of information. Therefore, several strikes by the Inquisition (which Arcanists also learned about long ago) against Kindred lairs had their secret origins in the Arcanum's archives. Similarly, the Reverend Jebediah Brown, an independent witch-hunter and former Arcanist, still believes his ongoing theft of intelligence from Arcanum chapter houses goes unnoticed — but, in truth, he is but another tool in an intricate armchair war.

Not even all of the Arcanum participants in these redirection efforts are aware of one another's work. Because of the intense danger vampiric investigation might pose to the entire organization, such activity is grounds for dismissal. Thus, Arcanists engage in "sic-



cing the witch-hunters" singly or in groups of two or three at most, and always with extreme care to preserve their anonymity. No member risks more with these clandestine pursuits than Sandeep D'Souza, Chancellor of the New Delhi Chapter House, who is poised to assume the Arcanum's Grand Chancellorship. Yet, since finding himself amidst rioting Sabbat vampires in Frankfurt and witnessing their depredations up close, D'Souza is a changed man. He doesn't understand why he was spared, which further fanned his guilt and ultimately propelled the Arcanist onto his current course. D'Souza is uncomfortable with using people as pawns against the Kindred, but he now finds inaction to be unthinkable.

Most of the organization's seekers of mysteries continue to encounter vampires unexpectedly, as mortals always have. It was through analyzing accounts by Arcanists who were looking for other things entirely (including the Grail) that D'Souza and his ilk have been able to pinpoint many Kindred havens. Of course, some of their suppositions are based on where missing colleagues are thought to have vanished. With much of the world in a state of religious agitation, the Arcanum has found Kindred in greater numbers and of more varied ideologies than they had guessed existed. This fact makes the Chancellor's abstinence ever more difficult to maintain — though he has gone so far as to "suggest" that discreet Arcanum fellows of immediate means test their own boundaries. D'Souza wishes to gauge their success in these clandestine endeavors, and has no idea how close his own secret machinations are to those of the feared and hated vampires he observes.

Arcanum Scholar

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 4 (or higher), Athletics 1, Computer 3, Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Expression 2, Investigation 3, Melee 1, Occult 4, Science 3

Humanity: 8, **Willpower:** 7

Equipment: Laptop or tablet computer, extensive library, sedan, collected occult paraphernalia, sizable bank account

Criminals

Kindred long ago cemented their influence over parts of La Cosa Nostra, the Russian Mafiya, and the Cali and Medellín drug cartels, as well as assorted ethnic, biker, and street gangs. Vampires use such criminals as cannon fodder, obstacles for the authorities, scapegoats when the Jyhad's skirmishes draw the attention of any media not under vampiric sway, and even as sustenance that goes largely unmissed should a Cainite get greedy while feeding. Given the superstition and ignorance common amongst criminals, there's some advantage to be gained from rumors that the "Big Boss" can see through walls or laugh off a gunshot. Most vampires choose to exert their will from total secrecy, however, and so most crooks have no idea of the Kindred's existence or agenda.

Recently, someone has been altering this equation. Some carefully-chosen midlevel thugs, including several Mafia lieutenants, Organizatsiya chiefs, a Cali Cartel street boss and others with a range of affiliations, have been hearing lectures on Cainite history, morphology, and power structures. The informants in question are knowledgeable and calculating. They share kernels of wisdom that are likely to incite an individual boss or gang against a specific vampire or Kindred in general. By playing on mortal fears and ambitions, these mysterious visitors have already ignited what promises to be a gang war of epic — if not apocalyptic — proportions.

In several areas of Detroit, for example, street violence is at an all-time high. After a man presented himself to the members of the local Columbian drug posse, demonstrated supernatural powers, claimed to be a messenger from God, and tricked the crew's Cainite leader into revealing his true nature, things got ugly fast. Intergang conflict quickly followed as mafioski, armed with stakes and AK-47s, joined the party. Local Giovanni vampires reacted harshly after some of their normally civil Colombian colleagues raided a Clan haven and chainsawed apart a few ghouls. Similar strife plagues Miami, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Most of the affected Kindred reacted swiftly enough to avoid harm in the first wave of violence. Quelling the gang warfare has thus far defied both individual efforts and concerted ones. The ongoing violence and pervasive Sabbat presence have hampered investigations by Camarilla Justicars in the targeted cities, but neither factor has prevented widespread realization among the Kindred that these events were a patently orchestrated assault. One consistent detail about the informants has surfaced: While they vary by race, gender, and description in the reports assembled thus far, all consistently identified themselves as "Caitiff."

Of course, this tidbit met with both consternation and skepticism among Cainites. It seemed too transparent an attempt at further dividing their ranks, and rather a stupid, pointless ploy for these dispossessed vampires to attempt anyway. Nevertheless, whoever committed this act of war (in every sense) clearly knew Kindred culture. The culprits — or perhaps culprit, as some vampires suspect a lone metamorph of some sort — surely must be supernatural, as many of the informants claimed to be angels helping to redeem gangsters' "immortal souls" and displayed unearthly abilities. Unfortunately for the Cainites, many of the criminals so approached were susceptible to such arguments.

Immediate consequences of this enemy action include the reduced usefulness of organized criminals for the Kindred and the unsavory possibility that key pawns may have to be purged from a variety of gangs. The long-range alternative is less pleasant, as some Kindred worry that bounties for vampires could become popular among crooks very quickly indeed. The mood on the streets of the major metropolitan centers is decidedly uneasy, and only the most powerful (or foolhardy) Cainites now supervise criminal organizations directly. Whether the situation could worsen still — especially given the anonymity of the perpetrator — remains to be seen.

Criminal Enforcer/Boss

This template represents a reasonably tough, savvy member of the underworld. Typical thugs and gangbangers will be much less threatening, while a Mafia Don or similar fellow will have higher Mental Attributes and extra Knowledges.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Finance 2, Firearms 3 (or higher), Larceny 3, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3 (or higher), Subterfuge 2

Humanity: 6 (often lower), **Willpower:** 6

Equipment: SMG, bulletproof vest, midsized car, knife, digital copy of detailed operations

Werewolves

The cities belong to the Kindred, and the race of Caine adopts their gilded cage as a badge of pride. The truth of the situation is a bit more complex, however. The interstices between cities and the swaths of untenanted wilderness that surround communities belong to the creatures calling themselves the Lupines. These are the wolf-men, the werewolves, and in the territories outside the cities, their wrathful will is law.

Vampires speak fearfully of the Lupines' capacities for violence. Even the most hardened Brujah and the deadliest Assamite give the werewolves a wide berth, for the shapeshifters consider themselves a warrior race and their rage lies close to the surface. Indeed, the Kindred and the Lupines have been at war since time out of mind, and to the shapeshifters, it is every bit a holy war. Even what fleeting commonalities certain Kindred may share with the werewolves — affinity with animals, a Beast that guides their movements, the ability to take on other forms — is no help. When vampires and Lupines meet, bloodshed is almost certain to follow.

Even elders wisely fear the viciousness of the wolf-men, as much for their near-indestructibility as their ability to inflict carnage. Savvy Kindred say the greatest threat posed by a werewolf isn't just his potential to invoke violence, but to withstand it as well. One werewolf is a match for a whole coterie of young Kindred, and certain revered Lupines may well be able to stand toe-to-toe with a coterie of elder vampires. The werewolf reputation for formidability is so great that cocky packs of Sabbat sometimes take on the challenge of hunting these creatures down and proving their own superiority. It's a boast upon which few Cainites can deliver.

Whispers among well-traveled vampires imply that the wolf-men aren't the only creatures who can take on the skins of savage beasts. Those who can take the form of ravens, sharks, great cats, or even spiders circulate among the realm of night. Whether there is any truth to these tales has yet to be undeniably confirmed, but in the modern nights, it's only a matter of time.

Powers and Weaknesses

• Lupines can take the forms of humans and wolves, as well as some forms that combine the traits of both. Most terrifying of all is their "wolfman" battle form, a wolf-headed, nine-foot humanoid killing machine that inspires a supernatural terror in humans. In this form, all their Physical Attributes are doubled, but they cannot use Social Attributes in connection with creatures other than werewolves and wild beasts (save to intimidate or terrify, of course).

• Werewolves create an effect known as the Delirium that is similar to a "forced Masquerade." When non-supernatural creatures observe a Lupine in battle form or using a mystical power, they are very likely to flee, and then later to rationalize the event in their minds, no matter how far they have to reach to justify it. This can occasionally help a Kindred protect her own breaches of the Masquerade, though a Kindred in close proximity to a werewolf probably has other, more immediate concerns at hand.

• Werewolves can attack several times each turn, often taking two to six actions in a single turn (like those actions provided by Celerity). They also fly into frenzy as readily as any Brujah, and in this killing state they suffer no health level penalties for wounds.

• Lupines heal incredibly rapidly, regenerating a health level each turn. Only fire, silver, or the teeth and claws of other supernatural creatures (such as a vampire's fangs) can cause lasting injuries to a werewolf — and a werewolf can even heal these wounds as a normal human can. Worse, werewolves can soak such damage with ease. Consider all damage — bashing, lethal, and aggravated — to be soakable with the werewolf's normal Stamina. However, because they are living beings, werewolves do not halve bashing damage applied to them, as the undead do.

• Werewolves fuel their supernatural powers with Gnosis, a measure of their innate spiritual energy. Werewolves can store a quantity of Gnosis in a reserve of sorts, like vampires' blood points. When they use equivalent Disciplines that call for blood points, use Gnosis instead. They regain Gnosis through long meditation or from bargaining with spirits.

• Lupines are apparently able to travel invisibly through the "spirit world," sometimes appearing from nowhere to attack their foes.

• Wolfsbane avails nothing against the Lupines, though silver is indeed their downfall. Werewolves cannot soak damage from silver weapons, and cannot regenerate such wounds as quickly as those from normal weapons.

• Lupines can call on strange mystical powers, not entirely dissimilar to vampiric Disciplines. Given time, they can also work certain rituals in the manner of Thaumaturgy. These powers depend on the werewolf's area of specialization, and can be represented by Disci-

plines — presume that a scout has something akin to Obfuscate, a shaman can ape Thaumaturgy or Necromancy, and so on.

• Werewolves do not have the same morality as vampires, but a Humanity score is provided as a rough metric and for mechanical effects that require such a score.

Adolescent Werewolf

Attributes (human form): Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 1, Alertness 3, Animal Ken 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Crafts 2, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 1, Melee 2, Occult 1, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Equivalent Disciplines: Celerity 3, Potence 1, Protean 4

Humanity: 7, **Willpower:** 5, **Gnosis:** 4

Veteran Lupine

Attributes (human form): Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4, Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 1, Alertness 3, Animal Ken 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Crafts 2, Expression 1, Firearms 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Leadership 1, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Equivalent Disciplines: Celerity 4, Potence 2, Protean 4

Humanity: 6, **Willpower:** 7, **Gnosis:** 6

Elder Shapeshifter

Attributes (human form): Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 1, Alertness 4, Animal Ken 4, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Crafts 2, Expression 3, Firearms 2, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Leadership 4, Medicine 1, Melee 5, Occult 4, Stealth 4, Survival 5

Equivalent Disciplines: Celerity 6, Dominate 2, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 3, Potence 3, Protean 4, one other Discipline at 4

Humanity: 5, **Willpower:** 9, **Gnosis:** 8



Dangerous Draughts

Lupine blood is potent vitae, and a powerful allure to the Kindred. A werewolf's blood is so rich that, though its body holds the equivalent physical volume of 10 blood points, a vampire can draw 20 or more actual blood points from the Lupine before its veins run dry. Even if a Cainite has time to guzzle only a blood point's worth, he gains two points for his pool. However, the supernatural power of werewolf blood can also be dangerous.

A vampire who feasts on werewolf blood is far more susceptible to frenzy and Rötschreck while the Lupine blood remains in her system. Every blood point of werewolf blood increases the difficulty to resist frenzy by one — that is, if a character drinks only two blood points worth of vitae from a Lupine, her difficulties to resist frenzy are two higher (even though the points manifest as four total blood points in the vampire's system). Even if the vampire successfully staves off her Beast, she becomes paranoid and short-tempered for as long as the blood remains in her system. In some cases, vampires have even gained temporary derangements from feasting on particularly volatile werebeasts.

There are rumors that Lupine blood can even temporarily grant levels of Potence or Celerity. However, this isn't always the case. It seems to have something to do with the werewolf's own bloodline, and how pure its heritage is. Unfortunately for would-be hunters, the more purely bred Lupines are often in positions of leadership in their packs, and it is a deadly proposition to go through the rank-and-file to catch the alpha.

Magi

There is nothing more terrifying than things we don't understand, and vampires of any age simply cannot understand the magi. Even ancient Kindred who once claimed brotherhood to the mages are puzzled by them. Enlightened by mad wisdom, magi can pick at the underpinnings of creation and move them to their liking — and that kind of power terrifies the Kindred.

Where sorcery (or "magick," as the wizards insist on spelling it) originally came from is a secret lost in time. Some claim that Lilith herself learned the magick Arts, and that she passed them on to those mortals that she favored. If that's true, then the magi are related to the Kindred through the same lineage, and it's possible that the ancient feud between the followers of Caine and the followers of Lilith may have been passed on to the vampires and the mages.

Regardless of its origins, however, magick is a real force, and it comes in many varieties. A powerful wizard can perform amazing feats worthy of a fantasy film, but most prefer subtler effects. Strange coincidences are the tools of the modern mage, not a fireball or a rampaging demon. Since mages are mortal, they often hide in plain sight, conducting their business daily until they are ready to take on the Kindred. A mage is no match for a vampire in a straight-up fight, however, so wizards often lay traps and scheme, much like the vampires themselves. Conflicts between vampires and mages more often resemble chess matches than cage matches, but when necessary, the mage still has the power to turn a Cainite to stone or burn him with the power of the sun.

Kindred have tried for centuries to learn the secrets of the magi, but to no avail. Blood bonds, Embraces, mystical pacts, and even ripping apart their minds have produced only wisps of true magick. It seems that life itself is somehow tied to these Arts, and that is the one thing that vampires can never truly have.

The conflicts, abilities, and politics of the magi have divided them into several distinct, often conflicting factions:

Wizards, Witches, and Miracle-workers

When the typical vampire thinks of mages, they usually think of those mortals that practice the arts of sorcery and witchcraft, people draped in New Age clothes

and surrounded by ritual trappings. Many neonates assume that such magicians are frauds, until a withering curse or a coincidental lighting strike shows them the error of their ways.

The Warlocks of Clan Tremere often reference their long historical association with hermetic mages. One such group, the Order of Hermes, has a complex love/hate relationship with the Tremere that goes back nearly a thousand years, to the foundation of the Clan itself. Centuries of wars, truces, and alliances later, the two groups have decided to just avoid each other whenever possible. Naturally, this means that they secretly spy on each other and lie in wait for the other side to make a mistake.

Other magician-cults are more hidden and far less predictable. For example, one faction keeps to the pagan ways of their ancestors, practicing a form of blood magick that allows them to act as shapeshifting warriors and peaceful healers in equal measure. While many elders have at least heard of these gory rituals, few have attended personally, and even fewer have managed to successfully convert one into a pawn.

Shamans and Yogi

These mages are enigmas, honing their minds and bodies in strange and powerful ways. Some commune quietly with spirits, while others practice mystical martial arts, and still others barter with ghosts and dead gods using primitive rituals.

In general, such wizards tend to be secretive. They affect the dress and language of lost tribes, or mix and match to integrate more seamlessly into "modern primitive" subculture. Unlike the mages of other factions, these 21st-century shamans avoid flashy magick, focusing instead on manipulating emotions, thoughts, or elements. In general, they want to exist outside of the Jyhad, only bringing their mighty power to bear when forced to deal with the Kindred. Aside from some Gangrel and the occasional Setite, vampires are happy to leave them the hell alone.

Techno-Freaks

Intriguing to some neonates but incomprehensibly terrifying to most elders, these magi blend technology, magick, and humanity in bizarre ways. Some build intensely powerful computer viruses, infecting huge databases and taking critical services offline, while others lurk on the Internet, searching for secret information to use in their ongoing conflicts. Strangest of all are those that actually graft mechanical parts into their own bodies, acquiring Discipline-like powers — inhuman strength, amazing sensory perception, and even hidden weaponry. Some of these are so deeply entwined with their machinery that their blood has become toxic to vampires, barely resembling mortal vitae at all.

These mystical factions are as likely to attack each other as the Kindred, locked in a shadowy struggle that the vampires can barely comprehend. Elders speak of wizard-wars that destroyed towns back in the Dark Ages, and there is little to suggest that they have stopped in the modern nights. Whatever the truth, the magi are a mysterious group, and any vampire that values immortality would do well to avoid these powerful mortals as much as possible.

Powers and Weaknesses

Magickal powers are diverse. To simulate a magician's repertoire, the Storyteller may assign a group of Disciplines as his "arsenal." Common Disciplines include Thaumaturgy, Auspex, Dominate, Presence, Protean, Obfuscate, and Obtenebration. Uncommon powers include Animalism, Celerity, Fortitude, Potence, Necromancy, and Chimerstry. A young magician would command five or so dots, an experienced one 10 or more, and a powerful wizard might have more than 20.

A few other things are worth remembering:

- Magi are mortal. While they can attempt to soak bashing attacks, they cannot soak lethal or aggravated damage without conjuring some sort of armor or utilizing cybernetic protection. Magi do not heal damage without the passage of time unless some medicinal spell is employed (curing one health level per success).

- While a rare few possess a Celerity-like power, most magicians act only once per turn.

- Wizards are not immune to the blood bond, and the Embrace destroys their power forever.

- Magick demands will; hence, magicians often have Willpower ratings between 6 and 10.

- Mages have access to energy called Quintessence, which they can replenish through exposure to mystical areas or access to magic items that store such energy. When using equivalent Disciplines, they spend Quintessence points instead of blood points, similar to werewolves and Gnosis (p. 378).

- Although the magi do not depend on age for their Arts, powerful ones may have effective Generation Back-

grounds to reflect their arcane prowess. The more powerful the magus, the higher her effective "Generation."

• An odd syndrome known as Paradox attacks magi whose spells are too blatant. A naturally rolled "1" on an exceedingly obvious spell (flight, a fireball, shapechanging, a chain-gun rising from the mage's back, etc.) causes things to go horribly wrong. Paradoxed wizards find their spells backfiring or their bodies collapsing. Some are swept off to Hell by demonic forces. Thus, magi are wary about using magick openly, even around the Kindred.

• A vampire with Thaumaturgy or Thaumaturgical Countermagic can try to counter a magickal spell directed at her; a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 6) "soaks" such spells, reducing the attack's potency by one level (or die) per success. A vampire who eliminates a mage's successes neutralizes the wizard's spell. A magi can also turn this ability around on vampires as well, using their countermagic against Kindred Disciplines.

• Mages do not have the same morality as vampires, but a Humanity score is provided as a rough metric and for mechanical effects that require such a score.

Young Cultist

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Drive 2, Empathy 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 2, Melee 2, Occult 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 2, Presence 1, Protean 1, Thaumaturgy 3 (one or two paths)

Humanity: 7, **Willpower:** 5, **Quintessence:** 10

Equipment: Knife, several guns, ritual instruments (candles, rope, chalk, robes, chalice), intimidating clothes

High Wizard

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 5, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Drive 1, Empathy 4, Etiquette 3, Finance 2, Firearms 1, Intimidation 4, Investigation 3, Leadership 2, Medicine 2, Occult 5, Subterfuge 3

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 4, Chimerstry 3, Dominate 2, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 4, Presence 3, Thaumaturgy 5 (many paths and rituals)

Humanity: 5, **Willpower:** 9, **Quintessence:** 12

Equipment: Sanctuary, extensive library, ritual instruments (books, blades, chalk, candles, potions, incense), sword-cane, tailored clothing

Technological Abomination

Note: Drinking the Abomination's poisonous blood is damaging — it causes one aggravated health level per blood point consumed by the vampire.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 3, Computer 4, Drive 3, Firearms 4, Intimidation 4, Investigation 4, Larceny 5, Law 2, Melee 3, Occult 4, Science 3, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Technology 4

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 4, Potence 3, Presence 3

Humanity: 3, **Willpower:** 8, **Quintessence:** 10

Equipment: Automatic weapons, body armor, supercomputer disguised as a smartphone, black armored sedan, black trenchcoat, mirrored sunglasses



Faeries

The fae are strange, enigmatic beings that live among both mortals and supernaturals without leaving any evidence of their existence. Modern faeries are very different from the sprites and tree-lords of legend. Instead, they hide their magic in human form, although why they walk in the World of Darkness is unknown.

Elders remember the faeries of old, and such Kindred claim that the fae have changed little in nature. They are still wild, alien, and capricious — and best avoided altogether. Few vampires who have dealings with the fae come out ahead, and even those that do are often left changed or driven mad by the experience. Even the very presence of the fae can cause Kindred to suffer crippling feelings of loss and agony as their physical beauty awakens long-dead feelings. A desperate craving for lost innocence or a yearning to believe in miracles can drive Cainites to despair.

Much of the time faeries are masked as mortals, their true selves hidden away. Only those who know what to look for can pierce the illusion that conceals them, and even then it is neither easy nor safe to do so. The fae like privacy and do not react well to those seeking to unmask them. They prefer to show their true natures only when they choose, and not before. The fae take many forms. Some are regal and exquisitely beautiful, while others are hideous and gruesome. After they make their presence known, the encounter is often forgotten, as though it were a fading dream.

Some Kindred (such as the Malkavians, the Ravnos, and the Tremere) hunt faeries for their blood, believing it to be far more potent than mortal blood. Among those who claim to have tasted this sweet vitae, the experience is quite varied. Some claim that fae blood tastes little or no different from mortal blood; others speak of rapturous bliss, hallucinations, or transcendent experiences. Some compare it to feeling the morning sun shining upon one's face once more — both in its exhilaration and in its excruciating pain.

Little is known of the customs or society of the fae. It does seem that fae activity increases greatly during certain times of the year, such as the equinoxes and solstices, as well as during festivals like Mardi Gras. Vampires may encounter faeries at any time, however, even if they aren't aware of it.

Even less is understood about their magic. Those faeries inclined to speak (and speak truthfully) on the matter claim their powers are fueled from a source they call Glamour, though how this Glamour is used and restored remains a mystery. Certain members of Clan Toreador believe that faeries gain their power through a connection to mortal art and artists, and more than one Toreador has come into conflict with the fae over a particularly talented artist or musician.

Faeries encountered in a **Vampire** story should remain distant and mysterious. Even if a vampire somehow befriends one of these beings, the alienation should be constantly reinforced. Additionally, the fact that the fae are so vibrant and full of life will serve as a constant reminder of what the vampire has lost by joining the legions of the undead — a situation that could quickly prove intolerable.

Powers and Weaknesses

• Faeries heal as mortals, though many know healing magic. They may soak lethal damage, but do not halve bashing damage. They take aggravated damage only from fire. If attacked with a weapon made of "cold" (unforged) iron, the faerie cannot soak the damage.

• They find the presence of vampires distasteful, and tend to avoid the undead. They may conceal their faerie forms from a vampire's sight, but Auspex often allows a vampire to pierce the disguise.

• Faeries spend Glamour to power equivalent Disciplines in the same way that werewolves do with Gnosis (p. 378).

• The fae do not have the same morality as vampires, but a Humanity score is provided as a rough metric and for mechanical effects that require such a score.

Pooka Trickster

This trickster often resembles an animal, at least when she reveals her faerie self. Kindred scholars of fae lore believe that pooka can shift into the form of the animal that they represent, in a manner similar to the Lupines, though this has never been observed. The pooka take delight in teasing and tormenting others.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Animal Ken 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Larceny 5, Performance 3, Occult 2, Stealth 5, Subterfuge 4

Equivalent Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 2, Chimerstry 3, Celerity 2, Obfuscate 4, Protean 4

Humanity: 6, **Willpower:** 6, **Glamour:** 6



Redcap Warrior

This brutish faerie thrives on carnage. His bloodlust can be as fierce as that of a vampire in blood-frenzy. In ancient times, redcaps delighted in dipping their caps in the blood of freshly fallen victims.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Intimidation 4, Larceny 2, Melee 4, Streetwise 3, Stealth 2

Equivalent Disciplines: Celerity 3, Fortitude 2, Obfuscate 3, Potence 2

Humanity: 4, **Willpower:** 5, **Glamour:** 5

Sidhe Enchantress

To look upon one of these magnificent beings is to look upon Heaven itself. The beauty of a sidhe is enough to overwhelm even the most jaded vampire. She can weave glamours and illusions that astound the senses and leave victims paralyzed with fear or awe.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 7, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 5, Empathy 3, Etiquette 4, Expression 4, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Occult 4, Performance 4, Subterfuge 2

Equivalent Disciplines: Celerity 1, Chimerstry 5, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 4, Presence 5

Humanity: 2, **Willpower:** 7, **Glamour:** 10

Ghosts

The restless dead, lingering spirits of departed mortals, have been around as long as Cainites have, perhaps longer. Many call themselves wraiths, and they are bound to the living world by some Passion, some unfinished business in the realm of the living. Not every dead mortal manifests as a ghost, but all who do so retain links to people, places, or things from their mortal lives. Such physical anchors can sway the emotion-driven existences of wraiths, who sustain themselves with strong emotions much as Kindred do with blood.

Wraiths, though normally incorporeal, can appear among the living in a variety of guises and through a range of powers similar to vampiric Disciplines. The invisibly hurled plate, the sourceless whisper, the worm-riddled visage that flickers at the edge of perception — these are

all possible for ghosts, and vampires aren't immune to such tricks. Haunted vampires are doubly damned, and such unfortunates typically find themselves shunned by Kindred society. But ghosts can't howl and rattle their way around the Skinlands — the living world, our world — with impunity. Impeding them is the Shroud, a spiritual wall that separates the living from the dead.

Most Cainites, save necromancers like those the Giovanni Clan, manage to elude any entanglement with ghosts. A dead person with a grudge against a vampire can be an annoyance or a threat, and most vampires are intolerant of either option. Only those with a grasp of Necromancy have any recourse against the restless dead.

Powers and Weaknesses

• Wraiths "feed" on emotion; this recharges their Passion pool, which is used to power their magical abilities (much like blood points). Kindred in frenzy may actually find themselves strengthening a ghostly opponent.

• Wraiths manifest most effectively in "haunted" sites and places where great suffering or trauma has left a psychic residue (battlefields, torture chambers, "suicide bridge," etc.). In such places, the Shroud between the worlds of the living and the dead is weak.

• Cainites' physicality and wraiths' incorporeality make conventional fights between them out of the question. Vampires can influence one of the Restless by manipulating her fetters (objects or persons important to the ghost in life), or they can affect a wraith directly with Necromancy or other Disciplines. Conversely, wraiths can possess mortals in order to attack a Cainite, or they can invisibly propel inanimate objects.

• Wraiths are normally invisible unless they choose to be seen. Vampires can perceive them through the use of Necromancy, however, and sometimes with Auspex.

• Some necromancers have encountered ghosts of true malice and hatred, who set about making their would-be masters' lives an absolute misery. These dark spirits seem to "live" only for inflicting pain, and indeed seem to thrive on it. Other ghosts seem to fear them, and refer to them as Spectres.

• Wraiths can affect the lands of the living, albeit with great effort. In the Shadowlands, however, they can easily inflict damage to the foolish who invade their home turf. (Stats to the right of the "/" in the stat blocks below reflect the wraith's power in the Shadowlands.)

Recently Deceased

This newly made wraith is most likely quite cocky and still has significant ties with the mortal world. However, he is inexperienced about the ways of the Underworld and the supernatural, often leading to a few rude surprises.

Attributes: Strength 0/2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Computer 2, Empathy 3, Intimidation 2, Investigation 1, Law 2, Melee 1, Occult 2, Politics 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 1, Chimerstry 1, Dementation 2, Dominate 1, Vicissitude 1

Humanity: 6, **Willpower:** 5, **Passion Pool:** 5

Spectre

Death and time have not improved this wraith. Perhaps he died with such rage and hate in his heart that



his dark side consumed him utterly upon death, or perhaps his bitterness slowly drove him into darkness. Whatever the reason, he now keeps fear and pain as his companions. Spectres seem to communicate by way of a shared consciousness, and if one requires aid, at least three more will answer his summons.

Attributes: Strength 0/3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Intimidation 3, Melee 3, Occult 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 2, Chimerstry 4, Dementation 4, Obfuscate 2, Obtenebration 3, Presence 2, Protean 2, Vicissitude 4

Humanity: 3, **Willpower:** 7, **Passion Pool:** 9

Old Soul

She may have been dead for a decade or centuries. Those of such power are not often seen in the Shadowlands, as time has worn away some of their connections to the mortal world. Those who do appear are considered some of the strongest and most feared wraiths.

Attributes: Strength 0/4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Bureaucracy 4, Computer 3, Empathy 3, Intimidation 3, Investigation 1, Law 2, Melee 2, Occult 2, Politics 1, Stealth 3, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3

Equivalent Disciplines: Auspex 2, Chimerstry 1, Dementation 4, Dominate 3, Presence 2, Thaumaturgy 3 (The Lure of Flames 3, Movement of the Mind 3), Vicissitude 3

Humanity: 1, **Willpower:** 9, **Passion Pool:** 10

Demons

The Kindred believe themselves the masters of history. They have ruled mankind from the shadows and shaped its beliefs for time immemorial. Yet there are creatures older than the Kindred, creatures which claim to predate all of humanity. These creatures have their own place in mortal belief, and their own agendas in the cities which vampires rule. These creatures possess the bodies of the weak and depraved, or haunt ancient relics and places.

Few vampires consider the existence of demons; after all, are not the Kindred themselves fallen and Damned? Why go looking for creatures more wretched? To most vampires, demons are creatures of myth, figments of the mortal imagination and perhaps the dreams of deluded Kindred cultists. Even those who believe typically adhere to mortal legend. Vampires who have encountered demons, however, know that they are as real as the claws of the Lupines. They have seen things which should not be, which neither man nor vampire was meant to know.

Of course, some vampires worship demons... and some even hunt them. The Baali believe that demons are the children of night itself, cast out of the sky by a narcissist God who created humanity to satisfy His vanity. They say that these spirits slumber in the earth, beneath the ruins of the first cities. They believe that the demons' names grant them power, but that knowing them grants the demons power over them. They claim that demons were the true power behind the most ancient of mortals' false gods. The most powerful among them can bring demons forth into the material world.

Some of the demons themselves claim that they were not always creatures of darkness. Indeed, many owe allegiance to a creature called the Lightbringer. The demons say that they were the servants of God before mortals were created, and that they fell only because they loved humanity too much. They say that they witnessed Caine slay Abel, and saw the tide of blood unleashed by the first murder. So demons say... but they are also notorious liars.

The Fallen, those demons who are ensconced in mortal flesh, operate much as vampires do. They scheme against each other for sway over mortals, whose prayers they devour. They even organize themselves into feudal hierarchies which span cities and regions. They grant power to their cultists, who carry forth their blasphemous word. They may not wield the influence that vampires do over human institutions, but they certainly covet it.

The Earthbound, demons who haunt objects or places, are of a different order. They also scheme, but their ancient minds are maddened, and their plans emerge from fevered dreams. They claim that they were once mankind's gods, just as the Baali say. Their cults are thusly more ancient, spanning innumerable generations. They demand sacrifice and depravity of their followers. The Earthbound are the most powerful of demons, but are trapped in their haunts or reliquaries.

Powers and Weaknesses

• All demons practice some form of possession; without a host, they are torn screaming back into whatever hell they came from. The Fallen are lesser demons, whose essence can be contained in a mortal shell. They possess humans whose souls are loosely bound to their bodies, such as the young, the infirm, or those utterly steeped in sin. The Earthbound are usually more potent, and possess ancient artifacts or unholy places. If these greater demons attempt to possess a mortal host, they swiftly destroy it from the inside out. A few demons have been able to possess vampires, but rarely for long; their ends in such bodies are usually disastrous for the original owners.

• Demons can take on apocalyptic forms that show their true nature, and which manifest monstrous traits like wings, horns, and claws. Some do this by transforming their hosts, while others are able to temporarily project themselves outside their bodies or reliquaries. Powers like Aura Perception can reveal this form to curious Kindred.

• Demons are immune to all forms of mind control. However, when summoned, they can be bound by the terms of bargains with humans or vampires.

• Many demonic powers parallel those of vampires, such as the ability to bind mortals to their will, reshape human flesh, or summon infernal fire. The Fallen typically exhibit powers equivalent to Disciplines in the one to five dot range, while the Earthbound command powers of six dots or greater.

• Like vampires, demons take their power from mortals. Where the Kindred feed on blood, these creatures feed on the faith of their followers. A mortal cultist or thrall must willingly offer her devotion, though the demon may lie in order to obtain it. Those mortals who make pacts with demons provide them with a steady flow of this energy, which they can then use to fuel their powers (use "Faith" in place of blood for equivalent Disciplines).

• Some cultists are imbued with the power of demons, and may manifest the spirits' dark miracles without being directly possessed.

• Demons are constantly tormented by dark memories and a spiritual pull back to their infernal prison. Additionally, the Fallen are often confused by the memories of their hosts. This torment can result in erratic behavior, spoiling otherwise dangerous plans.

Fallen Tempter

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 2, Awareness 4, Computer 1, Drive 2, Empathy 2, Etiquette 4, Expression 3, Finance 4, Intimidation 4, Law 3, Leadership 4, Occult 2, Performance 2, Politics 5, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 5

Equivalent Disciplines: Dominate 2, Fortitude 2, Daimoinon 4

Humanity: 3, **Willpower:** 7, **Faith:** 7

Earthbound Defiler in Darkness

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3, Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 5 (possesses physical Attributes only when projecting demonic form)

Abilities: Alertness 3, Awareness 4, Expression 3, Finance 4, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Medicine 3, Melee 3, Occult 3, Performance 2, Politics 3, Stealth 1, Subterfuge 5

Equivalent Disciplines: Dominate 6, Potence 6 (only in demonic form), Vicissitude 6

Humanity: 1, **Willpower:** 10, **Faith:** 10



Bestiary

Vampires are creatures of the cities and rarely interact with the beasts of the wild. Indeed, most animals fear the Kindred, hissing or snarling as the unnatural creatures approach. Nonetheless, certain vampires (particularly those with the Animalism Discipline) employ animals as companions, spies, or soldiers. Further, animals are occasionally changed into ghouls, particularly by the vampires of Clans Gangrel and Nosferatu.

Normal animals are described with only Physical and Mental Traits. They also have Abilities, reflecting innate or trained abilities. Traits in square brackets are instilled through human contact and training; an animal in the wilderness does not have these Abilities. Trained animals can also gain Willpower. Animals whose health levels include Incapacitated can survive longer than those without it — others die when they run out of health levels. The blood pool Trait reflects how many points a feeding Cainite can drain from a beast. (Note that animal blood is far less satisfying than human vitae; some animals that have more blood than a human actually have lower blood pool ratings.) Damage inflicted by animals is lethal, although small creatures might inflict bashing damage at the Storyteller's discretion.

Any of the beasts below can be turned into ghoul retainers with a monthly dose of at least one point of vampire blood; such companions gain Willpower, a dot of Potence, a useable blood pool of 2, and trained Abilities (more information on ghouls is on p. 496). Dogs are frequently made into ghouls because of their loyalty and intelligence. Dogs also rarely attract attention, and can be easily trained. Cats have been linked to creatures of the night, and more than one vampire has kept a feline companion through the transition from mortal to immortal. Still, these are not the limits of ghoul pets. Most domestic (and many wild) animals have been turned into ghouls at one point or another.

Alligator

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Stealth 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for seven dice; tail slap for six dice

Blood Pool: 5

Note: Alligators and crocodiles have one soak die of armor, usable against bashing or lethal damage.

Bat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Stealth 2

Willpower: 2, **Health Levels:** OK, -1,-3

Attack: Bite for one die

Blood Pool: 1/4 (1 blood point equals four bats)

Note: Bats can fly at 25 mph/40 kph. Vampires who employ the Protean Discipline to change into bats that are larger than the bats presented here.

Bear

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Intimidation 2, Stealth 1

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, OK, -1, -1, -1, -3, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for seven dice; bite for five dice

Blood Pool: 5

Birds

Small Bird (Finch, Parrot, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3 [Performance (Mimicry) 3]

Willpower: 1, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -5

Attack: Harassment (-1 die on all dice pools to target while being harassed)

Blood Pool: 1/4 (1 blood point equals four small birds)

Large Bird (Hawk, Raven, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2 [Brawl 3, Empathy 4, Intimidation 4]

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Claw for two dice; bite for one die (only in desperation)

Blood Pool: 1/2 (1 blood point equals two large birds)

Note: A bird can typically fly at 25 to 50 mph (40 to 80 kph).

Camel

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 4

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Kick for six dice; bite for four dice

Blood Pool: 6

Cats

Bobcat

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 3

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for four dice; claw for three dice

Blood Pool: 4

House Cat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 4 [Empathy 2, Subterfuge 2]

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for one die; claw for one die

Blood Pool: 1

Leopard (Jaguar, Panther, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3 [Intimidation 4, Stealth 3]

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels**: OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for five dice; claw for four dice

Blood Pool: 5

Tiger (Lion, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3 [Intimidation 4, Stealth 3]

Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for six dice; claw for five dice

Blood Pool: 5

Chimpanzee

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics (Climbing) 3, Brawl 2 [Empathy 2, Sign Language or Pictogram Language Merit]

Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for five dice; claw for four dice

Blood Pool: 4

Dogs

Small Dog (Chihuahua, Pug, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3 [Empathy 2, Performance 1, Stealth 3]

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -5

Attack: Bite for two dice

Blood Pool: 1

Medium Dog (Beagle, Border Collie, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Survival (Tracking) 3 [Empathy 2, Intimidation 1, Stealth 2]

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for three dice; claw for two dice

Blood Pool: 2

Large Dog (German Shepherd, Great Dane, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Survival (Tracking) 3 [Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Stealth 2]

Willpower: 5, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for five dice; claw for four dice

Blood Pool: 2

Horses

Small Horse (Pony, foal, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 1 [Brawl 2, Empathy 2]

Willpower: 2, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Trample or kick for six dice; bite for three

Blood Pool: 3

Large Horse (Stallion, Clydesdale, etc.)

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 1 [Brawl 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2]

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Trample or kick for seven dice; bite for three

Blood Pool: 4

Note: Horses typically fear the undead, but can be trained as mounts.

Pigs

Small Pig (Domestic Pigs)

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -4, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for two dice

Blood Pool: 3

Large Pig (Boar)

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 2 [Intimidation 2]

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, OK, -1, -1, -2, -4, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for four dice; gore for five

Blood Pool: 4

Rat

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 1, Stealth 3

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -5

Attack: Bite for one die

Blood Pool: 1/4 (1 blood point equals 4 rats)

Note: Rats are often turned into ghouls and used as spies and guards by Nosferatu. They frequently attack in swarms (see the rules below).

Snakes

Constrictor Snake

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Constrict for four dice per turn

Blood Pool: 2

Poisonous Snake

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3

Willpower: 4, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for two dice (see Poisons and Drugs, p. 301)

Blood Pool: 1

Spider

Attributes: Strength 0, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1, Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: None

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, Squashed

Attack: No damage, but bite may be poisonous (see p. 301)

Blood Pool: None

Note: Characters must make an Alertness + Perception roll (difficulty 7) to notice spiders on them.

Wolf

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 2, Athletics 1, Brawl 3, Stealth 2

Willpower: 3, **Health Levels:** OK, -1, -1, -3, -5, Incapacitated

Attack: Bite for four dice; claw for four dice

Blood Pool: 2

Packs and Swarms

Although the Traits listed above detail individual creatures, some animals attack en masse. If a swarm of hornets or horde of rats accosts the characters, instead of trying to determine what each and every member of a pack or swarm does, simply roll to see if the swarm itself harms a character. Narrate the results from there.

Each beast type is given a listing on the chart below. Roll the damage dice pool listed once per turn (difficulty 6), and allow the characters to try to dodge or soak the result. This damage is lethal, or possibly bashing in the case of small or weak creatures. Packs attack once per turn per target, and act on the initiative given on the chart.

If a character dodges, he can move normally for the remainder of the turn. Otherwise, his attackers slow him down to half his usual movement. If they score more than three health levels' worth of damage in one turn (after the target soaks), or if the player botches an appropriate roll, the character is knocked down and overrun. He can only move 1-2 yards/meters per turn, and the swarm's damage difficulty falls to 5. Efforts to get back up and continue moving (see "Knockdown," p. 279) are typically at +1 or +2 difficulty.

The health levels listed reflect the amount of damage it takes to disperse a pack or swarm. An additional two health levels destroy the attackers completely. Pistols, rifles, and small melee weapons (knives, brass knuckles, bottles, claws, bare hands) inflict a single health level per strike, no matter how many attack or damage successes are rolled (that is, the strike hits only one creature). Shotguns, submachine guns, and large melee weapons (swords, staves, boards, chainsaws) do normal damage (each damage success rolled eliminates one health level of the swarm as a whole), as do large-area attacks (Molotov cocktails, frost storms, gusts of wind, explosions). Swarms and packs don't soak.

Depending on the size of the pack, two or more characters might be affected by it and can attack it in return. Anyone who helps an overrun character can be attacked as well. A human can outrun some packs or swarms (those consisting of rats or bugs), but can't hope to outrun others (those consisting of hyenas or birds).

Animal	Damage	Health Levels	Initiative
Small bugs	1	5	2
Large bugs	2	7	3
Flying bugs	2	5	4
Birds, bats	4	9	5
Rats	3	7	3
Large rats	4	9	3
Feral cats	4	6	6
Wild dogs, wolves	6	15	4



Chapter Ten: Bloodlines

"I learned from them to take the blackness from the blood,
the wounds from the flesh, the evil from the world.
And though I may die, you, my childer will live on."

- The Book of Nod

In the years since **Vampire** was first published, the seven Clans grew into 13, with an impressive number of former Clans, sub-Clans, and bloodlines to boot. This chapter includes write-ups of many of these bloodlines, so that old fans can enjoy playing with them again, and new players can get a glimpse of how diverse **Vampire** really is.

Playing Bloodlines

The bloodlines described in this chapter are rare, or in some cases, entirely extinct in the modern nights. Does that mean that such characters are not viable for players to portray? Not in the least. Playing the last surviving member of, say, the Telyavic Tremere is an opportunity for great drama. It just requires that the player and the Storyteller be ready for the kinds of situations that creates.

It could be argued, then, that a player who creates such a character is just trying to be "more unique" than other vampires. Possibly, but so what? If the goal is to tell a compelling story, to focus on the characters that are, by default, more interesting than any others (that is, your characters), then why not create something that doesn't exist anywhere else? If you feel compelled to play a Blood Brother that has somehow broken the bonds of the circle and achieved autonomy, then do it (with Storyteller approval). Just be aware that doing so makes a statement about the World of Darkness that playing a Toreador painter does not — and maybe that's not a bad thing.

History and Vampires

While modern neonates have little understanding of how their elders survived in past centuries, some vampires still active tonight remember the Cappadocians, the Lamia, and other such bloodlines. As such, it's appropriate to note that the Camarilla and the Sabbat were both created *after* the fall of some of the Clans.

Up until the middle of the 15th century or so, vampire society broke the Clans down into two groups: High Clans and Low Clans. The High Clans were the Brujah, Cappadocians, Lasombra, Toreador, Tzimisce, and Ventrue. The Low Clans were the Assamites, Followers of Set, Gangrel, Malkavians, Nosferatu, Ravnos, and Tremere (still considered usurpers for what they did to the Salubri). The bloodlines that did not survive beyond (or much beyond) the Dark Ages — the Anda, Cappadocians, Lamia, Lhiannan, and Noaid — have stereotypes and quotes drawn from these groups, rather than the Camarilla and Sabbat.

Baali

Even monsters have their bogeymen, and Kindred are no exception. Sires often attempt to keep neonates from growing drunk on their own power as vampires, and one method for doing so is to explain to them what sorts of twisted, evil power awaits them in the dark. The Baali are one such power.



History — or legend, perhaps — claims that the childe of an Antediluvian made a pact with forces beyond human understanding in order to make war on the thirteen Clans. He took the name Baal-the-Destroyer, and he led his apostles against the Second City. The battle was terrible, and none caught in its wake were spared — Demon and Kindred alike perished. But the Baali and their unholy allies were routed and fled, and over the millennia, they faded from memory, to legend, to cautionary tale.

The Baali do still exist, though. The Inquisition weeded out the stupid and the careless, but left the clever and the patient. Some went into torpor, while others simply claimed membership in another Clan and begged for sanctuary. Now, in modern nights, the bloodline sees more concentrated activity than it has for centuries. Baali are explorers and seekers of secrets. They will do almost anything and sacrifice almost anyone to gain access to occult mysteries. They squander the wealth they have accumulated, they make deals they cannot possible hope to live up to, and they do so with no apology and no attempt at excuse. They seem to know that they are in decline, and that their bloodline is disappearing into the mists of time.

The bloodline has enemies, after all. Infernalists — those who call up and worship demons — are one of the very few beings that can be called "common enemies" by most of the denizens of the World of Darkness, Kindred and otherwise.

Despite their small numbers and host of enemies, the Baali are dangerous. They are not Faustian bargainers, looking for comfort or even knowledge. They do not wish to reign in Hell. They believe — they *know* — that the world is doomed. The End Times are here, and every sacrifice they make, every murder they incite, is one more chink in the dam holding back the deluge of blood called Gehenna. If they have to die to break that dam, so be it. They die knowing that what they do is what must be done.

Nickname: Demons

Sect: While individual Baali might pretend to membership in the Camarilla or, less commonly, the Sabbat, the bloodline as a whole claims no Sect.

Appearance: Some neonates adorn themselves with Satanic paraphernalia. Some Baali dress in expensive clothing, and some don't bother. Some become so fixated that they neglect outer appearance. Older Baali surround themselves with insects, rats, or other vermin.

Haven: Baali tend to nest in places of antiquity. Libraries, universities, and stately homes attract the Demons. No matter where the Baali make their havens, though, the vampire's very presence changes the place. Vermin creep in first, and no amount of effort can keep them out.

Background: The Baali value temperament above profession. Teachers, defrocked priests, laborers, artists — all have joined the ranks of the Baali. The bloodline even breeds their own recruits, drawing from ghoul families raised over the years to produce offspring suckled on the unholy truths that the Baali recite as gospel.

Character Creation: Mental Attributes, especially Perception, are usually primary. A Baali's ability to tempt and entice depend on his insight into what a person truly wants. Social Attributes are also helpful, as the Baali need both to keep their identities a secret and convince others to open up to them.

Clan Disciplines: Daimoinon, Obfuscate, Presence

Weakness: Baali cannot bear to look upon or handle objects of any faith. Demons must avert their gazes from such objects, and touching them burns their flesh. In addition, should a Baali run afoul of True Faith, any hindering or damage effects are doubled.

Organization: The Baali gather in cabals numbering three to 13. Supposedly, these cabals answer to the bloodline's founder. Any Demon is willing to die to protect his cabal-mates; not out of any loyalty or affection for them, but because they're all doomed anyway.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *Sooner or later, the masks have to come off. Take all the time you need. We'll wait.*

Sabbat: *A honeycomb in which to hide. Just learn how the little bees dance first.*

Followers of Set: *They have the right idea. They're just playing for the wrong team.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Satanists? They're not… wait. You think they care about* Satan*?*

Sabbat: *There's a reason we spend so much time ensuring loyalty, and it's not because we think the Camarilla Licks are going to infiltrate us.*

Ravnos: *You wouldn't believe what I've seen.*

Quote: *'And behold, a pale horse, and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.' Ever noticed it's in past tense? That's not a mistranslation.*

Blood Brothers

The Blood Brothers are Kindred only in a very loose sense. They are Sabbat shock troops, created by Tremere and Tzimisce sorcerers in order for the Sword of Caine to have loyal soldiers that can still pass for human. The process of creation (for the Blood Brothers do not undergo an Embrace) washes away any individuality and personality, leaving only strong, savage, and near-mindless quasi-vampires.

Blood Brothers are usually created in small groups of three to 10. These groups — called "circles" — become family units connected by a kind of hive mind. The Sabbat also usually arranges for a Tzimisce to fleshcraft the circle's faces so that they are identical.

The Frankensteins are a secret weapon for the Sabbat for several reasons. The Sabbat finds that while the loyalty of the Blood Brothers is beyond reproach, they don't possess much in the way of creativity. They aren't capable of trickery, clever tactics, or improvisation, and unless another vampire can direct them in the field in real time (which isn't impossible, given modern communication technology), they aren't good for much beyond simple, direct missions. Second, they are difficult and risky to create. Creating a circle of Blood Brothers means killing half a dozen people. While the Sabbat doesn't have a problem with that in itself, a pattern of disappearances can clue in mortal authorities and Camarilla watchers alike that the Sword of Caine is up to something.

Finally, the Blood Brothers are more useful as a surprise attack, and survivors of those attacks run the risk of passing along knowledge of the Brothers' weaknesses. Creating too many, even if it were possible or practical, would mean that eventually some Camarilla Tremere would figure out how to hurt them, or even how to reverse the magic that keeps them mindless, loyal, and useful. Some rumors say that this has already happened, but that the Tremere aren't willing to share this knowledge with the Camarilla just yet.

Nickname: Frankensteins

Sect: The Blood Brothers belong to the Sabbat exclusively. A Blood Brother that comes through the creation process with his individuality intact is destroyed.



Appearance: A Blood Brother often looks identical to the others in his circle, barring any burns or other marks that he might have picked up in battle. They usually dress alike. The members of the circle grow agitated when they see each other as "different."

Haven: Blood Brothers stay in whatever haven is provided for them by the Sabbat. As long as the circle is allowed to stay together, they don't seem to care much about amenities.

Background: A Blood Brother's mortal life is irrelevant. All that a person needs to do to become a Blood Brother is cross the wrong vampire's path on the wrong night. The Sabbat kills the target, removes his body hair, smooths over his features, and places him with four or five others, and after that no trace of the man-that-was remains.

Character Creation: Blood Brothers prioritize Physical Attributes and Talents. Nature and Demeanor are usually the same; common choices are Conformist, Bravo, and Monster. Blood Brothers don't usually have much in the way of Backgrounds apart from Generation and Mentor (their handler or creator).

Clan Disciplines: Fortitude, Potence, Sanguinus

Weakness: Blood Brothers cannot Embrace. If they attempt it, the mortal simply dies.

In addition, the Frankensteins literally feel each other's pain. When a Blood Brother suffers a wound penalty, all members of the circle suffer the same penalty for the next turn. If two Blood Brothers are wounded, only the greater wound penalty applies. Blood Brothers do not continually suffer these penalties unless one of them suffers a new wound.

Organization: The bloodline as a whole has no organization. It is loyal to the Sabbat, and the members are otherwise loyal to their circles. The Blood Brothers treat their handlers with complete loyalty, bordering on sycophancy. They treat other Sabbat Kindred with quiet deference.

Stereotypes

Anyone Not Sabbat: *Kill. Do not obey.*

Sabbat: *Obey. Do not kill.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *I used to have a muse. He was lovely, chiseled, golden-honey hair. He vanished one night. And then I chanced to pass through Detroit, and I saw him on the street.* Six *of him.*

Sabbat: *I know they're creepy. Don't think of them as Cainites.*

Followers of Set: *Why didn't we think of that?*

Quote: *Stranger. Kill? Watch. Watching. Kill? Watching. Kill?*

Daughters of Cacophony

The Daughters of Cacophony emerged as a distinct bloodline sometime during the 19th century. Before that, of course, there were always Kindred who saw music and song as a way to remain sane. Kindred scholars believe that the Daughters sprang from the blood of either Clan Toreador (for their passionate artistic pursuit) or Malkavian (given their propensity for causing madness), but their supernatural powers point more toward Clan Ventrue. It's something of a moot point, as the "first" Daughter of Cacophony is unknown. Regardless of their origins, the Sirens (as they are called in Kindred circles) are all singers, and the bloodline has always been predominantly female.



Indeed, the Daughters of Cacophony base their unlives on song. They wander through eternity with music always in their ears, and that makes them seem unfocused or flighty to other Kindred. This is one of the reasons, along with their rarity, that neither major Sect of vampires considers them a threat or much more than a diversion. Individual Kindred, however, might have occasion to meet a Siren and wonder why it is that those who spend too much time listening to their songs always seemed changed by the experience.

Nickname: Sirens

Sect: Sirens might fall in with whichever Sect holds power locally. If asked, most Daughters either identify as independents or claim membership in the Camarilla.

Appearance: A Siren might be a street musician dressed in thrift-store chic, a pierced and tattooed punk rocker, or a high-class entertainer with money and prestige. Apart from the fact that the Daughters are largely female, their appearance varies widely.

Haven: Most Sirens have a quiet room with good acoustics where they can sing without anyone listening. As much as most Daughters love performing, they would prefer to be alone after the "show" ends, and so the outward appearance of their havens isn't as important as maintaining its secrecy.

Background: The majority of Sirens were singers before the Embrace as well. Very occasionally, a Daughter Embraces someone who never developed her skill at singing, but these discover their talents swiftly.

The Daughters do not discriminate based on musical style. Jazz singer, nu-metal waif, opera diva, sultry lounge performer — any chanteuse might be a Siren.

Character Creation: Social Attributes tend to be primary. Expression and Performance are almost always high, and many have Fame. Sirens who die with a following reap the benefit of their fans (Herd). Those less lucky often still have Contacts in show business.

Clan Disciplines: Fortitude, Melpominee, Presence

Weakness: The Daughters of Cacophony hear music constantly. This might be a form of synesthesia, or it might be a hallucination.

This constant song distracts the Daughters as much as it guides them. The difficulties of all their Perception rolls increase by two. No Daughter of Cacophony may have Alertness above 3 dots.

Organization: Their numbers are too small for them to be truly organized, yet sometimes the Sirens act as one. Every so often, Sirens everywhere put on a performance on the same night. They don't necessarily sing the same songs, but all of the waking Sirens sing at exactly the same time.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *Would you like to hear another, my lord?*

Sabbat: *Very well. You don't mind if I hum a bit, though?*

Toreador: *If only your art had real power, like mine.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *It's the Prince's policy not to let fratricide go unanswered, even among the less important Clans — would you please stop singing a moment?*

Sabbat: *If we can't get 'em our way, you get 'em yours, sisters!*

Giovanni: *I don't know what songs they're talking about. I've got a nasty suspicion, though, that I could listen in if I wanted to.*

Quote: *I heard the song as I died. It led me out of darkness and cold, and it came to my lips with my mother-sister's blood. And now I sing, because to end the song would be to end all.*

Gargoyles

The Tremere unveiled the Gargoyle bloodline in AD 1167, and the Slaves have been a steady, if infrequent, part of Kindred society ever since. Gargoyles might, in fact, be one reason that the Tremere weren't exterminated entirely in their first few centuries of existence. These odd quasi-Kindred often look like their stone namesakes — rocky-skinned, ugly, winged creatures that exist only to serve their masters.

Or such was the case for several hundred years. Recently, though, many of the Slaves have thrown off their chains and joined the Camarilla. Why the Gargoyles choose to ally themselves with the Sect that also protects their former masters is anyone's guess. One of the going theories is that it's a slap in the Warlocks' collective face, but most Kindred don't give the Gargoyles credit for being that sophisticated. More likely, the Rockheads simply realize that in the Camarilla, their talents will be recognized and no one will try and order them around (at least not directly).

Gargoyles are created out of other Kindred, and this ugly fact makes their creation a seldom-discussed topic in polite vampiric society. The Tremere start with a Gangrel, Nosferatu, or Tzimisce vampire and perform obscene, bloody rituals using its blood, heart, and skin. Vitae from another vampire (from one of the other two Clans) is used to provoke a violent mutation, with the result that some Gargoyles look purely hideous (Nosferatu base), some look feral (Gangrel base), and some look fleshy and sport bony protrusions (Tzimisce base). No Gargoyle can pass for human.

The Tremere tolerate the Gargoyles' presence in the Camarilla as best they can — it's not as though they can easily re-enslave them, after all. But relations are obviously strained. The Gargoyles' revolt and induction into the Camarilla has all but doomed the remaining slave Gargoyles, as their masters now monitor



them ruthlessly for any sign of betrayal. The Tremere also aren't above planting hypnotic suggestions in their Slaves' minds, so that if they ever *do* rebel, they still serve a function for the Clan.

Nickname: Traditionally Slaves, though free Gargoyles have been known to crack heads over it. Other common nicknames are Rockheads, Runaways, Freemen, and Grotesques.

Sect: Gargoyles usually join the Camarilla. It's not impossible for a Slave to join the Sabbat, but the bloodline as a whole frowns on this.

Appearance: Not all Gargoyles look like the stone grotesques found spitting rainwater over old buildings, but all are nightmarish. Some have tufts of hair protruding randomly over their bodies, or odd, galloping walks. Most Gargoyles have gray, rock-like skin. All Gargoyles have wings. These grow as the character's Flight (see p. 447) increases.

Haven: Slave Gargoyles sleep wherever their masters allow them — closets, basements, crypts, cells. Free Gargoyles prefer sleeping in havens high above the ground. Bell towers and disused high-rises are favorites. Gargoyles are often muscle for other Kindred, sometimes in exchange for a bare-bones haven.

Background: Gargoyles creation rarely shows a discernible pattern. The Change tortures the new Gargoyle's body, as bones elongate and split to form the wings. The face warps, leaving nothing to recognize the mortal or vampire by. They rarely remember their unlife or mortal existence.

Character Creation: Created to be slaves, Gargoyles specialize in Physical Attributes, Talents, and a few select Skills (Melee, for instance). All Gargoyles start with a free dot of the Flight Discipline. Appearance is always zero. Gargoyles created by the Tremere are at the same Generation as the Kindred that act as their "base."

Clan Disciplines: Flight, Fortitude, Potence, Visceratika

Weakness: The Slaves are hideous. That grotesquery takes different forms, but always results in an Appearance of zero. They are also highly susceptible to mind control from any source. A Gargoyle's Willpower score (current or permanent) is considered two points lower when used to resist such powers.

Organization: Gargoyles have a strong sense of community. They often keep communal havens. Sometimes Gargoyles petition the Prince for the release of slave Gargoyles, but more often they just tear slave owners to pieces. With no community, Gargoyles are likely to Embrace and build their own.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *Our new home. Here, no one shouts or strikes us or burns us with mirrors and light. Here, they ask politely, and we are free to ask for payment in blood. Paradise.*

Sabbat: *They are so brutal. And they love each other so. And yet, when I think of them, my eyes begin to burn. Why should this be?*

Tremere: *I will never be a slave again.* Never.

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Fuck you, Merlin. They belong to* all *of us now.*

Sabbat: *Where d'ya think they get the raw materials to make those monsters? Oh, the civilized Camarilla.*

Ravnos: *You headed into the city? Good luck! Don't forget to look up!*

Quote: *Master. Why did you burn her? She only wanted to fly free for one night… yes, master. I obey.*

Harbingers of Skulls

The Harbingers of Skulls are a small bloodline that emerged from the mists of the past and threw their lot in with the Sabbat. The Harbingers are alleged to all be elders, and frighteningly powerful. While their sudden appearance suggests a long bout of torpor, they don't behave like recently-awakened vampires. Indeed, they claim they have been *dead* these past five centuries.

The Harbingers of Skulls resemble rotting corpses, much like the Samedi. Indeed, vampires that know of both bloodlines suggest a common origin, but since neither the Samedi nor the Harbingers discuss their origins publically, it's just speculation.

The Harbingers have only been members of the Sabbat for a short time, but during that time they have made themselves invaluable. The Sword of Caine, lacking Giovanni members, has difficulty dealing with ghosts. This can lead to problematic hauntings, since the Sabbat kills enough people that ghostly visitation can become an issue. The Harbingers can exorcises these vengeful shades, or, better yet, turn them into incorporeal spies and slaves. And for all of this, the Harbingers ask nothing except for favors to be repaid at a later date.

The Sabbat, for its part, isn't usually given to the favor-trading that one finds in the Camarilla, but what the Harbingers bring to the table is too valuable to miss. And besides, whether one believes the fairy tale about noble origins and "revenge on the traitorous moneylenders" that the Harbingers sometimes spin, their passion is palpable. That kind of murderous zeal is always welcome in the Sword of Caine.

Nickname: Lazarenes

Sect: The Harbingers of Skulls belong entirely to the Sabbat. That said, given that the bloodline obviously has many secrets buried, it's impossible to know if any Lazarenes claim membership in the Camarilla or remain independent.

Appearance: The Harbingers prefer to stay hidden in their havens, or at least remain among Kindred, and for good reason. They resemble emaciated, shrunken corpses. Their skin grows taut and white, and the gums recede, giving the impression of a bleached, grinning skull. Most Harbingers wearing flowing garments or burial shrouds, the better to highlight their affinity for death.

Haven: Unlike most Sabbat Kindred, the Harbingers of Skulls do not join packs, and therefore do not use communal havens. They usually choose lairs away from mortal interference, but close enough to the living that they don't want for blood (or fresh corpses for



their horrific arts). Crypts, disused laboratories, and slaughterhouses are common choices.

Background: The background of a "typical" Harbinger is impossible to know. They are all elders, and who they were in life has been lost to time. They do seem to show evidence of a classical education, and one survivor of a battle between a Harbinger and a gang of Camarilla Brujah mentions that the Lazarene used a style of fighting that originated in Florence. Beyond those sparse clues, however, the Harbingers' true identities are unknown.

Character Creation: The Harbingers of Skulls tend toward morbid and somewhat violent concepts. They are obsessed with revenge, death, and the horrors beyond the grave. Social Attributes and Abilities aren't a priority. Mental Attributes and Knowledges are generally highly rated, but their status as elders means that they are formidable across the board (and imply a significant amount spent on the Generation Background to boot).

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Necromancy

Weakness: No matter how much blood a Harbinger consumes, her skin remains deathly pale. Moreover, all Harbingers look like shriveled corpses. They have Appearance ratings of 0 and automatically fail Appearance rolls.

Organization: The Harbingers have some kind of internal organization, and they do keep in contact and even meet with one another occasionally. They keep in touch using ghostly messengers, and they travel to meet each other using methods that other Kindred cannot match. Most of the Sabbat doesn't quite know how many Harbingers exist or what they might be doing.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *The more things change….*

Sabbat: *They can't win. But we don't want to* win.

Giovanni: *Payback is coming very soon, and on that day all of your money will mean nothing.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *What do I have to do, spell it out for you?*

Sabbat: *You should have seen the look on the goombas' faces when their ghosty slaves all turned around and jumped on 'em. I love these guys!*

Giovanni: *How many times do I have to say it? The Cappadocians are* dead. *We killed them.* Period.

Quote: *It's amazing what the dead can teach you about revenge. We have been listening to them for centuries.*

Kiasyd

The Kiasyd are a bloodline of the Lasombra Clan; that much is obvious, given that these odd Kindred make use of the Obtenebration Discipline. But their aversion to iron, their odd power of Mytherceria, and their very appearance speak to even stranger ancestry.



The Kiasyd are independent, focused more on their studies than on the causes of the Sword of Caine. The ones that do claim membership in the Sabbat aren't passionately involved in the Sect's activities. Some speculate that the Lasombra hold some power over them — did the Keepers create the Kiasyd, the way the Tzimisce created the Blood Brothers? Do the Kiasyd, whatever their origin, owe the Lasombra some debt? Whatever the nature of their relationship, it seems to benefit the Sabbat.

The Kiasyd are, as a rule, calm and studious. They prefer to remain ensconced within their havens, poring over ancient texts, maps, artifacts, and other bits of antiquity. Other Kindred, it seems, can't understand how a lineage of vampires that is so very *strange* could be nothing more than scholars. To hear the rumor-mill tell it, the Kiasyd can feed only on the blood of infants, or faeries, or unspoiled virgins. Their otherworldly heritage comes not from the Good Folk, but from demons and the forces of Hell. Their odd appearance isn't because of mutation in their vitae, but a God-given warning: These are not Kindred. They are *other*.

Nickname: Weirdlings

Sect: Most Kiasyd belong to the Sabbat, at least nominally. A rare few identify as Camarilla vampires, and others are independent. Since the Kiasyd don't spend much time around each other if they can help it (see below), drawing a conclusion about their collective preferences is difficult.

Appearance: The Kiasyd aren't called "Weirdlings" just because of their behavior. Most of them are well over six feet tall (two meters or more), willowy, and thin. Their skin isn't just pale, as with most vampires, but glows faintly in moonlight. Their eyes are almond-shaped and have no visible pupils. They are often violet or jet black in color. Their ears are slightly pointed. The Kiasyd cover this with a hat or headband when going out amongst mortals, but even so, their height and skin tone make them stand out.

Haven: Most Kiasyd spend years building up their havens, improving security, library facilities, and other amenities. They are fiercely protective of their homes, and they do not allow guests without explicit invitations. When they do invite guests, however, they treat them well, offering vintage vitae, comfortable rooms and, of course, plenty of reading material.

Background: Museum curators, talented students, librarians, rare book experts, and academics of all stripes are likely choices for Kiasyd Embraces. The Weirdlings want their progeny to be studious, polite, and educated, and they don't want to take the time instructing them in the basics of erudite understanding.

Character Creation: Mental Attributes and Knowledges are usually primary, though all Kiasyd have some degree of Etiquette. Occult is, of course, a common Ability. Resources, Generation, and Contacts (with other Kindred) are the only common Backgrounds. Kiasyd have difficulty mingling with mortals long enough to gain others.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Mytherceria, Obtenebration

Weakness: Besides their somewhat freakish appearance, Kiasyd also have an allergy to iron. Touching iron requires an immediate roll to avoid frenzy, and any weapons made from cold iron inflict aggravated damage to Kiasyd.

Organization: The Kiasyd don't enjoy each other's company, which is strange, considering how little they have in common with everyone else. After a short period of instruction (50 years at the most, and this period has grown much shorter in modern nights), a Kiasyd childe is released from her sire's haven and is no longer the elder Kiasyd's responsibility.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *A grand experiment. I don't think it has run its course quite yet, but it has so much ground to make up.*

Sabbat: *What is the color of regret? What is the flavor of a bad debt? Like rust in my mouth.*

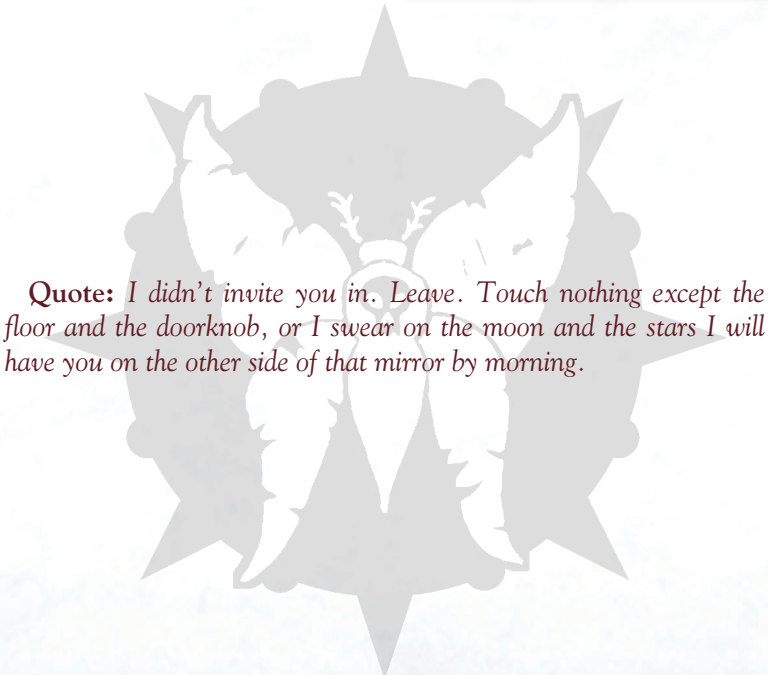
Ravnos: *They have some sense of how reality really works. A shame that they squander it on parlor tricks.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Proof positive that the Sabbat needs to be exterminated* now. *They'll accept anyone, even demon worshippers.*

Sabbat: *Three vampires walk into a bar, and the fourth was a Weirdling, so the bar decapitated him. Get it?*

Ravnos: *Do not turn your back on these guys, spit on the ground where they've walked, and for the love of all that's holy, do not steal their books.*



Quote: *I didn't invite you in. Leave. Touch nothing except the floor and the doorknob, or I swear on the moon and the stars I will have you on the other side of that mirror by morning.*

Nagaraja

A bizarre bloodline of flesh-eating witches, the Nagaraja are legends, feared by Kindred on all sides of the Jyhad. As a result of their hideous appetites, the Nagaraja have been hunted to near extinction in the modern nights by political enemies and the ghosts upon whom they prey. A few of these vampires still prowl the darkness, however, continuing their subtle plans.

Although not particularly forthcoming with their origins, the Nagaraja supposedly hail from the Middle East. They are associated with a death cult in that region that ritually consumed human flesh and opened gateways into the lands of the dead. How these cultists became vampires is lost to history, but those few Kindred that have met the Nagaraja have theories: maybe a wandering Giovanni trader Embraced them, perhaps they tried to follow in Tremere's footsteps, or they could be the last surviving Cappadocians. The Nagaraja refuse to confirm or deny such speculations, however, so the truth and rumor continue to entwine around these mysterious Kindred.



Some of the Flesh-Eaters belong to a Sect of vampires called the Tal'Mahe'Ra or the "True Black Hand," apparently distinct from the Black Hand of the Sabbat. What the Tal'Mahe'Ra is doing in the Deadlands isn't clear, nor why they war with the Restless Dead, but their city in the Underworld is home to a number of the Nagaraja. Those in the land of the living are independent, now seeking to eke out whatever unlife they can.

Nickname: Flesh-Eaters

Sect: The Nagaraja as a whole refuse membership in either the Camarilla or the Sabbat, but in Camarilla cities they follow the rules as well as they can (given their weakness).

Appearance: Nagaraja have pointed, irregular teeth, rather than the usual retractable fangs. This means that they seldom smile, and they tend to speak quietly around mortals — unless they plan to eat them.

Haven: The Nagaraja take havens where they can. One thing that the Flesh-Eaters do try to incorporate into their havens, when they can, is a means for disposing of bodies. They do not have the luxury of merely sipping a bit of blood the way other Kindred do.

Background: Most Nagaraja are well-educated, and many have some medical knowledge (either from their mortal lives or acquired post-Embrace). The bloodline's small numbers make further assertions difficult to support. Some Nagaraja were priests or cultists before the Embrace, some antiquarians, and some exorcists or ghost-hunters.

Character Creation: Nagaraja usually have solitary or selfish concepts and Natures, though their Demeanors may be practically anything. Mental Attributes are usually primary, as are Knowledges. The most common Backgrounds for Nagaraja are Contacts, Resources, and Retainers, though a few twisted Mentors sometimes Embrace childer.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Necromancy

Weakness: The Nagaraja require raw flesh in

addition to blood to survive. For every night a Nagaraja goes without consuming flesh, he loses one cumulative die from all his Physical dice pools. Eating one point worth of flesh restores one die to these pools until the vampire has "caught up." A human body has 10 "flesh points," which work just like blood points: A Nagaraja consuming one flesh point increases his blood pool by one. Unlike blood points, however, taking a "flesh point" from a vessel does one health level of unsoakable lethal damage to that vessel. The flesh the Nagaraja consume must be relatively fresh, though not necessarily "alive." Indeed, some Nagaraja keep stores of ritually preserved corpses in their havens. This weakness does not allow them to eat food or consume other liquids.

Organization: While some claim this bloodline belongs to the Tal'Mahe'Ra in its entirety, there are ample exceptions. A given Nagaraja might keep contact with another, but the bloodline as a whole has no organization.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *An umbrella, until the drops grow heavy enough to break it.*

Sabbat: *Perhaps we can kill enough of them? No. The contagion has taken root.*

Giovanni: *You think you're so powerful and decadent? How quaint.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Ghost problem? Go out to that busted-down house on 65th and follow the smell. You'll find a guy that can help you. Bring along a mortal you don't like.*

Sabbat: *These guys have backup you can't see or touch. Beyond that, no idea.*

Giovanni: *Hey, when did we pick up a bunch of towel-heads?*

Quote: *Your fate is inevitable, but serve me, and I will protect you from it for as long as I can.*

Salubri

The Salubri were once a true Clan. Their Clan founder, Saulot, was said to be a superlative warrior as well as a fair-minded judge. It was also said that he grew progressively more disgusted with Kindred affairs over time, and weary of the constant, bloody cycles of violence and betrayal. He left his home for lands far to the east. When he returned, he was changed. He was tranquil and contemplative, but also somewhat fatalistic. Most surprisingly, though, he had developed a third eye in his forehead. Saulot Embraced new childer, and his Clan slowly split into two distinct lines — the "warrior" and "healer" Salubri. For centuries, they acted as advisors, bodyguards, and sages to other Kindred and, to a lesser extent, mortals.

And then came the diablerie of Saulot.

The mages of the newly created Tremere line found Saulot's torpid body, and drained his blood and soul. They usurped the power of the one of the Clans of Caine, and sent the Salubri into a downward spiral from which they never really recovered. Tonight, rumor has it that only seven members of the once-respected line exist at any given time.

The rumors die hard, however. Modern Kindred know of the Salubri as diablerists who consume their own sires (and do it openly — patricide is hardly unknown among the other Clans, but they don't *admit* to it) and remove the souls of other Kindred. The Soulsuckers are, supposedly, a Clan of defilers and liars from centuries past, possibly involved with demon worship, and demonstrably part of the Sabbat (see Salubri *antitribu*, p. 431). They ask, quite reasonably, how the Salubri are able to achieve Golconda with any regularity. They wonder how any line can sustain itself with so few members. And, finally, they pose this question: even if these first two notions are taken as given, why would the Salubri need to submit to diablerie? Why do their childer *need* to consume their sires' souls, if not for some defect in the bloodline itself?

Nickname: Cyclops, or, less kindly, Soulsuckers

Sect: The Salubri are independent, though they do sometimes masquerade as other Clans and blend in with the Camarilla. The Salubri, however, are just trying to survive long enough to reach Golconda and pass along their blood. Sectarian politics mean nothing to them.

Appearance: Each Salubri has a third eye in the center of their forehead. Otherwise, the Salubri are too few in number for any generalization about their appearances to be possible. Their ranks in modern nights have included children, the elderly, and adults of all races.



Haven: Salubri are unwelcome in most cities, and that means their havens are situated in isolated environments. They also usually have multiple escape routes, and only have what possessions the character can carry in a backpack. Quick departures are not uncommon for the members of this bloodline, so Salubri don't get attached to their havens.

Background: The Salubri Embrace people whom they feel can find Golconda. Healers, teachers, empaths, and other people with high Humanity ratings are good choices, although occasionally Salubri Embrace evil people in hopes of seeing them redeemed (or, at least, setting them on that path).

Character Creation: Social or Mental Attributes are often primary, as are Knowledges. Most Salubri also have decent ratings in Empathy. All Salubri must take five dots of Generation (to represent their diablerie of their sires), and most have at least a dot of Herd as well.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Obeah

Weakness: Salubri have difficulty feeding on unwilling vessels. If a Cyclops attempts it, she loses a point of Willpower.

Organization: The Salubri are not, as a bloodline, organized. In fact, when Salubri do meet, it tends to be on the instruction of their sires — the dying wish of a given Cyclops to her childe might be to seek out another member of the bloodline and deliver a message or pay respects.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *Judge a man by the company he keeps.*

Sabbat: *Fish gotta swim, birds gotta fly, warriors gotta make war.*

Tremere: *The enemy. For them, there can be no forgiveness.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Yeah, yeah. I've heard the same things you have. Consider the source.*

Sabbat: *We've got some open slots, any time you folks wanna man up.*

Giovanni: *Hey, Tremere. I feel your pain.*

Quote: *I say this and mean it truly — no burden I have ever carried is heavier than what this new eye has seen.*

Samedi

If the Nosferatu are repulsive and the Harbingers of Skulls are hideous, a word hasn't yet been invented to describe the Samedi. Resembling nothing so much as walking, rotting corpses, these odd vampires take their name and their origin from the Caribbean and the religion of vodoun (popularly known as voodoo). Baron Samedi, in legend, was a *loa* of death and ancestor worship. The vampires that bear his name and visage (for Samedi is often portrayed as a corpse, albeit not one so disgusting as the Stiffs) also often share his rude, blunt demeanor. In fact, a vampire going by the name of "Baron Samedi" seems to be the founder, or at least the oldest extant member, of the bloodline.



The Samedi might seem to be an offshoot of the Nosferatu, but their powers of Thanatosis — a Discipline dedicated to manipulating dead flesh — speak of a connection to the Giovanni or their doomed predecessors, the Cappadocians. If that is the case, though, the Samedi and the Giovanni went their separate ways long ago, for neither has anything good to say about the other. The reason for this enmity is not something that members of either line discuss in public, but the Giovanni apparently have a history with Baron Samedi himself. The Baron, still active in the bloodline's affairs, refuses to discuss the "deal" that he had with Augustus Giovanni, but it must have been something of gravity for the mutual dislike to persist.

Samedi take the roles of enforcers and assassins in Kindred society. They don't do it on ideological grounds, like the Assamites, and thus they find work with Kindred who want to get what they paid for. The Samedi do not take contracts against Nosferatu or, strangely, Giovanni Kindred without a heavy fee, speaking to some regard or fear of these Clans. As with so many other facts about their line, the Samedi have nothing to say on the matter.

Nickname: Stiffs

Sect: Samedi occasionally join the Camarilla or the Sabbat, but for the most part they consider themselves independent.

Appearance: Saying that a Samedi resembles a rotting corpse is, sadly, in no way a euphemism. Their flesh is soft and tends to leak fluid if poked too hard. Their

ears and noses rot away (but still function normally), and tiny bits of their skin tend to slough off and regrow. Skin retracts from the eyes and teeth, giving them the appearance of grinning skulls, but too much meat clings to the cranium for them to achieve the cleaner horror of the Harbingers of Skulls. Some Samedi are leathery and dry, like unwrapped mummies. These Stiffs still stink, but their stench is more reminiscent of rotted flowers and old decay than fresh putrescence.

Haven: The Samedi make havens in places where a moldering corpse and its stench aren't out of place. Morgues, mortuaries, graveyards, and meat packing plants house the occasional Samedi. Some members of the bloodline choose to dwell below ground like the Nosferatu, but this does lead to conflict between the Stiffs and the Sewer Rats.

Background: The Samedi are a relatively young line. No Samedi older than 250 years is known to exist. Most of the older ones hail from the Caribbean islands or the southern United States. Neonate Samedi don't always share this connection to vodoun, but frequently were close to death (one way or another) before the Embrace.

Character Creation: While Physical Attributes are a priority for those Samedi working as killers and enforcers, many Samedi lean toward Mental Traits. Samedi rarely have the Herd or Resources Backgrounds, and their standoffish and solitary nature means that Mentor and Allies are equally rare.

Clan Disciplines: Fortitude, Obfuscate, Thanatosis

Weakness: The Samedi, as mentioned, are putrid beyond words. Samedi characters have Appearance ratings of 0, and automatically fail Appearance rolls.

Organization: The Samedi are too rare to be organized. They might cross each other's paths occasionally and trade stories, but no plan or schedules exists for these meetings, at least as far as anyone outside the bloodline can tell.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *Careful. These jokers have a built-in reason to set us on fire, and they aren't afraid to use it.*

Sabbat: *They're more honest than the Camarilla, anyway. But I smell like a dead asshole already; I don't need to actually* be *a dead asshole.*

Giovanni: *Just because you're older than me don't mean I give a fuck what you think, dago.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *We're all agreed that our continued survival rests on the mortals not knowing about us, right? How about we get rid of the walking, talking, Masquerade breach?*

Sabbat: *They follow the Baron, I prefer to dance with Erzulie. But it's nice to know that the family still talks.*

Giovanni: *So they can stuff shit into their dead stomachs. That's not Necromancy. That's, like,* biology.

Quote: *Make fun of me one more time and I'll hug you, you prissy bitch.*

True Brujah

The Clan Brujah that most Kindred know in the modern nights is not, according to legend, the true lineage of the Antediluvian known as "Brujah." The strange bloodline known as the True Brujah claim that Brujah's childe, Troile, committed diablerie upon him and stole control of the Clan. Brujah, it is said, was not the hot-blooded warrior/scholar that many vampires associate with the Rabble, but rather a staid, passionless introvert. Why, then, he chose to Embrace a maniac like Troile in the first place is a mystery that will likely never be fully explained.



The True Brujah were never subject to a massive purge as the Salubri or the Cappadocians were, but they don't Embrace often and never recovered from the theft of their Clan status. Their city — the Carthage of Kindred myth, in which vampires openly ruled over mortals — supposedly died out due to the treachery of Troile's childer (though other stories suggest demonic influence). From there, the bloodline faded from history. A few notable members of the bloodline appear throughout history, but by the modern nights only Kindred historians or those who chance to meet them can speak of their existence.

Whatever the truth of their origins, the True Brujah have remained a small but constant presence in Kindred society. Sometimes they wear their true nature openly, while other times they claim membership in other Clans (stating their Clan as "Brujah," for example, and not bothering to correct the misapprehension that ensues). Their primary focus is the pursuit of knowledge, and to that end they have made some strange alliances. The True Brujah occasionally ally with the Followers of Set, and sometimes even provide services as consultants to the Sabbat in exchange for access to secrets and locations normally closed to them.

Nickname: Sages

Sect: The Sages have become more or less independent. They follow the Camarilla's rules when in their cities, and avoid the Sabbat lest they become pressed into service or destroyed. While it isn't impossible for a True Brujah to join the Sword of Caine, most of them can't summon up the necessary fervor.

Appearance: In nights past, the True Brujah were predominantly of Greek or North African descent. As the centuries wore on, though, the Sages Embraced progeny from across Europe and, eventually, the New World. In modern nights, True Brujah tend to dress professionally, the better to fit in with the academic settings they prefer.

Haven: Some True Brujah maintain multiple havens around the world, which they use as they travel pursuing whatever kind of knowledge they find most fascinating. Others stay closer to a given city, generally with a centuries-old university or other center of learning nearby. In either case, their havens tend to be clean, well-maintained, and austere.

Background: It's not entirely accurate to say that the True Brujah only Embrace academics and scholars, but it's fairly rare for them to do otherwise. Sages sometimes Embrace out of curiosity or even spite, but for the most part they choose people whose capacity of learning and accumulated knowledge will benefit their sires.

Character Creation: Mental Attributes and Knowledges are usually primary. True Brujah sires instruct their childer in the basics of Occult and some form of combat (it's just not practical to be unable to fight). Nature and Demeanor are often similar, if not identical, and never anything forceful or passionate. Com-

mon Backgrounds include Resources, Contacts, and Herd.

Clan Disciplines: Potence, Presence, Temporis

Weakness: True Brujah lose much of their emotional capacity when they are Embraced, and their ability for sympathy continues to deteriorate as they grow older. All Conscience and Conviction rolls are made at +2 difficulty (maximum 10), and ratings in Conscience, Conviction, Humanity, and Paths of Enlightenment cost double the normal experience costs.

Organization: While their rarity precludes frequent meetings, the bloodline comes together twice a century to discuss matters that affect them all. The eldest members of the bloodline determine the location and specific time of the meeting. Outside of these larger meetings, many True Brujah stay in contact via letters, whether handwritten or online.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *After a certain point, a system becomes self-sustaining, and even if it no longer has any resemblance to its original purpose, it is too large to dismantle.*

Sabbat: *I strongly suspect that the future of all Kindred can be found in this Sect. I also hope I am wrong.*

Brujah: *A misguided, angry thief is still a thief.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *Yeah, they seem all smart and shit. My sire told me stories. Don't trust 'em, just stake 'em.*

Sabbat: *I spent a very pleasant evening conversation with one of their number some years back. I lament that their temperament doesn't induce them to join us. At least they are tactful.*

Followers of Set: *Our newest friends. We are still, I admit, at a loss for how best to tempt them. They don't seem to* want *anything.*

Quote: *I spared you last night because we hadn't finished our conversation. I might spare you tonight, if I think that tomorrow you might still interest me.*

Ahrimanes

The strange tale of the Ahrimanes begins with a Sabbat Gangrel *antitribu* named Muricia. Caught between two warring factions of Sabbat Gangrel, she watched as her packmates were pulled into the conflict and ultimately killed. She renounced the Sabbat and the Gangrel Clan entirely, now calling herself "an Ahrimane," and called upon shamanic magic to alter herself. How exactly this was accomplished is still a mystery. One theory is that Muricia was an anomaly even before she attempted her magical working, and had access to powers that other vampires didn't. Another (possibly more plausible) theory is that Muricia had help from mortal sorcerers who were hoping the effect would spread throughout the Kindred of the world, sterilizing them and preventing any new vampires from being created.

Regardless of the origin, Muricia found that she was not able to create childer or blood bonds. She did, however, retain the ability to turn other Kindred (at least other Gangrel) into whatever she had become. She kept the animalistic features that she can gained during her previous unlife, however, and it may have been her cat-like eyes that lent her bloodline its nickname.

Muricia extended the offered of "becoming Ahrimane" to any female Gangrel who wished it. She made it quite clear she was not interested in performing the process on male Kindred, though the specific reasons for this remain unclear. A few Gangrel joined her, taking havens in the southern United States and avoid contacting with other Sabbat.

The Ahrimanes were never numerous, and although they remained nominally allied with the Sabbat, Muricia made it quite clear that they were to be left alone. This isolation may have doomed them, however. In the late 1990s, all contact with the Cats ceased. Investigators found, sometime later, that their havens were empty, and no one has heard from them since. Most Sabbat believe that the Ahrimanes were destroyed, but concede that it is possible that Muricia might have led her line on a



spiritual pilgrimage somewhere out of the Kindred's reach.

Nickname: Cats

Sect: The Ahrimanes were an independent Sect, or more accurately, a group of independent individuals. They identified more with the Sabbat than the Camarilla, if only because they did not wish to answer to any elder (expect perhaps Muricia).

Appearance: All Ahrimanes were female, and most were either of African American or Native American descent (Muricia, apparently, was not partial to Caucasian vampires). Most Ahrimanes never went anywhere unarmed, and dressed to fight. Many Ahrimanes had animal features left over from their time as Gangrel.

Haven: Muricia was a vampire of some means, and she purchased houses on the outskirts of several cities in the American South (in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Georgia especially). New Ahrimanes could make their own arrangements or stay in one of these homes.

Background: All Ahrimanes were Gangrel before their magical transformation. As such, their Backgrounds varied just as much as the Beasts'. The sort of Gangrel who became an Ahrimane was female, usually non-white, and frustrated by the situation in her Sect or city.

Character Creation: All Ahrimanes had at least three dots in Mentor, to represent Muricia's guidance. Combat Abilities and Physical Attributes were common, but this was as much from the Ahrimanes' Gangrel background as anything else. Likewise, a dot or two of Protean or Fortitude was common, since Ahrimanes began unlife as Gangrel.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Presence, Spiritus

Weakness: An Ahrimanes' blood was inert. They were unable to create childer or blood bonds, and a person consuming Ahrimane blood did not become a ghoul.

Organization: Since all Ahrimanes effectively had the same "sire," they were all beholden to Muricia. She did not attempt to control or rule her creations, but did keep tabs on them and help them develop their powers of Spiritus. The bloodline was fairly tight-knit, as vampire "families" go, and threatening one Ahrimane generally meant battling several.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *I would suffocate under their rule.*

Sabbat: *Let them think they run us. They fear us, and they are not wrong to do so.*

Gangrel: *The only vampires that understand true freedom.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *I do wonder, sometimes, if I was wrong in rejecting her offer. Would I see the things she claims to have seen? Would others think I was as crazy as I thought her?*

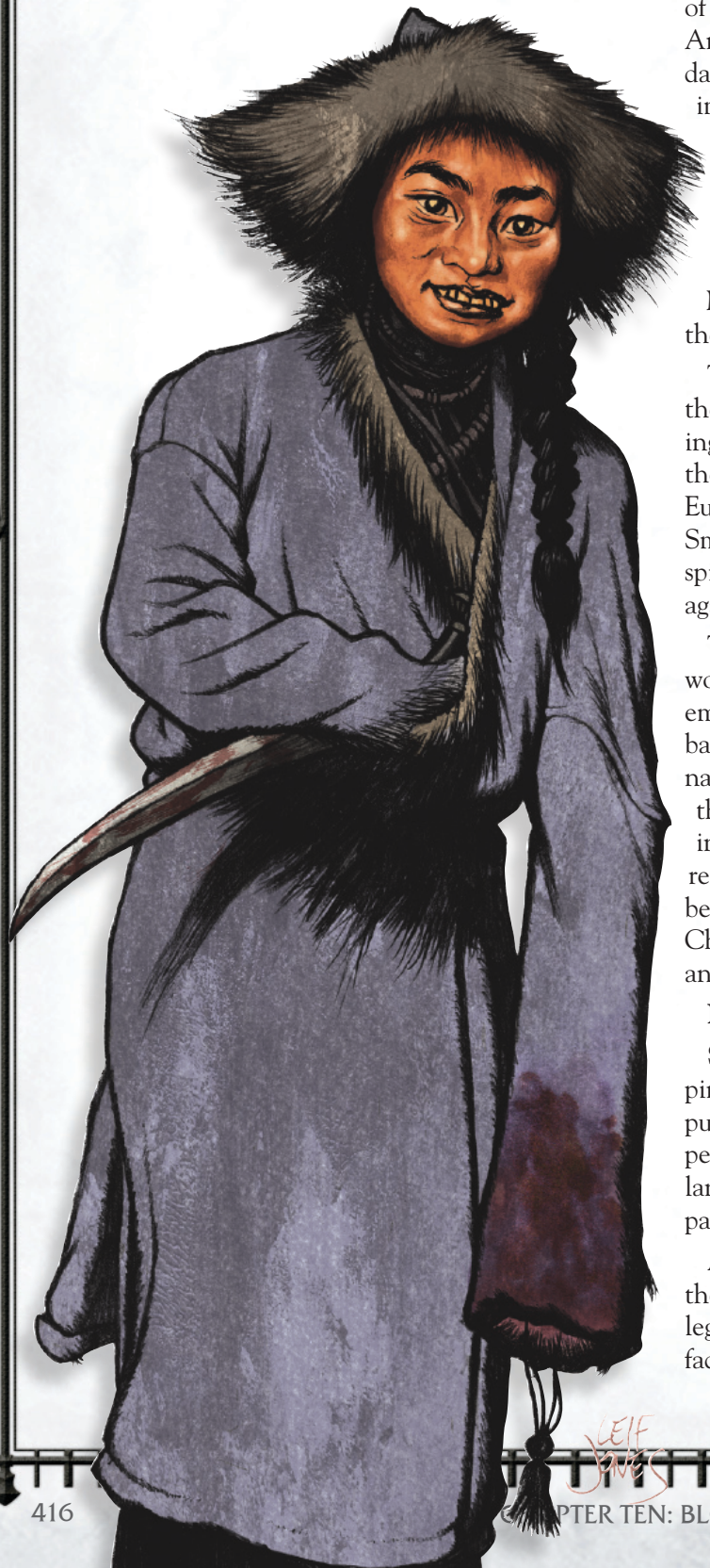
Sabbat: *You know you can't train a fucking cat.*

Assamites: *Changing the blood is possible. I don't like the change they made, but still, their ambition is admirable.*

Quote: *We are an evolution of your disease, an awakening from the nightmare of Caine. Come, sister. Awaken.*

Anda

The Anda were a Gangrel offshoot, created by a Methuselah called Dobrul the Brave. Dobrul, a wanderer with great respect for the Mongol hordes, Embraced several of their warriors. These vampires became the spirit warriors of the steppe, following the nomadic Mongol tribes and protecting them from outward threats.



The Anda had intricate rites governing the Embrace of new Kindred. Once a candidate was selected, any Anda in the area met for a discussion on that candidate's qualities. The prospective Tartar had to be an impressive warrior, but tempered enough in nature to understand that only by protecting his tribe from outward supernatural threats could he keep it healthy enough to feed from. Once the decision was made, the prospective sire would wash the candidate in a river, a ritual funerary bathing in the Mongol tradition. He would then drain and Embrace the new vampire.

This kind of ritual and observance governed much of the Anda's existence. Long and lonely nights wandering the steppe, either with the Mongols or alone (and they did wander alone, sometimes even into Western Europe), the Anda's Beast was the only company. Small wonder that these Kindred viewed themselves as spiritual warriors, their brutal ethos the only bulwark against madness and depredation.

The Anda made war against a variety of foes. They would join their nomad tribes against whatever enemies they chose (as far as they could, since not all battles were fought at night). They also clashed with native Chinese shapeshifters and vampires, and it was this latter group that proved the undoing of the Anda in the 14th century. The bloodline's heyday was the reign of Kublai Khan, and during this time they could be found openly celebrating their undead nature in China. When Kublai died, the Anda fell into decline, and in the modern nights none are known to exist.

Nickname: Tartars

Sect: Wandering Anda might join a particular vampire's court, at least for a time, but their irresistible push to keep moving prevented them from becoming permanent fixtures anywhere in Europe. In their own lands, they watched over Mongol tribes called *yasun*, parasitically protecting and feeding from the mortals.

Appearance: The Anda Embraced exclusively from the Mongol tribes, so they were short, stocky, and bow-legged from a lifetime of riding. The skin of an Anda faded to an odd brown-yellow following the Embrace.

Haven: The Anda dwelled on the steppe, far enough away from their *yasun* to avoid discovery, but close enough to catch up with them when night fell. The truly monstrous or depraved among them did not protect a tribe, but led a solitary unlife, feeding as opportunity permitted. These poor souls typically fell to torpor from hunger, and if any Anda still exist, it is likely one of these horrors, sleeping buried in somewhere in China.

Background: The Anda did not Embrace capriciously. They chose their candidates carefully, since this choice made a statement about who would protect their people. All Anda were skilled horsemen, trackers, warriors, and, to some degree, shamans.

Character Creation: Unlife on the steppe was harsh. Physical Attributes were generally primary, with Talents and Skills sharing priority (especially martial ones — all Anda had some facility in Melee, Brawl, and Survival). All of the Anda's Disciplines were important, but neonate Anda generally found that learning Earth Meld was a matter of survival.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Weakness: Like the Gangrel from which they were descended, Anda gained animal features from frenzying. Unlike the Gangrel, though, Anda gained such a feature once every *other* frenzy. However, the Anda suffered a further weakness — for each day after the third that an Anda slept within the same one-mile area, all dice pools were halved (to a minimum pool of one).

Organization: On the night of the new moon, all Anda within a given radius met to discuss the movements of their *yasun* and what kinds of threats might require their collective attention. The eldest Anda in such a gathering was called the *khan*, and all others were expected to submit to his authority.

Stereotypes

High Clans: *Strange tribes. Strange khans.*

Low Clans: *Some truly do seem low — diseased, mad, weak. And others I would glad call brother.*

The View From Without

High Clans: *Savages that ride with the Tartars. The low-born know their own.*

Low Clans: *They wander the world, drinking only blood, sleeping in the dirt. They are closer to Caine than I, then, and I thank them for it.*

Quote: *I am not a monster. I am a shepherd. I protect the sheep from wolves like you, because* I *wish to eat them.*

Cappadocians

The story of Clan Cappadocian is tragic, but illustrative of the parasitic cycle of Kindred existence. Nothing lasts forever in vampiric circles, but nothing ever truly dies.

The Cappadocians were a Clan that focused on death and undeath. Their founder, an ancient known simply as "Cappadocius" ("of Cappadocia"), did not attempt to rule his Clan. He asked only that they continue the search for truth and the secrets of life and death. The Clan's ancestral roots were rumored to be somewhere in Asia Minor, but by the end of the Dark Ages they had spread throughout Europe. Known as scholars, mystics, and necromancers, the Cappadocians were as firmly entrenched in the Cainite society of their time as any of the Clans of the Camarilla are tonight.

The Graverobbers expanded their knowledge base by Embracing members of important families or promising scholars. By the 13th century they had inroads across Europe, in monasteries, universities, and in the courts of royalty, but also members and ghouls among the working classes. Everyone must eventually die, the Cappadocians realized, and every death was potentially a lesson.

Their inclusive attitude may have spelled the Clan's doom. They accepted a Venetian merchant family called the Giovanni (the family's propensity for summoning up and controlling ghosts had as much to do with their Embrace as their skill with finance). Over the following centuries, the Giovanni worked their way into the hierarchy of the Clan, until Augustus Giovanni committed diablerie upon Cappadocius. Over the next few centuries, the Giovanni systematically destroyed the remaining Cappadocians. In modern nights, only small remnants survive, such as the Harbingers of Skulls. The lineage of these remnants is largely unknown.

Nickname: Graverobbers

Sect: The Cappadocians did not survive long enough to take a side in the Camarilla/Sabbat divide.

Appearance: The Graverobbers were pale and corpse-like, even for vampires. Their hair often darkened slightly after the Embrace, giving them even more of an ethereal appearance. The Cappadocians dressed appropriately for their station and role.

Haven: Cappadocians preferred a measure of solitude when choosing their havens. Although they had to stay close enough to mortals to feed, they often chose quiet



locales to make their homes — monasteries, crypts, and even sewers or cisterns. The Cappadocians acting as scholars or advisors enjoyed a better standard of unlife, but even they often chose places that mortals had no interest in exploring.

Background: As a general rule, the Cappadocians were not concerned with ethnicity or nationality when Embracing, meaning that it wasn't uncommon to find Moors, Jews, or even pagans brought into the Clan. The Graverobbers were more inclined to Embrace people with an interest in death. That didn't necessarily mean *causing* death (though certainly they Embraced their share of soldiers and hunters), but scholars of the afterlife and religion, gravediggers, priests, and hermits all found their way to Clan Cappadocian.

Character Creation: Mental Attributes and Knowledges were often primary, and rare was the Cappadocian without at least a few dots of Occult. The Clan included warriors as well as scholars and priests, and a Cappadocian who chose to be a tyrant could be a frightening creature indeed. For the most part, though, the Clan tended more toward intellectual and spiritual pursuits, and choices of Abilities and Backgrounds reflected that.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Necromancy

Weakness: As mentioned, the Cappadocians exhibited a deathly pallor, and this only worsened as the vampire grew older. Young Cappadocians were able to pass for human (though mortals that knew what to look for could pick them out easily), but elder Cappadocians showed shriveled skin and a much more withered countenance.

Organization: Clan Cappadocian was, in its heyday, an important Clan historically. It claimed domain in several important cities across Europe, and it wasn't uncommon for Graverobbers to act as spiritual or mystical advisors to other medieval Princes. Internally, the Clan had little strict hierarchy, though as the years wore on the Clan's core became more localized around the founder (which, in turn, allowed the Giovanni to take it over).

Stereotypes

High Clans: *We have seen the death of kings, and it is much like the death of peasants. But the final resting places are grand, and maybe that makes the difference.*

Low Clans: *When towers have fallen and kings are thrown down, who will remember us? It will be the low-blooded, and I hope they are kind in their eulogies.*

The View From Without

High Clans: *Noble and wise Cainites, though perhaps a bit too curious. Not every door need be opened.*

Low Clans: *Pretenders. Do you want to know what death can really do? Come to my domain and listen to the death-rattles.*

Quote: *Everyone must ride with Charon, by and by. We merely wish to know what to ask him before we step onto his boat.*

Children of Osiris

Egyptian mythology abounds with tales of the rivalry between Set and his brother, Osiris. Knowledgeable vampires are aware that the Followers of Set claim descent from an Antediluvian who took his name from that Egyptian serpent-god (though the Setites certainly seem to think Set actually *was* the god). If that's the case, such Kindred wonder, who was Osiris? A mortal spellcaster that was Embraced? Set's childe? Or perhaps another Antediluvian, lost to time and destroyed millennia ago?



Whatever the truth about Set, there was once a powerful vampire called Osiris. He was a philosopher and a scholar in an Egyptian court (whose dynasty is unknown), Embraced by an unknown vampire who believed that his knowledge of the law would make him a useful ally in the battle to bring Egypt under Kindred influence. Osiris, however, was horrified by his new condition. Rather than meet the sun, though, he became determined to face and banish his personal demons, and especially his own Beast. His studies on sublimating the vampiric impulses may have helped form the basis for the search for Golconda. At the very least, they expanded it.

The Children of Osiris might have become a Clan and continued into the modern nights, but Set slew Osiris. As mortal legendry has it, Set dismembered his "brother" and scattered his body throughout the land of Egypt. His sister, Isis (perhaps another vampire, but no one still extant seems to know for sure) found the pieces and reassembled them, and impossibly, Osiris was resurrected. Death, however, had taken its toll. His blood was inert, and he could no longer create more childer. This, however, did not stop him from spreading his path.

Nickname: Since even the Kindred who know about the Children of Osiris assume them all to be dead, they do not have a common nickname.

Sect: Strictly speaking, the Children of Osiris are a Sect, rather than a bloodline. They do not (and, by virtue of their own laws, cannot) join the Sabbat or the Camarilla.

Appearance: Since the Children can hail from any Clan or bloodline, their appearance can vary widely. They all shave their heads every evening upon awakening, and when in their temples they wear white robes adorned with mystical symbols and hieroglyphs. When leaving their temples on business, they dress simply and stay inconspicuous.

Haven: The few remaining Children of Osiris in the world dwell in one of several temples. These temples are well-hidden and kept secret from other Kindred,

meaning that they tend to be in areas that don't boast much of a vampire population.

Background: Children of Osiris renounce their Clans because they hate their condition, but do not wish to commit suicide. The search for Golconda leads some Kindred to the Children, while others encounter the Sect after running afoul of the Followers of Set.

Character Creation: Children of Osiris can be from any Clan (except the Followers of Set; while the Children might be willing to accept a truly repentant Setite, the situation has never come up). The character can have any combination of Attributes and Abilities, and they retain whatever knowledge of Disciplines they had before joining. Nature and Demeanor tend to be the same — the Children of Osiris are straightforward and honest.

Clan Disciplines: As appropriate for the character's original Clan. Children of Osiris can also learn Bardo as an in-Clan Discipline.

Weakness: As appropriate for the character's original Clan.

Organization: Each temple is under the supervision of an elder Child of Osiris (called the Undying King), and the entire Sect answers to a mysterious vampire called the Grand Undying King, rumored to be a direct childe of Osiris from before he lost the ability to Embrace. The Sect focuses on maintaining their Humanity, which is of course a difficult enough concern, but also thwarting the machinations of the Followers of Set without the Serpents knowing they still exist.

Stereotypes

Camarilla: *The best option for most Kindred, and still not nearly good enough.*

Sabbat: *If they are less evil than the Serpents, it is only because the Sword of Caine occasionally kills them.*

Followers of Set: *Osiris came back from death to avenge himself on Set. And so shall we.*

The View From Without

Camarilla: *My research indicates that Osiris and Set may have actually existed as Kindred at one time. Strange, then, that Set's "descendants" are hale and healthy and selling drugs on the corner, while Osiris' seem to have vanished entirely.*

Sabbat: *Nah, man. Luis went soft. We hit that gang of Setites last month, we got separated, and then he's talking about "I won't kill anymore" or some bullshit. Bishop probably torched him. Forget it.*

Followers of Set: *Feels good to win, even if the loser hasn't really been a real concern in a thousand years.*

Quote: *I could meet the sun, but I fear my heart would not balance the feather of Ma'at. Until I am sure, I will remain.*

Lamia

The Lamia were a bloodline of Cainites devoted to defending Clan Cappadocian. The founder of the bloodline, Lamia, claimed to be a daughter of Lilith, Adam's first wife. According to legend, a Cappadocian elder named Lazarus found her performing sacred rites to Lilith, the Dark Mother. Impressed by her skill and perhaps taken with her fierce beauty, he Embraced her. While she died and the Change took her, Lilith gave her a vision, a deep understanding of her future and that of the Cappadocians. When she recovered, she whispered something to Lazarus, and the Cappadocian elder fled in terror.



Lamia did find her way back to the Clan, though, and her bloodline became the guardians of the Cappadocians. They were never very numerous, but important Graverobbers often had at least one Gorgon standing at their side. The Lamia learned to feed sparingly, since their bite carried disease, and developed their own path of Necromancy based on the four humors. Over the centuries, they became an important resource for the Cappadocians. And yet, behind their loyalty was perhaps a greater dedication to the Dark Mother and to the vision of their founder.

The Revelation of the Dark Mother seems to have led the line to tragedy, however. The Lamia died defending the Cappadocians when the Giovanni subsumed the Clan. Augustus Giovanni murdered Lamia herself following his diablerie of Cappadocius, and the last known member of the bloodline was destroyed in 1718 as part of a Camarilla blood hunt.

Nickname: Gorgons

Sect: The Lamia were somewhere between the High and Low Clans. They were not a Clan, but were considered part of Clan Cappadocian in most Cainites' understanding. Other Cainites, however, treated them respectfully as servants or soldiers, both out of deference to their skills and to their patrons.

Appearance: The Lamia did not share the Cappadocians' pallor. Many of them were of Mediterranean or Semitic descent, though as the Cappadocians traveled across Europe with their Gorgon bodyguards, other nationalities came into the bloodline as well. The bloodline was predominantly female, but it wasn't uncommon for Lamia to dress as men (usually armed and armored).

Haven: The Lamia shared havens with their Cappadocian patrons. When they made their own, they often chose crypts and sarcophagi, preferring to be

alone among the dead (feeding on the recently dead also minimized their chance of starting an outbreak of plague).

Background: Since the Lamia Embraced women almost exclusively, they seldom had the chance to Embrace trained warriors. Instead, the Gorgons often chose women who had some experience with death. Women who had attempted or contemplated suicide, or had recently committed murder, were common choices. Likewise, women with a pronounced interest in black magic or scholarly pursuits in general were candidates for the Lamia Embrace. Training in combat could come after the gift of immortality.

Character Creation: All Lamia had some combat training, usually from their sires. Physical or Mental Attributes might be primary, as were Skills. The Lamia also tended to have some familiarity with Occult, both from the rites taught to them by their own bloodline and simply by proximity to the Cappadocians.

Clan Disciplines: Fortitude, Necromancy, Potence

Weakness: The Lamia carried the "Seed of Lilith," a wasting disease spread by their bite. Anyone the Lamia fed upon was required to make a Stamina roll (difficulty 6 for women, 8 for men). If the roll failed, the victim contracted a Black Plague-like pox that was fatal within several days. Any vampire that consumed Lamia blood became a carrier of the disease until all of the Lamia vitae had been purged from his body.

Organization: The sire-childe relationship in the Lamia was very strong, as most Lamia had to remain with their sires for at least a year to achieve the necessary combat skill to be of use. Lamia remained the leader of the bloodline until her destruction, but her first and most important order to her daughter was to serve the Cappadocians.

Stereotypes

High Clans: *Our masters' fellows cannot be trusted. Bow, but with one hand on your blade.*

Low Clans: *Their humors are purer. Sometimes far* too *pure.*

The View From Without

High Clans: *The Graverobbers have their own class of bodyguards. Hmm. It's sad that they need them.*

Low Clans: *Something is horribly wrong with these plague-bringers.*



Quote: *Approach the Prince when I bid you, or lose your hands.*

Lhiannan

The Lhiannan boasted a strange creation story. They claimed that their founder — a vampire simply known as the Crone — became bonded with a spirit of the forests. This spirit was a desperate, jealous being that could apparently see that people would destroy the forests and burn the trees that comprised them. Joining with an undying predator, then, was apparently the spirit's attempt at dodging this fate. Whether or not any of that is true, the Lhiannan did have a connection to the natural world that no other vampire, not even the Gangrel, can equal.

Whenever a Lhiannan Embraced, a shard of that original spirit broke off and empowered the new Cainite. This spirit-shard allowed Lhiannan to use their Ogham Discipline, which, in turn, enabled the style of unlife that the Lhiannan enjoyed. It also made the Lhiannan territorial above all else, and the Druids were quite limited in their mobility. The Lhiannan, much like the Telyavelic Tremere (see p. 438) found common cause with the pagan peoples of Europe. This, unfortunately, put them into conflict with Cainites and mortals who followed the Christian faith.

The bloodline was never numerous (especially since creating a new Lhiannan meant that the sire grew weaker), but the fires of the Inquisition and the spread of the Christian religion took a harsh toll on the Druids. By the end of the 14th century, they had all been destroyed. In modern times, though, Gangrel trade rumors of powerful Kindred in European forests decorated with strange, bloody symbols, so perhaps some of them survived — or perhaps the forest spirit that initially created the bloodline has resurfaced.

Nickname: Druids

Sect: The Lhiannan did not survive to see the dawning of the Sabbat or the Camarilla. In historical nomenclature, they were decidedly on the Low Clan side of the social divide, and most Cainites probably wouldn't have known them from the Gangrel. Lhiannan rarely joined coteries, limited as they were in mobility.

Appearance: The Druids resembled the native people of the regions of Europe that they called home — the British Isles, for the most part.

Haven: The Lhiannan made their havens in the forests of Europe, constructing simple dwellings or finding natural shelter. They would sometimes find a man-made haven and kill or enslave the inhabitants, or very rarely eke out an existence on the periphery of human civilization by taking the role of a shaman or wise woman.



Background: Since performing the Embrace meant growing weaker, the Druids only created childer out of sheer loneliness or when they found someone who truly impressed them. A pagan spirit-speaker with real devotion to her craft, or a woodsman with impeccable respect for the forests might be enough to get a Lhiannan's attention. The Lhiannan refused to Embrace Christians, Jews, or Muslims.

Character Creation: All Lhiannan were capable of surviving in the wilderness, and so Physical Attributes, Skills, and Talents were important. A Lhiannan acting as a counsel to a mortal settlement was likely to have higher Social Attributes and appropriate Abilities. Herd and Retainers (animals) were common Backgrounds.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Ogham, Presence

Weakness: The Lhiannan were part nature spirit, and the mark of their inhumanity ran strong within them. All difficulties to detect their nature via Auspex were reduced by two, and even normal humans felt vaguely uncomfortable in their presence. Additionally, any Lhiannan who left her territory became agitated — all dice pools were reduced by one die per week (to a minimum of the character's Stamina) that she was gone. Once she re-entered her territory, her dice pools returned to normal within a few hours.

Organization: Once a Lhiannan Embraced a childe, she generally kept the new vampire around for a few years until that childe was ready to fend for himself (and the novelty of having someone else around wore off). The sire would then send the childe away to find his own haven and territory. The Lhiannan were generally aware of members of their bloodline whose territories were adjacent, but there was no system of communication in place. This, of course, may have contributed to their eventual destruction.

Stereotypes

High Clans: *No one who wears such heavy, false robes or who shies away from blood is a leader to me.*

Low Clans: *By accepting the title of "low," they show it to be accurate.*

The View From Without

High Clans: *Watch, my childe. This is history happening before your eyes.*

Low Clans: *Hunt as you please, but spare the mad, the women heavy with child, and anyone who lives near the eastern forests. And stay far from those woods, especially as you wear the cross.*

Quote: *When the trees are pulling you apart, you may feel free to call out for your god. If he saves you, I shall give up my glade.*

Noiad

Few Kindred have ever beheld the Northern Lights. The trek to the far reaches of the world, in a place inhospitable to man, beast, or vampire, with no reliable way to feed is enough to put even the most curious Cainite off the idea. And yet, a bloodline of vampires managed to dwell close enough to see these lights on a regular basis. This line — the Noiad — felt it was their sacred duty to witness the Northern Lights and interpret the will of the gods. Their mortal charges, a nomadic tribe called the Samí, lived in fear and awe of their godlike protectors. The Noiad defended the Samí from outside threats, both natural and supernatural, and acted as shamans and teachers for these wanderers. In return, the Samí gave of their blood and kept the Noiad safe during the long months with no darkness.

Of course, the touch of the Kindred corrupts everything. The Noiad protected the Samí from monsters from the wastes, and their blood allowed the mortals to survive times of famine, but the Wanderers also refused to allow their mortal herds to change or improve. Interlopers were turned aside or killed, regardless of their intentions. When it became clear that the march of Christianity (and Lasombra working within the Church) could not be stopped, the Noiad pushed the Samí further north, away from the herds that would sustain them and away from the dawning of a new era. Whether the Noiad saw something in the Northern Lights that spurred them to this decision, or whether it was simply fear of change, is not important in the end. The Noiad drove the Samí almost to destruction.

Nickname: Wanderers

Sect: The Noiad never belonged to a Sect, and were largely apart from the vampire politics of the day (at least until war pushed far enough north to inconvenience them). As a Gangrel offshoot, other Cainites would have considered them a Low Clan, on the rare occasion that other Cainites learned enough about them to have opinions at all.

Appearance: The Noiad dwelled openly among the Samí, and Embraced exclusively from this population. Most Noaid were dark-haired and strongly built from their demanding lifestyles pre-Embrace. Their skin tone, of course, tended to be lighter than their still-living comrades.

Haven: The Samí constructed mobile "havens" that could be dragged behind them as they traveled by day. If terrain or numbers made this impossible, the Samí would watch in awe as their heavenly protectors sank into the earth, only to rejoin them the next night.

Background: The Samí selected for Embrace tended to be those with talent for divination, as well as dream and star interpretation. The Noiad also watched children descended from families that included at least one



vampire, looking for the traits they favored. Physicality was not a primary concern, but only because Samí that were not physically capable of thriving in the harsh climates didn't live long enough to be considered for the Embrace anyway.

Character Creation: Physical Attributes weren't necessarily primary, but tended to be no worse than average. All Noiad had good ratings in Survival and Animal Ken, and at least a dot or two in Athletics, and Melee. Finally, all Noiad had at least a dot of the Herd Background.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Protean

Weakness: The Noiad were so intrinsically tied to the Samí and to their role as the divine protectors of the tribe that one of the legends about them came true. The Samí's protectors, it was said, could not sup from animals, but could only take sustenance from the blood of the chosen (that is, the Samí). The Noiad, in fact, could not drink from animals, though they were capable of drinking from any mortal or Cainite, regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

Organization: The Noiad usually saw one another when they came to witness the Northern Lights (this also gave them the opportunity to make sure the gods were all telling them the same things). The Noiad also used animals, either ghouls or those controlled by the Animalism Discipline, to keep in some kind of contact.

Stereotypes

High Clans: *They can pretend to know of their god's mind all they want. They wrote the book, and they want to claim their god did it. I know this trick.*

Low Clans: *Too many have already been fooled. The ones that haven't know to leave us alone.*

The View From Without

High Clans: *They know more of the truth than they realize. I have no doubt that God speaks to them in the lights at the end of the world. I just doubt they truly hear Him.*

Low Clans: *The wolf that hides in the flock must remember that it is not, itself, a sheep.*

Quote: *We are the children of Midnight Sun. We have a family. We have what you never could. And you want to tear it all down, don't you?*

Variations of the Blood

The rest of this chapter deals with minor bloodlines and other variations on the Clans. For the most part, these are offshoots of the main Clans that differ only in outlook or culture. In other cases, some game mechanics (generally weakness or Clan Disciplines) change. These subtle differences might not be visible to outside observers, but they are part of what makes Kindred society so diverse, and so confusing.

The first group are the *antitribu* of the Sabbat, followed by other bloodlines in the modern nights, as well as some who have come and gone.

Canonical Changes

Two Clans were heavily impacted in some of the edition changes during **Vampire**'s history.

Assamite Developments

In the **Vampire** continuity, the Assamites managed to break the Tremere ritual that forced them to abstain from Kindred vitae. If the Storyteller chooses to exercise this option, the Assamites revert to their ancient weakness, which is an addiction to Kindred blood. In this case, when an Assamite so much as tastes Kindred vitae, the player must make a Self-Control or Instinct roll (difficulty equal to the number of blood points ingested +3). If this roll fails, the addiction rises to the fore, and she must make another Self-Control or Instinct roll the next time she comes in contact with Kindred vitae. If this roll fails, the Assamite frenzies, doing whatever she can to partake of more vampiric blood.

In the same continuity, a faction of Assamites has recently made a formal effort to bring the Clan under the auspices of the Camarilla, for both protection and opportunity (and to replace the Gangrel Clan, who has just left the Sect).

Ravnos Developments

At the Storyteller's option, she may choose to set the chronicle after an event known as the Week of Nightmares. If this is the case, the Ravnos are broken, having lost their Antediluvian in a false start to the End Times, when some of the most powerful supernatural entities in the world collaborated, in fragile detente, to bring down the threat of the ancient blood-god.

This option has no mechanical effect on Ravnos vampires. In the setting however, the Ravnos briefly went mad in the wake of their progenitor's destruction, and underwent a period of cannibalism and frenzy that left their numbers a paltry fraction of their previous status as they tore each other apart.

Other Developments

There are a number of other developments of note, such as the Gangrel leaving the Camarilla and the Malkavians of the Camarilla having Dominate instead of Dementation as an in-Clan Discipline. Whichever of these elements you decide to use are up to you as Storyteller.

Sabbat Antitribu

Assamite Antitribu

When the Tremere of the Camarilla subjected Clan Assamite to their curse, rendering Kindred blood a deadly poison to the Clan of Assassins, not every member of that Clan succumbed. Some broke away from the main body of the Clan, willing to face whatever doom awaited rather than submit to the infidel's magic. The result was the Assamite *antitribu*.

These vampires are Cainites in a more direct sense than many Sabbat. They regard Haqim as an abomination, just one of the hated Antediluvians. Instead, they revere Caine, and work to become closer to the Third Mortal. Their method, of course, is to lower their Generation through diablerie.

Beyond that, though, no much differentiates the Angels of Caine from the "mainstream" Assamites. Both

are masters of hunting and killing, and both observe strict codes of honor and fierce zeal where their ongoing crusade is concerned. Both grow darker of skin as they grown older and more powerful. And both forms of Assamite believe that in the Final Nights, the truly reverent and devout shall be rewarded, while the weak perish at their fangs.

Nickname: Angels of Caine

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Quietus

Weakness: Assamite *antitribu* have the post-curse weakness mentioned in the sidebar on the previous page. In fact, their weakness never changed, while the rest of the Clan shackled with the blood curse of the Tremere. Whenever an Assamite *antitribu* drinks vampire blood, the player must roll Self-Control or Instinct (difficulty 3 + the number of blood points consumed). If this roll fails, the character is addicted.

Once addicted, the character will indulge in drinking Kindred blood whenever possible. When she is given the opportunity to do so, the player must roll Self-Control or Instinct (difficulty 6). If this roll fails, the character frenzies, attacks the target and drinks as much blood as she can.

Quote: *What gives me the right to take your blood? Oh, I don't have a "right." I have a duty.*

Brujah Antitribu

The Brujah *antitribu* are, perhaps, the historical founders of the Sabbat. It was the young members of Clan Brujah, after all, who broke with their elders during the Anarch Revolt, and it was these same volatile Kindred that fought against the agents of those elders when other vampires might have considered compromise.

Brujah *antitribu* are just as unstable and angry as their Camarilla counterparts, but unlike the Rabble, they don't have to pretend to be in control. When a Brujah *antitribu* wants something — blood, money, property, or a new childe — he takes it. This attitude has led to the bloodline being one of the most numerous in the Sabbat, and one that supports the Sect with fervor. They turn their infamously violent passion toward every cause that the Sabbat puts forth. While they traditionally don't assume leadership roles, when they do undertake their own missions, they execute them with brutal and ostentatious abandon.

The Brutes take pains to make others uncomfortable. Whether that's by their manner of dress, their barely concealed appetite for blood, or simply that they seldom retract their fangs even around mortals, the bloodline does what it can to stand out. That might mean a breach of the Masquerade, of course, but the Brujah *antitribu* reason that they are the Damned — so why shouldn't they raise a little hell?

Nickname: Brutes

Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Presence

Weakness: The bloodline has the same weakness as the main body of the Clan (p. 51): All frenzy difficulties are increased by two, to a maximum of 10. Unlike Camarilla Brujah, though, the Brutes aren't in the least bit sensitive about their tempers. Indeed, they revel in their rage.

Quote: *Heads, we kill everybody here. Tails, we only kill the ones that stay after I tear that faggot's ears off.*

City Gangrel

The Sabbat boasts two Gangrel lines, the City and the Country Gangrel. The City Gangrel remind some Kindred of coyotes — they are creatures well-suited for wilderness life, but they adapt to an urban existence quite smoothly. The high preponderance of prey in the cities, coupled with the Gangrel's inherent mutability of blood, has allowed the line to flourish. Their association with the Sabbat means that they Embrace prolifically, but also that their unlife expectancy is short.

Unlike Country Gangrel, who can afford to let their animalistic ways take over and their appearances grow truly bestial, the City Gangrel must either adopt a more Nosferatu-like approach to unlife or blend in with their prey. To outward appearance, then, these latter Kindred seem human, dress as appropriate to their area and the social class that they mimic. But City Gangrel are largely Sabbat vampires, and that means they are predators. Any disguise they adopt is strictly that, camouflage to allow them to get close enough to bite.

Nickname: Coyotes

Disciplines: Celerity, Obfuscate, Protean

Weakness: City Gangrel suffer the same weakness as the main line of the Clan (p. 55). Whenever a City Gangrel frenzies, he gains a temporary animalistic feature of some kind (which may replace an existing temporary one). The mechanical impact of such a feature is up to Storyteller discretion. City Gangrel tend to develop features reminiscent of the animals commonly found in urban environments — rats, dogs, cats, pigeons, and even insects.

Quote: *The new community center is finally open. Call up the pack.*

Country Gangrel

The Country Gangrel resemble the independent and Camarilla Gangrel — they are savage, vicious hunters, more comfortable in the wilds between cities than the concrete jungles. The Sabbat has seen a influx of Gangrel converts from the Camarilla, and these Hunters easily lost themselves in stalking and killing.

The Country Gangrel serve the Sabbat as assassins and scouts, using their command of animals to gather intelligence on the comings and goings of other Kindred. Travel between cities was never exactly safe, as Lupines seem to prowl any patch of land large enough to grow a few trees (or so Camarilla elders have always told their childer), but with the Hunters prowling about, looking for wayward neonates, itinerant Kindred face even more dire threats.

This might sound like Camarilla propaganda, but the Country Gangrel do all they can to make it true. Free from the constraints of having to look human, these creatures relish the chance to hunt as wolves hunt — savagely and in packs. If they have a regret, it's that their prey can't usually run fast enough to make the hunt last.

Nickname: Hunters

Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Weakness: The Hunters have the same weakness as their non-Sabbat counterparts (p. 55). Each time a Country Gangrel frenzies, he gains a temporary animalistic feature, which may replace an existing temporary one. The mechanical impact of such a feature is up to Storyteller discretion.

Quote: *Lost? Bad place for lost. Wanna run now?*

Malkavian Antitribu

The Malkavians are insane. It is their defining feature, and while not every Lunatic is dangerous, they are all unstable and unpredictable. And so the Malkavians of the Sabbat, the vampires of the Camarilla suspect, must be even crazier. They are quite correct.

Malkavian *antitribu* are just as varied in dementia as their Camarilla brethren, but their madness carries with it a desperate, cloying edge. They are not satisfied with setting others on edge or forcing the "sane" vampires to challenge their own philosophies. They want — inasmuch as they can be said to collectively want anything — for the world to share their madness. Maybe they feel that their madness is overflowing, forcing its way from their minds into the minds of others through their Dementation Discipline. Whatever the case, the Clan at large — even outside the Sabbat — seems to have heard the message.

Within the Sabbat, the Freaks take on roles appropriate to their madness. The truly vicious and uncontrollable ones are locked away in crypts and unleashed when the Sabbat needs shock and awe. The more functional Freaks lead war parties, perform ritae, or divine the future of the Sect from the entrails of their victims (often while those victims look on in horror). No matter what their role, though, the underlying goal of the Malkavian *antitribu* seems to be to bestow the gift of madness upon everyone around them.

Nickname: Freaks

Disciplines: Auspex, Dementation, Obfuscate

Weakness: Like all Malkavians (p. 61), the Freaks are completely insane. At character creation, the player must choose a derangement that the character can never overcome.

Quote: *Consult the haruspex once again. Always learn the same lesson. Follow the tract, and it ends in the same place. We're there, boys. We're in the shit.*

Nosferatu Antitribu

The Nosferatu of the Sabbat aren't too different from their Camarilla brethren. Both branches of the Clan tend toward subterranean havens, and both branches use their considerable skill in stealth and control of vermin to traffic in information. Just as the more beautiful Kindred of the Camarilla must occasionally get their feet dirty going to see a Nosferatu information broker, the Cainites call upon their deformed comrades for secrets and tactics.

Interestingly, the Nosferatu *antitribu* are less brutal than many Sabbat Kindred. This may be because they know what it is to be a monster — it's there, in their faces, from the first night of undeath. They don't need to overcompensate, and so bloody excesses are unnecessary. This by no means makes the Creeps human, or even especially humane. It just means that if a Nosferatu *antitribu* does engage in wholesale slaughter or horrific violence, he's doing it for a specific reason, rather than just for fun.

But the Creeps may have another reason for avoiding overt depravity — they wish to stay as far under the radar as possible. While the Nosferatu *antitribu* are careful to avoid letting Clan business get out into the rumor mill, gossip occasionally surfaces that the Clan is terrified of its Antediluvian founder, more so than other Clans of the Sabbat.

Nickname: Creeps

Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence

Weakness: Sabbat Nosferatu are just as hideous as their Camarilla counterparts, and suffer the same weakness (p. 63): they all have an Appearance score of zero, and they may never improve it

Quote: *There's always a scarier beastie. Look: You're scarier than Dahmer or Gacy. I'm scarier than you. And… well. There are things scarier than me. Let's leave it at that.*

Panders

The Caitiff of the Sabbat, Panders are on the front lines when the Sword of Caine goes to war. That means, of course, that the vast majority of casualties in violent action come from their ranks. But as precarious as this position within the Sabbat may be, it *is* their position, and the rest of the Sect recognizes this. Recognition, as any Caitiff trying desperately to survive under a Camarilla Prince will tell you, goes a long way.

Any Sabbat vampire that does not know his Clan, or any vampire Embraced by an established Pander, is considered a Mutt. This means that when the Sabbat goes looking for shock troops, it tends to be Panders that swell their ranks (since mass Embrace definitely qualifies as dangerous work). The Panders became an established part of the Sabbat in the 1950s, when a low-level Sabbat vampire named Joseph Pander united the Clanless Sabbat under his banner (and name). Ever since then, the term has been applied to these Kindred. They take on the dress and mannerisms of bikers, homeless, punks, and the dispossessed among humanity, the better to feed on and Embrace from these dregs. But rare is the Pander that bemoans his lot in unlife — these Cainites are true, loyal Sabbat.

Nickname: Mutts

Disciplines: Panders do not have Clan Disciplines, meaning that the player may choose any Discipline at character creation (subject to Storyteller approval). In addition, Panders are subject to the same rules for raising Disciplines with experience points as Caitiff (see p. 124).

Weakness: Panders do not have a specific weakness. Pander characters cannot start lower than Ninth Generation, though they can subsequently lower their Generation via diablerie.

Quote: *Call me a Mutt, yeah? That's fine. Purebreds go crazy as they get older. And Cainites, well, we* live *"dog eat dog."*

Ravnos Antitribu

Shortly after the formation of the Sabbat, a small group of Ravnos decided that following the orders of their elders and searching for the same "truths" the Clan always had wasn't what they wanted out of unlife. They wanted the freedom that the Sabbat promised, and so they renounced their heritage and became part of the Sword of Caine. From there, they Embraced just as any Sabbat vampires did, and so the Ravnos *antitribu* are still an important part of the Sabbat. The Rogues lurk amongst the nomadic Sabbat packs, acting as scouts and con artists.

The Ravnos *antitribu* may be thieves and liars, but if one gives his solemn word (accompanied by spitting blood into his hand), he will keep that vow even unto Final Death. They share their Clan's propensity for vice, and for nomadic unlife. The freedom to pull up stakes and leave an area whenever trouble comes knocking — combined with the freedom to feed as they please — makes the Sabbat the only conceivable way of unlife for these Cainites.

Nickname: Rogues

Disciplines: Animalism, Chimerstry, Fortitude

Weakness: Each Ravnos *antitribu*, just like their parent Clan (p. 65), has a penchant for some sort of vice — breaking taboos is hard-wired into the Rogues just as it is into the Ravnos proper. When presented with the opportunity to engage in that vice, the Rogue must indulge it unless her player succeeds on a Self-Control or Instinct roll (difficulty 6).

Quote: *Freedom means not giving a fuck about* ma-rime.

Salubri Antitribu

The Salubri of the Sabbat are not the quiet, contemplative Kindred that seek Golconda in persecuted exile. No, these Kindred call themselves "Furies," and they seek the blood of the Camarilla vampires — the Tremere especially — with a venomous passion. In nights past, as mentioned in the Salubri spread (p. 408), the Clan contained both healers and warriors. And now, in the modern nights, the warriors have reemerged — and stand to be counted with the Sabbat.

The Salubri *antitribu* are devoted to the cause of killing Camarilla vampires, but not necessarily to other Sabbat agendas. They take part in the ritae of the Sect, and they share their blood, but what truly fires them up is the chance to invade Camarilla territory and burn some Tremere. If the ancient rumors of the Salubri

warriors being honorable knights are true, then times have indeed changed. These Kindred do not know "honorable combat" from "IED." They just want to watch their enemies crumble to dust.

Nickname: Furies

Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Valeren

Weakness: Unlike their nonviolent brethren, Sabbat Salubri must consume blood taken by force, preferably in the heat of battle. Unless the vampire feeds on blood from a fallen foe or fights his target before feeding, the Vitae offers no nourishment. In addition, Salubri *antitribu* cannot start lower than Tenth Generation or higher than Twelfth, as their blood has yet to spread across a wider spectrum than that.

Quote: *I'd wear your skin, but I don't want to smell like fear and gasoline.*

Serpents of the Light

The Serpents of the Light are the *antitribu* of the Followers of Set. They began as a splinter group, a Setite heresy that rejected the worship of the Clan's founder as a god. This Sect made its way to Haiti, studying vodoun and the mysticism thereof, and during the 1970s came under the sway of the Sabbat. The Clan proper tried to bring the Serpents of the Light back in line with "orthodox" Setite belief, but to no avail. As with several other splinter groups of the Clans, the Serpents of the Light found the freedom of the Sword of Caine too alluring.

The bloodline's methods are familiar to those who know the Setites. The Cobras engage in seduction and sexual manipulation in order to achieve their ends (and, of course, to find the blood they need to survive). They dabble in drugs, prostitution, and any other method they can find to bring mortals into slavery to their own vices. In fact, apart from religious outlook, very little separates them from the Followers of Set. Some Kindred wonder, in fact, if the whole schism isn't part of some much longer and intricate scheme, one that only the eldest of the line are fully privy to.

Nickname: Cobras

Disciplines: Presence, Obfuscate, Serpentis

Weakness: The Serpents of the Light, despite the name, are just as vulnerable to bright illumination as their parent Clan (p. 53). They suffer two additional health levels of damage from sunlight, and a one-die penalty to all rolls when subject to bright light of any kind.

Quote: *Let's dance, you and I. No one watching but the* loa. *And hell, let's invite them to join us. Roll up your sleeve.*

Toreador Antitribu

The Toreador of the Sabbat are just as prone to creative expression and love of beauty as their Camarilla counterparts, but they enjoy a much higher regard within their Sect. This is because the Toreador *antitribu* codified much of the Sabbat's present structure, forming its rites and expressing its philosophy in such as a way as to appeal to the young vampires of the time. They layered discourse with meaning, showing through satire, poetry, and (when necessary) straightforward explanation that the Sabbat held the keys to the future of all Cainites.

These vampires haven't lost their creative edge over the centuries. While Camarilla Toreador express themselves through fairly conventional means of art, the Perverts tend more toward extreme, bloody, and painful presentations. Torture is an art form, and body art — whether performed with tattoo needles or scalpels — is popular among the Perverts. Since such modifications are not permanent (unless the Pervert in question is able to learn Vicissitude, that is), the undead form is a constantly renewing canvas. The Toreador *antitribu* take advantage of this to send messages coded within the art of their own bodies, using a system of symbols that takes the vampires a lifetime to truly master.

Nickname: Perverts or Pervs

Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Presence

Weakness: Over time, the propensity for the Toreador to become fascinated by beauty has twisted itself into a perverse need for cruelty. When faced with an opportunity to inflict emotional or physical pain — a captive that might be tortured, or a protégé whose ambitions might be squashed — the Toreador *antitribu*'s player must make a Self-Control or Instinct roll (difficulty 6), or spend a Willpower point. If the roll fails, the character must indulge in her savage desires.

Quote: *Hold that pose. That's good. Can you stop bleeding from the neck so much, please?*

Tremere Antitribu

Centuries ago, a small group of Tremere, fearful that the Sabbat would destroy the Camarilla and their Clan in the process, defected to the smaller Sect. They offered their skills as thaumaturgists to the Sword of Caine, in exchange for safety from their former Clan.

The Sabbat, not able to turn down the benefits of blood magic (despite how much the Tzimisce objected), took them in.

Reaction from Clan Tremere was swift, of course. The Warlocks conjured a curse that branded every Tremere *antitribu* with a mark, one that only "true" Tremere could see. Unable to hide what they were, the Tremere *antitribu* stayed in chantries, providing support and knowledge to their comrades.

This state of affairs continued for centuries. The Tremere *antitribu* contributed much to the Sabbat. They worked with the Tzimisce to create the Blood Brothers, they prevented the Camarilla Tremere from destroying the Sect from afar, and, of course, they tutored other Sabbat Cainites in blood magic. And then one horrible night, they all died, burning to death in a mysterious conflagration that afflicted each and every Tremere subject to the traitor's mark. Interestingly, those few Sabbat Tremere who had defected *from* the Sabbat to the Camarilla were not destroyed, which might shed some light on the massacre's origins.

Nickname: Spellbinders

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy

Weakness: The Tremere *antitribu* were all immediately recognizable as traitors to Camarilla Warlocks. The mark wasn't a physical disfigurement, but a change to the character's very presence. This wasn't a weakness that carries an immediate mechanical disadvantage, but once identified, the Tremere *antitribu* could expect to be hunted down and burned as soon as the Tremere can possibly manage it. They were also still susceptible to the power of the blood, gaining a +1 to all Vinculum rolls.

In addition, Tremere *antitribu* were barred from taking leadership roles in the Sabbat.

Quote: *It's always been inevitable. That's why we joined up in the first place.*

Ventrue Antitribu

The Ventrue pretend to nobility, but they are nothing more than the ruling class of the dying world — merchants and moneylenders. Clan Ventrue has a glorious past, a lineage of knights, paladins, and warrior-kings. The Blue Bloods of tonight relish backroom dealings, compromise and favor-trading. In other words, say the Ventrue *antitribu*, they are no better than the sniveling Tremere.

The Ventrue *antitribu* might not be the moral backbone of the Sabbat, but they are definitely some of the most idealist Cainites therein (although there are rumors that there may be two distinct bloodlines both claiming to be the "true" Ventrue *antitribu*). They carry with them the notions of *noblesse oblige* and chivalry. They believe that their Camarilla counterparts have betrayed not only the true nature of the vampiric race, but the role of their Clan in particular and feel that only by taking up the mantle of Warriors of Caine can they atone. When Gehenna comes and the skies rain fire and blood, it will not be the Crusaders that hide in their havens and pray that doom passes them by. These devout Kindred will be at the forefront, swords — or machine guns — hoisted high and the ancient motto of their Clan proudly on their lips: *Regere sanguine, regere in veritatem est* ("To rule in blood is to rule in truth").

Nickname: Crusaders

Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Auspex or Presence

Weakness: Sabbat Ventrue have the same weakness as their Camarilla brethren (see p. 73). The player decides with the Storyteller what specific type of blood suits the Crusader, and this choice is permanent. Blood of other types (even animals) simply offers the vampire no blood pool increase, no matter how much he consumes

Quote: *You're not worthy of the blood you're carrying. Time to give it to a* real *child of Veddartha.*

Other Bloodlines

Assamites

Assamite Sorcerers

Outsiders to Clan Assamite don't see the caste divisions clearly, but the Saracens have a history of blood magic that predates that of the Tremere. Assamite sorcerers began in the Second City, conscripted or lured into the Clan with the promise of immortality in which to perfect their magic. They were tasked with providing magical support, and for centuries, they were simply one caste of the Assamite Clan.

And then came the Tremere. The Assamite sorcerers found themselves facing foes as magically tenacious as they were, foes that were quite happy to steal their knowledge. The sorcerers fought against this new menace as best they could, but then the Tremere levied their blood curse on the line. The sorcerers became ob-

sessed with finding a cure, an obsession which remains tonight.

Nickname: Magi (singular, "Magus")

Disciplines: Assamite Sorcery, Obfuscate, Quietus

Weakness: The line as a whole has practiced the art for so long that it permeates their blood, making each individual sorcerer stand out like a beacon to anyone with supernatural perception. Any use of a supernatural power on a sorcerer for purposes of perception enjoys a -2 difficulty. Additionally, attempts to penetrate a sorcerer's supernatural concealment using an opposed power are considered to operate one level higher than normal (so a character with Auspex 2 trying to penetrate a sorcerer's Obfuscate has an effective Auspex of 3).

Quote: *We were calling down gentle rain and terrible storms when your people were still making crude charcoal marks on cave walls. Don't presume to know us.*

Assamite Viziers

Assamite viziers are and always have been a vital part of the Clan. Magical knowledge and research remains the purview of the sorcerers, but the viziers are necessary for compiling and uncovering information on philosophy, government, the arts, and religion. The viziers have acted as leaders within the Clan — not where matters of war are concerned (this they wisely leave to the warrior Assamites), but when it comes to understanding and relating to mortals, the viziers make the best consultants.

Unfortunately, while they can learn, understand, and interpret mortal customs and mores, they have difficulty actually relating to them. Assamite viziers are driven to accumulate knowledge with a zeal that borders on obsessive. They can understand why people act the way they do on a large scale, but understanding the motives of a particular person is much more difficult.

For many years, Assamite viziers and sorcerers were regarded as one caste (this is why sorcerers are still referred to as "viziers" by the ignorant). In modern nights, the viziers have emerged from the shadows to conduct their scholarly research more visibly. Whether this will open the viziers to greater danger from the Assamites' enemies or bring the caste more power remains to be seen.

Nickname: Scholars or Artisans

Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Quietus

Weakness: The viziers are mad. Every vizier finds himself caught up in the continuance of his chosen pursuits to the exclusion of trivial concerns such as daily shelter or nightly nourishment. Each vizier has an Obsessive-Compulsive derangement (p. 292) associated with his highest-rated intellectual or creative Ability. If the character's focus of effort shifts, so does the focus of the derangement.

Quote: *Seventy virgins. Seventy Kindred in the city. Virgin blood — have any of the Kindred in the city consumed the blood of their own childer? Well, find out!*

Followers of Set

Daitya

The Daitya are an Indian bloodline of the Followers of Set. They revere Shiva the Destroyer as an incarnation of Set, and believe that by casting the world into greater depths of depravity, they can help it reach its nadir of true evil. When that happens, Shiva will open his third eye and gaze upon the world, destroying it, and setting the stage for the next cycle of existence.

Like many Indian Kindred, the Daitya do not accept the Caine myth. They believe that they are demons, and that by killing, corrupting, and enslaving people, they are doing what it is in their nature as demons to do. They observe a caste system similar to that of mortals, and feel that being Embraced indicates a previous life of sin and profanity. By doing their duty in this incarnation (which can last many lifetimes), then the Daitya feel that reincarnation in a higher station is possible.

Many Daitya run or are involved with a cult to Shiva, and recruit ghouls and childer from the cult. The bloodline is scholarly and devout, in its way. The Daitya are not, however, humble — they believe that the gods themselves listen to their prayers, and that they are the vehicles that will bring the world to judgment.

Nickname: Blasphemers

Disciplines: Presence, Obfuscate, Serpentis

Weakness: The Daitya suffer the same weakness as the Followers of Set (p. 53): They suffer two additional health levels of damage from sunlight, and a one-die penalty to all rolls when subject to bright light of any kind.

Quote: *Tonight we fast. Keep your hunger under control. Kill the mortal whelp if you wish, if it helps, but do not feed.*

Tlacique

When the Spanish came to what is now Mexico, they carried Kindred with them in the holds of their ships. These undead stepped into the nights of the New World… and found that other vampires already claimed domain here. One bloodline of such Kindred was the Tlacique.

Claiming descent from Tezcatlipoca, the Aztec god of night and black magic, the Tlacique might have forged alliances with the Kindred that arrived with the Spaniards, had those conquistadores not destroyed the civilizations on which the Tlacique preyed and infected their people with smallpox. As their society fell, the Tlacique briefly allied with the Sabbat, but when the two factions took the time to examine the others, they found their belief systems quite incompatible. The Sword of Caine eventually slew the weakened Tlacique, and the bloodline as a whole vanished from view. They still exist, however: a handful scattered across Central America and the southwestern United States.

The Tlacique are unquestionably a Setite line, though only their vulnerability to sunlight marks them as such. They are mystics one and all, and status within the line depends in part by learning magic. In addition to their Disciplines, they practice a form of Thaumaturgy called *Nahuallotl* (in game terms, this Path is identical to the Path of Blood, found on p. 213, although they pay out-of-Clan costs to learn it).

Nickname: Jaguars

Disciplines: Obfuscate, Presence, Protean

Weakness: The Tlacique's weakness is one of the only ways to trace the line's lineage to the Setites. They, like the Followers of Set (p. 53), suffer two additional health levels of damage from sunlight, and a one-die penalty to all rolls when subjected to bright light of any kind.

Quote: *A heart to make the sun rise. The blood within the heart to sustain the sun through his nightly sleep. You are blessed — you get to provide both.*

Warrior Setites

Not all Followers of Set are subtle, forked-tongued seducers. A number of them prefer to walk a more martial path, becoming holy warriors for their god. The warrior Setites eschew the Obfuscate Discipline for Potence — no slinking in the dark for these serpents. They are proud and brutal soldiers for Set, and are perfectly willing to go into battle to back up their subtler brethren. They act as enforcers, assassins, and even martyrs for the rest of the line, although thinking of them as mindless brutes is a mistake. A warrior Setite is still very much a Setite, and quite capable of leading others into all sorts of temptation. They just have the strength to make their points forcefully when necessary.

The warrior Setite line is interesting in that it is not passed down by the Embrace. A mortal Embraced by a warrior Setite becomes a "normal" member of the line (that is, learning Obfuscate as a Clan Discipline) unless trained as a warrior from childe-hood. The line is therefore an example of how training and ideology can change the basic makeup of a vampire's Clan.

Warrior Setites generally embrace passionate ideologues. The ideology that they espouse isn't important. A fanatical Christian's fervor can be turned to Set as easily as the zeal of a pro-union rabble rouser, given the right amount of Kindred vitae and religious revelations from Set.

Nickname: Horned Vipers

Disciplines: Potence, Presence, Serpentis

Weakness: The warriors suffer same weakness as the Followers of Set (p. 53): They suffer two additional health levels of damage from sunlight, and a one-die penalty to all rolls when subjected to bright light of any kind.

Quote: *The Serpent of Eden had his approach. Mine is more honest — that should be refreshing for you.*

Gangrel

Mariners

The Mariners are Gangrel who have chosen to dwell full-time in the ocean. Gangrel *aquarii* (as they are sometimes known to scholarly Kindred) swim below the sunlit zone, their Fortitude Discipline keeping them safe from the pressure that would otherwise crush them. They ascend at night to feed, usually on sharks and whales, but they aren't choosy — anything with blood is fair game. A shipwreck is a smorgasbord for the Mariners, and a large enough disaster is one of the few events that might draw more than one to the same region.

Mariners sometimes act in defense of the oceans, sneaking aboard polluting vessels and killing everyone aboard. One some level this makes sense — if their prey dies off, they'll have to return to the land (or quest ever further into the Deeps).

The Camarilla and the Sabbat have, on the rare occasions they find them, offered Mariners membership. The Mariners decline. They have no sectarian interests, and escaping the Jyhad might have been why the first Mariner left the land to begin with. No one knows how long ago that was, but most of the Mariners are of low Generation, and some of them date to the Age of Exploration.

Nickname: None (the few Kindred that know of them simply call them "Mariners" or "aquatic Gangrel")

Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Weakness: As with most Gangrel (p. 55), the Mariners gain an animalistic feature each time they frenzy. These features, though, resemble fish, aquatic worms, cephalopods, and other sea creatures (the rare Gangrel develops a cetacean or seal-like feature). The alien nature of these features should be taken into consideration by Storytellers determining the mechanical impact of such features.

Quote: *Why did I leave the land? Because in the sea, the sharks just swim up and bite you. They don't smile first.*

Lasombra

Angellis Ater

The *Angellis Ater* are an odd bloodline, one that crosses boundaries between Baali and Lasombra. The so-called "black angels" believe that vampires are the instrument of Satan, and they worship sin and the darkness of the soul. Their Lasombra blood lets them reach into the blackness, pull it forth and manipulate it, and the black angels become dependent upon and addicted to use of the Obtenebration Discipline over time.

The bloodline has been around since at least the Middle Ages, descended in part from a powerful Baali called Azaneal. This monstrous vampire acted as a leader within the Baali line for a time, and twisted the orthodoxy of some Kindred enough to create a kind of heresy, one that was all too attractive to the Lasombra. The Clan of Shadows' power base traditionally included the Catholic Church, and over time the *Angellis Ater* made at least some inroad with these pious (or pious-seeming) Lasombra. How much influence in the Church they were able to wield is not known, but they did survive the Inquisition. *Angellis Ater* are rare in modern nights, but they do exist.

Nickname: Black Angels

Disciplines: Daimoinon, Dominate, and one of Potence, Presence, or Obtenebration

Weakness: The *Angellis Ater* have the same weakness as other Lasombra (p. 59) — they do not cast reflections.

Quote: *We reach into the shadows, reach into hell. We pull out what you find there, and paint the world with it.*

Lasombra Antitribu

Lasombra *antitribu* are simply members of Clan Lasombra who either predate the Sabbat and refused to join, or who disagree with the Sabbat's philosophies. They are rare in either case, because the Sabbat goes out of its way to destroy them, but a few persist. Some join the Camarilla, while others remain independent. As a rule, they carry the Machiavellian attitude that typifies the Lasombra — they fully expect that they will win the Jyhad, and they are willing to do what is necessary to do so. They just feel that their Clan as a whole made the wrong choice.

While some Camarilla vampires know that these Kindred exist, at least in theory, the Magisters themselves try to stay out of the spotlight. The Sabbat has been known to stage raids on Camarilla cities, raids that they cannot hope to bring to a victory, just to destroy a Lasombra *antitribu*. Some Kindred put this down to the tenacity and spite of the Sabbat, but others point out that it tends to be the Sabbat Lasombra — well known for being good tacticians — who initiate these raids. What are they so afraid that the Lasombra *antitribu* might reveal?

Nickname: Magisters (this was the Clan's sobriquet for centuries before the Anarch Revolt)

Disciplines: Dominate, Obtenebration, Potence

Weakness: In addition to the Clan's usual problem with reflections (p. 59), Lasombra *antitribu* also have the "weakness" of being hunted relentlessly by the Sabbat, and targeted for destruction whenever their existence is made public.

Quote: *I watched the fires of the Reconquista. I saw the trenches of the Great War and the fires that burned Dresden. The so-called "Sword of Caine" does not fill me with dread.*

Malkavians

Dominate Malkavians

For the most part, other Kindred don't differentiate between Dominate Malkavians and the main body of

the Clan. Vampires don't carry badges detailing their acuity in the various Disciplines, after all, and it's by no means impossible for a Malkavian to wield both powers. As with so many things related to the Moon Clan, most vampires wouldn't know about it if the Malkavians didn't tell them.

For some reason, the Clan felt it was important for the Camarilla to know that some of their number retained skill with the Dominate Discipline. Likewise, their nickname — Carriers — is self-applied. The implication is clear: These Malkavians are immune to Dementation (at least as far as "contracting" it the way the rest of the Clan did), but they are capable of spreading it. Rumors fly that these Malkavians are capable of spreading Dementation — and the accompanying madness — even to non-Malkavian Kindred.

Whether or not that's true hasn't been established, but it is true that Dominate Malkavians tend to be more outwardly stable than other members of their Clan. That isn't to say they aren't mad — they are. Their derangements, though, tend more toward cold sociopathy or quiet hallucinations that the screaming, full-blown madness that afflicts much of the rest of the Clan. Likewise, Dominate Malkavians show no particular propensity for prophetic wisdom, and often seem somewhat contemptuous of the ones that do.

Nickname: Carriers

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate (Note: If you wish to set your **Vampire** game before the events of the "Great Prank" that gave every Malkavian Dementation, nearly every Lunatic has these Disciplines – only the Malkavian *antitribu* at the time have access to Dementation.)

Weakness: Like all Malkavians (p. 61), the Carriers are irretrievably insane. As a rule, their insanity tends to be "quieter" than the average Lunatic's, but the Dominate Malkavians still have at least one derangement that cannot be cured.

Quote: *If you're expecting me to flip out and start hitting people with fish, well, you've got the wrong weirdo. I'm not here to amuse you.*



Ravnos

Brahman

The elders of Clan Ravnos long ago divided themselves up into castes, much like mortal Indian society. In theory, only a member of a given vampire caste could Embrace a member of the appropriate mortal caste. In

practice, though, the Clan's elders couldn't maintain such strict control over its members, even in India, and certainly not in the rest of the world.

For the most part, these vampire castes (called *jati*) were identical to the main body of the Clan in terms of ability and blood. The Brahman Ravnos, though, have a gift of sight that the other *jati* do not, and often use it to divine the future or the locations of their enemies. They act as advisors and seers to their Clan in India.

Another branch of the Clan, called the Phuri Dae, followed the Roma (Gypsies) along their travels in Europe. They are mechanically identical to the Brahman, and served much the same function.

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Chimerstry

Weakness: The Brahman suffer the same weakness as the main body of Clan Ravnos (p. 65). Each one has a preferred form of vice (though the Brahman have a special love for swindling through psychic readings and séances). Whenever the Brahman is given the chance to indulge in his favorite vice, the player must roll Self-Control or Instinct (difficulty 6) to resist the temptation.

Quote: *Our traditions are not meaningless now, childe. If anything, they mean* more *now. We have so much more to preserve, and so few voices left to accomplish it.*

Salubri

Wu Zao

Saulot left Europe and traveled east, where he met native creatures that, though they fed on blood, were not truly Kindred. These "Wan Kuei" called him Zao-lat, and regarded him as a trickster, a thief, and a barbarian.

Unwelcome though he was, Zao-lat managed to leave a legacy behind — the Wu Zao. These Kindred are the descendants of two vampires Embraced by Zao-lat during his time in the Middle Kingdom (named Zao-zei and Zao-xue). These two vampires helped Zao-lat uncover the arcane secrets of the East, break into the lairs of demons, and learn their weaknesses.

But the local vampires eventually drove Zao-lat from their lands, leaving behind his two childer to carry on his work. Since then, the Wu Zao have been intrigued or (more accurately) obsessed by whatever areas of arcane study pique their interests. Their scholarly ways have served them well — when news of Saulot's destruction reached them, some few went into hiding and avoided purges in their own lands. The bloodline survives in modern nights — rare and quiet, but present.

Nickname: Orphans

Disciplines: Auspex, Fortitude, Obeah or Valeren (player's choice at character creation)

Weakness: The Wu Zao are scholars by nature, and each of them has a special focus. At character creation, the player must select an area of arcane study — the Wan Kuei, the culture of a specific mortal group, a group of mystical tomes lost to the ages, etc. Whenever the opportunity arises to learn something about this subject, the player must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to avoid pursuing that lead to the exclusion of all else.

Quote: *How much? Ha! For that old trinket! Never! Wait, wait. How much again?*

Tremere

Telyavelic Tremere

In the early nights of Clan Tremere, before the diablerie of Saulot, a small band of Warlocks made its way into Lithuania. Clan records state that the original goal of this journey was to expand the Clan's influence into these lands, or to find allies. Some elder Tremere, though, claim that these pilgrims took the journey to escape from the clutches of their Clan once and for all.

Whatever the original motive behind the exodus, when the Tremere arrived, they fell in with the pagan peoples of Lithuania and learned of Telyavel, the protector of the dead. The local people saw the vampires — nocturnal, bloodthirsty, and obviously magical — as incarnations or avatars of their death-gods, and the Tremere grew to believe them. They cast off the name "Tremere," and simply became the "Telyavs." While they had some infrequent contact with chantries outside of Lithuania, for the most party they remained patrons and predators to the villagers.

This was not to last, however. In the late 13th century, the Ventrue warlord Jürgen the Sword-Bearer destroyed one of the last remaining enclaves of the Telyavs. The bloodline managed to limp along for another few centuries, but by the 16th century, the main body of the Tremere reported that all of them had been destroyed.

Nickname: Telyavs, Shepherds

Disciplines: Auspex, Presence, Thaumaturgy

Weakness: The Telyavs bound their fates so tightly to their pagan herds that they took on some of the same fears and enemies. They are weak against Christian symbols and faith. Difficulties to resist frenzy are two higher than normal when confronted by an enemy using True Faith as a defense. They recoil from the sight of the cross or other symbols of the Christian faith.

Quote: *We reached too high. Power and enlightenment aren't found in formulae. They are found in dirt, wood, and blood.*

Tzimisce

Kolduns

The koldun are the oldest sorcerers among the Kindred, or at least they claim to be. Their magic is ancient, to be sure. This magic does not depend on formulae and lifeless, categorized rotes. Rather, it draws power from the most unlikely source: the living earth. Koldunic Sorcery excels in manipulating the natural elements in subtle and grandiose ways, yet its paths follow no other directions. Many of its rituals build on spirituality and vitality thought lost to vampires. Kolduns, then, are Tzimisce wizards who are in tune with the land around them to a frightening degree.

The kolduns aren't protectors of the land, though, at least not in the way that the phrase usually implies. They *use* the land, drinking in its energy and reshaping it into weapons. They protect the land because it is theirs, and therefore they display the same territorialism for which the Tzimisce in general are so widely known.

For many years, Koldunic Sorcery was the province of a few very powerful elder Tzimisce, almost all Old Clan (see below). In recent nights, though, the knowledge of the magic has filtered down through the Clan's ranks, and even neonates may learn it. This is a huge departure from previous practices. It remains to be seen what effect Koldunic Sorcery will have on the world at large.

Nickname: None

Disciplines: The kolduns aren't truly a bloodline. Rather, koldunism is a practice within the Tzimisce where the vampire learns Koldunic Sorcery (at out-of-Clan costs). Koldun Clan Disciplines, therefore, are Auspex, Animalism, and either Dominate or Vicissitude (depending on whether the koldun is an Old Clan Tzimisce or not).

Weakness: As with the rest of the Clan (p. 71): The koldun must rest in the proximity of at least two handfuls of native soil. Failure to meet this requirement halves the koldun's dice pools every 24 hours, until all pools fall to one die. This penalty remains until they are able to rest for a full day in their earth.

Quote: *I* am *the land. You have not violated my home… you have violated* me*. And now you reap the consequences.*

Old Clan Tzimisce

The Old Clan Tzimisce are a small group of Fiends who predate the use of fleshcrafting. They regard Vicissitude as a disease of the soul, and refuse to learn or employ it. In most other respects, though, they resemble the rest of the Clan. They share the Clan's propensity for manners and respect for territory, and as most of the surviving members of this "bloodline" still reside in what is now Romania, they govern their territories using Old World methods and customs. In some remote places, they rule more or less openly, taking blood tithe from the mortals under their "protection" and keeping out other supernatural threats. As the world grows smaller through the use of information technology, though, those nights may be coming to an end.

The Old Clan would prefer never to have to deal with the "defiled" members of Clan Tzimisce, but family is family and they can't survive the modern nights with no support. They make treaties and trade favors with other Fiends, sometimes lending support to the Sabbat as a whole in exchange for help and support when they need. One thing they refuse to do, though, is share blood with a Sabbat vampire. One never knows what might be swimming in it.

Nickname: The Old Clan

Disciplines: Animalism, Auspex, Dominate

Weakness: As with the rest of the Clan (p. 71), the Old Clan Tzimisce must sleep in at least two handfuls of soil from their homeland. Failure to meet this requirement halves the Tzimisce's dice pools every 24 hours, until all pools fall to one die. This penalty remains until they are able to rest for a full day in their earth.

Quote: *Old ways do not die. Like old Cainites, they merely sleep, awaiting sufficient blood to reawaken them.*

Disciplines

These are the alphabetized Disciplines for the bloodlines presented in this chapter.

Assamite Sorcery

From a purely functional standpoint, the blood magic that the Assamite sorcerer caste practices differs little from that wielded by the Tremere. From a philosophical perspective, however, worlds of difference separate the two. The Tremere force every piece of knowledge they incorporate into the structured, rigid framework of high Hermetic invocation. By contrast, the sorcerer caste's practices are the result of millennia of adaptation and melding, and are too disparate to be considered "structured" in any real sense. The modern body of knowledge that is Assamite Sorcery draws its content from a wide array of magical traditions, from the ecstatic rites of Kali and Shiva's followers to the subtle precision of feng shui to the elegant symbolic and mathematical transformations of Islamic alchemists and astronomers.

Assamite Sorcery is mechanically identical to the more common Thaumaturgy that appears on pp. 212-240. However, though they work on similar principles (the use of vampiric vitae to fuel exertions of conscious will in order to effect change upon the physical or spiritual world), the two are not cross-compatible. A Tremere strives to perform his magic the same way, all the time, every time. An Assamite might never enact the same ritual the same exact way twice in a millennium.

As may be expected, students of Assamite Sorcery have great difficulty learning the practices of other blood magic traditions. All experience points costs to learn other blood magic paths and rituals are increased by half (round up) for Assamite sorcerers. In addition, even once the sorcerer has incorporated these lessons into her repertoire, they are still alien to her. All invocations of a "foreign" path require one extra blood point and all rituals take triple the normal time and require one extra success for any desired result.

Awakening of the Steel

Although combat mastery is hardly the sorcerer caste's primary goal, they have a long tradition of standing ready to defend themselves and, if need be, assisting the warrior caste on the battlefield. Awakening of the Steel is one legacy of this preparedness, a path that some say began with the alchemists who studied in the forges of Toledo and Damascus. This set of techniques focuses on the symbolism of the sword as the ultimate extension of a trained warrior's body, drawing on the myths that various warrior traditions attached to their swords and daggers: European Crusaders and their blessed blades, the *kris* of Indonesian Pentjak-Silat practitioners, and Indian Ghurkas and their *kukri* knives, among others. The practitioner of Awakening of the Steel focuses on this symbolism as he uses the power of his blood to enhance his weapon and his skill.

Equivalent Assamite Paths and Rituals

The sorcerers have equivalent teachings for many common blood magic techniques in addition to their own unique lessons. The following list is not an exhaustive coverage of everything in the Great Library, but it is a starting point for players and Storytellers who wish to determine the capabilities of Assamite sorcerers. Names in parentheses are the names that the sorcerer caste prefers to use for each item, if the Assamite name differs from the commonly accepted one. Paths marked with an asterisk are usually options for an Assamite sorcerer to learn as his primary path, provided his instructor approves.

Paths: The Path of Blood, The Lure of Flames*, Movement of the Mind*, The Path of Conjuring, Hands of Destruction

Rituals: Defense of the Sacred Haven (Curtain of Will), Wake with Evening's Freshness (Black Sunrise), Communicate with Kindred Sire (Speak with Sire), Deflection of Wooden Doom (Turn the Impaling Shaft), Ward versus Ghouls, Principal Focus of Vitae Infusion (Draught of the Pebble), Incorporeal Passage (Passage of the Ghul), Bone of Lies (Stain of Guilt)

A student of Awakening of the Steel finds that a keen understanding of both the form and the function of a blade is necessary for full mastery of this path. A character must have a level of either Melee or Crafts Ability equal to his level in Awakening of the Steel. Those who practice this path also find that its lessons are tightly focused, perhaps to the point of overspecialization. The path is at its most effective with swords and knives, and the wielder can only extend its effects to other edged weapons. Any attempt to use a technique of this path on another edged weapon is at +1 difficulty.

• Confer with the Blade

Although few Assamites claim to have actually spoken to a weapon's soul, blacksmiths and warriors alike have ascribed spiritual qualities to hand-forged blades for centuries. Practitioners of Auspex are familiar with the manner in which inanimate objects can bear impressions of their own history. Confer with the Blade allows a weapon's wielder to delve into the events that have occurred around his weapon. Some practitioners of this power claim this makes the weapon feel more "comfortable" in their hands, while others speak of the sense of history that an ancient blade bears. The actual impressions only take an instant to gain, though many prefer to spend much longer in contemplation if time permits.

System: The number of successes determines the amount of information the sorcerer gains regarding the blade's history and its present state, as well as all information yielded by a lesser number of successes. With three or more successes, the sorcerer may lower the difficulty on his next attempt to apply a blood-magic ritual to the weapon by one.

•• Grasp of the Mountain

The best scimitar in all creation does its owner no good if it's lying five yards away from him. Grasp of the Mountain strengthens the spiritual bond between the sword and the swordsman in order to reinforce the wielder's physical grip on his weapon. A blade that is under the effect of this art never leaves its master's hand unless he so wills it.

System: For the rest of the scene, the character has a number of automatic successes to resist all attempts to disarm him, equal to the number of successes rolled. He cannot accidentally drop the blade (which means his botches are likely to result in self-mutilation instead of an empty hand). If the character is somehow disarmed in spite of Grasp of the Mountain, he may call the blade back to his hand by successfully invoking this power again, assuming he has a clear line of sight to the weapon.

••• Pierce Steel's Skin

At this level of understanding, the sorcerer can command his blade with such precision that he can strike at an opponent's physical protection rather than his body. The sword transfers its full fury to the intended target, shredding even the toughest chain or plate. This strips away the victim's defenses, leaving him vulner-

Successes	Result
One success	Physical information only: precise length and weight (to the micrometer and milligram), chemical composition (assuming the character understands metallurgy), number of damage dice and type of damage (lethal or aggravated).
Two successes	Historical overview: when and where the blade was forged, the name and face of its smith, brief glimpses of significant events in its existence.
Three successes	Sorcerous understanding: the type and relative level of power of any enchantments or supernatural enhancements that the blade possesses as well as the name and face of the individual who laid them.
Four successes	Subliminal synthesis: comprehensive knowledge of the sword's history. For the next seven nights, the character recognizes the taste of any blood that has ever stained the blade if she tastes it herself.
Five successes	Total communion: The sword and the wielder become linked at a level deeper than the physical and more enduring than the immediate. The Storyteller determines what information the sword holds for the character, but it may include any event in the blade's history or any aspect of its present existence and condition.

able to the next attack. While this power is of limited utility in modern nights, as traditional armor has fallen by the wayside, it remains in the path's progression of lessons due to its utility in destroying other obstacles.

System: While Pierce Steel's Skin is in effect, an attack against an unarmored target inflicts half damage (rounded down). However, for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, each successful attack the character makes against an armored foe inflicts damage on the target's body armor rather than injuring him directly. Only metal armor can be damaged by this power. When the character makes a successful attack against an armored target, the player does not roll damage. Instead, he rolls a number of dice equal to the sword's damage bonus (the number of dice that it adds to his Strength) against a difficulty of 7. Each success reduces the armor's soak bonus by one die. Armor that is reduced to zero soak dice in this manner is completely destroyed and unsalvageable. Additional successes beyond those needed to destroy a piece of armor have no effect.

At the Storyteller's discretion, Pierce Steel's Skin may destroy other inanimate objects (walls, doors, cars, dramatically appropriate obstacles) without significant damage to the sword. For the purposes of this power, Fortitude counts as part of the target's Stamina, not external armor.

•••• Razor's Shield

Many swordsmen hold that the duel is the ultimate test of the warrior because it places all opponents on an equal footing: Death is only three feet of steel away, and only the skill of the combatants determines who walks away. However, observers who are more pragmatic than romantic note that an enemy with a ranged weapon (be it bow, sling, or gun) has the advantage of striking from much farther away than arm's length. While Awakening of the Steel cannot completely counteract this advantage, this power allows the skilled sorcerer some measure of defense as the sword interposes itself between its master and attacks from afar.

System: For a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, the character may attempt to parry projectiles. This requires one action for each projectile that the player wishes to block, and the character must be able to see the shot coming (Heightened Senses allows visual tracking of bullets). Each parrying attempt requires a Dexterity + Melee roll, with a difficulty determined by the speed of the projectile. Thrown objects have a difficulty of 6, arrows and crossbow bolts a difficulty of 7, and bullets a difficulty of 9. Each success subtracts one success from the attacker's attack roll.

Razor's Shield does not allow the character to parry ranged attacks that do not incorporate solid projectiles, such as flame, lightning, or spat blood.

••••• Strike at the True Flesh

Although pacifists may find other uses for blades, a warrior knows that swords were created for one purpose: to carve an enemy's flesh into bloody ruin. Strike at the True Flesh invokes the very essence of the sorcerer's weapon, reducing it to the embodiment of its very definition (or, as the more classically minded would put it, invoking the Platonic form) while simplifying its target to a similarly basic level. The results of such an invocation are usually devastating on both a philosophical and practical level as weapon and victim momentarily lose all supernatural attributes.

System: The effects of Strike at the True Flesh last for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled, and they end with the first successful attack that the character makes within this time period. The sword inflicts only the base amount of lethal damage that a weapon of its size and type would normally cause, disregarding all enhancements that it may have received (though augmentations to the wielder's strength or speed, such as Potence and Celerity, still have their normal effects, as do extra successes on the attack roll).

However, all the target's supernatural defenses (including Fortitude) are likewise negated — he soaks the attack only with his base Stamina. If the negation of his powers and defenses renders the target unable to soak lethal damage, he cannot soak the attack at all. Body armor does protect against this attack, as it is a mundane form of defense.

Bardo

This Discipline has been handed down since Osiris himself first discovered this path. It involves attainment of a constant state of mystical consciousness, only achieved by the rigid, ascetic unlife of the Children. This Discipline is not the same state as Golconda. Golconda is a realization and acceptance of the way things are, while the Children's Disciplines are based on denial. They deny the Beast within them by intensely concentrating on their Humanity and their state of death. If a Child was to give up his meditations and discipline, he would be assailed by his Beast.

The Child must maintain Humanity equal to their highest level of ability, or else lose that ability. For example, a Child must have a Humanity of 9 to gain the ninth level of attainment. If the Child's Humanity ever drops below the required level, then the ability of that level is lost and must be bought all over again with experience points. The Child can counteract this with Restore Humanitas (below).

A Child of Osiris cannot follow any type of moral code other than Humanity.

• Restore Humanitas

The first thing that the Children of Osiris are taught is that Humanity does not have to be an inexorable slide into depravity. Instead, it is more akin to a climb up an extremely steep hill. The vampire is going to lose some ground, but with perseverance and strength, he can regain it.

System: When the vampire loses a dot of Humanity, he can attempt to regain it without spending experience points by using this power. The Child must use this power within a week of losing the Humanity, and must not have lost any more Humanity since the initial loss (that is, if the character falls from Humanity 8 to Humanity 7, and then falls to Humanity 6 before using this power, Restore Humanitas can only be used to recover Humanity 7). The character meditates for several hours, and spends all of the blood points currently in his body. The player then rolls Conscience (difficulty equal to the level of Humanity being regained). If the roll succeeds, the character regains the dot of Humanity and (if applicable) the dot of Conscience lost to a botched degeneration roll. If the character gained a derangement, it fades within a week of using Restore Humanitas.

•• Banishing Sign of Thoth

The character gestures, turning aside any supernatural effect aimed at her. The source of the effect does not matter. She can thwart, or at least blunt, the strength of any mystical attack. This sign was supposedly taught to Osiris by Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom and magic. What Thoth actually was — vampire, mortal, or spellcaster — is lost to time.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 7). This power can be used to "dodge" any incoming attack of a mystical nature, including any Disciplines that target the character (whether or not they actually inflict damage). Any successes the player rolls are subtracted from the successes on the attacker's roll. The sign does not serve to turn aside magically enhanced physical attacks; a punch from a vampire with the Potence Discipline still has the full effect.

••• Gift of Apis

All vampires must consume blood, no matter how good their intentions. While this basic fact of undeath cannot be circumvented, the Children of Osiris can at least avoid drinking human blood.

System: Animal blood is just as nourishing to the character as human blood. An animal is considered to have a blood pool equal to the number of health levels it has, rather than the lesser value usually assigned to represent the creature's less-than-filling fluids (see p. 270 for more on drinking from animals). This ability is always active.

•••• Pillar of Osiris

In the center of every temple is a Pillar of Osiris, a place of meditation and power in which the Children's magic is greatly increased. At this level of Bardo, the character learns to create such a Pillar, meaning that he can create his own temple.

System: Creating the Pillar of Osiris requires a night-long ritual, with the difficulty determined by the location. The more remote and free from violence the location is, the lower the difficulty. A cave far from human populations that has never seen violence might be difficulty 5, which the site of a grisly murder-suicide in a downtown area would be difficulty 9. The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Willpower. Success creates the Pillar, which does not require a physical pillar — the Pillar of Osiris is conceptual, not literal.

Once the Pillar is created, any vampire with at least one dot of Bardo receives a -3 to the difficulties of any Discipline or other mystical activity (including blood magic) performed at the Pillar. However, this requires regular trips to the Pillar. Once the vampire has created a Pillar, he must visit it at least once a month, or it ceases to function. In addition, for every week he is away from a Pillar (not necessarily the one he created), the difficulties of all rolls to avoid frenzy increase by one. The Beast, long denied by the Child's ascetic practices, grows in strength while away from the Pillar, and eventually pushes the vampire to frenzy and (likely) Humanity loss. The Children of Osiris, for this and other reasons, do not leave their temples for long.

••••• Paradox

The Child utters a phrase or a riddle that lays bare the truth of the universe to a listener. That truth — the perspective of that one listener's importance weighed against the whole of creation — is enough to immobilize the target for short while. Although this experience would seem to be disheartening, after the fact the targets are loath to harm the Child. Whether that's because of a newfound appreciation for one's place in the world, or out of fear that the vampire will reveal the paradox again, no one really knows.

System: The vampire speaks the phrase, and the player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty equal to the listener's current Willpower). If multiple listeners are present, the player rolls against the highest difficulty. If the roll is successful, the listener(s) is immobilized for the scene as he contemplates what he has heard. Striking the victim snaps him out of it. At the end of the scene, the paradox is gone, and the target can't ever quite explain it. He does, however, suffer a permanent +1 difficulty to harm or act against the Child of Osiris.

••••• • Boon of Anubis

The vampire can protect a mortal from Embrace, leaving instructions for Anubis, the judge of the dead, not to take this particular mortal to his scales. If the mortal is Embraced while under the power of this Discipline, she simply sleeps for a full night and day, and awakens aching and sick, but unharmed.

In order to enact this power, the Child of Osiris must kiss the mortal, usually on the forehead.

System: The vampire spends a point of Willpower and rolls Humanity. If the roll succeeds, the target is immune to the Embrace for a number of months equal to the successes rolled. The player can spend a *dot* of Willpower to make the effect permanent. Note that this Discipline does not protect against any other form of death than the Embrace. If a vampire drains the unfortunate victim dry and then shoots her in the head, she dies just the same. However, the difficulty to avoid degeneration when killing or harming someone under protection of this power is increased by three.

••••• •• Bring Forth the Dawn

This power does not actually cause the sun to rise, but rather triggers the daysleep in Kindred. The Child simply gestures, and the target's Beast responds as though the sun had just risen outside. The Child can then beat a hasty retreat — or stake and behead the vampire now lying helpless before him.

System: The player spends a blood point for each vampire to be affected and rolls Manipulation + Occult in a contested roll against each target's Humanity or Path (both rolls at difficulty 7). If the target wins, the power fails. If the Child wins, however, all affected vampires fall asleep for a number of hours equal to the Child's net successes. Followers of Set and other bloodlines that share their weakness suffer a -2 to their dice pool for this roll. Any Disciplines or Thaumaturgy rituals which protect the Kindred during their sleep also work in defending against this level of Bardo.

••••• ••• Mummification

The Children of Osiris have an uneasy relationship with destroying other vampires. They would prefer not to do so, but some Kindred are too evil to be allowed to exist. For the vampires that straddle the line — that are wicked, but retain a spark of Humanity — the Children sometimes use Mummification.

This long ritual allows a vampire to be put into torpor for as long as the Child wishes. The target can attempt to struggle free, but only once per century. Once the vampire is mummified, the Children usually seal her up in a deep tomb, where (hopefully) she will remain undisturbed.

System: The target must be immobilized, ritually bound in strips of fabric, and prepared with incense and special herbs. The player then rolls Willpower in a contested action against the target's Willpower (both difficulty 8). If the Child wins, the target enters torpor. If the victim wins, he remains awake and the ritual cannot be completed for another night (meaning that resistance is usually temporary). The target can also attempt to shake the spell free once per century, with a Willpower roll (difficulty 9).

Ghouls can also be mummified, but they get no chance to escape.

••••• •••• Ra's Blessing

This ritual is difficult, but allows the vampire to accomplish the impossible — walking in sunlight, fully experiencing the day once more. Gaining Ra's Blessing requires a month-long period of fasting and meditation, at the end of which the character might be granted the chance to spend a few precious hours in sunlight. Even this brief period, however, can bolster the character's Humanity.

System: After completing the month of contemplation, the character ritually washes herself and prepares to greet the dawn. The player spends 10 blood points and rolls Humanity (difficulty 9). Every success allows the character to withstand the sunlight as if she were mortal for a single hour. If the roll fails or botches, the character cannot attempt Ra's Blessing for a decade.

If the roll succeeds, though, the character can use the reaffirmation of seeing sunlight as a way to boost her Humanity and Virtues. For every hour spent under the sun, the Child can roll his Humanity, or one of his Virtues, against a difficulty of 9. Success means that trait is raised by one, while failure or botching this room means no gain.

Daimoinon

These are the mysteries of the Baali, black arts torn whole and beating from the sorcerer-kings of ancient cultures and prehistoric civilizations, incoherent memories passed from tome to tongue, hearkening to times of oblivion. They are sibilant secrets in which all begins to end and begin again. With every new night and novice brought into the circle, the telling grows shorter.

• Sense the Sin

A real mark always convinces himself. The most dangerous Baali aren't the ones that use extortion, threats, or over displays of power; the most dangerous Demons simply know how to talk their victims into cutting their own throats. This power allows the Baali to find a target's particular vice.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy against living or undead beings; the difficulty is equal to the subject's Self-Control or Instinct +4. If successful, the Baali can sense the subject's greatest weakness. The significance of this information is dictated by the degree of success: One success might determine a low Virtue, weak Willpower, or a poorly defended avenue of approach, while two might yield a closely guarded secret or conversational misstep. Three or more yields a central derangement or formative trauma from the subject's past.

•• Fear of the Void Below

Once the Baali has mastered reading a subject's darkest secrets, he can reach into the victim's mind and twist what he finds there. The shock of feeling one's most deeply held beliefs and darkest fears manipulated can send the victim into catatonia or fits of panic.

System: The Baali must first employ Sense the Sin (above) or use some other method to discern the tragic flaw of the target. She must then speak to the target, playing upon his inadequacies and the inescapable consequences of his shortcomings. A successful Wits + Intimidation roll (difficulty of the subject's Courage +4) drives the victim into fits of terror (one success), mindless panic-borne flight similar to Rötschreck (two successes), or even unconsciousness (three or more successes). All effects last for the remainder of the scene. Kindred targets may resist with a Courage roll (difficulty equal to the Baali's Willpower) — they are accustomed to dealing with their Beasts. If the Kindred target garners more successes than the Baali did on her original roll, he resists the power completely.

••• Conflagration

Not all of the Baali's powers are designed for manipulation and subtlety. The Demons can also call up the fire from the realms of their infernal patrons, hurling it at their enemies in exultation of the Outer Dark. This fire spreads and burns normally, but at the moment of creation it is black and cold, as though drawn from a place where terrestrial physics do not apply.

System: The player spends a blood point. This creates a bolt of black flame that inflicts one die of aggravated damage; more blood points may be spent to increase the size and damage of the flame. Such fires are fleeting and dissipate at the end of the turn, unless the Baali continues to spend blood points on Conflagration over several turns, gradually creating a larger flame. The player also rolls Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 6) to hit his target, who may dodge as normal. Vampires confronted with this black fire make Rötschreck tests as if confronted with a similar quantity of normal flame.

•••• Psychomachia

With this power, the Baali combines his ability to read the psyche of a victim with the ability to summon up matter from the Outer Dark. Psychomachia pits a victim against the most dangerous, shameful parts of her own subconscious.

System: The vampire, after learning the targets tragic flaw (such as after using Sense the Sin, above), forces the subject's player to roll her lowest Virtue (difficulty 6). Failing this roll pits the target against an apparition summoned from her darker self, perceptible to the subject only. The target may see or feel his abusive father,

a long-dead lover, a childhood bogeyman, or (for Kindred victims) even the Beast itself. A botch indicates the target has been overwhelmed and frenzies — or, worse, becomes possessed by his inner demons.

This imaginary antagonist may be wholly narrated, or assigned Traits equivalent or slightly inferior to the victim's, at the Storyteller's option. All injuries sustained by the target in such an encounter are illusory (substitute catatonia or torpor for death as appropriate) and vanish upon the phantasm's defeat or the Baali's loss of concentration.

••••• Condemnation

The Baali levies a curse upon the victim. The more skillful in her dark studies the Baali has become, the more dire the curse is likely to be. Legend states that some Baali can wield curses so foul that the victims attempt suicide after a single night — only to find that they can no longer die.

System: An Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty equal to the subject's Willpower) dictates the length and severity of the curse. Successes must be split between both these effects, as per the sidebar below.

The player must split successes between effect and duration – curses with zero successes allotted to duration last for one night. For example, if the Baali's player rolls four successes, she can inflict a two-success curse for one month, a three-success curse for up to week, or a four-success curse for one night. At any time, the Baali may choose to end the curse. Storytellers should feel free to invent creative or story-appropriate curses.

••••• • Concordance

The Baali makes a Devil's bargain and takes the unholy nature of his masters into his own being. This warps his body both to his detriment and benefit. A truly dedicated Demon might make numerous such pacts, growing more grotesque and more powerful each time.

System: The most typical manifestation of this power incorporates immunity to the damaging effects of fire, though other equivalently-powered assets may be available at the Storyteller's option. Most of these tributes take the form of left-handed "gifts" with unforeseen consequences (a telltale bronze tint to flame-resistant flesh, a vestigial set of wings, visible talons or horns that cannot be concealed, etc.). This Discipline may be purchased more than once at greater cost to body and soul. (The current *shaitan* is said to have been so gnarled and twisted by the Masters as to be no longer even remotely mistakable for human.)

Note that three of the banes particular to the Baali — piety, vulnerability to sunlight, and dependency on blood for sustenance — may not be overcome by this Discipline under any circumstances. In the end, it is up to the Storyteller's discretion what the Baali can or cannot withstand.

••••• •• Summon the Herald of Topheth

Using the same skill that allows for calling up demon-fire, the Baali can call a minion of his masters to Earth. Although the names assigned them differ (angel, demon, daeva, djinn, efreet, malakim, shedim, and

Successes	Duration	Example
1 success	Up to one week	"No voice shall be lent your lying tongue." — All Subterfuge rolls suffer a +3 difficulty.
2 successes	One month	"Sicken and wither, infidel… a babe's weakness upon you." — All Strength rolls suffer a +2 difficulty, or vampire cannot use blood to boost Strength.
3 successes	One year	"Reap this bitter harvest — may your closest friends turn foe." — The character's friends do not trust him. This can have any number of mechanical effects (higher difficulty on Social rolls, friends might be more prone to frenzy around the character) at the Storyteller's discretion.
4 successes	Ten years	"Barren be thy seed and the loins of all your line." — The character becomes sterile or barren, or (if Kindred) cannot Embrace childer or create ghouls.
5 successes	Permanent	"The mark of doom — all you touch must fail." — Simple failures are considered botches while the curse is in effect.

countless others), the end results are the same. This being is under the Baali's control, at least for a short time after being summoned. Yet scholars who have studied the blasphemous rite by which this Discipline is enacted note that no provision is made for *banishing* the Herald.

System: To summon a Herald of Topheth, the Demon must spend at least three blood points and perform an infernal ceremony. Heralds of Topheth have the following stats: Attributes 10/7/3, Abilities (15 points worth), Willpower 8, Disciplines (10 points worth), Fortitude of at least 3, and the capacity to heal one health level at least every other round. Storytellers should feel free to alter these guidelines based on the power level of the troupe and the form the Herald takes. Though most celestial beings chafe at the notion of wearing a single shape, many adopt those common to myth and legend; preternatural succubi or angels, reptilian horrors, and bat-winged monsters are among the most often seen.

••••• ••• Contagion

The most damaging disease is human sin. Pandora learned it to her detriment, as did the ungrateful and impolite denizens of Sodom. The Baali, of course, revel in the slow decay of human settlements, and Methuselahs of the bloodline learn to infect a mortal community with jealousy, slander, hate, and bigotry. Crime and violence soar, petty angers give rise to seething hatreds, and local economies take a downward spiral. Marriages end over trivial quarrels and the world becomes a nastier place in general. In the history of the Baali, entire towns and villages have been temporarily enslaved to an infernal master's will.

System: Successes garnered on an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 9) must be divided between the intensity and the area of the desired effect – at least two successes are needed to cover both area and effect. Sufficiently high degrees of Auspex or powers that detect demons may be able to pick up on this vague, malevolent aura; otherwise they will simply assume that times have taken a dire change for the worse.

Successes	Area	Effect
1 success	Immediate vicinity	Ill-tempered/out-of-sorts behavior
2 successes	An office complex	Civil/domestic unrest, prejudice
3 successes	A city block	Angry (even riotous) dissent
4 successes	A stadium or apartment complex	Bar-brawls,hate crimes, blood in the streets
5+ successes	An entire city	A throng of blood thirsty single-minded Philistines

••••• •••• Call the Great Beast

This Discipline is largely theoretical. Baali have, in the past, boasted that their most powerful elders know a ritual that can tear a rift to the Outer Dark and allow the creatures that dwell there into our world. Occasionally, a vampire destroys a Baali and sees the beginnings of such a ritual carved on a wall or tattooed onto a minion's flesh. But even among the Kindred who know of the Baali and what they are capable of, the ability to Call the Great Beast doesn't meet with much credence. This isn't because the Kindred don't think it's possible, but because they realize that if a Demon ever succeeded in using it, there wouldn't be much to be done anyway.

System: The preparatory ritual requires a tremendous investment of time and sacrifice; veiled allusions such as "fivescore souls, plucked clean and whole" and "when three times sets the hooded sun" indicate a selective sacrificial rite spanning days, nights, and dozens of victims. (Deviation or imperfection in this litany may well have unforeseen consequences, ranging from simple failure to unwelcome demonic attention)

At this point, the high priest expends *all* of his permanent Willpower and releases his consciousness in a desperate attempt to breach the gulf Beyond, becoming an empty vessel for whatever will most effectively end the world as your chronicle knows it. You're the Storyteller — what would the Devil do to your world?

(Call the Great Beast has two main functions in the chronicle. It's either a plot device that the characters must work to prevent, or a means to change the world of **Vampire** into a demon-infested apocalypse. Either is useful, but it's not the sort of power that a vampire just pulls out casually.)

Flight

Gargoyles possess a fourth in-clan Discipline, called Flight. All Gargoyles start with a free dot, and it can be increased like any other Discipline. As the Gargoyle gains dots of Flight, he becomes capable of flying faster, as follows:

• The character cannot actually fly, but can soar like a hang-glider. He also cannot carry anything (he needs his hands to help steer). Maximum speed is equal to prevailing winds, or 15 miles/25 kilometers per hour in calm air.

•• The character can make a running takeoff and carry 20 pounds/10 kilograms while flying. Maximum speed is 30 miles/50 kilometers per hour.

••• The character can make a straight, vertical takeoff if unencumbered, or can make a running takeoff carrying up to 50 pounds/25 kg. Maximum air speed is 45 miles/70 kilometers per hour.

•••• The character can now make a vertical takeoff with up to 50 pounds/25 kg of baggage, but can carry up to 100 pounds/45 kg while flying. Maximum speed is 60 miles/95 kilometers per hour.

••••• The character can now carry up to 200 pounds/90 kg, easily enough to carry away an adult person (or vampire). Maximum speed is 75 miles/120 kilometers per hour.

Further dots in the Discipline add 100 pounds/45 kg of weight and 20 miles/30 kilometers per hour to the speed. Gargoyles don't think of Flight as a Discipline. To them, it's just flight, part and parcel to being a Gargoyle, and may be baffled by notions such as teaching it to other vampires.

Koldunic Sorcery

The actual casting of Koldunic sorcery requires more than a clumsy exertion of will. Such magic demands perfection of form and mastery of the appropriate lore. The caster's player spends one blood point and rolls (Attribute) + Occult against a difficulty of the power's level + 3, with the specific Attribute listed for each path or "way." Vampires always use the base Attribute, ignoring any bonuses gained from blood expenditure or other Disciplines. All kolduns must select one of the ways listed below as their primary path.

The Way of Earth

Capable of great destruction and great healing, the earth is the womb of life and the sepulcher of death. It drinks all blood violently spilled upon its soil, and so mirrors the vampire. It is by association with the earth as a source of strength that a koldun enacts his will.

Attribute: Stamina

• Grasping Soil

A koldun invoking this power may command earth to rise in a spray of dirt and crawl up a victim's legs. This power can only command soil, not stone, and may only target victims standing on the earth.

System: The koldun may direct any patch of earth within a 100-foot/30-meter radius to ensnare a target for two turns per success rolled. Animated dirt ascends and constricts midway between the victim's knees and hips, holding her fast unless her player scores five successes on Strength + Survival roll (difficulty 6). It is also possible to use this power as an attack, in which case the grasping earth crushes once and then releases. Used in this manner, each success on the casting inflicts one level of lethal damage. Such damage manifests as broken legs and crushed feet.

•• Endurance of Stone

Drawing the essence of earth into himself, a koldun may gain a measure of its preternatural resilience. Under the effects of this power, a vampire's skin resembles a horrid fusion of flesh and stone that cracks and flows impossibly with every movement.

System: A successful activation roll grants the koldun two extra dots of Stamina for the rest of the scene. These dots are considered part of the character's natural Stamina and may aid in any uses of that Attribute, including soak.

••• Hungry Earth

Expanding on the power of Grasping Soil, a koldun may use this power to drag a victim into the earth. He need only gesture and the soil beneath his victim opens like the maw of a great beast. This power may ensnare any victim who stands upon the earth within 100 feet/30 meters of the koldun.

System: Like Grasping Soil, every success on the activation roll leaves the victim immobile for one turn. However, the difficulty of the Strength + Survival roll to break free increases to 8 and doing so still requires five successes. As the earth continues to shift and grasp while the power remains active, this roll must be made as a single (though repeatable) attempt rather than an extended test. In addition, beings trapped in the crushing pit suffer one level of lethal damage each turn. Beings capable of soaking this damage may do so, but at difficulty 7. At the end of the power's duration, the earth yawns once more to release the victim.

•••• Root of Vitality

As with Hungry Earth, the koldun may direct the land to bury any target standing on the earth within a 100-foot/30-meter radius. Yet this power is far more benevolent in its intent, if no less disturbing in its manifestation. The soil ripples, parting and closing like some obscene womb as it draws the target a full yard beneath the surface. Living beings entombed in this fashion do not suffocate, as the enchanted soil pumps air from above in undulating breaths. Better still, the fertile essence of the earth presses upon her flesh and restores it to new health. Still, the process is highly disturbing and unnatural, especially as targets remain wholly aware in silent, helpless immobility for the full duration. It is possible for a koldun to heal himself with this power.

System: The player spends as many blood points as desired (which may require multiple turns depending on Generation) and makes the activation roll. Each success permits the earth to heal two levels of bashing damage or one level of lethal damage. Healing aggravated damage requires two successes per level. The total number of health levels that may be restored with each use of this power is the number of blood points invested or the number of successes on the activation roll, whichever is lower. Any blood points spent beyond the number of successes drain away to no effect. The actual healing process takes one turn per bashing level, one minute per lethal level, and one hour per aggravated level. Once the healing is complete or the power is interrupted through determined excavation, the earth expels the target back to the surface.

••••• Kupala's Fury

Mortals pray in fear when the mountains shake. They fear the wrath of the Old Gods, and rightfully so. This is not a power used lightly or capriciously, because it represents one of the greatest weapons available to Koldunic Sorcery.

System: This power requires a Willpower point in addition to the usual cost and activation roll. The koldun smites the earth with his fist, and his anger flows through the soil to any target in his line of sight. The quake erupts outward from that point, inflicting 10 dice of lethal damage on everything and everyone in the area of effect. Most wooden structures collapse entirely and even buildings of concrete and steel may grow cracked and pitted with superficial damage from the shaking earth. This tremor lasts one turn and affects an area determined by the number of successes rolled. It is not possible to apply fewer successes than those rolled.

Successes	Area
1 success	One house or single storefront
2 successes	Five lesser structures or a small city block
3 successes	An entire side street or a large city block
4 successes	Multiple square blocks or a large structure (like a stadium)
5 successes	An entire neighborhood or massive industrial complex

The Way of Wind

Subtler than mastery over earth, this way evokes the air in the breath of the living and last rattle of a dying man. In stillness or motion, koldun turn all aspects of air to their unliving design.

Attribute: Perception

• Breath of Whispers

Even in their absence, koldun instill deep fear in their servants. This power carries the vampire's words on a light breeze and returns with the target's reply. The vampire need only address the target by name and forcibly mimic a deep exhalation of breath as he speaks his message.

System: Every time the koldun wishes to send a new message via this power, his player makes the usual activation roll. However, the player need only spend blood the first time the power is used during a given scene. Each success permits one turn of speech. After the vampire concludes the message, swift winds carry it to its destination. Within a minute, the target hears the koldun as if the vampire whispered in his ear. He may reply or remain silent, but anything he says within a number of turns equal to the koldun's successes flies back to the koldun. This power may bring words to anyone within a mile (one and a half kilometers) who is not in a sealed room. While using this power, a koldun must concentrate fully. Any disturbance breaks the communication.

•• Biting Gale

Vengeful koldun sought to invoke a wind as chill as air atop the Carpathian Mountains. This power achieves that end, unleashing a cutting wind that can freeze a man's blood in his veins as it swirls through an

area of his choosing. Besides its obvious combat applications, this power also facilitates a dramatic entrance for those so inclined.

System: With a successful activation roll, the koldun summons a freezing wind within a maximum of a 100-yard/meter radius. Anyone caught in this frigid blast suffers one die of bashing damage each turn (which may be soaked normally), loses two dice from all Dexterity pools, and moves at half normal speed. The winds last as long as the koldun wills, provided he maintains concentration. Any non-reflexive actions on the part of the vampire cause the winds to still and dissipate. This includes any movement.

••• Breeze of Lethargy

Although they cannot induce immediate sleep, the winds evoked by this power bring growing exhaustion and numbing weariness through every muscle. Victims of this power often smell a hint of bittersweet smoke before they fall entranced.

System: For two turns per success, the koldun creates a wind inflicting extreme lethargy within a 200-foot/60-meter radius. Players of characters caught in this wind must roll Stamina + Survival (difficulty 8). This roll is made once every ten minutes of exposure. Failure means the character halves all dice pools involving physical actions for the remaining duration of the wind and halves all movement rates for the scene. A botch puts the character to sleep (or a state of light torpor for vampires) for the scene. Sleeping characters awaken if prodded, shaken, or otherwise manhandled, though they move slowly and may suffer halved dice pools if the wind persists.

•••• Ride the Tempest

A koldun employing this power moves at incredible speeds as he rides along the winds. While traveling with this power, a vampire assumes a blurred form that coalesces as he reaches his destination.

System: With a successful activation roll, the koldun fades into the wind and flies at 250 mph/400 kph to his destination. This power cannot effectively function in caves, buildings, or other enclosed areas. Outside, the vampire's flight navigates all obstacles. Once the koldun arrives at his destination or the scene ends, the vampire descends to earth and solidifies.

••••• Tempest

Applying fury magnified by blood and will, a koldun may project the full measure of his anger into the night sky. Churning gray clouds blot out stars and moon, unleashing spiraling gusts and a driving downpour of freezing rain. Lightning arcs overhead, with each thunderous flash casting jagged shadows.

System: With a successful activation roll and a point of Willpower (in addition to the usual blood), a koldun may conjure a terrible storm. It takes six hours for the clouds to gather and thicken overhead, minus one hour for every success rolled. If this results in a duration of less than one hour, the clouds blossom outward from directly overhead like a black canopy, filling the sky in mere minutes. Once the clouds form, the rain begins to fall in torrents and the lightning begins. The storm persists at full strength for one hour per success rolled. It gradually dissipates over the hour following that. During the peak of its fury, the storm may cause flooding and certainly chills any exposed mortal to the bone (1 die of unsoakable bashing damage every five minutes of full exposure). Lightning strikes regularly, far more than a usual storm. Indeed, for a cost of one Willpower point, a koldun may direct lightning at a foe using his Perception + Occult (difficulty 6). A successful strike inflicts 10 dice of lethal damage (which can be soaked normally). Only one such attack may be made each turn.

The Way of Water

Largely practiced by koldun with havens near a large water source, this way can raise watery spirit slaves and dash a ship to splinters. More subtly, the vampire may lurk in the depths or conjure illusions to confound and dazzle his foes.

Attribute: Wits

• Pool of Lies

This versatile power creates three-dimensional illusions along the surface of a water source. How a koldun uses such illusions depends on his temperament and will. It is just as easy to feign a divine visitation as a cunning seduction.

System: With a successful activation roll, the koldun may project an illusion on any water surface in line of sight. The illusion may speak and move however the vampire wishes, though it has no substance and cannot step beyond the bounds of the water. The phantom lasts one turn per success rolled, after which it slowly dissipates into fine mist. It is possible to extend this lifespan with subsequent activations of the power, each of which stack in determining final duration. Rolls to extend an illusion's duration add one to the base difficulty, but require no blood. Once an illusion fades away, it must be cast anew.

•• Watery Haven

Just as the Gangrel meld with the earth, so may a koldun with this power sink beneath the water to escape the sun. The vampire does not so much submerge as merge with the water. Though his slumbering form may be visible at odd angles from above, only the most determined splashing can disturb his rest.

System: This power requires no blood. If the player gains two or more successes on the activation roll, the vampire sinks into the water as per the Protean power Earth Meld. A body of water must be at least two feet deep and as large in other dimensions as the vampire's body to contain him. Catching a glimpse of a hidden koldun in the water requires a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8).

••• Fog Over Sea

Moving with the unnatural grace of a ghost, a koldun employing this power may stride across water as readily as land, leaving nary a ripple to mark his passing. Some vampires delight in using this power in conjunction with Pool of Lies to conjure phantasms to attend them.

System: For every success on the activation roll, the koldun may walk on water for one scene or one hour, whichever is longer. A koldun may choose to drop the effects of this power in order to submerge or swim; however, the vampire may not walk on water again unless he reactivates the power.

•••• Minions of the Deep

By dripping his blood into a body of water, a koldun may summon or rouse embodied water elementals to serve him for a night. Such minions are infallibly loyal, if not especially clever. Despite their liquid form, they are solid enough to grab a man and drag him to a watery grave or pummel him like the crashing surf.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and makes the standard activation roll. With success, the player may spend blood to summon elemental minions. This blood must be dripped or flung into a body of water, which may require multiple turns depending on generational limits for blood expenditure.

Once the last drop of blood falls, the water rises into whatever form the koldun desires. The caster may create as many minions as blood points spent, though not more than the total number of successes rolled. Regardless of their form, the spirits have a rating equal to the vampire's Wits in all Traits. These beings have no Knowledges and no Skills apart from Stealth. Further-



more, their Mental and Social Attributes are considered to have a rating of 1 except in passive or defensive situations (such as to resist persuasion or mind-control).

Water elementals soak and otherwise suffer damage as vampires, including from sunlight. Fire harms them less, inflicting bashing damage only. Moreover, the watery creatures may extinguish flames with their liquid bodies, though not without suffering injury. An elemental who leaves the body of water that spawned it suffers one level of aggravated damage per hour. Minions regenerate one level of damage of any kind (including aggravated) each turn they remain in contact with a large body of water, but do not otherwise heal. Unless destroyed, summoned minions last until the next dawn before collapsing into inanimate puddles.

••••• Doom Tide

Many ships lie at the bottom of the Black Sea, shattered by the whirlpools of the koldun. Victims of this power must fight with every ounce of their strength or fall into the whirling, airless depths below.

System: The player spends a Willpower point in addition to the usual blood. For every success on the activation roll, the resulting whirlpool has a radius of five feet/1.5 meters, centered anywhere in the vampire's line of sight. Whirlpools have a base Strength of 15, increasing by 5 dots per success after the first. Victims must successfully oppose this Strength with their own Strength + Survival (difficulty 8) in order to break free. Those who fail are sucked into the depths and pounded with crushing currents. Living beings drown normally, while vampires and other non-breathing creatures simply remain trapped helplessly in the vortex. This power lasts for one scene.

The Way of Fire

The ancient anathema of vampires, the element of fire offers the most powerful and dangerous tool available to koldun. The Way of Fire shares aspects with the Way of Earth, in that it focuses more on magma and fiery rock than pure, naked flame.

Attribute: Manipulation

• Fiery Courage

No vampire can master an element he fears, so this power dims that fear to a mere ember of its former intensity.

System: Once learned, this power is permanent and requires no activation roll or blood. The koldun subtracts his rating in the Way of Fire from the difficulty of Courage rolls to resist Rötschreck from exposure or proximity to flame. This power does not aid in resisting the panic that accompanies sunlight or any other causes apart from actual fire. If this reduces the difficulty of a Courage roll below two, the koldun simply does not succumb to the Red Fear. Koldun never risk Rötschrek from fire and magma they conjure.

•• Combust

The Cainite's eyes flash vivid orange with sorcerous power as superheated air coils around the target. In moments, the target bursts into spontaneous flame.

System: For every success on the activation roll, the target suffers one level of aggravated damage. This attack may be dodged, but not blocked, and can affect living (or unliving) beings at +2 difficulty. It is only possible to make one fiery attack per turn.

••• Wall of Magma

The koldun raises his hand and the earth splits, spraying a wall of glowing magma 10 feet/3 meters high. Normally, this wall forms a 10-foot/3-meter radius circle around the vampire, although the sorcerer can raise other shapes with practice and skill.

System: The wall of magma summoned with this power has a lifespan of two turns per success rolled. If the koldun wishes to release the magma along a shape other than a protective circle, increase the base difficulty by one. Characters cannot approach a wall of molten rock without a Courage roll (difficulty 8), and even then, the close blistering heat inflicts a level of aggravated damage. Actual contact with the lava increases the damage to three levels and raises the soak difficulty to 9, assuming any sort of soak is possible. The koldun takes no damage from his proximity to the summoned magma (although contact with it still damages him as normal).

•••• Heat Wave

The koldun acts as a conduit for steam geysers and channels a blast of desiccating air at a victim within line of sight. This fiery wind appears as a rippling heat wave enveloping the victim. Individuals slain with this gruesome power appear as withered, mummified husks.

System: On a successful activation roll, the victim suffers five levels of lethal damage that may be soaked by beings capable of such. Vampire targets also lose five blood points, regardless of the damage inflicted.

••••• Volcanic Blast

At the final mastery of Way of Fire, a koldun commands lava to explode from the ground in a huge geyser. The molten rock spews across a wide swath before crashing to earth and flowing in all directions. Anything in the path of the molten rock burns, melts, or vaporizes within moments. The caster may direct the lava to erupt anywhere in his line of sight.

System: This power costs one Willpower point in addition to a blood point. For every success on the activation roll, the initial lava burst lasts one turn. The rivers of burning liquid rock then flow sluggishly for twice this duration before suddenly cooling and hardening. Even if an object survives the heat, it now lies trapped beneath the rock. Anything that makes contact with lava (including the koldun) suffers a minimum of three levels of aggravated damage. For objects that don't have health levels, the Storyteller must decide how many turns they last before melting or erupting into their own inferno. A botch on this power opens the lava geyser under an unintended target, possibly the koldun himself.

Melpominee

Named for Melpomene, the Greek Muse of tragedy, the unique Discipline of the Daughters of Cacophony is one of speech and song. The powers of this Discipline explore the various uses of the voice for both benefit and harm. As is the case with mortal art, it is not always clear which of those directions these powers take. No character may have a rating in Melpominee higher than her Performance rating. Melpominee affects the subject's soul as well as the ears; thus, it works perfectly well on deaf subjects, and has caused at least one known breach of the Masquerade due to this effect. Additionally, the powers of Melpominee work only on those who are present when it is used — Daughters of Cacophony cannot record Melpominee effects, send them across radio waves, or have them streamed over the Internet.

Daughters of Cacophony can use some of the powers of the Melpominee Discipline in concert, as it were. If more than one Siren uses the same level of this Discipline simultaneously, the difficulty for the roll falls by one for each Daughter involved beyond the first. The difficulty cannot fall lower than 3, however. The Discipline levels that can benefit from this rule are noted below.

• The Missing Voice

The character can "throw" her voice anywhere within her line of sight. This enables the Daughter to carry on surreptitious conversations, sing duets with herself, or cause any number of distractions. This power can also be combined with other Melpominee powers to disguise their source (and some Daughters use it to conceal the fact that Melpominee powers do not function through recorded media).

System: This power functions automatically as long as the character wills it. However, using The Missing Voice while performing any action other than speech or singing incurs a penalty of two dice on that action due to the disruption of the character's concentration.

•• Phantom Speaker

The Daughter can project her voice to any individual she has personally met. Distance is no object, but it must be night wherever the target presently is. The vampire can sing, talk, or otherwise project her voice in any way she sees fit (including other uses of Melpominee), but she cannot hear what she is saying, and therefore suffers a +1 difficulty to any rolls accompanying her utterance. For instance, the vampire could project her voice to an enemy in an attempt to intimidate him, but would suffer a +1 to the difficulty of the Charisma + Intimidation roll.

System: The player rolls Wits + Performance (difficulty 7) and spends a blood point. Each success allows one turn of speech; three or more successes allow speech for an entire scene.

••• Madrigal

Music has the power to sway the listener, engendering specific emotions through artful lyrics, pounding crescendo, or haunting melody. The Daughters of Cacophony can tap into music's power, forcing listeners to feel whatever they wish. The emotion becomes so powerful that the listener must act, though what a listener does isn't something the Siren can directly control.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Performance (difficulty 7). Each success instills the chosen emotion in a fifth of the Kindred's audience (more than five successes have no additional effect). The Storyteller decides precisely which members of the audience are affected. Characters may resist this power for the duration of the scene with the expenditure of a Willpower point, but only if they have reason to believe that they are

being controlled by outside individuals. The song the vampire sings must also reflect the emotion she wishes to engender — no one's going to mob the concert security no matter how well she sings "High Hopes," but they might if she performs "I Predict a Riot."

Affected individuals should act in accordance with their Natures — enraged Conformists would join a riot but not start one, aroused Bravos may force their attentions on the object of their desire, and jealous Directors may send cronies after their rivals.

Multiple Daughters may use this Discipline in concert.

•••• Siren's Beckoning

The Daughters of Cacophony don't spread madness as surely (or as visibly) as the Malkavians, but their songs are definitely detrimental to one's sanity. With this power, the Daughter can drive any listener to madness. Most of the time, the victim is too fascinated to realize that he should leave the area and block out the music from his mind.

System: Siren's Beckoning requires an extended, resisted roll. The player rolls Manipulation + Performance (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower); the victim resists with a Willpower roll (difficulty equal to the singer's Appearance + Performance). If the singer accumulates five more successes than the victim at any point, the hapless soul acquires a new derangement or Psychological Flaw of the Storyteller's choice. This derangement normally lasts for one night, with an additional night per success over five. With a total of 20 net successes, the Daughter can make it permanent.

Multiple Daughters may use this Discipline in concert.

••••• Virtuosa

Most of the low-level Melpominee powers can only be used on one target at a time. When the Daughter reaches this level of mastery in her Discipline, she can "entertain" a wider audience. Each member of the audience hears the same message.

System: The Daughter may use Phantom Speaker or Siren's Beckoning on a number of targets equal to her Stamina + Performance. The player must spend one blood point for every five targets beyond the first.

••••• • Shattering Crescendo

The Daughter can sing powerfully enough to rend flesh, split skin, and crack bone. While some Kindred unfortunate enough to witness this power make reference to the fact that even mortal singers can shatter glass at the right frequency, others note that volume and intensity don't seem to matter when a Daughter employs Shattering Crescendo. The Siren can sing a soothing lullaby and still kill a target.

System: Use of this power requires that the victim be within hearing range (characters with hearing difficulties — or Heightened Senses — are affected at the same range as other victims). The player spends one blood point and rolls Manipulation + Performance (difficulty of the target's Stamina + Fortitude). Each success inflicts one health level of aggravated damage, which may not be soaked. If using this power on an inanimate object, the Storyteller determines how many dice (if any) the object may use to "soak" and how many successes are needed to completely shatter it.

Multiple Daughters may use this Discipline in concert.

••••• •• Persistent Echo

The Daughter can sing, speak, or even use a Melpominee power and leave the effect hanging in the air, waiting for someone to come along and hear it. The character can control who can trigger her latent song, meaning that combined with Shattering Crescendo or Siren's Beckoning, this power can be used as a trap.

System: The player rolls Stamina + Performance (difficulty 8) and spends a blood point. Each success yields one turn of speech that may be left to be heard later. If the player wishes to time-delay another Melpominee power, the roll for that power must be made at +1 difficulty. The echo stays suspended for a maximum number of nights equal to twice the vampire's Stamina + Performance before fading.

The Kindred may choose to make the echo audible to anyone who stands in her position for the duration of the power — in effect, an endlessly looped mystic recording. Conversely, she may choose for it to fade away once it is heard for the first time. She may also choose to leave it dormant until activated by the presence of a specific individual with whom she is familiar. If the echo is made a one-time-only effect, all traces of the power disappear once the vampire's words echo to the intended recipient.

If a character uses Heightened Senses in an area where an "unactivated" echo exists, he will hear a faint murmur. Three successes on a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 8) are necessary to hear the message, and a botch on this roll will deafen the listener for the rest of the night.

Multiple Daughters may use this Discipline in concert.

Mytherceria

Whatever odd commingling of blood which produced the Kiasyd has led to a number of weird effects, not least of which is the Mytherceria Discipline. This collection of powers mimics the abilities of faeries — or at least, that's the best guess of the Kindred who are familiar with it. The Kiasyd use this power to alter and beguile the minds of their foes, as well as to force others to tell the truth. The Kiasyd do not, in general, teach this Discipline to those outside the bloodline, and supposedly it would require oaths sworn on the lifeblood of the student to learn.

• Folderol

The Kiasyd can cleave truth from lies. The exact effect varies from vampire to vampire. Some Kiasyd experience bleeding from the eyes or ears when they hear a lie, while some Weirdlings' eyes glow when told a falsehood. Whatever the effect, this power detects lies, not mistakes, meaning that a target has to know he is lying in order for this power to work.

System: The character knows when a target is deliberately lying. No roll or expenditure is necessary for this power to work, but the character must deliberately activate it. Note that this power does not provide any insight into what the truth might be, nor does it enable the vampire to tell if a target is simply stating something false that he believes to be true.

•• Fae Sight

The Kiasyd's knowledge of magic isn't just theoretical. Their strangely-colored eyes are capable of detecting the arcane energies of the fae, as well as magic from other, more esoteric sources. They are not, however, capable of using this power to detect the residue of ghosts or vampiric magic.

System: The Kiasyd sees faeries and other fae-touched mortals for what they really are, with no roll required. Additionally, the player can detect any form of magic that does *not* stem from ghosts or the undead, including magic from mages, werewolves, and other such odd sources. The character can recognize these for what they truly are, provided he has seen similar effects before.

••• Aura Absorption

The Kiasyd is capable of seeing images of events and emotions past by touching an object or an area. However, unlike the Auspex Power The Spirit's Touch, this power absorbs the images, making them harder for other beings with similar powers to access. Anyone attempting to use this power, Spirit's Touch, or a similar ability to see what the Kiasyd has seen finds that the images are hard to hold, slipping through his mind's eye like minnows through a stream.

System: The player must make a Perception + Empathy roll. The difficulty is determined by the Storyteller based on the age of the impressions and the mental and spiritual strength of the person who left them. The number of successes determines the amount of information gained, both in terms of images of the scene when the object was being held or touched, and the nature of the person who was holding the object. One scene-type image and one aspect of the person's identity (Nature, Demeanor, aura, name, sex, or age) becomes clear for each success the player garners on the roll. Anyone attempting to use this power or The Spirit's Touch on the same object subsequently must accumulate more successes than the Kiasyd did to get any impression at all. The first Kiasyd's successes subtract from the number of successes scored by anyone trying to read the object thereafter.

•••• Chanjelin Ward

The vampire inscribes a ward on an object, a location, or a person. That ward disorients and befuddles anyone that sees it, meaning that even if an intruder can penetrate a Weirdling's security and steal an object of value, he's unlikely to be able to find his way to the exit. Spiteful Kiasyd use these wards as punishment — one story tells of a Weirdling that drew a ward on an enemy's shirt as dawn approached, and then watched (from safety) as the unfortunate vampire burned in the sun, unable to remember which way to run.

System: The vampire creating the ward inscribes the symbol in a visible location — on a library door, bookshelf, or an individual's clothing — and the player rolls Intelligence + Larceny (difficulty 7 for inanimate objects, or the subject's current Willpower +2). Anyone entering the warded area or touching the warded object loses two dice from her Intelligence dice pools as long as she maintains contact with or proximity to the ward. Additionally, anyone seeing the ward becomes addled and lost unless she succeeds on a Wits + Investigation roll (difficulty 8). The Kiasyd is immune to his own wards. The glyphs last for a duration indicated by the number of successes on the Intelligence + Larceny roll:

Successes	Duration
1 success	One hour
2 successes	One night
3 successes	One week
4 successes	One month
5 successes	One year

••••• The Riddle Phantastique

The Kiasyd whispers a riddle to an opponent, and the riddle consumes his mind. The target can do nothing until he solves the riddle, and no one can help him — answers provided by others, even correct answers, fail to counteract this affliction.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty of the victim's current Willpower). After a successful roll, the victim can do nothing but sit and ponder the Riddle until she accumulates three times the riddler's successes. The subject rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 8, plus or minus the number of derangements the victim has, at the Storyteller's discretion). She makes this roll as soon as she is told the Riddle, and then once per hour until she has gathered enough successes. Should the victim botch on a roll to solve the Riddle, she takes one level of lethal damage as the mystical enigma racks her body, and she loses all successes from the accumulated total. This damage cannot be healed until the Riddle has been solved. The riddler can end this trance by telling the victim the answer, but no one else can.

••••• • Steal the Mind

Legends tell of the Fair Folk taking the memories and faculties of their victims, leaving these hapless people drooling idiots for the rest of their lives. While modern thinking is that these stories actually referred to stroke victims, elder Kiasyd display a power with a similar effect. The victim of Steal the Mind loses his memories and all knowledge he has accumulated. The Kiasyd gains these memories for a short time, and generally uses this time to inscribe them before they revert to the original owner… assuming the Weirdling lets that happen.

System: The player selects a mortal or supernatural target and rolls Perception + Subterfuge (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower). While the Kiasyd has "stolen" her subject's mind, she retains her own consciousness, but has complete access to all of the subject's thoughts and memories. Subjects have no knowledge that they have been affected in this manner, though any attempts to harm them — by the Kiasyd or anyone else — return their wits to them immediately. Subjects have no access to their Knowledges while this power is active, but Talents and most Skills (those that work on muscle memory) are still present. The Storyteller might need to exercise discretion as to which Abilities are lost.

Those who are victims of this power for long periods of time may starve, though they will eat food presented to them. The number of successes determines the duration of the effect, though the Kiasyd may return the subject's mind at any time before this period ends. If the victim dies before the memories return, the Weirdling keeps them. If the Kiasyd kills the target to keep his memory, the character may need to roll for degeneration (see p. 309) depending on what Path they follow — Kiasyd on Humanity must always roll.

Successes	Duration
1 Success	10 minutes
2 Successes	One hour
3 Successes	One night
4 Successes	One week
5 Successes	One month

••••• •• Absorb the Mind

This power, similar to Steal the Mind, allows the vampire to absorb Abilities from her victim. These traits are transferred permanently; the victim loses the knowledge, and the Kindred gains it. Absorb the Mind is an extremely invasive and insidious power, and fortunately only a bare handful of Kindred in the world know of it.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty equal to the target's current Willpower). The target may resist with a Willpower roll (difficulty equal to the Kiasyd's current Willpower). The difference between the two determines the effect. If the target gets more successes, he resists completely and the Kiasyd may never use Absorb the Mind on this target again. The Kiasyd, if successful, may select a combination of Abilities to her satisfaction.

Taking some of a victim's Ability dots may leave a remainder — the Kiasyd need not take all of a subject's dots in a given Ability. For example, a character with three dots in Occult, from whom a Kiasyd steals one, retains an Occult of 2. If a Kiasyd takes fewer dots than

she already has in a given Ability, these points do not serve to raise her own rating. (In the previous example, the Kiasyd would not increase his Occult rating if he already had a rating of one or more, as he took only one dot.) If the Kiasyd fails in an attempt to use this power on a target, no subsequent attempt can be made on that target for a year and a day.

In all cases, the maximum to which the Kiasyd can raise an Ability is the level the target has in that Ability, so if a victim has only one dot in Law and the Kiasyd gets 2 successes, she can't gain 2 dots in Law. Generational restrictions do apply: a Sixth-Generation Kiasyd can have a maximum of seven dots in an Ability, for example. All losses of Abilities on the part of the victim are permanent, though they may be returned to their original levels via experience-point expenditure.

Successes	Effect
1 Success	Steal 1 dot
2 Successes	Steal 2 dots in one Ability
3 Successes	Steal 3 dots in up to two Abilities
4 Successes	Steal 4 dots in up to three Abilities
5 Successes	Steal 5 dots in up to four Abilities

••••• ••• The Grandest Trick

The Kiasyd can fool himself into believing that he is not, and has never been, a vampire. This trick lasts for a short time, during which the character gives up all blessings (but loses all drawbacks) of being Kindred. He retains all of his other knowledge, but the magic of the Grandest Trick deftly prevents him from figuring out the truth (notes that explain the truth vanish, knowledge of clues that would lead him to it don't make sense, etc.). The Grandest Trick is useful for throwing vampire hunters off a character's scent, but also for gathering information that can only be obtained during the day. Rumors among younger Kiasyd also persist that some elders of the bloodline use the Grandest Trick to meet during the day once every 50 years, exchanging documents and letters that, for that day, make no sense to any of them. It is only after the Trick wears off that they remember who they are and can read what their Clanmates wrote.

System: The player spends eight blood points and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). If this roll is successful, the character becomes mortal at the next sunrise for a duration determined by the number of successes on the roll. The Kiasyd knows, however subliminally, the duration of the power, and he automatically attempts to return to safety, should daylight be a problem at the power's end. After this power ends, the Kiasyd retains all memories of his brief return to the world of mortals. During his time as a mortal, the character's Traits are limited to ratings of 5 (which return to their original levels when the character becomes a vampire again), and the character has no access to her Disciplines. Likewise, the character may not use blood points for any vampiric benefits while mortal.

Successes	Duration
1 success	10 minutes
2 successes	One hour
3 successes	Four hours
4 successes	12 hours
5 successes	24 hours

Obeah

The bloodline known in modern nights simply as the Salubri is actually descendant of one half of the ancient Clan. In bygone nights, one might have spoken of "healer" and "warrior" Salubri. In the modern nights, the last vestiges of the warrior Salubri are the *antitribu* of the Clan, and practice their Discipline of Valeren (see p. 474). The rest of the bloodline know the Discipline of Obeah. This Discipline allows the Salubri to judge and even improve a subject's health. As the vampire grows more powerful, Obeah lets her heal a target's soul directly. It is this power that forms the basis of the "soulsucker" charge that dogs the bloodline these nights.

This Discipline gives its practitioners a third eye in the center of the vampire's forehead when the Kindred masters the second level of Obeah.

• Sense Vitality

With a touch, the Salubri can instantaneously read a target's injuries. She may learn how much damage a target has incurred, and therefore make a guess at what must be done to save him. This power can also be used for diagnostic purposes — useful for a victim who can no longer speak.

System: The Salubri must touch the target to see how close to death she is. He must then make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 7). One success on this roll identifies a subject as a mortal, vampire, ghoul, or other



creature. Two successes reveal how many health levels of damage the subject has suffered. Three successes tell how full the subject's blood pool is (if a vampire) or how many blood points she has left in her system (if a mortal or other blood-bearing form of life). Four successes reveal any diseases in the subject's bloodstream. A player may opt to learn the information yielded by a lesser degree of success — for example, a player who accumulates three successes may learn whether or not a subject is a vampire as well as the contents of his blood pool.

Alternately, each success on this roll allows the player to ask the Storyteller one question about the subject's health or health levels. "Was he drugged?" or "Are his wounds aggravated?" are valid questions, but "Did the Sabbat do this?" or "What did the Lupine who attacked him look like?" are not. The Salubri may use this power on herself if she has injuries but has somehow lost the memory of how the wounds were received.

Additionally, at the cost of one blood point, the Salubri may use Empathy for a roll instead of Medicine.

•• Anesthetic Touch

The vampire can ease a target's pain or place him into a deep, soothing sleep with nothing but a touch. This power is intended to heal the pain or succor the mind of willing targets, but the character can, with some effort, employ the power against someone who does not wish it.

System: If the subject is willing to undergo this process, the player spends a blood point and makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to block the subject's pain. This allows the subject to ignore all wound penalties for one turn per success. A second application of this power may be made once the first one has expired, at the cost of another blood point and another Willpower roll. If the subject is unwilling for some reason, the player must make a contested Willpower roll against the subject (difficulty 8).

To put a mortal to sleep, the same system applies. The mortal sleeps for five to 10 hours — whatever his normal sleep cycle is — and regains one temporary Willpower point upon awakening. He sleeps peacefully and does not suffer nightmares or the effects of

any derangements while asleep. He may be awakened normally (or violently).

Kindred, including the Salubri herself, are unaffected by this power — their corpselike bodies are too tied to death.

••• Corpore Sano

The Salubri can heal wounds with a laying-on of hands. The subject feels a warm, tingling sensation over the affected areas as pain leaves the body and flesh knits. The vampire's third eye opens during this process.

System: This power works on any living or undead creature, but the character must touch the actual injury (or the closest part of the victim's body, in the case of internal injuries). Each health level to be healed requires the expenditure of one blood point and one turn of contact. Aggravated wounds may also be healed in this manner, but the vampire must spend two blood points instead of one for each aggravated health level.

•••• Shepherd's Watch

The Salubri with this level of mastery of Obeah can create an invisible barrier between those under his care and those who would do them harm. The Salubri himself must stand among his charges as he generates this barrier; he cannot defend them from afar. Enemies armed with guns or other ranged weapons can still attack, but none may approach closer than a few paces.

System: The player spends two Willpower points. Erecting this barrier is a standard action, but maintaining it from turn to turn or dropping it is a reflexive action. The invisible barrier extends to about a 3-yard/meter radius from the character, and no one outside that barrier may cross it while she maintains the power. Those within it at its creation may leave and return, however. The barrier moves with the Salubri. It cannot be maintained at a distance.

Those who wish to cross the barrier from the outside, whether friendly or hostile, must best the character in an extended, resisted Willpower roll (difficulty equals the opponent's current Willpower for the Salubri, and the Salubri's current Willpower for the opponent). The opponent may cross the barrier as soon as he accumulates three more net successes than the Salubri.

••••• Mens Sana

With this power, the Salubri can heal madness, quieting inner demons and bringing a soul to peace. Indeed, ancient stories of the Salubri state that Saulot used this power to bring sweet, if temporary, relief to his "brother" Malkav. Other, more recent stories claim that Saulot caused Malkav's madness in the first place.

System: The player spends two blood points and rolls Intelligence + Empathy (difficulty 8). The use of Mens Sana takes at least 10 minutes of relatively uninterrupted conversation. Success cures the subject of one derangement of the Salubri player's choice. This power cannot cure a Malkavian of his core derangement, though it alleviates its effects for the rest of the scene. A botch inflicts the same derangement on the Salubri for the rest of the scene. This power may not be used by the Salubri to cure her own derangements.

••••• • Unburdening the Bestial Soul

This power is the leverage that the Tremere have used for years to tarnish the Salubri's name. The Warlocks claim that the Salubri use this power to remove the souls of their victims, alter them in horrible ways, or simply consume them and then make mindless slaves from the blasted husks. The truth is that the Cyclops use this power to rebuild a target's tattered soul, at the expense of their own mental fortitude.

The Salubri draws the subject's soul out of his body, and into the vampire's third eye. There, the vampire repairs the soul. During this time, the target's body is vacant, but alive. It obeys the Salubri's commands (and the vampire must command it to eat and drink, or else it will starve — repairing the soul is not a quick undertaking).

By a similar process, the character can cleanse a person, place, or object of demonic or evil influence. This isn't a simple banishment, however. It is a battle, pitting the Salubri's moral and spiritual purity against whatever malign entity is present. If the Salubri loses the contest, she might lose her own soul in the process.

System: This power may be used to draw out the soul of any character except those with Humanity or Path ratings of 1 or 0 or those who follow particularly inhuman Paths of Enlightenment – some souls are beyond redemption. The player rolls Stamina + Empathy (difficulty of 12 minus the subject's Humanity or Path rating). A botch gives the Salubri the subject's derangement for the remainder of the scene. The Salubri must make eye contact with the subject and the subject must be willing to be subjected to this power.

A soul drawn out in this manner becomes part of the Salubri's soul while the healing process takes place. She may return it to its proper body at any time. While the

soul is within the Salubri, she may spend a permanent Willpower point to restore a point to the subject's Humanity or Path rating. The Salubri may restore a maximum number of points equal to her Empathy rating, and may not raise the subject's Humanity or Path higher than the sum of his relevant Virtues (for example, a character subscribing to Humanity with Conscience 3 and Self-Control 3 could not have his Humanity raised above 6 in this manner).

While a soul is being held by the Salubri, its body is an empty husk, comatose or in torpor, with no motivating force within it. A soul whose body is killed immediately vanishes, its disposition unknown to any (although the Salubri strongly suspect that souls that vanish in this manner are completely and irreversibly destroyed). Killing the body of a drawn-out soul may warrant a Conscience or Conviction roll if the killer knows of the soul's absence, at the Storyteller's discretion.

If used to draw out a demon, the player spends a Willpower point if the subject is willing and the corrupting agent does not resist (a rare occurrence). If the subject is possessed by a conscious entity, the demon (or other foreign consciousness) fights the Salubri for dominance. This takes place via an extended, contested roll of the Salubri's Humanity or Path versus the opponent's Willpower (each party's difficulty is equal to the other's current Willpower). The winner is the first one to achieve three net successes more than the other. If the player fails, the attempt at purification also fails. If the player botches, the demon takes over the Salubri's body. This purification cannot be used on oneself and has no effect on the Beast or an alternate personality.

Once the initial removal has been successfully performed, the player spends a second Willpower point. The Salubri thrusts the demon into a nearby item, animal, or person, trapping the demon in the selected vessel. This must be accomplished within two turns of the Purification and the target must be within physical reach. If this cannot be accomplished, the demon is likely to go free… or find another suitable vessel (such as the Salubri). If the vampire places the demon in a being who is likely to suffer from its presence, the player must make an immediate Conscience or Conviction roll (difficulty 8) if the Storyteller believes that the character's morality would object. A botch, in addition to the normal consequences, releases the demon into the world.

••••• •• Renewed Vigor

At this level of power, the Salubri no longer has to repair a target's body wound by wound. With a touch and a moment's concentration, she can restore the body to full health.

System: The Salubri touches the target and spends a full turn concentrating. The player spends a point of Willpower. At the end of the turn, the target is healed of *all* damage, including aggravated damage. If the character attempts any other action but the laying of hands during this turn, the Willpower point is lost and no healing occurs. The Salubri can use this power on herself.

••••• ••• Safe Passage

The Salubri radiates a non-threatening aura, altering the minds of those around her to seem safe, pleasant, and harmless. Crowds unconsciously part for her, pursuers lose interest, and passers-by are willing to provide assistance. In the event that someone does attempt to do her harm, the rest of the crowd may even protect her.

System: This power is always activate, though the Salubri can turn it off if she so desires. While Safe Passage is active, anyone in a crowd (defined as more than 10 people in close proximity) who wants to harm the Salubri must engage in a contested Willpower roll with the vampire's player (difficulty 6). If the pursuer wins, he may do as he wishes. If the vampire wins, her net successes act as a dice pool penalty on any hostile action the pursuer chooses to take. This manifests as lost interest in the vampire (the pursuers wonders why he is chasing this person rather than doing something more interesting).

Safe Passage can also assist a Salubri in finding help or shelter. The player rolls Charisma + Expression difficulty 7). Each success reduces the difficulty of a subsequent, appropriate Social roll by one. This affects only attempts to gain seemingly harmless or innocent assistance, such as a place to stay or advice on the bad parts of town — a Salubri won't be able to get automatic weapons or low-grade heroin more easily with this power. The effects of this power last until the next sunrise. Safe Passage affects only those who know the Salubri casually or not at all. Anyone who has known her long enough to form an opinion of her cannot be touched by this power.

••••• •••• Unburden the Flesh-Clad Soul

Some few Salubri elders can (or could, at least) achieve an understanding of the soul that allowed them to free it from its fleshly confines. The character allows a willing subject's soul to fly free, able to explore the world as an astral projection and transcend that existence whenever it wishes.

System: The vampire and a willing subject must both enter a deep meditative trance for a minimum of one uninterrupted hour as the Salubri performs the ritual necessary to separate soul from flesh without damaging either. During this period, the player spends a number of blood points equal to twice the permanent Willpower of the subject. At the end of the ritual, the subject's body slips into a coma and dies by the end of the night. Many Tremere and other cautious Kindred warn that the Salubri may misrepresent themselves and convince others to volunteer for a "release" from mortal concerns, when in truth they wish to trap the soul in another plane of existence.

The subject's soul is released from her body and enters the astral plane (such as the Auspex power Psychic Projection on p. 138). This separation is permanent and irreversible. The subject is treated as an astrally-projecting character in terms of rules mechanics. However, she no longer has a silver cord and no longer needs one, as she exists independently of her body. If she is reduced to zero Willpower through astral combat, she loses one point of permanent Willpower and re-forms after a year and a day at the place where this power was used upon her. A character reduced to zero permanent Willpower is destroyed forever.

This power may only be used upon mortals (excluding mages) and vampires who are in Golconda, and the subject must have a full understanding of what this ritual entails — including its permanence and the impossibility of a reversal. The body of a vampire who is Unbound decays at sunrise. It is possible to drink the blood remaining in the vampire's body, but no benefits are gained from an attempt at diablerie. Any attempt to Embrace the body of an Unbound mortal automatically fails. The free-flying soul may choose to dissipate, moving on to whatever awaits beyond death, at any time (and is therefore not a ghost).

The Salubri may use this power on herself, provided she is in Golconda.

Ogham

The Ogham Discipline is only found among the Lhiannan bloodline; they do not (some say cannot) share its secrets with those who do not suffer from their line's curse. All Lhiannan share a splinter of a dark, once-vast, and powerful forest spirit. Ogham allows them to tap into that spirit's power, and into its communion with free spirits of its ilk.

Ogham is a limited form of blood magic; it is neither as flexible nor as powerful as Tremere Thaumaturgy, nor other Clans' blood sorcery, but within the bounds set by the Lhiannan's territorial nature it is quite powerful. Ogham is strongest within a Lhiannan's home territory. More than 50 miles (80 km) from her home territory, the difficulty of using Ogham increases by one across the board, as the Lhiannan's own spirit-shard comes into conflict with unfamiliar local spirit life.

• Consecrate the Grove

The Lhiannan with this ability can use the power of her blood to awaken the spirits of plant life in her territory; they will act in her defense against any unwelcome intruder. Roots tangle feet, grass grasps at boots, trees sway unnaturally in foes' way, and so on. Typically the Lhiannan slits a wrist and whirls in place, or stabs a palm and walks a spiral pattern through the foliage that she wishes to awaken.

System: The player spends from one to three blood points, and the character must undertake the process described above. One blood point rouses the plant life in a 10-foot (3-meter) diameter; two blood points doubles that to 20 feet (6 meters); three makes it 40 feet (12 meters). Tracing the desired area takes one turn per blood point spent.

When the blood has been sown, the player rolls Charisma + Survival (difficulty 6). If the roll garners even one success, the plant life animates as the local spirit world is roused to action. Enemies in the area suffer a -2 to all dice pools from distraction and physical interference. Additionally, interlopers must make a Stamina + Athletics roll to avoid three dice of bashing damage from the local flora (provided the local plant life is capable of such damage; trees and brambles probably are, but a grassy meadow doesn't contain the kind of flora necessary for such an assault). Botching this roll causes the plants to turn on the Lhiannan instead.

This power lasts for one scene.

•• Crimson Woad

The Lhiannan traces mystical runes or script on her own body in vitae, inviting spirits of war to infuse her and gird her for battle. While so imbued, she ignores many wounds and retains greater control of her mind as the spirits direct her Beast. The Lhiannan can also lash out at her enemies with a fierce, blood-borne attack.

System: The character spends one scene tracing the woad on her body; this costs one blood point. The player then rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 7). Each success enables the character to ignore one die of wound penalties from injury. It also subtracts one from the difficulty to avoid frenzy or Rötschreck. This ability lasts through one scene. Additionally, if the character receives more than four health levels of damage, the mystic inscriptions are ruined, and the spirits flee her body.

The Lhiannan may also lash out at her enemies, adding the fury of the woad to her attack. The player may add the number of successes achieved on the above roll to the number of dice rolled for damage for a single close-combat attack (this ability can only be used once per application of Crimson Woad).

••• Inscribe the Curse

The Lhiannan inscribes the name of an enemy on her body in vitae, in whatever language or set of symbols she likes. When the name is so inscribed and the Lhiannan's enemy can see it, baleful spirits become bound to the name and enact a curse upon that enemy. The curse takes effect the moment the victim sees his name scrawled in blood.

System: The player spends three blood points. The Lhiannan must write the foe's name in blood, and it must be displayed on a part of her body visible to intended target in order for Inscribe the Curse to take effect. The player chooses which curse to enact on the target from the list below; the curse takes effect as soon as the target sees his name. He does not need to understand the language used, but if he can comprehend it, he may resist the curse with a Wits + Occult roll (difficulty 8).

The curses described below expire when the glyph is erased, worn off, or defaced by the Lhiannan's taking four or more health levels of damage. The curse works differently depending on where the Lhiannan inscribes the target's name.

Body: Inscribe the name on arms, legs, or belly. The victim's body becomes ill and weak (+2 to all difficulties on Physical rolls, and all wound penalties are increased by one die) or, in the case of Cainites, the victim cannot use blood other than the one point per day necessary to remain active.

Mind: Inscribe the name across the forehead. The foe becomes confused as parts of his mind become disconnected from one another; he must spend one Willpower point in order to attempt any Knowledge roll or use any magical ability or Discipline (other than Celerity, Fortitude, or Potence). This Willpower doesn't buy him a success on that roll; it simply allows him to make it.

Voice: Inscribe the name on the throat. The victim loses the power of speech; he can grunt or moan, but cannot say any words.

Soul: Inscribe the name down the sternum and over the heart. The subject loses his will to resist the Beast: difficulties to avoid frenzy are increased by two. Non-vampires are overcome by fear. The target must flee the Lhiannan's territory unless he succeeds in a Courage roll (difficulty 8).

•••• Moon and Sun

The life of a Cainite is dominated by two celestial bodies: the sun, which she must fear and hate; and the moon, her only safe source of light. A Lhiannan can trace ancient sigils of those two orbs on her body to gain gifts – the spirit of the moon, ever the vampire's friend, blesses her by its current phase, while the sun's spirit wards off some of that orb's fiery curse.

System: The player spends three blood points. The Lhiannan inscribes the desired sigil on her body over the course of 15 minutes. The sigil can be inscribed anywhere, but must be exposed. The character may choose to inscribe both the moon and the sun, but each symbol requires the blood expenditure and 15 minutes to trace it. She can also inscribe these sigils on any voluntary subject.

The sun emblem protects a vampire from the worst effects of fire and sunlight. So long as the symbol remains on the character's body, the player makes a Stamina roll (difficulty 8) when afflicted by fire or sunlight. If the roll is successful, the damage is considered lethal and the player may roll to soak it normally. This roll must be made every time the character faces such damage.

The moon emblem adds one to the difficulties of Self-Control/Instinct rolls to avoid frenzy (but not Courage rolls to avoid Rötschreck). Other effects of the moon emblem depend on the current phase of the moon:

New Moon: Add one die to Dexterity and Stealth dice pools.

Crescent Moon: Add one die to Wits and Occult dice pools.

Half Moon: Add one die to Perception and Subterfuge dice pools.

Gibbous Moon: Add one die to Charisma and Expression dice pools.

Full Moon: Add one die to Strength and Brawl dice pools.

••••• Drink Dry the Earth

The spirit within every Lhiannan is drawn to sites of mystical energy, whether ancient stone circles, faerie rings, or dragon tracks. That spirit-shard can wrest spiritual energy out of those places of power and use it to aid the Lhiannan. A word of caution, however: stealing too much power from any mystical site renders it barren and lifeless, much as if the Cainite had consumed the very blood of the Earth. Also, wizards and werewolves frequent these same sites, and destroying these places can rouse their ire.

System: The player rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty 8). One success determines if a given location is a suitable site (a decision generally left in the Storyteller's hands, though a Lhiannan with a high Domain Background may have such a site within her holdings). Two or more successes on this roll grants a rough idea of the site's power on a scale of 1 to 5. If the character wishes to tap the power of that location, she must spend a scene and one blood point marking various parts of the site with sigils of power, keys for her spirit-shard to unlock the location's energies.

Once the site is prepared, the player makes a second, reflexive Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 7). Any successes beyond the site's power rating are ignored. For each success, the player gains two dice, which she may add to any dice pools (except those to avoid frenzy or Rötschreck) for the remainder of the scene. These dice are gone when used, but the character may tap the same location again from turn to turn. The player must make the Perception + Occult roll each time. Each "drink" of the site's energies depletes it, however, as described below.

The Lhiannan's spirit-shard is a greedy thing, wearing as it does the garb of a Cainite's Beast, and drinks the site's energies recklessly. A Lhiannan can only garner a number of successes equal to 10 times the site's power rating, after which point the area turns into a barren wasteland, incapable of sustaining life. This sort of activity in particular is certain to attract the attention of Lupines or wizards. A site may replenish itself over a period of years. However, a site that is tapped with Drink Dry the Earth at any point during the year is unable to replenish lost dice at all that year, and if the site is completely drained, it is irrevocably dead.

••••• • Inscribe the Forgotten Names

When the Lhiannan reaches this level of Ogham, she reverses the relationship between herself and her spirit-shard and can dominate and extract information from it. The Lhiannan's ancient spirit knows the names of many mythical beings, and it can be bludgeoned into giving the Lhiannan one of those names so that she may invoke such a creature. These beings are dangerous, and not to be trifled with. Many are on a par with Methuselahs.

Inscribe the Forgotten Names allows its wielder to communicate with the being she summons, but it does not give her domination or control over that creature. She must appease it in whatever manner she can, and hope that it does not take offense at being called up.

System: The player spends three blood points. The Lhiannan must spend one half hour undisturbed as blood oozes from her skin to sate the spirit-shard's hunger. At the end of this time, the player rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 9, or 8 if the character has summoned this particular being before). If the roll succeeds, a powerful creature arrives in the immediate vicinity before the end of the current scene.

The Storyteller is free to assign game statistics to any creature summoned. Such creatures have their own desires and demands, and many do not take kindly to being called.

Sanguinus

Sanguinus is the unwholesome Discipline granted to the Blood Brothers by the Tzimisce who created them. A curious relative of Vicissitude, Sanguinus allows vampires who practice it to combine parts of their bodies, loan them out to others, and coordinate their minds and appendages. Even low levels of it are unset-

tling to watch. Use of the higher levels is disgusting, indeed, as flesh parts and exposed organs, atrophied by the Blood Brothers' state of undeath, merge and pulse. Mortals observing the spectacle of this Discipline's more obvious powers must make Courage rolls (difficulty 4), spend a point of Willpower, or flee the area in nausea.

• Brother's Blood

A circle of Blood Brothers is closer than any Sabbat pack, any blood-bound pair of vampiric lovers, any ghoul family. The circle shares flesh, mind, and, of course, blood. The members of the circle can spend blood to heal each other's bodies, no matter how far apart they are.

System: The player spends a blood point, which may be used to heal any member of the circle, regardless of distance from the character. The Blood Brother may also "bank" blood, spending five points to heal another's aggravated wound over the course of several turns. This power takes effect automatically; no roll is necessary. Blood spent by another Frankenstein does *not* count against the maximum amount of vitae the target character can spend per turn.

•• Octopod

The Blood Brother circle can donate limbs and organs to one another. This isn't meant for healing after the battle, but for use *during* the battle. An opponent facing down the Blood Brothers might see one of his opponents grow a second set of legs (making him nearly impossible to knock down), another pair of arms (meaning he can block or parry almost any incoming attack), extra eyes for 360 degree vision, or an extra mouth for an greater blood consumption. Of course, the Frankenstein that gives up the organ might be left a limbless, eyeless, mouthless lump of flesh on the side of the battlefield, but the Blood Brothers never seem to mind that.

System: The "donor" player spends a blood point for each limb or organ he wishes to loan to the other circle member. (Only the donor needs to have this level of mastery of Sanguinus; the recipient may be any other member of the donor's circle.) The loaned organs appear at the end of that turn, in whatever location the recipient wishes — eyes on the back of heads or on the ends of hands have been seen, as have entire heads located between a Blood Brother's legs. Use of this power does not impart any extra attacks, but it may allow for additional sensory input, more blood to be consumed in a single turn, or extra hands to hold weapons or pin down foes. Only external organs may be loaned in this manner — hearts, stomachs, and brains cannot.

••• Gestalt

Blood Brothers share a hive-mind; this ability was one of the guiding principles behind their creation. The Gestalt power is that hive-mind, the ability of the Frankensteins to coordinate silently and perfectly in battle, to avoid mind-controlling powers, and to act in unison.

System: This power confers several benefits on the Blood Brothers. For this power to work, however, every Blood Brother in the circle must spend a blood point. If even one member cannot or will not spend a blood point, this power fails. Once a Blood Brother has met the Final Death, he is no longer a part of the circle, so the power continues to function among the still-undead members of the group. Gestalt lasts for one scene. While this power is active:

• Dominate, Presence, and the like take effect against the highest Willpower rating in the circle. For example, if a vampire attempts to Dominate a Blood Brother under the influence of Gestalt, she must roll against the highest Willpower rating any of the vampires in the circle possesses, even if her subject has the lowest Willpower rating in the circle. Additionally, a Blood Brother affected by powers in this manner drops out of the Gestalt, though Gestalt remains active for others. This mental "fuse" was supposedly created to prevent the entire circle from being Dominated by a vampire looking into the eyes of one Blood Brother.

• Perception difficulties for all Blood Brothers in the circle decrease by three, as they share the sensory input of other vampires in the circle.

• By taking no action other than concentrating, a Blood Brother may "loan" an Ability to another brother. For example, a wounded vampire with Melee 4 may step out of combat and loan a circle-mate with Melee 2 his mastery of that Skill. The "borrowing" vampire makes Ability checks against the loaned Trait as if it were his own.

• The Blood Brothers in the Gestalt may communicate through telepathy, allowing them to coordinate actions. In game terms, only one initiative roll is made for the circle, based on the character with the highest initiative rating (see p. 271).

Not all Blood Brothers in the circle need to have this level of Sanguinus to benefit from the Gestalt. If

a given character does not know this power, though, the player rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 7) when the power is enacted. If this roll fails, the character can still receive loaned Abilities, but gains no other benefits from the Gestalt.

•••• Walk of Caine

The sorcerous theory behind the Blood Brothers reads like a philosophical treatise on the nature of individuality, free will, and hematology. The Frankensteins are not a group of vampires but are one vampire in several bodies, or so goes the theory. As such, any of their characteristics must be viewed as a continuum — they are not individually Twelfth, Eleventh, and Thirteenth Generation, for example, but they are collectively Ninth Generation at any given time. While the metaphysics of this kind of thinking makes most vampires' heads ache, there seems to be something to it. A Blood Brother can draw strength from his circle, lowering his Generation to allow for greater feats of vitae expenditure.

System: Each member of the circle can "donate" one step in Generation. In the example listed above, the vampire of Eleventh Generation could take one step from his two circle-mates and drop to Ninth, but the vampire of Thirteenth Generation couldn't drop lower than Eleventh. No matter how big the circle, no Blood Brother can drop to an effective Generation lower than Fourth. Likewise, a Thirteenth Generation Blood Brother can drop to an effective Generation of Fourteenth, which carries with it the penalties listed for the Fourteenth Generation Flaw (p. 481). (He cannot go to Fifteenth Generation, however.)

As with Gestalt, only one Blood Brother needs to know this power in order to begin the process. Any that don't have Walk of Caine need to make a Stamina + Awareness roll (difficulty 7). If this roll fails, they may not participate in the action.

••••• Coagulated Entity

The Blood Brothers merge into a fleshy, bleeding mound of horror. This juggernaut surges forward, crushing and consuming anything in its path. The Sabbat has learned to its chagrin that if the Blood Brothers are not explicitly told to separate after using this power, they won't. This merger is, apparently, what the Blood Brothers truly want.

System: Every vampire in the circle who wishes to become part of the Coagulated Entity spends three blood points. Three turns after the process begins, the monster is complete and able to act. The vampire of the lowest Generation who is part of the construct guides the creature's actions. The actual Generation of the creature itself, however, is the highest Generation of any vampire present in the construct, less one for each additional vampire present in the construct. (Using the previous example, the Eleventh-Generation vampire would be the guide but the highest Generation is 13, so the overall Entity would be 13 minus 2, or Eleventh Generation.)

The creature's Strength, Stamina, and Perception are equal to the guide's, with a +1 for every additional vampire contained within. (Generational limits do not apply to this creature — through sheer size, a Coagulated Entity may have a Strength of 7 or more.) All physical actions undertaken by the monstrosity gain one extra die to the pool for each vampire beyond the first present in the construct (before splitting dice pools).

Only one vampire in the circle needs to possess Sanguinus at Level Five for this power to work. Body parts tend to shift during the creation of a Coagulated Entity — fanged maws at the ends of hands and eyes atop fleshy stalks have been reported by terrified survivors. Storytellers should feel free to give any bonuses (or penalties) to the construct as they see fit.

A Coagulated Entity may not be staked, as it has too many hearts in unconventional places for any but the blindest luck to impale. It has a vampire's normal seven health levels, plus two for each additional vampire who becomes part of the entity (treat these extra health levels as Bruised). The entity remains congealed for one scene, unless the Storyteller wishes to rule that no one told the Blood Brothers to separate.

Spiritus

The Discipline of Spiritus opens the vampire up to worlds and vistas — and methods of feeding — that most Kindred can never touch. Vampires are spiritually dead, unable to create life. The shamanic ritual that created the Ahrimanes, though, allowed a spiritual connection between the undead and the vast, living world all around them. While the vampire can barely scratch the surface of what living shamans can accomplish, the Discipline of Spiritus is still formidable.

• Aid from Spirits

Spirits are everywhere, but invisible to most living (and unliving) beings. This power allows the vampire to briefly rouse the spirit of an object, making that object perform its intended function better and more efficiently. It in no way makes the spirit well-disposed toward the vampire — not that this usually matters to the Ahrimane.

System: The character touches the object, and the player spends a blood point and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6). If the roll succeeds, the player receives a bonus to her dice pool using that item, equal to the number of successes rolled. For example, if the character uses this power on a gun and the player rolls three successes, she then receives a +3 to her next Firearms roll made with that gun. Unused bonuses fade at the end of the scene, and multiple uses of this power do not combine (the most recent use trumps any previous uses). The character can, however, use the power on multiple objects she uses in the same scene, so long as she has the blood for it.

•• Summon Spirit Beasts

The vampire might not fully understand the link between "animal" and "animal-spirit," but spirits of aggressive animals are usually more than willing to take on a physical body and fight for the vampire. Spirits of curious animals, meanwhile, seem to enjoy unlocking doors or following people. With this power, the Ahrimane can summon up the spirit of an animal indigenous to the area and send it to do what comes naturally.

The spirit assumes the corporeal form of the appropriate animal, and is capable of whatever the animal would normally be able to do. The animal can follow simple telepathic commands, and is slightly more intelligent than a normal animal would be (but still not as intelligent as a person).

System: The animal summoned must be native to the area — just because the local zoo hosts a tiger doesn't mean there are tiger-spirits running about. The player must spend one blood point and roll Charisma + Animal Ken (difficulty 7). The number of successes indicates how long the spirit remains material. The spirits have the same number of health levels their physical counterparts would normally have (see p. 388 for some sample animals traits). If they are reduced to Incapacitated, they discorporate.

Successes	Duration
1 Success	One Turn
2 Successes	Five Turns
3 Successes	One Hour
4 Successes	One Night
5 Successes	One Week

••• Aspect of the Beast

Instead of calling up animal spirits, the vampire learns to emulate aspects of those spirits herself. In this way, she can become faster, stronger, tougher, or gain the special powers of nearly any animal, provided that the spirit is local to the area.

System: The player spends a blood point and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 7). The power lasts for one turn per success, unless otherwise noted. Some examples of aspects are given below, though the player and Storyteller are welcome to make up others:

Beaver's Bite — This makes the Ahrimane's bite strong and sharp enough to cut through almost any substance (though it does no additional damage to living or unliving targets).

Chameleon's Colors — The Ahrimane becomes capable of changing color to suit the environment (-2 difficulties to all Stealth rolls involving hiding).

Ears of the Hare — The Ahrimane can hear as well as a rabbit, reducing the difficulty of Perception rolls involving hearing by two.

Falcon's Eye — The Ahrimane can see great distances as if she had the eyes of a falcon (-3 to all Perception rolls involving vision).

Ferocity of the Cougar — All Courage rolls are made at -2 difficulty.

Leapfrog — This grants the Ahrimane the ability to leap three times the normal height and distance. (See p. 260 for jumping rules.)

Nose of the Hound — The Ahrimane's sense of smell is far greater than that of a mortal. She can even track by scent with on a Perception + Survival roll (difficulty set by Storyteller).

Serpent's Venom — The Ahrimane's bite transmits a venomous toxin that causes two health levels of damage in living victims per turn (see "Poisons and Drugs," p. 301). The damage continues until the toxin is removed or nullified, or until the Ahrimane's spirit power ends.

Sound of the Cricket — This grants the power to produce an annoying, grating sound loud enough to deafen those nearby. The target suffers a +4 to all Perception

rolls related to hearing for the next scene unless he succeeds on a Willpower roll (difficulty 7).

Squirrel's Balance — The Ahrimane can move about in the branches and limbs of trees or across tightropes with little fear of falling. All such Athletics rolls have their difficulties decreased by two.

Strength of the Bear — This gives the Ahrimane two extra dots of Strength.

Swiftness of the Stag — The Ahrimane can move at twice her normal running speed.

•••• Engling Fury

Spirits abound — supposedly *everything*, from one's shirt to the very air, has one. The Ahrimane can take those spirits into herself, break them down, and refresh her own mental reserves. This destroys the spirit, but no repercussions have been reported.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty 8). Every success allows her to regain a point of Willpower, but each use of this power destroys another spirit.

••••• The Wild Beast

The Ahrimane grows leaner, lithe, and strong. She hunches over slightly, her eyes become slitted and catlike, and she grows vicious claws on her hands. Her features become slightly feline, and in this form she is an even more formidable predator than usual. Animals react with fear to the Wild Beast, and mortals see her as a monster — if they see her at all.

System: The change does not require a roll, but the player must spend two blood points. The change raises the vampire's Strength by three, and Dexterity and Stamina each by two. Appearance falls to 0 and Manipulation is reduced by three. The vampire's fangs inflict an extra die of damage, and she grows claws that inflict aggravated damage. The character can see in the dark, and all difficulties involving scent, hearing, and vision fall by two. The character can retain the Wild Beast form for a number of hours every night equal to her Willpower rating.

Temporis

The True Brujah bloodline claims a peculiar Discipline that allows them some control over the flow of time. Masters of Temporis often grow ever more detached from the passage of ages. This, combined with the natural tendency for Sages to grow emotionally and spiritually distant, makes True Brujah elders exceptionally dangerous. They know that all life is finite, and so they feel no compunction about ending it.

• Hourglass of the Mind

Masters of Temporis value patience and clarity. Time is too complex and dangerous to manipulate incautiously or on a whim. Thus, the first power of Temporis focuses entirely on perception and serves as a permanent alteration of a vampire's senses.

System: Once purchased, this Discipline gives a vampire a perfect sense of time. The vampire knows events to the nearest second or better. Moreover, the Cainite knows whenever the flow of time is mystically disturbed by use of Celerity, greater levels of Temporis, mortal wizardry, or stranger things. Sensing disturbances is instinctive and reflexive, though it requires a successful Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 6 for most phenomena, as modified by the Storyteller for distance and intensity).

•• Recurring Contemplation

A vampire with this power may trap a target's mind into reviewing a set of events over and over until interrupted. This power is extremely subtle and ill-suited to combat or other situations rich in sensory stimuli. However, a cunning vampire can trick a sentry into reliving the tedium of his uneventful watch even as the Cainite draws close enough to strike or slip past. Other uses include the maddening infliction of déjà vu to induce paranoia or make a victim question her senses and her sanity.

System: The vampire concentrates on a single victim in his line of sight. The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty equal to the victim's current Willpower). With any successes, the victim falls into a light trance and relives the most recent experiences that preceded her fugue. Alternately, the vampire may evoke another set of specific memories and circumstances from the victim's past, provided that he has some means of telepathically drawing them forth. The recurring events must be relatively benign, insofar as nothing noteworthy happens or nothing happens that would demand the victim's immediate action. Thus, in the example of the sentry, the vampire could entrance him and walk past unobserved, but not if the sentry spotted him before invoking the power. Ordinarily, the fugue lasts one minute per success. If the vampire's player spends a blood point to fuel this power, determine the trance's duration according to the following chart:

Successes	Duration
1 success	one minute
2 successes	10 minutes
3 successes	one hour
4 successes	six hours
5+ successes	one day

Entranced victims are oblivious to their surroundings and the actual flow of time around them. However, the fugue ends immediately if the victim suffers any damage or experiences a sudden jolt to her senses, such as a thunderclap or even a gentle nudge. Normal conversation does not break the trance, although shouting does.

••• Leaden Moment

With this power, a vampire may begin to alter the flow of time itself rather than mere perception of events. The vampire gestures and slows the desired object almost to a dead stop. This power can slow incoming bullets to the pace of drifting clouds, or cause an enemy warrior to see the battlefield quicken to a blur of dizzying carnage even as his every motion slows to a crawl.

System: The player spends one blood point and rolls Intelligence + Occult. The difficulty depends on the size and nature of the target: a single thrown brick is only difficulty 4, while a crazed ghoul has a difficulty of 9. Targets larger than an adult human cannot be affected with Leaden Moment. It is possible to affect small, closely grouped inanimate objects of the same nature as a single object, though this increases the difficulty by two or more at the Storyteller's discretion (a hail of bullets might be difficulty 9). This power may be activated reflexively as a defensive action against projectiles, but otherwise requires a full action on the vampire's initiative. Though failure carries no special penalty apart from wasting blood, a botch means the vampire mistakenly slows himself rather than the target, counting every 1 as a success for that purpose.

If the vampire succeeds, the object slows to one-half its true speed. Every two successes beyond the first reduce this speed by one additional factor, so three successes slows the target to one third its speed, five successes yields quarter speed, etc. The actual mechanics of such slowing depend on the situation. For projectiles, multiply any successes to hit and final damage by the speed factor, rounded down. Similarly apply the speed modifier to the successes of other actions involving Dexterity, Wits, or Strength for slowed characters. Characters with Celerity may spend one blood point to negate one factor of speed reduction at the expense of the usual extra action provided – for example, one blood point cancels a reduction to one half speed, two blood points cancel one third, etc. Leaden Moment lasts one turn for every two successes rolled, rounded up.

•••• Patience of the Norns

The vampire can now suspend an inanimate object in time, keeping it frozen in perfect stasis as time passes at normal speed around it. As with lesser Temporis powers, this stasis has both combat and non-combat applications. True Brujah warriors may halt bullets outright rather than merely slowing their approach or casually sidestep a collapsing building. Higher-level variations on this power preserve precious scrolls and artifacts without risk of mold or decay. If any solid object or nontrivial volume of liquid touches a frozen object that did not touch it at the moment of suspension, the item re-enters time with the same properties and velocity as when it stopped. Thus, touching a suspended object with anything more substantial than a raindrop releases it exactly as it was before it stopped.

System: The player spends two blood points and rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). The vampire must be able to perceive the object that he's suspending, so the player may need to make a Perception + Alertness roll at a difficulty determined by the Storyteller in order to freeze fast-moving objects. If an object exceeds the speed of mortal perception, superhuman perception such as Auspex is required in order to see and stop it (as such, bullets *can* be stopped with this power, but only if the vampire has at least a dot of Auspex). Objects frozen by this power remain halted according to the number of successes rolled:

Successes	Duration
1 success	one turn
2 successes	one minute
3 successes	10 minutes
4 successes	one hour
5 successes	one day
6+ successes	one week per success over 5

Suspended objects retain all energy in their suspension, releasing none to the outside universe. A suspended knife has no kinetic energy as far as the rest of the world is concerned and hangs suspended in mid-air until the power is interrupted or the duration expires. Suspended alchemical or chemical processes also halt, including fire. However, any physical contact more substantial than a falling raindrop breaks the suspension.

••••• Clotho's Gift

With this power, a vampire momentarily accelerates time through himself. In this brief instant, he moves with the preternatural speed of Celerity. Unlike that Discipline, however, the time dilation of Clotho's Gift permits any type of action. A vampire may still move or strike faster than the eye can see, but also think, plan, and even invoke other Disciplines that require full concentration. Only the last presents a danger, as it overtaxes the vampire's unliving stasis.

System: The player spends three blood points and rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 7). For a number of turns equal to half the vampire's Temporis rating, rounded up, the character may take a number of extra actions at her full dice pool equal to the number of successes rolled. These actions follow the timing rules associated with Celerity, but may be used to take any action. A vampire may use the actions granted by Clotho's Gift to activate Disciplines multiple times, even Disciplines that cannot be used more than once in a turn (such as Dominate or Thaumaturgy). However, for every action spent activating a Discipline, the vampire suffers one level of unsoakable lethal damage. Only one important exception exists: Any attempt to stack extra actions through Celerity, subsequent applications of Clotho's Gift or other powers results in immediate Final Death, as the vampire collapses into ash as though burned by the sun.

••••• • Kiss of Lachesis

True Brujah with this power gain limited mastery over the physical age of objects and individuals. It is a trivial matter to accelerate time in a compressed rush, aging a target decades or even centuries in the blink of an eye. It is far more difficult to absorb and unweave entropy, lessening time's hold. This power does not reverse history in any way; it merely reverses or accelerates the effects of time in terms of wear and tear. Moreover, a target cannot regress to an earlier or incomplete state of being. For inanimate objects, this is the point at which they were assembled. For living beings, it is either adult maturity or the time of birth (or its equivalent). For the undead and other corpses, it is the moment of death.

System: In order for the vampire to age a target, the player spends two blood points and rolls Manipulation + Occult. The difficulty equals the target's true physical age in decades or effective physical age in the case of target's that have aged unnaturally, such as by means of this power. This difficulty cannot rise higher than 10 or drop below 4. The vampire touches the target and concentrates for a turn. The Cainite may age the target a maximum number of years as determined by the following table, although his player may choose to apply a lesser effect. The Storyteller remains the final arbiter of time's effect on an object, but living beings aged past their natural lifespan quickly perish.

Successes	Elapsed Time
1 success	up to one year
2 successes	up to five years
3 successes	up to 10 years
4 successes	up to 50 years
5 successes	up to 100 years
6+ successes	up to one century per success over 5

Removing the effects of time requires greater effort, increasing the difficulty of the activation roll by one. In addition, the vampire suffers one level of unsoakable lethal damage for every success her player chooses to apply. As noted, objects cannot return to an earlier or incomplete state. A silver coin may lose its tarnish and seem newly minted, but it will not revert to an unformed block of metal. Likewise, while an adult may revert to the cusp of his adulthood or a child to a newborn, neither could regress to a prenatal state. Also, this power only accounts for damage and wear due to time. A child amputee reverted to a baby will not regenerate her missing arm, nor will a broken sword become anything but finely crafted shards.

In either application, this power does not change a subject's mental or mystical properties. Sentient beings retain all memories and any derangements. A vampire regressed to the point of death remains a vampire, not an inanimate corpse — and the regressed Cainite still remembers all Disciplines and keeps any changes in Generation due to diablerie. However, a vampire aged far enough pales considerably or loses any signs of diablerie from his aura.

••••• •• Cheat the Fates

Where a vampire with Clotho's Gift may accelerate with respect to the world, a vampire with this power may step outside of time entirely. During this brief sojourn, the Cainite perceives the world frozen at a standstill. He can walk about at a leisurely pace to sidestep blows or retreat without being observed. He may even exert force, such as by striking a blow, though no damage is resolved until he re-enters time. However, this power wreaks terrible destruction on a vampire's unliv-

ing body. Used incautiously, a vampire may saunter out of time, only to fall to ash when he returns.

System: The player spends one Willpower point and three blood points, and then rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 7). This power may be activated reflexively as a defensive action; however, such hasty use reduces the maximum duration to a single turn. Failure does nothing apart from wasting effort and blood, while a botch inflicts one level of aggravated damage for every 1 rolled.

If successful, the vampire steps out of time for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled (outside of combat, a turn still only lasts three to five seconds for the purposes of this power). These turns occur for the vampire only while the rest of the world stands still. He may take any action or actions during this time, as many as desired, but he has no access to Disciplines — even innate or perpetual Disciplines such as Potence. The vampire must direct every aspect of Caine's Curse toward holding back time. If the vampire attacks someone in this state, the target cannot dodge or parry. Resolve the attack normally but do not apply damage. However, if the vampire suffers injury, such as by exposure to sunlight or walking through a frozen flame, apply this damage immediately.

The vampire may end his sojourn at any point or wait until the full duration of the power passes, at which point time resumes. Before anything else happens, including resolution of damage inflicted by the vampire, roll one die for every turn the vampire moved out of time. The difficulty is equal to the vampire's Temporis rating. For every success, the Cainite suffers one level of unsoakable aggravated damage. Apply this damage concurrently with damage suffered by halted victims and continue play on the same turn and initiative the vampire stepped out of time.

••••• ••• Clio's Kiss

One of the most subtle manifestations of Temporis' higher levels, this power allows a vampire to reach into the past and summon events, objects, or even individuals. Clio's Kiss, named for the muse of history, is the power to bypass the flow of time and bring something — or someone — forward to the present. Some True Brujah scholars use this to observe history as it truly occurred, while others look to the past for aid or to retrieve lost possessions. At least two coordinated attempts by the True Brujah to summon their Antediluvian progenitor have met with catastrophic failure.

No one knows if a Sage capable of this power remains. The hope is that Clio's Kiss faded from knowledge — the bloodline cannot afford a third attempt.

System: The player spends half of the character's current blood pool, rounded up, and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 8). This power automatically fails if the player spends fewer than five blood points. The number of successes determines the maximum amount of time through which the character may reach:

Successes	Time
1 success	24 hours
2 successes	one month
3 successes	one year
4 successes	10 years
5+ successes	one century per success over 4

When a vampire uses this power successfully, the scene she seeks to retrieve materializes around her, briefly supplanting the current environment. This change extends to a maximum volume of a ballroom or similarly proportioned outdoor space (at Storyteller's discretion). The power affects everyone inside this area by granting them awareness of the summoned events, but the vampire is the only person who may choose to interact with the scene (though he may remain invisible and disembodied). All others must remain incorporeal observers until time reasserts itself and the scene fades. They may move about to change their vantage point, but can take no other action.

If the vampire wants to remove an object or individual from the scene, bringing them forward to the present, the player must spend a *dot* of Willpower. Once this is done, the conjured scene fades away and present reality returns. Only the summoned object or person remains.

This power can never alter the course of history in any significant manner. Should an object or person have a meaningful role yet to play at the time it is removed, the weight of time crashes upon the vampire and he vanishes in its current. Whether such folly results in destruction or propels the vampire far into the future remains unknown and likely unknowable. Likewise, any changes the vampire makes to a summoned scene unravel as soon as he departs. Like a play, time may be altered by the removal of extras, but the script stays the same — however cruel a fate, Carthage must be destroyed.

As always, the Storyteller remains the final judge of what this power can achieve and need not reveal

all limitations until a vampire attempts a change. It is possible to summon a person from a point close to his death, assuming he perished without observers. Likewise, a manuscript destroyed when the Library of Alexandria burned can be called after it is last read. Calling the very *library* from Alexandria would be impossible, not only for its size but also the necessity and significance of its ruins. Finally, the previous form of a currently existing object cannot be summoned, if only because its continued existence validates a role in history. Storytellers need not consider every ramification of paradox, but this power has tremendous potential for abuse and should be adjudicated accordingly.

••••• •••• Tangle Atropos' Hand

This manifestation of Temporis is at once the most flagrant and subtle twist of time — the power of second chances. The existence of such power is only a theory and a fearfully whispered rumor, for who can ever know when or how time itself unraveled and changed?

System: The player spends a dot of Willpower and three blood points and rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 8). Every additional point of permanent Willpower spent beyond the first adds one automatic success to the roll. Use of this power is reflexive and may be done at any moment, even on a turn in which the vampire has used other Disciplines. If successful, the Cainite's mind flashes back to his earlier self with full memory of the events that transpired and now only *might* transpire. This rewind encompasses one turn for every success rolled, and inflicts an equal number of levels of unsoakable aggravated damage. Assuming the vampire does nothing, every event plays out exactly as before. Once the vampire takes a new action of any sort, time shifts to encompass a new future and fate is no longer fixed.

Thanatosis

This Discipline is an exclusive development of the Samedi bloodline, and it is tied intrinsically to the Stiffs' identity and history. Although Thanatosis appears to deal closely with death and the energies of decay, no Giovanni have ever claimed mastery of this power. Outsiders assume the Giovanni must be interested in learning this Discipline. However, the Giovanni view the Samedi with distrust and loathing, while the Samedi take on the Giovanni is usually expressed by muttering a curse on the Clan and spitting blood. Thus, the possibility of an exchange of information approaches nil.

• Hag's Wrinkles

Perpetual rot makes the character's flesh malleable. The Samedi can open large folds in her flesh, storing objects in them like a kangaroo's pouch. She can also massage the slimy flaps of fatty tissue to alter her appearance slightly (though this does nothing for the smell). Other Kindred can learn this Discipline, of course, but if they do not possess the "advantage" of having skin that already falls in droops and folds, large wrinkles and bulges may be visible.

System: This power requires one turn to shape the wrinkles and the expenditure of a blood point. If the power is used to distort a character's features, the Samedi player must roll Stamina + Subterfuge (difficulty 8). Success raises the difficulty to visually identify the character by one and lasts for one hour per success rolled. If the character is attempting to hide a small object (a wallet, a letter, a small pistol), the roll and duration are the same, but all rolls made to see if the object is detected (for example, a pat-down search or a security guard's visual inspection) are at +2 difficulty.

•• Putrefaction

The character can, with a touch, inflict decay upon a target. Hair falls out, teeth loosen, flesh rots and fungus grows on the skin. This power works on targets living and undead, and is obviously quite unsettling both physically and psychologically.

System: This power first requires that the character touch his intended target. The player then rolls Dexterity + Medicine (difficulty of the target's Stamina + Fortitude) and spends a blood point. Success inflicts one health level of lethal damage on the target and removes one point of the victim's Appearance. This Appearance loss returns to vampires at the rate of one point per night, but is permanent for mortals (though plastic surgery can correct mortals' physical disfigurement). If a mortal suffers three or more health levels of damage from repeated uses of this power in one scene, gangrene or other ailments may occur.

Putrefaction can also be used on plants, in which case the target becomes blighted and withered. It cannot, however, be used on inanimate objects such as cars or wooden stakes.

••• Ashes to Ashes

The character collapses into a thick, sticky white powder. While in this form, the character cannot move and is only dimly aware of her surroundings, but is immune to fire and sunlight (meaning that this power is



an effective escape in some situations). The character must take care, though — if the ashes are scattered, she might never be able to reform.

System: The transformation to ashes requires one turn and the expenditure of two blood points. While the character is in ash form, the player must make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9) for any scene in which she wishes her character to be aware of her surroundings. Reforming from the heap of ashes takes one turn. If the character is in a confined space (such as an urn), she explodes from it in a suitably dramatic manner as she brings herself back to full size. If a Samedi is scattered while in this form, one health level and one blood point are lost for each tenth (roughly) of the character that has been dissipated. Five blood points are required to heal each health level lost in this manner. At the Storyteller's discretion, the Samedi may be missing limbs or vital organs (though never the head or the heart) until the missing health levels are healed.

•••• Withering

The Stiff can shrivel and render useless an opponent's limb. This power works on Kindred as well as mortals. Kindred, of course, are horrified by the power, as they tend to think of their bodies as immortal and invulnerable to such ravages.

System: The Samedi must touch the limb he intends to shrivel. The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty equal to the victim's Stamina + Fortitude). Three successes are required for this power to shrink a limb. With one or two successes, the victim takes one health level of bashing damage, which may be soaked normally, but is otherwise unaffected. (If the Withering attempt is successful, the subject suffers no health level of damage, but rather the withering of the limb itself.)

The effects of Withering fade after one night if a vampire or other supernatural creature is the victim, but mortals (including mages) are permanently afflicted unless some type of supernatural healing is used. If this power is used on an arm or leg, the limb instantly becomes useless. If this power is used on an opponent's head, mortal victims die instantly. Kindred lose two points from all Mental Attributes while their heads are shrunken and are unable to use any Disciplines except Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence. Multiple uses of this power on the same appendage have no additional effect.

••••• Necrosis

A more horrific and potent form of Putrefaction, this power causes flesh to decay and slough off, exposing the bone beneath. Use of this power can render an opponent unable to move from lack of muscle tissue.

System: The Samedi must make contact with the victim. The player spends two blood points and rolls Dexterity + Medicine (difficulty of the target's Stamina + Fortitude). The victim takes a number of health levels of lethal damage equal to the number of successes rolled and suffers additional effects as listed below.

Successes	Effects
1 success	No additional effects
2 successes	Lose one point of Appearance
3 successes	Lose a point each of Appearance and Dexterity
4 successes	Lose a point each of Appearance, Dexterity, and Strength
5+ successes	Lose two points of Appearance and one each of Dexterity and Strength

Attributes lost in this manner are regained when all damage from the Necrosis attack is healed. If a victim is reduced to zero Strength or Dexterity, he is unable to move except for weak flailing and crawling but may still use Disciplines and spend blood points normally.

••••• • Creeping Infection

Rumors state that Samedi, especially elders, are infectious, that their presence or touch causes a wasting disease. This power might be the source of these rumors. Creeping Infection allows the Samedi to use Putrefaction, Withering, or Necrosis, but prevent the Discipline from taking effect until the Samedi is well away. This power allows for subtle curses, or insurance against someone who might hire the Samedi and then refuse to pay up.

System: The player must successfully roll for a use of Putrefaction, Withering, or Necrosis, as above, and may delay the effect for a number of months equal to the Samedi's Stamina. The player may spend a blood point at any time during this period in order to activate the dormant power. If the Creeping Infection is not used before the end of its duration, it fades away with no effect.

••••• •• Dust to Dust

With this power, the Samedi retains cohesion, awareness, and mobility while in ash form. While not as impressive as the Tzimisce Horrid Form, a clever Stiff can find many tactical uses for such a power.

System: While a pile of ash, the Samedi remains fully conscious and may use any Discipline powers that being a pile of dust would permit (for instance, Majesty will make the pile of dust very impressive, and no maid in her right mind would dare sweep it up). The character cannot be blown apart by high winds, and any deliberate attempt to separate the pile of ash may be resisted with a die pool equaling the character's combined Strength, Stamina, Potence, and Fortitude. The character may move voluntarily at a speed no higher than that at which a pile of normal dust would be blown by the wind, even if he is indoors. He does not have to move in the direction of the prevailing air currents, and may "flatten" himself by spreading his ashes thinly so as to slip under doors and through cracks. This power functions like Ashes to Ashes in all other respects.

••••• ••• Putrescent Servitude

The practice of creating zombified servants is an old one in vodoun, though most powerful Samedi can perform feats of reanimation that put the finest *houngan* to shame. The Stiff can raise a recently dead person as an undead servant. The zombie can't think critically or move faster than a quick walk, but it is tough, strong, and unquestioningly loyal.

System: The first application of this power allows the Samedi to feed some of her blood to a recently dead corpse (maximum time since death equal to the Samedi's Stamina in weeks) in order to animate it. Three blood points must be spent to bring the corpse back to a semblance of life. A reanimated corpse has the same Physical Attributes as it did in life. It is capable of limited reasoning (reduce all Mental Attributes by one), but free thought is beyond it and the only person it can clearly understand is its master or an individual who its master has directed it to obey. Reanimated corpses possess two levels of Fortitude and three extra health levels. They suffer no dice pool penalties from wounds until they lose their last health level, at which point they collapse and cannot be reanimated again.

A reanimated corpse crumbles to dust at the third sunrise after its creation. Its "lifespan" can be extended by feeding it more blood at creation — one blood point per extra night.

This power can also be used on a mortal. The Samedi creates a ghoul in the normal fashion, by feeding the subject one blood point. The player then rolls Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty equal to the mortal's perma-

nent Willpower). Three or more successes are required to turn the mortal into a zombie. If this roll succeeds, the mortal loses all free will, becoming completely subjugated to the Samedi's command. The mortal may try to break free once per night by rolling his Willpower (difficulty equal to the Samedi's Manipulation + Leadership). If the mortal frees himself, he is still considered a ghoul but regains his free will and normal Mental and Social Attributes (see below). A mortal who botches his Willpower roll or who becomes blood-bound to the Samedi may never again attempt to break free.

A mortal under the influence of Putrescent Servitude becomes pale and corpselike. He loses one point from all Social and Mental Attributes (to a minimum value of one). He gains three extra health levels and takes no dice pool penalties from injuries until he reaches Incapacitated, at which point he collapses. One more lethal wound will kill him once he reaches this point. The mortal also gains one level of Potence, as a normal ghoul would, and has the potential to learn other Disciplines if the Samedi feels inclined to teach him.

A ghoul zombie who goes a month without vampiric blood loses all benefits of being a ghoul, as would normally occur. He also loses all effects of this power and regains his free will, though he may still be blood-bound to his master.

Valeren

Valeren is a warrior's Discipline, a holdover from the nights when warrior Salubri acted as noble fighters and Kindred knights. The Discipline is still applicable to the modern nights, but the Salubri *antitribu* put it to decidedly more vicious ends.

Like Obeah, Valeren imparts its practitioners with the fabled third eye of Saulot. The third eye appears at the time the vampire masters the second level of Valeren. The precise nature and purpose of the eye are all but unknown to vampires outside the Salubri *antitribu*. Some suspect the eye grants them sight beyond sight, while others venture that the eye allows them to see the infernal taint in the non-Sabbat Salubri themselves.

• Sense Vitality

A healer learns a subject's illnesses to cure them. The Salubri *antitribu*, however, learn how close to death a target is so that they may hasten the process.

System: This power works identically to the Obeah power of the same name (p. 457).

•• Anesthetic Touch

The Salubri *antitribu* can ameliorate a subject's pain, allowing him to bolster a ghoul's effectiveness in combat. This power can also put a mortal to sleep, which has obvious applications for escaping human scrutiny (though the Fury is probably just as likely to kill the mortal in question).

System: This power works identically to the Obeah power of the same name (p. 458).

••• Burning Touch

The character's hands bring searing pain, as though the target is being burnt with red-hot metal. Although the power does not inflict actual damage, prolonged or repeated exposure can be enough to traumatize a victim. This power works extremely well as a torture method.

System: The vampire must touch his subject for this power to take effect, and the effects diminish rapidly after he removes his hand. The player spends at least one blood point to activate this power, and each blood point spent reduces the victim's dice pools by two while the Fury is in contact with the victim. This power is often used for interrogation or torture, wearing down the subject's resistance and rendering him much more tractable.

•••• Armor of Caine's Fury

The Salubri *antitribu* is surrounded by a shining, crimson halo. This phantom armor protects the vampire against most physical injury, as well as against Rötschreck.

System: The player spends one blood point and rolls Stamina + Melee (difficulty 7). For each success, the character gains one point of armor protection against bashing and lethal damage, to a maximum of five points of protection. Additionally, for every two successes rolled, she gains an additional die to resist Rötschreck from the effects of battle (but not fire or sunlight). This power works for one scene.

••••• Vengeance of Samiel

The Salubri *antitribu* strikes his foe with superhuman accuracy and strength, as his third eye opens and changes to a furious, icy blue. Some Furies invoke the names of ancient Salubri warriors, while others simply close their normal eyes and let Samiel guide their hands.

System: This power costs three blood points. Any single attack made by the vampire automatically hits

the target as mystic forces guide the blow. Attacks made in this manner may not be dodged, though they may be blocked, parried, and soaked as normal. The blow strikes as if the Salubri *antitribu* had succeeded with all of his Dexterity + Melee or Brawling dice pool (which makes for significant damage). This power may be used only once per turn, and only then the Salubri *antitribu*'s sole action is the attack. Additionally, this power does not work for ranged weapons; only bare hands or melee weapons.

••••• • Blissful Agony

The vampire may cause pain with a mere touch, as per Burning Touch, but this pain lingers and swells even after the Fury has removed her hand. It is believed that this power was originally used to acclimate warrior Salubri to the pain they would experience in battle, but among the Sabbat Salubri, Blissful Agony has been turned to more brutal uses. If applied with enough intensity, Blissful Agony can drive vampires to the point of frenzy, incapacitate Lupines, and even kill mortals outright.

System: The player makes a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) and spends a blood point. The power lasts for one scene, though this duration may be prolonged if the Salubri *antitribu* wishes by making a subsequent Willpower roll (though no additional blood points need be spent). The character must touch her subject for the power to take effect initially.

At the vampire's option, she may cause actual physical damage to the victim at the rate of one health level per blood point spent, though touch must be maintained for this to happen. Damage to vampires and other supernatural creatures in this fashion vanishes at the next sunset, but mortals must heal the damage normally. This damage is considered lethal damage, and mortals may not soak it (though vampires and other supernatural entities may).

To induce frenzy in a victim, the Fury must cause damage in excess of the subject's Willpower. At that point, the subject must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) or succumb to frenzy.

Visceratika

Visceratika is an extension of the Gargoyles' natural affinity for stone and earth. Certain Visceratika powers closely resemble some aspects of Protean and, to a lesser extent, Vicissitude. Tremere in a position to know insist that this is pure coincidence, but the few among the Gargoyles who retain scholarly aspirations insist that the Gangrel and Tzimisce blood used to create the bloodline still maintains a certain hold over its members.

For many years, Visceratika was regarded as endemic to the Gargoyle condition, just like the repulsive visage and the wings with which other Kindred associate the bloodline. That is, vampires — including the Tremere — believed that they couldn't have the one without the others. Supposedly this isn't true, and provided one can find a Gargoyle tutor, any vampire can learn the Discipline. Of course, that assumes one *can* find a willing tutor — the Gargoyles aren't eager to reveal these secrets. Furthermore, few Kindred want to bet that the Tremere are wrong and risk waking up with wings and horns.

• Skin of the Chameleon

This basic power has saved countless Gargoyles breaching the Masquerade — and has allowed just as many to ambush unsuspecting intruders. When Skin of the Chameleon is in effect, the Gargoyle's skin takes on the color and texture of the surrounding environment. This coloration changes reflexively as long as the Gargoyle maintains a walking pace or slower. More rapid movement causes the Gargoyle's appearance to blur, negating the camouflaging effect. If this power is used while the Gargoyle is in flight, his skin becomes a reasonable facsimile of the night sky (though it will not shift to mimic nearby skyscrapers or star patterns, and a black silhouette against a brightly lit skyline is likely to be noticed).

System: The player spends one blood point. For the rest of the scene, the Gargoyle's Stealth dice pool is increased by five. This power is subject to the limitations described above. Any ground movement faster than a walk negates this power's effect, as does flight (at the Storyteller's discretion).

•• Scry the Hearthstone

The Gargoyles' first function for the Tremere was that of guardian and watchdog. This power allows them to know instinctively where anyone is inside a given structure. It even allows the Gargoyle to detect characters concealed by magical means, if the Slave is perceptive enough.

System: The player spends a Willpower point to activate this power, which remains in effect as long as the Gargoyle is within or in contact with the target struc-

ture, or until the next sunset. Scry the Hearthstone may be used on anything up to the size of a cave complex, a large theatre, a parking garage, or a mansion. The character gains an innate sense of the location and approximate size and physical condition of all living (or unliving) beings within the structure. To pinpoint a specific individual's location with this power, the player must succeed in a Perception + Awareness roll (difficulty 6). If the subject is attempting to hide, he may oppose this roll with a roll of Wits + Stealth (difficulty 6).

Scry the Hearthstone may be used to detect the presence of characters who are under Obfuscate or similar powers. In this case, the Gargoyle only knows that there is someone present — she cannot actually see the individual in question. To determine the Gargoyle's ability to detect Obfuscated characters, compare the relative levels of the Gargoyle's Visceratika minus one and the intruder's Obfuscate as per the "Seeing the Unseen" sidebar on p. 142.

••• Bond with the Mountain

The Gargoyle sinks into a stone surface, disappearing into the rock until he wishes to reappear. This power allowed Gargoyles to invade their masters' enemies' strongholds, fight until sunrise, then meld with the rocks or stone walls and reappear the next evening. In modern nights, it can take the place of a haven for itinerant Runaways. Unlike the Earth Meld power (p. 199) which it resembles, Bond with the Mountain does not conceal the Gargoyle completely. A faint outline of his body can be seen in the rock where he hides.

System: The player spends two blood points, and the merge takes four turns to complete. This power functions in a fashion similar to the Protean 3 power of Earth Meld, and may only be performed upon bare rock or a similar substance. However, the Gargoyle does not sink fully into the substance with which he merges, and his outline can be detected within the stone with a successful Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 9). A Gargoyle attacked while Bonded with the Mountain has triple his normal soak dice pool against all forms of attack. However, if he sustains three or more lethal health levels of damage from a single attack, he is forced out of his bond and suffers disorientation similar to that experienced by an Earth Melded character whose slumber is interrupted.

•••• Armor of Terra

At this level of Visceratika, the Gargoyle's skin hardens and becomes truly rock-like to the touch. The Slave becomes harder to harm, even with fire, and grows inured to injury. A non-Gargoyle learning this level of Visceratika would find her skin becoming gray and rock-like, putting lie to the claim that the Discipline doesn't carry the risk of the Gargoyle's curse.

System: This power is automatic and requires no roll; it is always in effect. A vampire with Armor of Terra has one extra soak die for all aggravated and lethal attacks and two for all bashing attacks, reduces all wound penalties by one, and halves the damage dice pool of any fire-based source of injury (this Discipline does not change the rules for Rötschreck, however). The difficulty of all touch-based Perception rolls is increased by two, due to the desensitization of the character's skin.

••••• Flow Within the Mountain

The Gargoyle is no longer restricted to hiding within stone. Now, he can flow through stone like lava working its way down a mountainside, emerging from the hiding place at any point he wishes. Since this power works on cement or concrete as well as rock, the streets of a modern metropolis afford a Gargoyle some very interesting assassination tools.

System: Once the character has used Bond with the Mountain, the player spends two more blood points to activate Flow Within the Mountain for the duration of the scene. The Gargoyle can move within stone and cement (otherwise using the same rules as the Protean power Earth Control, p. 200). The character can also use this power to walk through a stone wall and emerge on the other side without first using Bond with the Mountain. In this case, the player spends one blood point and rolls Strength (difficulty 8; Potence adds dice or successes normally). The Gargoyle may flow through a maximum thickness in feet equal to the number of successes rolled, or 30 times the number of successes rolled in centimeters. If the wall or barrier is thicker than this, the character is trapped within it until he is chiseled out or uses Flow Within the Mountain to escape.




Re In
Veritatem

Appendix

"Friends, friends… I thought we were committed to science, not mythology."

- Albertus Magnus, *Encyclopaedia Vampirica*

Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws are optional Traits that a Storyteller may choose to include, or prohibit, in her chronicle. Properly used, Merits and Flaws help players create and individualize their characters. Merits are special abilities or advantages that are rare or unique in the general Kindred population, while Flaws are liabilities or disadvantages that pose challenges to a character's nightly existence. These Traits can provide player characters with added depth and personality, but Storytellers should be careful to ensure that any Traits chosen will not adversely influence the course of the chronicle or give one character an unfair advantage over the rest.

Merits and Flaws can be selected only during character creation and are purchased using freebie points (although existing Merits and Flaws can be removed or new ones added by the Storyteller during the course of the chronicle). Each Merit has its own point cost, while each Flaw has a point value which adds to the amount of freebie points a player can spend during the creation process. A character may take as many Merits as the player can afford, but no character may have more than seven points' worth of Flaws (which would give a character a total of 22 freebie points to spend in other areas).

Merits and Flaws are divided into four categories: physical, mental, social and supernatural. The physical category describes Merits or Flaws that deal with a character's physical makeup or abilities, while the mental category addresses intellectual abilities or patterns of behavior. The social category comprises relationships and status in Kindred or mortal society, while supernatural Merits and Flaws concern the paranormal abilities of vampires and the way they interact with the physical world. Storytellers are encouraged to not only restrict and disallow any Merits and Flaws that don't fit with their chronicles or for specific characters, but also to create their own to reflect unique elements of their games. Some example restrictions are given in the text of each Merit and Flaw, but Storytellers can allow (or disallow) any combination that don't make sense for their games.

Physical

Acute Sense (1pt. Merit)

One of your senses is exceptionally sharp, be it sight, hearing, smell, touch, or taste. The difficulties for all

tasks involving the use of this particular sense are reduced by two. This Merit can be combined with the Discipline of Auspex to produce superhuman sensory acuity.

Ambidextrous (1pt. Merit)

You have a high degree of off-hand dexterity and can perform tasks with the "wrong" hand at no penalty. The rules for taking multiple actions still apply, but you do not suffer a difficulty penalty if you use two weapons or are forced to use your off hand.

Bruiser (1pt. Merit)

Your appearance is sufficiently thug-like to inspire fear (or at least disquiet) in those who see you. While you're not necessarily ugly, you do radiate a quiet menace, to the point where people cross the street to avoid passing near you. All Intimidation rolls against those who have not demonstrated their physical superiority to you are at -1 difficulty.

Catlike Balance (1pt. Merit)

You possess an innately perfect sense of balance. Characters with this Merit reduce difficulties of all balance-related rolls (e.g., Dexterity + Athletics to walk along a narrow ledge) by two.

Early Riser (1pt. Merit)

No one can explain it, but you seem to have the ability to work on less rest than your fellow vampires. You always seem to be the first to rise and the last to go to bed even if you're been out until dawn. Your Humanity or Path score is considered to be 10 for purposes of deciding when you rise each evening. Vampires with this Merit cannot take the Deep Sleeper Flaw.

Eat Food (1pt. Merit)

You have the capacity to eat food and even savor its taste. While you cannot derive any nourishment from eating regular foods, this ability will serve you well in pretending to be human. Of course, you can't digest what you eat, and there will be some point during the evening when you have to heave it back up.

Friendly Face (1pt. Merit)

You have a face that reminds everyone of someone, to the point where strangers are inclined to be well-inclined toward you because of it. The effect doesn't fade even if you explain the "mistake," leaving you at -1 difficulty on all appropriate Social-based rolls (yes for Seduction, no for Intimidation, for example) when a stranger is involved. This Merit only functions on a first meeting.

Blush of Health (2pt. Merit)

You look more hale and healthy in appearance than other vampires, allowing you to blend with human society much more easily. You still retain the color of a living mortal, and your skin feels only slightly cool to the touch.

Enchanting Voice (2pt. Merit)

There is something about your voice that others cannot ignore. When you command, they are cowed. When you seduce, they swoon. Whether thundering, soothing, persuading, or simply talking, your voice commands attention. The difficulties of all rolls involving the use of the voice to persuade, charm, or command are reduced by two.

Daredevil (3pt. Merit)

You are good at taking risks, and even better at surviving them. When attempting exceptionally risky non-combat actions (such as leaping from one moving car to another), characters with this Merit add an additional three dice to their rolls, and negate a single botch die that may result from such a roll. Generally, such actions must be at least difficulty 8 and have the potential to inflict at least three health levels of damage if failed.

Efficient Digestion (3pt. Merit)

You are able to draw more than the usual amount of nourishment from blood. When feeding, you gain an additional point to your blood pool for every two points of blood you consume. This does not allow you to exceed your blood pool maximum.

Huge Size (4pt. Merit)

You are abnormally large in size, at least 6'10" and 300 pounds in weight (well over two meters tall and over 130 kgs). Aside from making you extremely noticeable in public, this extra mass bestows an additional Bruised health level. Characters with this Merit may also gain bonuses to push objects, open barred doors, avoid being knocked down, etc.

Hard of Hearing (1pt. Flaw)

Your hearing is defective. The difficulties of any rolls involving the use of hearing are increased by two.

Short (1pt. Flaw)

You are well below average height — four and a half feet (1.5 meters) tall or less. You have difficulty reaching or manipulating objects designed for normal adult size, and your running speed is one-half that of an average human.

Smell of the Grave (1pt. Flaw)

You exude an odor of dampness and newly turned earth, which no amount of scents or perfumes will cover. Mortals in your immediate presence become uncomfortable, so the difficulties of all Social rolls to affect mortals increase by one.

Tic/Twitch (1pt. Flaw)

You have some sort of repetitive motion that you make in times of stress, and it's a dead giveaway as to your identity. Examples include a nervous cough, constantly wringing your hands, cracking your knuckles, and so on. It costs one Willpower to refrain from engaging in your tic.

Bad Sight (1 or 3pt. Flaw)

Your sight is defective. The difficulties of any die rolls involving the use of your eyesight are increased by two. As a one-point Flaw, this condition can be corrected with glasses or contacts; as a three-point Flaw, the condition is too severe to be corrected.

Fourteenth Generation (2pt. Flaw)

You were created five or fewer years ago by a member of the Thirteenth Generation. Though you have 10 blood points in your body, only eight of them may be used to heal wounds, power Disciplines, raise Attributes, etc. You can still use the final two blood points for other purposes, though. The blood point costs of nightly rising, creating and sustaining ghouls, and creating blood bonds remains the same as for other vampires. You cannot raise any Discipline above four dots.

Taking this Flaw precludes you from taking the Generation Background, and you may not start with Status, either. You are likely a Clanless Caitiff, for your blood is probably too thin to pass down the distinguishing characteristics of a Clan. Most Fourteenth-Generation vampires should also take the Thin Blood Flaw (p. 483).

Fifteenth Generation (4pt. Flaw)

Your vitae is so weak that only six of your 10 blood points can be used for Disciplines, healing or raising Attributes. For these functions, you must expend two blood points to obtain the effect a normal vampire would achieve with one. (The cost for nightly rising remains a single blood point.) What's more, you cannot create or sustain ghouls, create a blood bond, or sire a vampiric childe. You can use the remaining four blood points to survive through the day and wake up each night, nothing more.

You cannot raise any Discipline above three dots.

The weakening of the Curse of Caine has compensations, though (which distinguish this Flaw from the Thin Blood Flaw itself). Sunlight does lethal damage to you, instead of aggravated damage as it does to other vampires. You can hold down mortal food and drink for an hour or so; other vampires vomit immediately if they try (unless they have the Eat Food Merit). Strangest of all, once in a while you might actually have a child the normal, human way... though it will hardly be a normal, human child.

Disfigured (2pt. Flaw)

A hideous disfigurement makes your appearance disturbing and memorable. The difficulties of all die rolls relating to social interaction are increased by two. You may not have an Appearance rating greater than 2.

Dulled Bite (2pt. Flaw)

For some reason your fangs never developed fully, or they may not have manifested at all. When feeding, you need to find some other method of making the blood flow. Failing that, you must achieve double the normal number of successes in order to make your bite penetrate properly. A number of Caitiff and high-Generation vampires often manifest this Flaw.

Infectious Bite (2pt. Flaw)

You may not automatically lick the wounds of your feeding closed. In fact, your bites have a one in five chance of becoming infected and causing mortal victims to become seriously ill. The precise nature of the infection is determined by the Storyteller.

One Eye (2pt. Flaw)

You have only one eye — which eye is missing is up to you. The difficulties of all Perception rolls involving eyesight are increased by two, and the difficulties of all die rolls requiring depth perception are increased by one (this includes ranged combat).

Vulnerability to Silver (2pt. Flaw)

To you, silver is as painful and as deadly as the rays of the sun. You suffer aggravated wounds from any silver weapons (bullets, knives, etc.), and the mere touch of silver objects discomfits you.

Open Wound (2 or 4pt. Flaw)

You have one or more wounds that refuse to heal, and which constantly drip blood. This slow leakage costs you an extra blood point per evening (marked off just before dawn), in addition to drawing attention to you. If the wound is visible, you are at + 1 difficulty for all Social-based rolls. For two points, the Flaw is simply unsightly and has the basic effect mentioned above; for four points the seeping wound is serious or disfiguring and includes the effects of the Flaw Permanent Wound (below).

Addiction (3pt. Flaw)

You suffer from an addiction to a substance, which must now be present in the blood you drink (or you automatically frenzy, as per the Prey Exclusion Flaw). This can be alcohol, nicotine, hard drugs, or simply adrenaline. This substance always impairs you in some fashion (see "Poisons and Drugs," p. 301, for particulars).

Child (3pt. Flaw)

You were a small child (between five and 10 years old) at the time of your Embrace, leaving your Physical Attributes underdeveloped and making it difficult to interact with some aspects of mortal society. You may not have more than two dots in Strength or Stamina at character creation, except when raising Physical Attributes with blood points, and the difficulties of all die rolls when attempting to direct or lead mortal adults are increased by two. Characters with this Flaw should also take the Short Flaw.

Deformity (3pt. Flaw)

You have some kind of deformity — a misshapen limb, hunchback, or clubfoot, for example — which affects your physical abilities and interactions with others. A hunchback, for instance, would lower a character's Dexterity by two dots and increase the difficulty of die rolls relating to social skills by one. It is the responsibility of the Storyteller to determine the specific effects of the deformity chosen.

Glowing Eyes (3pt. Flaw)

You have the stereotypical glowing eyes of vampire legend, which gives you a -1 difficulty on Intimidation rolls when you're dealing with mortals. However, the tradeoffs are many; you must constantly disguise your condition (no, contacts don't cut it); the glow impairs your vision and puts you at +1 difficulty on all sight-based rolls (including the use of ranged weapons); and the radiance emanating from your eye sockets makes it difficult to hide (+2 difficulty to Stealth rolls) in the dark.

Lame (3pt. Flaw)

Your legs are damaged, which prevents you from running or walking easily. You are forced to walk with a cane or possibly leg braces, and you have a pronounced limp to your stride. Your walking speed is one-quarter that of a normal human, and running is impossible.

Lazy (3pt. Flaw)

You are simply lazy, avoiding anything that requires effort on your part. Preferring to let others do the hard work, you lounge around. For any action that requires preparation, there's a good chance you didn't properly prepare. Difficulty rolls for spontaneous Physical actions (including combat, unless it's part of a planned offensive) increase by one.

Monstrous (3pt. Flaw)

Your physical form was twisted during the Embrace, and now reflects the Beast that rages inside you. Characters with this Flaw appear to be savage monsters and have Appearance ratings of zero. Nosferatu and other bloodlines whose weaknesses cause them to start off with Appearance zero cannot take this Flaw.

Permanent Fangs (3pt. Flaw)

Your fangs do not retract, making it impossible for you to hide your true nature. While some mortals may think you've had your teeth filed or are wearing prosthetics, sooner or later you're going to run into someone who knows what you truly are. You are also limited to a maximum Appearance rating of 3.

Permanent Wound (3pt. Flaw)

You suffered injuries during your Embrace which your transformation somehow failed to repair. At the beginning of each night, you rise from sleep at the Wounded

health level, though this may be healed by spending blood points.

Slow Healing (3pt. Flaw)

You have difficulty healing wounds. It requires two blood points to heal one health level of bashing or lethal damage, and you heal one health level of aggravated damage every five days (plus the usual five blood points and Willpower expenditure).

Disease Carrier (4pt. Flaw)

Your blood carries a lethal and highly contagious disease. The disease can be anything from rabies to HIV, and Kindred who drink your blood have a 10% chance of becoming a carrier as well. You must spend an extra blood point each night on awakening, or you will begin manifesting symptoms of the disease (increased chance to frenzy for rabies, reduced soak rolls for HIV, etc.).

Deaf (4pt. Flaw)

You cannot hear. While you may be more resistant to some applications of Dominate, you also may not listen to electronic or vocal media, and the difficulties of many Perception rolls are increased by three.

Mute (4pt. Flaw)

You cannot speak. You may communicate with the Storyteller and describe your actions, but cannot talk to player or Storyteller characters unless everyone concerned purchases a commonly understood sign language (via the Language Merit) or you write down what you wish to say.

Thin Blood (4pt. Flaw)

Your blood is thin, weak, and does not sustain you well. All blood point costs are doubled (e.g., using blood-related Disciplines or healing damage), although you only lose one blood upon rising in the evening. Furthermore, you are unable to create a blood bond, and efforts to sire other vampires succeed only one in five times.

Flesh of the Corpse (5pt. Flaw)

Your flesh does not fully regenerate itself once it is damaged. While you are able to heal yourself to the point of regaining full functionality, your skin still retains the cuts, tears, bullet holes, and other visible damage that you have incurred. Depending on the nature of the damage, this Flaw will make social dealings exceedingly difficult, and may decrease your Appearance dots over time (even to 0).



Infertile Vitae (5pt. Flaw)

During your Embrace, something went horribly wrong, causing your blood to mutate under the stress of dying and rising again. All those you try to Embrace die. No matter what you do, you may not create any childer. However, your blood can still be used in blood rituals like Thaumaturgy and the Vaulderie, or for any other vampiric needs like making ghouls.

Blind (6pt. Flaw)

You cannot see. Characters can compensate for the loss of vision by becoming more attuned to other sensory input, but visual cues and images are lost to them. Difficulties of all Dexterity-based rolls are increased by two. Oddly, vampires with Aura Perception (Auspex 2) are still able to use this ability, thought the information is interpreted via the other senses. On the other hand, vampires who need make eye contact to enact powers like Dominate against you are only at a penalty to do so (see the sidebar on p. 152).

Mental

Coldly Logical (1pt. Merit)

While some might refer to you as a "cold fish," you have a knack for separating factual reporting from emotional or hysterical coloration. You may or may not be emotional yourself, but you can see clearly when others are clouding the facts with their feelings (-1 difficulty on all related rolls).

Common Sense (1pt. Merit)

You have a significant amount of practical, everyday wisdom. Whenever you are about to act in a way contrary to common sense, the Storyteller can make suggestions or warnings about the implications of said action. This is a very useful Merit for beginning players unfamiliar with the game.

Concentration (1pt. Merit)

You have the ability to focus your mind and shut out any distractions or annoyances. Characters with this Merit are unaffected by any penalties stemming from distracting circumstances (e.g., loud noises, strobe lights, or hanging upside down).

Introspection (1pt. Merit)

You have keen insight into the ulterior motives of all your actions. Through this nightly exercise, you also have incredible insight into the underlying motives of others' actions. Add two dice to your Perception dice pool when you must take an action against someone with the same Nature or Demeanor as you.

Language (1pt. Merit)

You know a language in addition to your native one. You can take this Merit multiple times, each reflecting a different language.

Time Sense (1pt. Merit)

You have an innate sense of time and are able to estimate the passage of time accurately without using a watch or other mechanical device.

Useful Knowledge (1pt. Merit)

You have expertise in a specific field that makes your conversation intriguing to an older Kindred. So long as your knowledge holds the other vampire's attention, he has a vested interest in keeping you around. Then again, once he's pumped you for every iota of information you possess, that patronage may suddenly vanish. (Note: This Merit should be played like a 1-dot Mentor with a specific interest. However, unlike a Mentor, Useful Knowledge does not imply a permanent relationship.)

Code of Honor (2pt. Merit)

You have a personal code of ethics to which you adhere. The specifics of this code must be worked out with the Storyteller prior to play, and the character must follow it strictly. Characters with this Merit gain two additional dice to all Willpower or Virtue rolls when acting in accordance with their code (e.g., defending the helpless) or when attempting to avoid situations that might force them to violate their code.

Computer Aptitude (2pt. Merit)

You are familiar with and talented in the uses of computer equipment. Other Kindred may not understand computers, but to you they are intuitive. All rolls involving computers are at -2 difficulty for you.

Eidetic Memory (2pt. Merit)

You remember, with perfect detail, things you see and hear. Documents, photographs, conversations, etc., can be committed to memory with only minor concentration. Under stressful conditions involving numerous distractions, you must make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 6) to summon enough concentration to absorb what your senses detect.

Light Sleeper (2pt. Merit)

You can awaken instantly at any sign of trouble or danger, and do so without any sleepiness or hesitation. You may ignore rules regarding how Humanity or your morality Path restricts the number of dice available during the day.

Natural Linguist (2pt. Merit)

You have a flair for languages. You may add three dice to any dice pool involving written or spoken languages, and each purchase of the Language Merit (previous page) gives you two languages instead of just one.

Calm Heart (3pt. Merit)

You are naturally calm and do not easily fly off the handle. You receive two extra dice when attempting to resist a frenzy. Brujah may not take this Merit.

Iron Will (3pt. Merit)

When you are determined and your mind is set, nothing can thwart you from your goals. Characters using Dementation, Dominate, or any other mind-altering magic, spell, or Thaumaturgy path against your character are at +3 difficulty.

Elder levels of powers like Dementation and Dominate may overwhelm even this resistance. Against Level Six powers, the expenditure of a Willpower point through Iron Will only raises the difficulty of the Discipline roll by two. Against Level Seven powers, the difficulty is increased by only one. Level Eight and higher powers cannot be resisted with Iron Will.

This Merit does not affect Presence or other powers dealing with the emotions. Characters will Willpower scores below 8 cannot take this Merit.

Precocious (3pt. Merit)

You learn quickly. The time for you to pick up a particular Ability (or Abilities, at Storyteller discretion) is cut in half, as is the experience cost.

Deep Sleeper (1pt. Flaw)

When you sleep, it is very difficult for you to awaken. The difficulty of any roll to awaken during the day is increased by two.

Impatient (1pt. Flaw)

You have no patience for standing around and waiting. You want to do things *now* — fuck those slowpokes trying to hold you back. Every time you are forced to wait around instead of acting, a Self-Control roll is required to see if you go tearing off on your own instead.

Nightmares (1pt. Flaw)

You experience horrendous nightmares every time you sleep, and memories of them haunt you during your waking hours. Upon awakening, you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) or lose a die on all actions for that night. A botched Willpower roll indicates that, even when awake, you still believe that you are locked in a nightmare.

Prey Exclusion (1pt. Flaw)

You refuse to hunt a certain class of prey. You might refuse to feed on drug dealers, policemen, accountants, or rich people — if you accidentally feed upon such an individual, you automatically frenzy and must make a roll to prevent Humanity or Path loss (difficulty 7). Witnessing other Kindred feeding on the object of your exclusion might also provoke a frenzy, at the Storyteller's discretion. Ventrue, owing to the limitations already imposed on their feeding by their Clan weakness, may not take this Flaw.

Shy (1pt. Flaw)

You are distinctly ill at ease when dealing with people and try to avoid social situations whenever possible. Difficulties for all rolls involving social interaction with strangers are increased by two. If the character becomes the center of attention in a large group, difficulties are increased by three.

Soft-Hearted (1pt. Flaw)

You cannot stand to watch others suffer. You avoid any situation that involves causing someone physical or emotional pain, unless you make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8). You must have a Humanity rating of 7 or above to take this Flaw — vampires on Paths of Enlightenment can only take this Flaw with Storyteller approval.

Speech Impediment (1pt. Flaw)

You have a stammer or other speech impediment that hampers verbal communication. The difficulties of all die rolls involving verbal communication are increased by two. This Flaw must be roleplayed whenever possible.

Unconvinced (1pt. Flaw)

You fail to see the need for the core ideologies of your Sect or Clan, and have gone on record as saying so. Taking your stand has made you suspect in the eyes of your superiors, and may have attracted the attention of your enemies as well.

Amnesia (2pt. Flaw)

You are unable to remember anything about your past, yourself, or your family (whether mortal or vampiric), though your past might well come back to haunt you. Your origins and the circumstances behind your amnesia are for the Storyteller to determine, and she is encouraged to make it as interesting as possible.

Lunacy (2pt. Flaw)

You are affected by the phases of the moon, increasing your chances to frenzy. Under the crescent moon, difficulties to avoid frenzy increase by one. Under the half or gibbous moon, difficulties rise by two. When the moon is full, difficulties increase by three.

Phobia (2pt. Flaw)

You have an overpowering fear of something. Spiders, snakes, crowds, and heights are examples of common phobias. You must make a Courage roll every time you encounter the object of your fear. The difficulty of the roll is determined by the Storyteller. If you fail the roll, you must retreat from the object.

Short Fuse (2pt. Flaw)

You are easily angered. Difficulties to avoid frenzy are two greater. Brujah vampires cannot take this Flaw, as they already suffer from a similar weakness.

Stereotype (2pt. Flaw)

You buy heavily into all of the vampire stories you've read and heard. You wear a cape or body glitter, speak with an accent, and otherwise act in a cartoonish fashion. Such behavior is embarrassing in the extreme to other Kindred, who are likely to ostracize or mock you (+2 difficulty to Social rolls with other vampires who don't share your habits). You also stand out to hunters.

Territorial (2pt. Flaw)

You are extremely territorial, staking out a particular area as your hunting ground and reacting aggressively to trespassers. If another vampire enters your territory uninvited, you must make a frenzy roll. If you fail, you immediately attack the interloper and continue attacking until the intruder is dead or has left your hunting grounds. You are reluctant to leave your territory except in desperate circumstances.

Thirst for Innocence (2pt. Flaw)

The sight of innocence — of any sort — arouses in you a terrible bloodlust. Roll Self-Control or Instinct, or else frenzy and attack the source of your hunger.

Vengeful (2pt. Flaw)

You have a score to settle, incurred either during your mortal days or after the Embrace. You are obsessed with taking your revenge on an individual or group, and it is your overriding priority in any situation where you encounter the object of your revenge. You may temporarily resist your need for vengeance by spending a Willpower point.

Victim of the Masquerade (2pt. Flaw)

The Camarilla's propaganda machine did too good a job on you. Even after your Embrace you refused to believe you were a vampire. You remain convinced that there is some logical explanation for your condition, and spend as much time as you can searching for it. You also have problems feeding, and may insist on trying to eat regular food. None of these habits makes you particularly pleasant company for other Kindred. This Flaw must be roleplayed at all times, and is generally taken by Camarilla vampires.

Weak-Willed (3pt. Flaw)

You are highly susceptible to Dominate and intimidation by others; Dominate attempts automatically affect you unless the Discipline wielder is of higher Generation, and your difficulties to resist Social abilities such as Intimidation or Leadership, as well as mind-altering spells or magic, are increased by two. Your Willpower Trait may never rise above 4.

Conspicuous Consumption (4pt. Flaw)

It is not enough for you to draw nourishment from the blood of mortals — you believe you must also consume your victim's heart, liver, and other blood-rich tissue. Of course, this will necessitate the deaths of all of your victims (unless you are extremely creative), which might lead to numerous problems with maintaining Humanity (and a low profile). Characters with this Flaw should additionally purchase the Eat Food Merit.

Guilt-Wracked (4pt. Flaw)

You simply cannot come to grips with the fact that you must drink blood to survive. You suffer horrible guilt over each time you feed (roll Conscience, difficulty 7, or else frenzy every time you feed — characters with the Conviction Virtue cannot take this Flaw) and try to avoid doing so as much as possible. This means that you rarely have much blood in your system, leaving you vulnerable to both attacks and hunger-based frenzies.



Flashbacks (6pt. Flaw)

You managed to make it through the Creation Rites or other similarly traumatic experience, but not wholly intact. The most insignificant thing can throw you into a different mood or state of mind, and as such your behavior is extremely unpredictable. Because of your precarious emotional state, your Willpower fluctuates. At the beginning of each story, make a Willpower roll (you may not spend Willpower for an automatic success). If you succeed, you may participate in the story as normal. If you fail, however, your Willpower score is considered to be 1 for the duration of that session, and you only have one Willpower point to spend. You may roll again at the beginning of the next session to see if you regain your Willpower.

Social

Elysium Regular (1pt. Merit)

You spend an unusual amount of time in Elysium. You see and are seen to such an extent that all of the movers and shakers of Elysium at least know who you are. Extended time spent in Elysium also gives you extended opportunities to interact with the Harpies and other Kindred of that stature — and they'll know your name when you approach them. This Merit is generally taken by vampires that respect and attend Elysium on a regular basis.

Former Ghoul (1pt. Merit)

You were introduced to the Blood long before you were made Kindred. Your long experience as a ghoul gives you insight into and comfort with vampiric society. You are at -1 difficulty on all Social rolls when in the presence of other neonates (particularly those who haven't been educated by their sires), and have a -1 difficulty on all rolls relating to vampiric knowledge.

Harmless (1pt. Merit)

Everyone in the city knows you, and knows that you're no threat to their plans. While that sort of estimation may seem insulting, it's also what's kept you from being killed. No one considers you worth their time to deal with, and that low opinion keeps you safe. If you start acting in a way that demonstrates that you are no longer harmless, others' reactions to you will likely change as a result.

Natural Leader (1pt. Merit)

You are gifted with a certain magnetism to which others naturally defer. You receive two extra dice when

making Leadership rolls. You must have a Charisma rating of 3 or greater to purchase this Merit.

Prestigious Sire (1pt. Merit)

Your sire has or had great status in her Sect or Clan, and this has accorded you a certain amount of prestige. Though your sire may no longer have any dealings with you, the simple fact of your ancestry has marked you forever. This prestige might aid you greatly in dealings with other vampires, or it might engender jealousy or contempt.

Protégé (1pt. Merit)

Your sire watched you for some time before Embracing you, and spoke glowingly of you to acquaintances. These vampires may be inclined to look favorably on you by dint of your sire's recommendation; you are at -1 difficulty on Social rolls with all those who've heard good things about you.

Rep (1pt. Merit)

Your fame has exceeded the bounds of your Sect. Everyone knows who you are, what you've done and what you're supposed to have done (which might not be the same thing). The publicity can be good or bad; what matters is that everybody knows your name. Whether individuals outside of your immediate social circle know enough to match your face to your name is a different matter.

Sabbat Survivor (1pt. Merit)

You've lived through at least one Sabbat attack or attempted recruitment. Your experience helps you anticipate situations where you might potentially be endangered by the Sabbat once again. You are at -1 difficulty on all Perception rolls when it comes to Sabbat-based matters. This Merit is generally taken by groups in conflict with the Sabbat, and comes into play most frequently as a means of avoiding ambushes.

Boon (1-6pt. Merit)

Someone owes you a favor. The vampire in your debt might be the lowliest neonate in the city or might be the Prince herself; it all depends on how many points the Merit costs. You only have that single favor owed you (unless you take the Merit multiple times), so using it properly is of paramount importance. Depending on status and other factors, the vampire who owes you a favor may well resent his debt, and might go out of his way to "settle" it early — even going so far as to create situations from which he must "rescue" you and thus clear the slate.

Bullyboy (2pt. Merit)

You're part of the brute squad the local Sheriff or Bishop calls on when he needs some muscle. As a result, you get in on action that others miss entirely, score points with those in power, and occasionally get a chance to act outside of the law. How far outside the law you can go depends on circumstance and how much the vampire you report to likes you.

Old Pal (2pt. Merit)

An acquaintance from your breathing days was Embraced at the same time you were. Fortunately, your friendship has endured even death and unlife, and you find a constant source of support and aid in your old friend. She expects the same of you, which isn't always convenient, but at least you each have someone to hang onto who remembers the good old nights — and days. The Storyteller should play the Old Pal as a very loyal Ally.

Lawman's Friend (2pt. Merit)

For whatever reason (maybe your winning smile or perhaps just your superb groveling technique), the local Sheriff or Bishop in charge of discipline likes you. He's inclined to overlook your minor trespasses and let you in on things you're not supposed to know about. He even gives you warnings about occasional crackdowns and times when the higher-ups aren't feeling generous. Of course, abusing this connection might well turn a friendly vampire into an enemy — and the change might not be apparent until it's too late.

Open Road (2pt. Merit)

Unlike many Kindred, you like to travel. You have a solid knowledge of safe travel routes and methodologies, not to mention haven space available in any number of destinations. Unless someone out there knows your exact route and is specifically looking for you, you can move between cities unimpeded by random encounters with Lupines, overzealous state troopers, and the like.

Sanctity (2pt. Merit)

This Merit is sometimes called the halo effect; everyone considers you pure and innocent, though not necessarily naïve. You have a saint-like quality that is hard to pinpoint but cannot be denied. You are trusted, even if you are not trustworthy. At the Storyteller's discretion, you tend to receive lesser punishments for wrongdoing, and you are liked by most.

Scholar of Enemies (2pt. Merit)

You have taken the time to learn about and specialize in one particular enemy of your Sect. You are aware of at least some of the group's customs, strategies, abilities, and long-term goals, and can put that knowledge to good use. This Merit is worth a -2 difficulty for all non-combat rolls pertaining specifically to the subject of your specialization. On the other hand, you are at a +1 difficulty when it comes to dealing with other enemies, simply because you're so thoroughly focused on your field.

Scholar of Others (2pt. Merit)

This Merit functions identically to Scholar of Enemies, except that it applies to a group that is not necessarily inimical to your Sect.

Friend of the Underground (3pt. Merit)

While you're not a Nosferatu, you know your way around the sewers, tunnels, ducts, subway tubes, and other subterranean passages of your hometown. The local Nosferatu (and any other creatures dwelling down in the muck) may not actually like you, but they're not inclined to kill you on sight when they see you in their territory. You are at -1 difficulty on any rolls involving the subterranean world (sneaking from place to place underground, finding routes into sub-basements, and so on). Nosferatu cannot purchase this Merit.

Mole (3pt. Merit)

You have an informer buried in one of your Sect's enemy organizations who funnels you all sorts of information as to what her peers are up to. What you do with the information is up to you, but abusing the knowledge might be a good way to get your informer killed. The other side has spies too….

Rising Star (3pt. Merit)

You're one of the up-and-comers in the city, a rising star in your Sect. Everyone wants to know you and be your friend, even as those in power groom you for positions of greater responsibility. You are at -1 difficulty on all Social rolls against any vampires in your Sect who aren't actively opposing your ascent.

Broken Bond (4pt. Merit)

You were once blood-bound but have secretly slipped the leash, and you are free to act as you will once more. Your regnant has no idea that you are not in fact bound, and continues to treat you as if you were. At Storyteller discretion, the experience of having been bound once may render you immune to ever being enthralled again. Sabbat vampires cannot take this Merit.

Clan Friendship (4pt. Merit)

One particular Clan (not your own) has a special liking for you. You might have done the Clan as a whole a favor at some point, or perhaps you're just a loud voice in support of their aims. Whatever the case, you're at -2 difficulty on all friendly Social rolls involving members of the Clan in question. Of course, the reaction your cozy relationship with another Clan is likely to draw from your own Clan leaders is an entirely different can of worms.

Primogen/Bishop Friendship (4pt. Merit)

The ruling vampires of the city value you and your opinions. You are called in to consult on decisions, and your recommendations carry great weight. Your position may not be an official one, but it's powerful nonetheless.

Botched Presentation (1pt. Flaw)

When your sire presented you to the Prince of the city, you flubbed it. Now you're convinced His Majesty hates you (whether he does or not). You need to succeed on a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) just to stand in front of the Prince or one of his duly authorized representatives without running, blubbering, or otherwise making a fool of yourself. This Flaw can only be taken by Camarilla vampires.

Dark Secret (1pt. Flaw)

You have some sort of secret that, if uncovered, would be of immense embarrassment to you and would make you a pariah in the local Kindred community. This could be anything from having murdered an elder to being a member of the Anarchs.

Expendable (1pt. Flaw)

Someone in power doesn't want you around. Maybe she wants territory you possess, or is jealous of the attention you're getting from a prize mortal retainer — the details are irrelevant. What does matter is that she has the power to maneuver you into dangerous situations "for the good of the Sect," and has no compunctions about doing so.

Incomplete Understanding (1pt. Flaw)

The whole matter has been explained to you, but you're still not quite sure how things in your Sect work. Your imperfect understanding of the rules and regulations of your new existence means that sooner or later, you're going to make a mistake. It's only a matter of time….

Infamous Sire (1pt. Flaw)

Your sire was, and perhaps still is, distrusted and disliked by many of the city's Kindred. As a result, you are distrusted and disliked as well.

Mistaken Identity (1pt. Flaw)

You look similar to descriptions of another Kindred, which cause cases of mistaken identity. This can prompt numerous awkward or even dangerous situations, especially if your "twin" has a terrible reputation or is wanted for some crime.

New Arrival (1pt. Flaw)

You've just arrived in your new city of residence, and don't know anyone in the place. Existing factions may try to recruit or eliminate you, while vampires in positions of authority size you up and take your measure. Meanwhile, your ignorance of the city's current events, history, and politics (not to mention the personality quirks of the vampires already in place) may cause you to make a serious blunder.

New Kid (1pt. Flaw)

You're the latest in the city to be Embraced or have yet to prove yourself to your Sect, and everyone knows it. That automatically puts you at the bottom of the social totem pole. Other neonates take every opportunity to demonstrate your inferiority, or rival packs constantly test your worthiness to the Sabbat. Even if someone else is added to the ranks of the unliving, you're still regarded as something as a bit of a geek by your peers — a distinction that can have dangerous consequences if bullets start flying. All Social-related rolls are at +1 difficulty when you are dealing with other neonates. (Ancillae and elders lump you in with all the other neonates under their general disdain.)

Recruitment Target (1pt. Flaw)

Someone in one of your Sect's enemy organizations wants you, and they want you *bad*. Every effort is being made to recruit you, willing or no, and the press gangs usually show up at the worst possible time.

Sire's Resentment (1pt. Flaw)

Your sire dislikes you and wishes you ill. Given the smallest opportunity, she will actively seek to do you harm. Your sire's allies also work against you, and many elders may resent you.

Special Responsibility (1pt. Flaw)

Shortly after your Embrace, you volunteered for some task in order to gain respect and approval from the vampires around you. Now, you wish you had never opened your damn mouth! While you are not given any special credit for performing this duty, you would lose a lot of respect if you were to stop. The nature and the details of your duty should be worked out with the Storyteller in advance. Ideas can range from lending money to other Kindred to acting as a messenger or possibly gathering victims for ritae (such as Blood Feasts).

Sympathizer (1pt. Flaw)

You have publicly expressed sympathy for some of the goals and policies of the enemies of your Sect. Your outspoken views on the subject have made you suspect in the eyes of the city's hierarchy, and you may be suspected of (or arrested for) treason.

Enemy (1-5pt. Flaw)

You have an enemy, or perhaps a group of enemies, who seek to harm you. The power of the enemy depends upon how many points the player wishes to spend (five points indicate the wrath of a Methuselah or other potent supernatural foe).

Bound (2pt. Flaw)

You are blood bound to another vampire. Your regnant may not necessarily treat you badly, but the fact remains that your will is not entirely your own. The knowledge gnaws at you, even as you find yourself lost in devotion to your vampiric master. Sabbat vampires cannot take this Flaw.

Catspaw (2pt. Flaw)

You've done dirty work for someone high up in the city's hierarchy in the past — the Sheriff, the Bishop, or even someone higher. However, instead of granting you favor, your deeds have made you an embarrassment or a liability. For the moment, your former employer's concern is to keep you quiet. In the long term, it's to get rid of you.

Escaped Target (2pt. Flaw)

You had targeted a mortal for the Embrace, but someone else got there first. You cannot stand the humiliation of being cheated of your prize, and fly into a rage (+2 difficulty to avoid frenzy) whenever you see the one who got away. This hatred may lead you into other irrational behaviors, like Embracing enemies of the neonate, creating unauthorized childer, or even trying to kill your rival. Furthermore, your petty and irrational behavior is well-known and quite noticeable, and as a result you are at + 1 difficulty on all Charisma rolls until the situation is resolved.

Failure (2pt. Flaw)

You once held a title in the city, but failed catastrophically in your duties. Now you are branded incompetent, excluded from circles of power and responsibility, and generally ostracized by those on their way up. Your exclusion may make you a target for recruitment by the Sect's enemies (or so the whispers run, making you even more distrusted). Conversely, the consequences of your error might come back to haunt you.

Masquerade Breaker (2pt. Flaw)

In your first nights as a vampire, you accidentally broke the Masquerade — and were spotted doing so. Someone else covered for your mistake, but holds the favor over you. Now you exist in fear that your error will be revealed. In the meantime, your "savior" takes pitiless advantage of you. This Flaw can only be taken by vampires in Sects or Clans that respect the Masquerade.

Hunted (4pt. Flaw)

You are pursued by a fanatical witch-hunter who believes (perhaps correctly) that you are a danger to humanity. All those with whom you associate, be they mortal or Kindred, may be hunted as well.

Old Flame (2pt. Flaw)

Someone you once cared deeply for is now with the enemy. He still attempts to play on your sympathies "for old times' sake" while working against you. Unless you succeed on a contested Manipulation + Expression roll against your former friend, you cannot act against him unless the situation becomes life-threatening.

Rival Sires (2pt. Flaw)

The flip side of Escaped Target, two vampires wanted to gift you with the Embrace. One succeeded, one failed — and she's not happy about that failure. You,



your actual sire, or both of you have become the target of the failed suitor's ire. Regardless, your persecutor is at +2 difficulty to refrain from frenzy in your presence. In addition, she may well be working actively to discredit or destroy you.

Uppity (2pt. Flaw)

You are proud of your new status in the Sect — so proud that you've shot your mouth off to other Kindred and made some enemies. Wiser vampires laugh at you and chalk your rudeness up to youth, but others find you arrogant and insulting. These enemies will take action to embarrass or harm you. Furthermore, you are at +2 difficulty on all Social rolls against any vampires you have alienated through your yammering — and you may not know who they are.

At Storyteller discretion, you may also be required to make a Willpower roll (difficulty 6) to keep your mouth shut any time the opportunity presents itself for you to brag about your pack, your Clan, or your status.

Disgrace to the Blood (3pt. Flaw)

Your sire regards the fact that he Embraced you to be a titanic mistake, and has let everyone know it. You are mocked at gatherings, taunted by your peers, and actively despised by the one who should be giving you guidance. Any request or petition you make is likely to be looked down upon by friends of your sire, and your achievements are likely to be discounted.

Former Prince (3pt. Flaw)

Once, you held near-absolute power in a city, but those nights are gone now. Perhaps you stepped down, perhaps you were deposed, or perhaps your city fell to the Sabbat; it matters little in your reduced state. What does matter is that the Prince in the city where you now dwell is aware of your prior employment, and has concerns that you might be trying to make a comeback. The machinery of the Camarilla in the city where you now make your home is subtly stacked against you, and if the Prince sees an opportunity to get rid of you he just might take it. This Flaw can only be taken by Camarilla vampires.

Hunted Like a Dog (3pt. Flaw)

Another Sect or group of vampires has decided that you're a target for extermination, and pursues you relentlessly. On the bright side, the enemies of your enemy may well wish to help you out, potentially garnering you allies.

Narc (3pt. Flaw)

You are known to be a snitch, an informer firmly planted in the pocket of the vampires in charge. Those on whom you might yet inform loathe you as a result, feeding you misinformation when they can in an attempt to discredit you. Given the opportunity, they might do you mischief. Regardless, your reputation as a weasel precedes you, putting you at +1 difficulty on all Social rolls against those who don't agree with your politics.

Sleeping With the Enemy (3pt. Flaw)

You have some sort of intimate connection with a member of an opposing Sect or inimical Clan. You may have a lover, a childe, a friend, or a contact working the other side of the fence, but regardless of politics you retain a friendly (or more than friendly) relationship with your putative foe. Your close ties to someone on the other side would be regarded as treason by your superiors within the Sect, and if you are discovered, the penalty will surely be death.

Clan Enmity (4pt. Flaw)

One Clan in particular wants you dead. You have offended the entire Clan, from elders to neonates, and as a result every member of that bloodline wants your head on a plate. The effects of the Flaw may manifest as anything from very public snubs and insults to actual attempts on your unlife. You are also at +2 difficulty on all Social rolls relating to members of the Clan in question.

Loathsome Regnant (4pt. Flaw)

Not only are you blood bound, but you are also in thrall to a vampire who mistreats you hideously. Perhaps you are publicly abused or humiliated; perhaps your master forces you to commit unspeakable acts for him. In any case, existence under the bond is a never-ending nightmare, with your regnant serving to conduct the symphony of malice. Sabbat vampires cannot take this Flaw.

Overextended (4pt. Flaw)

You've got your fingers in too many pies, and people are starting to notice. You have too many ghouls, too many retainers, or too much influence, which means that a lot of people have a vested interest in trimming back your operations. These enemies take every opportunity to reduce your power and influence, and if that means lying, cheating, or killing, so be it. Furthermore, your enemies block every attempt you make to move into new areas of control. You're boxed in, and the box is getting smaller.

Probationary Sect Member (4pt. Flaw)

You are a defector. You turned traitor to the Camarilla, Sabbat, or other Sect, and you still have much to prove before you are accepted by the Kindred you have defected to. Other vampires treat you with distrust and even hostility, and your reputation might even sully those whom you regularly associate with.

Blood Hunted (4 or 6pt. Flaw)

You have been made the target of a blood hunt, and for you to return to your home city is death. For four points, this Flaw means that only your home city is off-limits to you. For six, it means that the entire Camarilla is howling for your vitae. This Flaw can only be taken by Camarilla vampires.

Laughingstock (5pt. Flaw)

Somehow you've drawn the scorn of the local Harpies, who make you their favorite target. You are at a +2 difficulty on all Social rolls in Elysium and a +1 anywhere else in the city. In addition, you are at +2 difficulty to use Intimidation or any Dominate powers on anyone who has heard the stories mocking you. This Flaw can only be taken by Camarilla vampires.

Red List (7pt. Flaw)

You are either being considered for or are already on the dreaded Red List, the registry of those vampires the Camarilla most wants extinguished. Any Camarilla vampire will either attack you on sight or, more likely, call in for a great deal of help.

Supernatural

Deceptive Aura (1pt. Merit)

Your aura is unnaturally bright and colorful for a vampire. You register as a mortal on all attempts to read your aura.

Healing Touch (1pt. Merit)

Normally vampires can only seal the wounds they inflict from feeding by licking them. With but a touch, you can achieve the same effect, closing the puncture wounds left by drinking blood.

Inoffensive to Animals (1pt. Merit)

With rare exceptions, animals usually despise the Kindred. Some flee, others attack, but all dislike being in the presence of a vampire. You have no such problem. Animals may not enjoy being in your company, but they don't actively flee from you.

Medium (2pt. Merit)

You possess the natural affinity to sense and hear spirits, ghosts, and shades. Though you cannot see them, you can sense them, speak to them and, through pleading or cajoling, draw them to your presence. You may call upon them for aid or advice, but there will always be a price. Also, your difficulty is reduced by two for all Awareness rolls involving the spirits of the dead.

Magic Resistance (2pt. Merit)

You have an inherent resistance to the rituals of the Tremere and the spells of the mages of other Clans. The difficulty of all such magic, both malicious and beneficent, is two higher when directed at you. You may never learn magical Disciplines such as Thaumaturgy and Necromancy.

Hidden Diablerie (3pt. Merit)

The tell-tale black streaks of diablerie do not manifest in your aura.

Lucky (3pt. Merit)

You were born lucky — or else the Devil looks after his own. Either way, you may repeat any three failed rolls per story, including botches, but you may try only once per failed roll.

Oracular Ability (3pt. Merit)

You can see and interpret signs and omens. You are able to draw advice from these omens, for they provide hints of the future and warnings of the present. When the Storyteller feels that you are in position to see an omen, you will be required to make a Perception + Awareness roll, with the difficulty relative to how well the omen is concealed. If successful, you may then roll Intelligence + Occult to interpret what you have seen; the difficulty is again relative to the complexity of the omen.

Spirit Mentor (3pt. Merit)

You have a ghostly companion and guide. The identity and exact powers of this spirit are up to the Storyteller, but it can be called upon in difficult situations for help and guidance.

True Love (4pt. Merit)

You have discovered, perhaps too late, a true love. He or she is mortal, but is the center of your existence, and inspires you to keep going in a world of darkness and despair. Whenever you suffer, the thought of your true love gives you the strength to persevere. This Mer-

it grants you one automatic success on all Willpower rolls, which can be negated only by a botch die. This can be a great gift but also a hindrance, for your true love may require protection and occasionally rescue.

Additional Discipline (5pt. Merit)

You can take one additional Discipline (Storyteller discretion) as if it were a Clan Discipline. All costs to learn that Discipline are paid out as if it were native to your Clan. A character cannot take this Merit more than once, and Caitiff vampires cannot take this Merit.

Unbondable (5pt. Merit)

You are immune to being blood bound. Tremere cannot take this Merit.

Nine Lives (6pt. Merit)

Fate has granted you the opportunity to come as close to Final Death as anyone can get and still survive. When a roll occurs that would result in your death, the roll is made again. If the next roll succeeds, then you live — and one of your nine lives is used up. If that subsequent roll fails, then another reroll is made, until either a successful roll occurs or your nine lives are used up. The Storyteller should keep careful count of how many lives the character has remaining.

True Faith (7pt. Merit)

You have a deep-seated faith in and love for God, or whatever name you choose to call the Almighty. You begin the game with one point of True Faith (see the sidebar on p. 372); this Trait adds one die per point to all Willpower and Virtue rolls. You must have a Humanity of 9 or higher to choose this Merit, and if you lose even a single point, all your Faith points are lost and may be regained only when the lost Humanity is recovered. Individuals with True Faith are capable of performing magical acts akin to miracles, but the exact nature of those acts are up to the Storyteller.

Cast No Reflection (1pt. Flaw)

You actually cast no reflection, just like the vampires of legend. This can have a detrimental effect when trying to pass as a human. Vampires of Clan Lasombra automatically have this Flaw (and you may be mistaken for one of them if you possess this).

Cold Breeze (1pt. Flaw)

A chill wind follows you everywhere you go. While it may make for dramatic entrances, this effect also discomfits mortals (+1 difficulty on all appropriate Social rolls) and marks you as obviously supernatural. Cold winds sweeping through executive offices or crowded nightclubs can raise all sorts of questions.

Repulsed by Garlic (1pt. Flaw)

You cannot abide garlic, and the smallest whiff of its scent will drive you from a room unless you make a successful Willpower roll (difficulty based on the strength of the odor).

Touch of Frost (1pt. Flaw)

Plants wither as you approach and die at your touch. Your touch leeches heat from living beings, as though you were made of ice.

Cursed (1-5pt. Flaw)

You are the recipient of a supernatural curse. The strength and pervasiveness of the curse depend upon how many points you wish to incur. Examples follow:

- If you pass on a secret you were entrusted with, your betrayal will come back to harm you in some way. (1 pt.)
- You stutter uncontrollably when you try to describe what you have seen or heard. (2 pts.)
- Tools break or malfunction when you try to use them. (3 pts.)
- You are doomed to make enemies of those whom you most love or admire. (4 pts.)
- Every one of your accomplishments or triumphs will eventually become soiled or fail in some way. (5 pts.)

Beacon of the Unholy (2pt. Flaw)

You radiate palpable evil. Clergy and devout mortals know instinctively that there is something horribly wrong with you, and react accordingly.

Deathsight (2pt. Flaw)

Everything appears rotted and decayed to you. The world appears to you as a corpse; mortals look diseased or skeletal, buildings seem decrepit, and your fellow Kindred seem to be walking, moldering cadavers. You are at -2 difficulty to resist all rolls based on Appear-

ance, but by the same token you are at +2 difficulty on all Perception-based rolls. In addition, you find social interaction difficult and are at +1 difficulty on all Social-based rolls.

Eerie Presence (2pt. Flaw)

Mortals have an unconscious awareness of your undead nature, which makes then anxious and ill at ease in your presence. Because of this, difficulties of all rolls relating to social interaction with mortals are increased by two.

Lord of the Flies (2pt. Flaw)

Buzzing harbingers of decay swirl around you everywhere. Their constant presence makes it difficult for you to interact socially (+1 difficulty when appropriate) and nearly impossible to sneak up on someone or hide effectively. The buzzing of the flies inevitably gives you away — all Stealth rolls are at +2 difficulty.

Can't Cross Running Water (3pt. Flaw)

You believe in the old folklore, and cannot cross running water unless you are at least 50 feet (15 meters) above it. Running water is considered to be any body of water at least two feet (half a meter) wide in any direction and not completely stagnant.

Haunted (3pt. Flaw)

You are haunted by an angry and tormented spirit, most likely one of your first victims. This spirit actively attempts to hinder you, especially when feeding, and does its utmost to vent its anguish upon you and anyone in your presence. The Storyteller determines the exact nature of the spirit, its powers, and whether or not it can eventually be laid to rest.

Repelled by Crosses (3pt. Flaw)

You are repelled by the sight of ordinary crosses, believing them to be symbols of holy might. When confronted by a cross, you must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) or flee from the symbol for the duration of the scene. If you botch the roll, not only must you attempt to flee, but the touch of the cross can cause aggravated damage (one health level of damage per turn that the cross touches your skin). This damage cannot be soaked, even if the vampire possesses Fortitude.

Grip of the Damned (4pt. Flaw)

There is no ecstasy in your Embrace — only terror and pain. Mortals upon whom you feed struggle and shriek while you attempt to feed, requiring you to grapple with them for as long as you wish to take their blood. For vampires with high Humanity, this experience may require a Humanity roll, at the discretion of the Storyteller. Giovanni cannot take this Flaw.

Dark Fate (5pt. Flaw)

You are doomed to experience Final Death or, worse, suffer eternal agony. No matter what you do, you cannot avoid this terrible fate. At some point during the chronicle, your Dark Fate will come upon you. Even more ghastly is the fact that you occasionally have visions of this fate, and the malaise these images inspire requires an expenditure of a temporary Willpower point to avoid, or else you lose a die from all of your actions for the remainder of the night. It is up to the Storyteller to determine the exact nature of this fate, and when it will occur. This is a difficult Flaw to roleplay; ironically, though it may seem as though it removes all free will, the knowledge of one's death can be quite liberating.

Light-Sensitive (5pt. Flaw)

You are even more sensitive to sunlight than other vampires are. Sunlight causes double normal damage, and the light of the moon can cause lethal damage in a manner similar to the sun, though it must shine directly upon you. Even bright lights hurt your eyes, requiring the use of sunglasses. Followers of Set and related bloodlines cannot take this Flaw, as they already have a worse version of it.

Ghouls

A vampire's blood has great power — power that can be passed on. Long ago, the Kindred discovered that mortals who drank vampiric blood would become possessed of supernatural abilities and dark appetites. Soon it became common practice for vampires to keep certain favored servants, fattening them on vitae, and blood bonding them in the process. In doing so, they created undying, hellishly loyal servitors — ghouls.

Most ghouls exist at the whim of their domitors (masters), serving loyally in exchange for vitae. As they are as susceptible to the blood bond as anyone, ghouls are almost without exception unfailingly devoted to their masters — and if the domitor has more than one ghoul servant, the result may be a jealous struggle between them for the domitor's favor. A ghoul's emotions run to extremes with the heady drug of vitae in his veins — such a creature often falls prey to great rages and disturbing cravings. The name "ghouls" was not chosen at random.

Types of Ghouls

Vassals

"No, you listen to me. I don't care who you are or who you're with; the lady asked not to be disturbed. And she isn't going to be. Capisce?"

When most vampires think of ghouls, they picture the vassal. Many Cainites find it inconceivable to create ghouls for any other purpose; indeed, to most Kindred, any ghouls other than vassals are blasphemies. By and large, vassals are the "normal people" among ghouls. Most of them didn't ask for their new power or immortality, although few complain too much once the blood bond takes effect. Scant few of them know even a quarter what a neonate does about Kindred society. Somewhere along the line, they were just singled out by something old and powerful, something that wanted another pair of hands. Although a vassal's supply of vitae is pretty much assured, that's really all she has to look forward to. In fact, she'd better be on her very best behavior if she wants to keep her liquid strength coming regularly. She also has to come to terms with the fact that she's in love — truly, passionately, in a way she didn't think she'd ever feel again after her first love left — with a person who treats her with passing kindness at best and draconian cruelty at worst.

The sad thing is that the great majority of vassals really have no idea what's going on. They don't know why they feel the way they do; they don't know what's in that miracle drink their new friend gives them. But they're loyal, if for no other reason than they don't want the magic to stop. They don't want to go back to the monochromatic, tasteless lives they knew before. And you know what? Those are the lucky ones. Because once a ghoul's been dragged to the other side of that mystery, once the Masquerade's been broken, she exists entirely at the sufferance of her domitor.

Independents

"You know just us well as I do that you can't do everything yourself, or have you forgotten that you're exclusively nocturnal? Trust me, I'm reliable help, and my price isn't hard to pay at all."

You think being a junkie is rough? Try doing it when the dealers want to shoot you on sight. An independent's road is a hard one. Kindred view these masterless ghouls as dangerous and uncontrollable, and a vampire very much mistrusts what he doesn't control. Usually, the only recourse is to kidnap and kill vampires in order to gain their blood. Others serve vampires as freelance "help," taking care of particularly nasty daylight problems.

Independent ghouls come from all places, but they put a bit of distance between themselves and ordinary people. They aren't pawns; they do what they do deliberately. Usually, they're orphans: A domitor dies, and his enemies are careless enough to let a servant or two get away. Sometimes the orphan's been a ghoul for so long that he knows he'll wither away to old age in a month if he doesn't get some vitae. Desperation gets a lot of independents started down this road.

Of course, some independents have more complicated stories. Some may have stumbled across Cainite society accidentally, and eventually discovered the power that vitae contains. Others may have been cultists who discovered that there was a variety of blood that worked much better in rituals. Some few might even have been cannibalistic killers who picked an unusually strong victim, and learned the source of that strength. But even without the blood bond, the addiction remains, and only a handful of those who've tasted vitae never try to taste it again.

Revenants

"What? What's wrong? You look… disconcerted. Please, don't be. Come inside. I want you to meet the family. I think they'll like you."

Revenants are ghouls for whom the condition has become hereditary, and who are capable of generating vitae within their own veins. These long-lived, decadent ghouls are almost always found in service to the Sabbat, but there are exceptions. All the perverse urges and dark drives that boil up in the average ghoul are magnified in the revenant. Revenants hold curious family revels, typically of the sort that involve debauchery, drugs, or victims (or all three). They see themselves as superior to humanity, and therefore exempt from society's mores. Some worship vampires as virtual gods, while others aspire to vampirism themselves. Humanity, on the other hand, receives nothing but contempt from loyal revenant scions.

Revenants are a clannish, insular lot, and different families are unlikely to trust one another very much. In particular, the Grimaldis and Zantosas have feuded too often to consider each other friends. Although revenants work with ghouls from rival families when necessary, they rarely like it.

Creating a Ghoul

Step One: Character Concept

Character concepts for ghouls can be just as broad as those for Kindred. A ghoul can be anybody, and people have been ghouled for just about any reason. If a Toreador catches sight of a pretty face in a crowd, ghouling said darling is far less risky than giving her the Embrace. When the vampire grows tired of her, no one will complain when she turns up on a milk carton. A childe is forever — a ghoul is only for as long as it suits you. Since the standards for ghouldom are less exacting, your basic concept could range anywhere from a world-renowned linguist to "that quiet guy next door."

Your concept includes your basic identity, Nature, and Demeanor. It also defines your role in the chronicle. Generally speaking, your character begins the game either as a vassal under the blood bond to a domitor, as a member of a revenant family, or as an independent with alternate means of obtaining vitae to preserve her powers. Whichever disposition you pick, consider the following questions to flesh out your character.

• How did you first find out you were twice as strong as before, and what did you do with your newfound power? What's your day job? Do you have trouble there these days? Have you ever been driven into a frenzy, and how? Do you know you're an addict, or do you fool even yourself? How do you rationalize your habit? Do

Character Creation Process

• **Step One: Character Concept**

Choose concept, Nature, and Demeanor, then Vassal, Independent, or Revenant.

• **Step Two: Select Attributes**

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (6/4/3). Your character automatically has one dot in each Attribute.

Rate Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina.

Rate Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance.

Rate Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits.

• **Step Three: Select Abilities**

Prioritize the three categories: Talents, Skills, Knowledges (11/7/4).

Choose Talents, Skills, Knowledges.

No Ability higher than 3 at this stage

• **Step Four: Select Advantages**

Choose Disciplines (1, plus Potence 1), Backgrounds (5), and rate Virtues (5 for revenants and Sabbat ghouls, 7 for all others). Your character automatically has one dot in each Virtue.

• **Step Five: Finishing Touches**

Record Humanity (equal to Conscience + Self-Control), Willpower (equal to Courage), and Blood Pool (1). Ghouls cannot take a Path of Enlightenment.

Spend freebie points (21). Optional: Choose Merits and Flaws (max. 7 points).

Freebie Points

Trait	Cost
Attribute	5 per dot
Ability	2 per dot
Discipline	10 per dot
Background	1 per dot
Virtue	2 per dot
Humanity	1 per dot
Willpower	1 per dot



you hate anybody enough that you now feel like doing something about it — or have you done it already? How would you describe the Blood? What metaphors best sum up that incredible rush? Would you let a loved one become a ghoul, or would you try to stop her?

• For vassals, what sort of person were you before you became a ghoul? Do you define yourself mainly by your relationship to your master? Why were you chosen; what do you have to offer your domitor? Were you tricked into becoming a ghoul, or did you go willingly? Are you treated fairly, or is your liege abusive? What's your master's Clan, and what do you know about her role among the city's Kindred? Have you ever felt anything as powerful as the blood bond?

• If you were born a revenant, what family do you belong to? How strong are those family ties? How did your extremely prolonged childhood affect you? Were you abused by your family? Do you have any sibling rivalries? Have you run into trouble with the ghoul-hating members of your Sect? Why are you away from home? Will you ever go back, and if so, how will you be received?

• As an independent, how did you receive your first taste of vitae? How do you maintain your all-important supply of the Blood? Do you interact with Kindred on their own terms, or do you deliberately avoid becoming entangled in their politics? Are you an escaped vassal? If so, what was your role: paramour, soldier, aide? Do you know about any other denizens of the World of Darkness? Do you want to?

Step Two: Select Attributes

A ghoul has fewer dots to divide among her Attributes, as her starting capabilities are more mundane than a vampire's. However, you'll get a bit more flexibility with freebie points in Step Four. You begin play with one free dot in each Attribute. After prioritizing Attribute categories, spend six dots among primary Attributes, four among secondary, and three among tertiary.

Step Three: Select Abilities

Select primary, secondary, and tertiary groups for Abilities. The primary group receives 11 dots, the secondary group gets seven, and the tertiary group receives four. Unlike Attributes, characters do not begin the game with automatic dots in any Ability. No Ability may be purchased above three dots during this stage of character creation. You may raise Abilities higher with freebie points in Step Four.

Step Four: Select Advantages

Although weaker than Cainites, ghouls still have an edge over ordinary men and women. All ghouls begin play with one dot of Potence, which they learn instinctively and immediately. Each ghoul also has one dot in another Discipline, which should be chosen according to your character concept. The exceptions to this rule are Protean, Thaumaturgy, and other Clan-exclusive Disciplines. These highly specific Disciplines are available only to vassals of the appropriate Clan.

If you're playing a vassal, you must pick a Discipline that your domitor knows. Check with your Storyteller; your domitor's Clan will usually be a guide.

If you're playing a revenant, you should choose your second Discipline from your family's traditional Disciplines.

Independent ghouls have no Clan restrictions, but if you are creating an independent character, the Storyteller may require you to choose your second dot from among the innate physical Disciplines (Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence).

Ghouls and revenants are typically limited to learning only the first level of any Discipline. Their borrowed vitae simply isn't potent enough to bestow more powerful abilities. However, they can exceed this limit by consuming blood from more powerful vampires. The potency of said blood is directly connected to the donor's Generation — the closer the vitae to Caine, the more powerful the Disciplines a ghoul may learn. The ghoul must drink this potent blood for a considerable period of time (generally, long enough to gain the requisite experience points to buy such advanced Disciplines).

The chart below gives a suggested correlation between a donor's Generation and the level of Disciplines a ghoul may attain.

Donor's Generation	Maximum Discipline Level
13th-8th	1
7th	2
6th	3
5th	4
4th	5

Step Five: Last Touches

The finishing touches are pretty much the same for ghoul and vampire characters (ghouls start with one blood point, and have a blood pool of 2 or more, depending on age — see p. 500 for details). Ghouls receive 21 freebie points, more than starting vampire characters. This reflects their mortal flexibility, as well as the traits that initially made them attractive or useful to vampires.

Experience Costs

Trait	Cost
New Ability	3
New Discipline	20
New Path (Necromancy or Thaumaturgy)	20 (Clan ghouls only)
Attribute	current rating x 4
Ability	current rating x 2
Clan/Family Discipline	current level x 15*
Other Discipline	current level x 25*
Secondary Path (Necromancy or Thaumaturgy)	current level x 15 (Clan ghouls only)
Virtue	current rating x 2**
Humanity	current rating x 2
Willpower	current rating

* A vassal gets a cost break on the Clan Disciplines of her first domitor, regardless of the domitor's actual Disciplines. So, while a Toreador may know Dominate, his ghoul still pays current level x 25 for it. An independent gets a cost break on Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence. A revenant gets a cost break on her family's Disciplines.

A vassal who leaves a vampire's service is treated as an independent from that point on, while an independent who becomes blood bound to a domitor is treated as a vassal.

** Increasing a Virtue through experience does not increase Traits based on that Virtue (Humanity, Willpower).

I Was Embraced Yesterday

When a ghoul character is Embraced, give them any Attribute and Ability points necessary to raise them to the starting values for vampires.

Backgrounds and Virtues are unchanged. Embraced ghouls also receive the same Discipline points as a starting vampire. They retain any Disciplines learned as a ghoul when they are Embraced, including Potence. They are now also able to teach those Disciplines, to the same extent as any other vampire.

Rules

Revenants

Revenants manufacture their own vitae, though they may drink vampire vitae as well. Revenants may spend their vitae normally and replenish their vitae supplies at the rate of one blood point per day. This renewal presupposes that the revenant in question is healthy and properly nourished.

Blood Bond

Ghouls are still living beings, and so the mechanics of blood bonding them differ from those used to govern vampires. For a ghoul, a blood bond is not a sudden plunge into love, but a gradual slide into an emotional abyss.

After the first drink, a ghoul displays strong feelings toward the donor. There are no mechanical effects, but the feelings or the battle to suppress them should be roleplayed. Most independent ghouls, especially those dealing with charismatic or attractive Kindred, prefer to take one drink and move on.

After the second drink, things aren't so simple; the ghoul is considered to be under an effect equivalent to a Vinculum score of 5 (see p. 289).

Ghouls with Willpower scores of 5 and below may have to make Self-Control rolls to avoid taking a third drink, and even ghouls with high Willpower scores may have to roll if (in the Storyteller's opinion) the temptation to drink is strong. Unlike vampires, ghouls may actually "wean" themselves off a blood bond by refusing to accept blood from the domitor.

Kindred folklore claims that a year is required to become fully "emancipated." In reality, the time required depends on the ghoul. After a "dry" period of 12 months minus one month per Willpower dot, a ghoul drops one level on the blood bond chart — for example, a ghoul who was fully bound is considered to be two steps toward being bound. Each such interval of withdrawal reduces the bond by one level, until the ghoul is "clean."

However, it is by no means easy to abstain. At the Storyteller's option, a ghoul may have to spend Willpower points to avoid the enticement of an ex-domitor's vitae until she is completely free of the bond. If the ghoul has an addiction-prone personality, such as a Conformist or Child Nature, she may never completely shake the craving.

Disciplines

Ghouls have much more difficulty learning Disciplines than Kindred do. The powers passed down from Caine reach their full potency only in his childer; they are alien to mere mortals. Generally, a ghoul may learn only those Disciplines known by her most recent "donor." An independent wishing to learn Obtenebration must spend some time feasting on Lasombra vitae; similarly, a Malkavian's vassal is unlikely to pick up Necromancy. However, once she's learned a Discipline, any form of vitae will allow her to use it; revenants may even use their own vitae to fuel foreign arts such as Serpentis. The exceptions are the physical arts of Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence, which are instinctive enough to be accessible to any ghoul.

Once a ghoul has learned a Discipline, the knowledge will likely stay with her even if she doesn't practice it for a while (if her vitae supply is cut off, for instance). Once her diet is restored, she may use her Disciplines as usual. Of course, any unused talent will eventually atrophy — after six months without drinking vitae, a ghoul loses a dot in a Discipline. Each month after that, she loses another dot in a Discipline until all are gone.

Most ghouls and revenants don't understand the Kindred well enough to teach Disciplines to them.

Aging

A ghoul's immunity to aging is contingent on her supply of vitae. If she misses her monthly feeding, she could be in real trouble. As long as she is still within



her natural life span, she resumes normal aging. But if she's lived from 100 to 250 years, then she begins aging at 10 times the normal rate — a year becomes a decade, and so on. Ghouls who have lived more than 250 years crumble instantly to dust if their supply of vitae falters. On the other hand, elder ghouls gain some benefits — in many ways, such prolonged exposure to vitae transforms them into something not quite human.

Elder revenants gain additional "storage capacity" beyond their starting limit of two points. For each century of life, he gains one extra point in his blood pool capacity. Elder ghouls who are not revenants may also gain additional blood points, but at the rate of one per two centuries of life (so an 800-year-old ghoul has a Blood Pool of 6). Additionally, the difficulty to effect regeneration decreases by one per century (see below).

Healing

Ghouls may heal using their blood pool, just as Kindred do. They can also regenerate limbs, though not automatically. To make a regeneration attempt, a ghoul must spend a Willpower point, spend an appropriate number of blood points (one for a finger or eye, two for a foot or forearm, three for an entire limb) and make a Stamina roll (difficulty 8). If the roll fails or is botched, the ghoul may never regrow the limb. Elder ghouls find regeneration easier: for each century of age, the difficulty of the roll decreases by one.

Frenzy

It is the Storyteller's duty to decide what situations might provoke frenzy in a ghoul character. While any individual stimulus is relatively unlikely to send a ghoul into frenzy, ghouls experience provocation much more commonly than vampires do. Ghouls' human natures battle constantly with their Beasts, and most are not given instruction in how to prevent their pseudo-vampiric natures from taking over. However, since the Beast is weaker in ghouls, they typically face lower difficulties (usually, a ghoul's frenzy difficulties are three lower than a vampire's).

In order for a ghoul character to resist frenzy, the ghoul's player must make a Self-Control roll, the difficulty of which varies. The player must score five successes before frenzy is overcome completely. With each success rolled, frenzy is staved off for one turn.

Clan Weaknesses

A few Clans' vitae possesses contagious properties. Ghouls imbibing or injecting five or more blood points over time from certain Clans must make a Stamina

roll (difficulty 5) or "inherit" a lesser form of the domitor's weakness; this lasts until the ghoul starts taking in blood from a different Clan, diluting the influence. The Clans for which this rule most commonly applies are:

• Brujah: A ghoul "pumped" on Brujah blood frenzies at difficulties equal to those of a non-Brujah vampire.

• Follower of Set: Ghoul develops painful (-1 to dice pools) rashes when in direct sunlight.

• Malkavian: The ghoul gains a mild derangement.

• Nosferatu: Appearance drops by one or two points, but no lower than 1.

• Ventrue: Ghoul gains a marked preference for Ventrue blood, possibly endangering the domitor.

• Any Sabbat: No mandatory effect, but remember the possibility of contracting disease via the Vaulderie.

At the Storyteller's discretion, vitae from other Clans or bloodlines may cause similar effects.

Overdosing

Ghouls can take in more vitae than their mortal bodies can comfortably handle, but this often causes dangerous side effects. For each point of Stamina a ghoul has, she can "cram" an extra blood point into her body. If a ghoul imbibes more vitae than she can contain, she must make a Stamina check (difficulty 8). If she succeeds, she may use the excess blood normally.

If she fails, she suffers one point of lethal damage per blood point above her maximum. Moreover, the excess blood can't be used. It takes a full scene of vomiting to burn off such "useless" blood points; until this takes place, the ghoul cannot use any blood points whatsoever.

While a ghoul is overdosed, her chance to frenzy becomes equal to that of a vampire's, though certainly the ghoul will not hunger at this point. Reaction time increases (the ghoul temporarily gains a dot in Dexterity), but the overdosed ghoul must make a Perception + Self-Control roll each scene or suffer from violent hallucinations (effects are up to the Storyteller's discretion).

Withdrawal

Withdrawn ghouls suffer symptoms for a period of weeks equal to six minus the ghoul's Stamina. Whenever the opportunity to gain vitae arises, the ghoul must make a Self-Control roll (difficulty 7) or attempt to "score" however possible.

Additionally, each week of withdrawal requires the ghoul to make an Intelligence + Self-Control roll (difficulty 6); if this roll fails, the ghoul begins to sublimate her cravings for vitae into a desire for human blood, flesh, or sex. A Willpower point may be spent to resist these cravings. If the roll is botched, no Willpower may be spent, and the victim must act on her urges.

War Ghouls

The Tzimisce once crafted ghouls into shock troops and guardians. Some of these monstrous creations still exist tonight, waiting to be unleashed upon the enemies of the Fiends.

Szlachta

These horrible creatures are the fleshcrafted minions of the Tzimisce. Many szlachta are lobotomized as part of the process, making them bestial creatures who understand only how to obey. Szlachta are typically twisted into nightmarish caricatures of living creatures.

The appalling alterations they undergo serve two purposes: First, they become more frightening, often a crucial edge in battle. Second, no szlachta may ever enter human society again. Without the temptation of flight, szlachta are among the most brutally loyal ghouls an unfortunate intruder may encounter.

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 4

Skills: Melee 1, Stealth 3, Survival (Tracking) 2

Knowledges: Any three at 2

Disciplines: Fortitude 1, Potence 1

Backgrounds: None

Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 5

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 4

Flaws: Monstrous

Vozhd

Run.

These nightmarish leviathans are hybrids created from 15+ ghouls who have been grafted together through Vicissitude, Thaumaturgy, and Sabbat sadism. A lobotomized Vozhd is immune to Animalism, Dominate, and Presence; a sentient one (if the rumors are true) would be even worse.

Vozhd are rarely used in this age of media and Masquerade. When they are deployed, they are treated as walking bombs: Sabbat point them at their targets, then run for cover. Vozhd are omnivorous, eating anything in their path. Other ghouls are as tasty as mortals or vampires.

Physical: Strength 8, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6

Social: All Attributes 0

Mental: Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: n/a

Humanity: n/a

Disciplines: Fortitude 4, Potence 6

Revenant Families

For untold centuries, the Tzimisce have practiced the art of selective breeding on their most trusted (or at least most useful) servants. In the early Middle Ages, certain elders of the Clan undertook a long-term experiment studying the effects of regular vitae infusion into the blood of several Eastern European noble families. The eventual result, a handful of generations later, was the creation of their revenant families.

A millennium ago, over a dozen distinct revenant lines served the Tzimisce. However, several were exterminated during the Inquisition and the Anarch Revolt, and others were absorbed into surviving families through intermarriage. It is rumored that others have broken away from the Tzimisce and now serve other masters, a distinctly dangerous proposition. The revenant families that have survived to the modern nights are universally wretched and disturbing specimens by any "normal" standard. Incest, pedophilia, cannibalism, bestiality, substance abuse, and fringe-movement political activism are among the more tame hobbies practiced by the revenant families. Such behavior renders them all the more amusing to their masters, who watch these depraved antics with a twisted glee.

Bratovitch

The Bratovitches mainly keep to their isolated rural estates, breeding hellhounds and other unsavory beasts. They emerge only to hunt Lupines and other creatures of the night, to kidnap brides and studs, or to serve as trackers for nomadic Sabbat packs. Members of this family are, as a general rule, more subhuman than most other revenants, and they delight in their perversity and savagery. Most Sabbat tend to avoid Bratovitch estates unless they are truly desperate. This is not out of fear — Bratovitches look up to Sabbat Cainites as "big, nasty uncles" of a sort — but rather out of disgust.

Cross a stereotypical back-country hill clan with a Tzimisce, and season with a liberal amount of pure Neanderthal hunt-kill-mate mentality, and you'll have a good representation of a Bratovitch. The family primarily lairs in the North American wilderness, though a handful of outposts can be found in South America, and the family's ancestral estate in Poland is still a respectably sized holding.

Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Vicissitude

Weakness: Bratovitches are easily angered — some would say psychotic. They make all rolls to resist frenzy at +2 difficulty, and do not get along well with normal mortals.

Ducheski

What little the Ducheski allow others to know about them indicates a history of treachery. Like most of the revenant bloodlines, the Ducheski claim to have once served the hoary Tzimisce of the Old World. Since those nights, however, something caused them to turn their backs on their erstwhile masters and throw their fates in with the Tremere. Needless to say, this has not earned them any favor with the Fiends.

Ducheski revenants are rare, indeed, and some say the line is dying out after severing its connections with the Tzimisce who bred them so long ago. Rumors attribute a few crumbling manses to the family's holdings, mostly spread through Europe. It is here that they serve their new masters, the Tremere. Although a few Ducheski sometimes receive the Embrace into the Clan, the Tremere generally prefer to keep them in roles of subservience. A few prominent Warlocks maintain Ducheski ghouls in their libraries, sanctums, and thaumaturgical laboratories, but by and large the family remains a well-guarded secret even among the ranks of the Tremere.

The true genius of the Ducheski manifests in their talent with machines and contraptions. They are masters of mechanical devices, sometimes devising works of Da Vinci-like brilliance, though the purposes to which these machines are turned are almost always grim. To those elders who know of them, a Ducheski torture device or system of alembics is a sign of status, much like owning a piece of original artwork. To the Ducheski, it is the price for which they have sold their souls to escape the talons of the Tzimisce, a burden they silently bear.

Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy

Weakness: As a result of centuries spent under the thumb of the Tremere, the Ducheski have grown quite far from the human side of their beings. Isolation and inbreeding has caused an aberration in the minds, bodies, and personalities of the Ducheskis, who betray the birth defects and skittish personalities of those too far removed from outside human contact. No Ducheski may ever have a Social Trait above 2.

Grimaldi

Once merchants in the Italian city-states of the 12th Century, the Grimaldis still enjoy a profitable position of go-between for the Sabbat's dealings with mortal society. They are probably the most "normal" of the families, though some would argue that extreme wealth sets one apart as much as their vampire blood does. Grimaldis are usually groomed for positions of power, and it is not uncommon for a member of this family to hold a high political office or a corporate leadership role in his home city.

Starting at birth, Grimaldis enjoy every luxury that life has to offer, from private schools and tutors to decadent vacations at the most exclusive resorts to the most wonderful toys. In addition to furthering the political agendas of their masters, the Grimaldis have a second, more personal goal that is kept secret from all but the leaders of the family.

Grimaldi elders believe that their continued existence hinges on their utility to the Sabbat, and their destruction will be swift and total should the Tzimisce ever withdraw their aegis. Accordingly, the Grimaldi have begun to formulate contingency plans for a transfer of family loyalty either to the Ventrue of the Camarilla or to the Giovanni, should the Sabbat ever decide that the Grimaldis have outlived their usefulness. Needless to say, this information would ensure the family's total obliteration should it ever come to light, so the privileged few who know of these treasonous thoughts make certain to stay well away from their nominal masters.

Disciplines: Celerity, Dominate, Fortitude

Weakness: All Grimaldis past puberty are blood bound to Sabbat members of Bishop rank or above. This began as a safety measure to ensure that the Grimaldis did not betray the Sabbat in the course of their extensive mingling with mortal society, but has devolved to little more than a formal rite of passage and sign of majority in modern nights. Most Sabbat rarely call upon their thralls; those unlucky Grimaldi whose regnants frequently impose their will upon them are most likely be written off as "acceptable losses" if and when the family decides to shift its allegiance.

Obertus

Reclusive scholars, the Obertuses have managed to maintain their continued existence by avoiding the Sabbat's notice and by feeding their Tzimisce patrons a steady trickle of research data. Originally librarians and clerics for the Tzimisce lords of the Byzantine Empire, the Obertus family moved first to the Clan's ancestral homelands in Eastern Europe, then to the New World during the first waves of Sabbat colonization. They still maintain a strong presence in the New England states and the eastern Canadian provinces.

The Obertuses can best be characterized as chthonic, both in their reclusive small-town nature and in their constant search for knowledge that they may not necessarily want. Obertus research tends toward the paranormal: ghoulies, ghosties, long-legged beasties, and things that go bump in the night, among other subjects.

Like the Grimaldis, the Obertuses have a secret objective that might well lead to their destruction should the Sabbat discover it. The Obertus family elders have come to believe that revenant existence is the key to the next logical step in human evolution: *Homo obertus* is destined to replace *Homo sapiens*, just as modern humans exterminated the Neanderthal. To this end, the family conducts experiments with various permutations on the Embrace and the ghouling process, using vitae from several captured Camarilla Kindred and one Tzimisce elder who was foolish enough to enter voluntary torpor in an Obertus-controlled fishing town outside Boston. No definite results have appeared yet, but the Obertuses believe they may be close to discovering the secret of perpetuating "ghoul" existence without a source of vampiric vitae.

Disciplines: Auspex, Obfuscate, Vicissitude

Weakness: The Obertuses were bred for intellectual ability, sometimes at the expense of stability, and are thus prone to monomania and similar psychological disorders. The vast majority of Obertus revenants suffer from the Obsessive-Compulsive derangement (see p. 292). At the Storyteller's discretion, an Obertus may suffer another appropriate derangement.

Oprichniki

The Oprichniki, the vassals of Russia's Tzimisce, can trace their origins down to the year. During the reign of Ivan the Terrible, these mortal mercenaries served as cutthroats to a mortal devil. Only Vlad Tepes himself could match Ivan's reign of blood. The Oprichniki, in turn, carried out Ivan's orders, performing acts of terror against the populace, flaying anyone who complained too loudly, and boiling the czar's enemies.

The Oprichniki barely survived the reign of Ivan the Terrible, for they suffered his ministrations as well. He turned them upon each other in his final years, and only the vilest of their lot survived. The Russian Tzimisce took them in and used them as vassals over the remaining century. Surprisingly, the Oprichniki eventually became revenants, even though they never once served upon the Carpathians' blighted soil. Fiends theorize the Oprichniki cursed themselves by serving Ivan the Terrible, though this is more fable than fact.

Even before the rise and fall of the Iron Curtain, the Oprichniki were a well-kept secret, especially from the younger Transylvanian *voivodes*. The Russian Fiends desired the Oprichniki to be their henchmen and majordomos, whether they served as vassals, intermediaries, mouthpieces, bodyguards, or cutthroats. As such, the Tzimisce train the Oprichniki from birth to fulfill a variety of assignments and duties. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Tzimisce are finally free of both Brujah idealists spouting proletariat rhetoric and the superstitious elders of the Camarilla casting dubious eyes toward the obviously exceptional skulkers in darkness maintained by the Fiends. To this night, the Oprichniki remain hidden from the majority of the Clan, serving independent Russian Tzimisce.

Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Vicissitude

Weakness: The Oprichniki drawback manifests more as a curse than a weakness. All revenants from this family, regardless their ethnic background, suffer at the hands of at least one ghost as per the 3-point Supernatural Flaw Haunted (see p. 495). Russian koldun believe the ghosts are the victims of Novgorod, a Russian city that the Oprichniki decimated in their mortal years. Ivan's assault against Novgorod resulted in the murder and torture of thousands of innocent civilians, a crime the revenants carry with them. Even if an Oprichniki finds a way through Disciplines or magic to rid himself of his ghost, another always takes its place.

Zantosa

The Zantosas don't really seem to have a reason for continued existence. In fact, if the average Sabbat vampire was asked her opinion of them (assuming she had even heard of revenant families), she would likely reply with a blank look. The Zantosa family appears to have outlived its usefulness, and exists primarily to continue its members' decadent, self-indulgent lifestyles, and to provide entertainment for the Toreador *antitribu*, Serpents of the Light, and Tzimisce.



Once the cream of Eastern Europe's social elite, the Zantosas have curdled and withdrawn, forsaking long-term socio-political manipulation for short-term gratification. The primary family pursuits these nights include petty crime, vice, black marketeering, and pushing the boundaries of sensation. Indeed, the only apparent reason the Zantosas haven't been wiped out by a Black Hand-led pogrom already is that the end results wouldn't be worth the effort expended to cleanse their penthouses, nightclubs, and movie studios.

Recently, an internal purge rocked the Zantosa family estate in New York. No less than two dozen family members, most with previously impeccable reputations (as Zantosa reputations go), were put to death in sudden and grisly fashion by household elders. Sabbat inquiries were notably cursory ("let them kill themselves off" seems to have been the general attitude), and were met with responses that the destroyed parties had been caught dabbling in dark sorcery — a response that, curiously enough, did not warrant an Inquisition investigation.

The truth, known only to the Zantosa family's uppermost echelon, is far more ominous. For the past several centuries, the Zantosa family has guarded a torporous form believed to be a Tzimisce vampire of great age. A year or so ago, the crypt in which the body in question lay was found empty with no prior warning and no evidence. No explanation has yet been forthcoming.

Disciplines: Auspex, Presence, Vicissitude

Weakness: Zantosas are rather weak-willed when it comes to resisting temptation. Accordingly, whenever a Zantosa is exposed to a particularly pleasurable experience, she must make a Willpower roll (difficulty determined by the Storyteller, depending on the experience in question). Failure indicates that the Zantosa is now obsessed with or addicted to that particular sensation (which can be anything from doing a new drug, to performing a particular sexual position, to enjoying a sumptuous wine, to the act of being fed upon), and will do damn near anything to experience it again.

Zantosas are also unable to spend Willpower to resist any supernatural power that entices them toward a new source of pleasure, and many have met untimely ends at the hands of Cainites, fae, and stranger creatures.

Others

Other revenant families have come and gone over the centuries. Some may still exist tonight, while others have been crushed beneath the wheels of history.

Basarab: Charismatic leaders and warriors who served the Tzimisce during the Dark Ages. The legendary Dracula may have risen from this line.

Danislav: Kin of the dreaded Lupines who came to serve the Tzimisce in ancient Transylvania.

D'Habi: Cultists who served — and betrayed — the Baali in the name of their vampire-god Nergal.

Enrathi: A family of slave traders and merchants with roots stretching back further than the Roman empire. They dwell now in the Underworld with the Tal'Mahe'Ra.

Giovanni: Rumors say that some members of the mortal Giovanni family have become revenants through long exposure to the Blood.

Krevcheski: A long-dead line, murdered by the Tzimisce after a great betrayal.

Khazi: Servants of the "white god" Byelobog, betrayed by their own and exterminated during the Crusades.

Marijava: Thugee cultists who became the spies and informers of the Nagaraja.

Rafastio: Blood magicians who preserve the Black Hand's association with an ancient lodge of human wizards.

Szantovich: Transylvanian spies and infiltrators who allied with several Clans.

Servants of Anushin-Rawan: Debased fisherfolk who served an eccentric Ventrue in early modern Greece.

Sabbat Ritae

The Sabbat values its bonds of loyalty and fraternity above all else. To this end, the Sect has established many rituals, which reinforce pack and Sect solidarity. The entire Sect observes the same auctoritas ritae, while the ignoblis ritae vary greatly in number, subject, and observation from pack to pack.

Packs observe the auctoritas ritae at common times — at esbats (Sabbat gatherings), before sieges, or when bringing a new member into the pack, for example. The ignoblis ritae may occur at any time, usually when the Pack Priest believes them to be most appropriate. Some packs observe greeting or parting ritae, feeding ritae, ritae of diablerie, and any number of variations. Basically, any event of import, common or otherwise, might have an associated ignoblis ritus in a given pack.

System: Ritae may be conducted by anyone, in theory, though their mechanical effects only occur when presided over by a vampire with the Rituals Background. You can't just mix a bunch of vitae in a paper cup and have a Vaulderie.

Auctoritas Ritae

The entire Sect practices auctoritas ritae, due to both tradition and their significance in Sabbat beliefs. They strengthen the Sect's bonds of loyalty and fraternity, by providing emotional power through familiarity with the ritae and the sorcery that accompanies them. These are some of the auctoritas ritae practiced by the Sect (including the Vaulderie, which can be found on p. 288).

The Blood Bath

This ritus is performed whenever Sect leaders wish to recognize a Sabbat vampire's claim to a title, such as Bishop or Cardinal. The Blood Bath formalizes the vampire's new status in the Sect. As many Sabbat as possible who will serve under this new leader must attend the ceremony, for failing to do so without an adequate reason is a grave slight to the leader in question. Starting with the priest conducting the ritus, attendant Sect leaders and other Sabbat take turns coming forward, kneeling in front of and expressing their endorsement of or allegiance to the Cainite, and contributing a quantity of blood into a large vessel. The newly titled vampire gives praise and/or advice to each of the vampires present, emphasizing the benefits the Sabbat stands to gain through the sharing of her wisdom. She then bathes in the blood donated to the pool. Following the ceremony, all vampires present drink from the bathing vessel (the blood in which is sometimes consecrated as a Vaulderie), symbolizing that they willingly partake of everything the new leader has to offer.

System: Most Sabbat refuse to acknowledge a leader who has not been confirmed through a proper Blood Bath ceremony, if they have reason to suspect such.

The Blood Feast

No formal Sabbat gathering would be complete without a Blood Feast. It serves both as sustenance and as a vehicle to express the Sabbat's lust to exist as the ultimate predator. The Blood Feast is a ritual "meal," in which captured vessels are suspended from the ceiling, bound to sculptures, or otherwise immobilized and fed from at the leisure of all vampires present. The feast itself is as much social gathering as it is a structured ritus, and many Sabbat make grand entrances, wearing the best of their finery.

In preparation for a Blood Feast, a specially created pack or hunting party will have collected humans or even a rogue vampire or two the night before the feast. Much shouting, cheering, and baring of fangs occurs as the hunting party makes a formal presentation of the night's feast to the highest-ranking Sabbat present. The official receives each victim and thanks the giver by kissing her forehead. He then hands the victims over to assistants, chosen to prepare the victims for the feast. They bind the victims' hands and feet together and hoist them up on chains to hang at head level, or they tie (or nail) the victims to objects that prevent movement.

The night after the preparation, ghouls or low-ranking Sabbat prepare the feast location by placing the vessels. After all the guests have arrived — it is considered grievously poor form to be fashionably late — the priest, Bishop, or Archbishop holding the service conducts the ritus, dedicating the vessels to the Sabbat. Cainites at the gathering then bite open the victims and feed on the fresh vitae, often licking the wounds closed so as not to waste. There is usually one victim for every three vampires present at the feast; the presiding priest, Bishop, or Archbishop gets first choice of the night's treats, and he draws first blood.

Some Cainites of the Sabbat have been formally censured by higher-ranking Sabbat and even members of the Inquisition and Black Hand for relying too heavily on the Blood Feast. To be sure, mass-kidnappings and

the blood-stained halls left behind can lead vampire hunters to the trail of careless vampires.

System: Each blood point a Blood Feast victim possesses mystically transforms into two as it leaves his body. By the third night after a Blood Feast, however, the blood once again condenses back down to its original amount (if it hasn't been used and remains in a vampire's body).

Creation Rites

To hear vampires outside the Sect talk, all Sabbat are created on the fly, with recruits being drained, fed, bashed over the head with a shovel, buried, and left to claw their way to the surface in a starving frenzy. This is not always the case. Most Sabbat use the "shovelhead method" only in times of war. This infamous method consists of collecting a number of victims, Embracing them with the tiniest quantity of blood possible, bashing them over the head with a shovel (to knock them unconscious before they frenzy), and burying them in a mass grave. The newly Embraced Cainites rouse quickly, and they must dig themselves out of the grave to sate their frenzy, often at the expense of the weaker vampires entombed with them. This method is simple, relatively quick, and quite effective at stripping victims of their Humanity. In any event, vampires created this way have not actually received their Creation Rites. In fact, the Sabbat does not even consider them vampires yet, and it has little reservation against throwing legions of these frenzied horrors against their foes.

The Creation Rites themselves are much more serious, marking the passage from nonentity into True Sabbat. After the Embrace, the new vampire is eligible for the Creation Rites only after he has demonstrated his worth to the Sect — perhaps the very night of his Embrace, perhaps years afterward. The ritus itself is quite simple — the priest merely touches a flaming brand to the initiate's head and leads him in an oath of allegiance. The ceremony that precedes the Creation Rites, however, varies widely, and it is wholly in the hands of the Cainite's sire. Some Panders and Brujah *antitribu* have ceremonies not unlike gang initiations, which involve pummeling the vampire in question until the sire decides he's had enough. Tzimisce ceremonies are much more civil and formal affairs, often involving recitations of one's lineage and praise of one's sire. Some vampires require no ceremony at all, deciding that they have all the proof that they need from a given vampire's performance, while still others require Byzantine trials or bizarre acts like bestiality, kidnapping, murder, self-mutilation, or other depravity.

The Rites serve several purposes, both practical and symbolic. The flames help reduce the new Sabbat's fear of fire, while the ceremony teaches him what is expected of a Sabbat member like himself. Immediately following the Creation Rites comes a Vaulderie, which binds the Cainite to the pack — his new, immortal family.

System: Without the Creation Rites, a vampire is not truly a vampire in the eyes of Sabbat. Such an unfortunate may not participate in Sabbat ritae or functions until he has received the Creation Rites, and is often kicked about, abused, and ordered around at any of the "real" vampires' whims.

Fire Dance

To most vampires, fire is something to be feared and avoided, yet not to the Sabbat. While they still fear it, they are not above turning it loose on their enemies. To be fully Sabbat, one must face the Rötschreck and master it.

To enact this ritus, the priest lights a large bonfire in a place secure from mortal eyes. Through the rhythmic beating of a drum, chanting, or both, participating Cainites enter a trance-like frenzy, whirling around the flames, writhing before them and even prostrating themselves in front of the blaze. As the ceremony reaches its peak, the vampires rave and chant, and encourage each other to jump through the flames. They make fantastic leaps, some even turning aerial somersaults over and over again to the point of exhaustion. The Fire Dance comes to a close when the last vampire present has jumped through the flames and collapsed from all the activity.

System: For a vampire to even approach the blazes, the player must succeed in a Courage roll (difficulty only 5, because of the trance-frenzy). For a vampire to successfully leap the flames, the player must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 6 to simply jump the flames, though Storytellers should feel free to increase the difficulty if the character tries to leap in a particularly dramatic or acrobatic way).

After a Fire Dance, characters who leapt through the flames gain a temporary bonus point of Courage for the three nights following the ritus. This bonus point may even exceed the normal Virtue limit of 5.

Games of Instinct

The vampires of the Sabbat engage in numerous sanctioned "games," adjudicated by their Pack Priests to maintain their predatory edge. These games take

various forms, and different packs practice different styles — everything from parodies of children's games or sports to completely unique vampiric tests of skill can be made into a Game of Instinct. The only commonality between the games is that the priest presides over them, consecrating them as righteous exercises. Here are some common examples:

• **Cowboys and Indians/Cops and Robbers:** The object of Cowboys and Indians is to capture or incapacitate (but not kill) as many members of the other side as possible. Because of vampires' innate resistance to damage, this is easier said than done, and bullets aplenty fly during these games. The team that knocks the other out of commission is the winner.

• **Demolition Derby**: Starting at opposite ends of a street or parking lot, pack members set their cars on fire and charge another team's car. After much bashing and crashing, one team inevitably has to flee their car or burn to death; the first team to exit its vehicle loses.

• **Dogtagging:** The object of the game is to capture a werewolf, tag its ear (with tags similar to kind used by cattle ranchers), and turn it loose.

• **Rat Race:** A human is sealed in a labyrinth of some sort, such as an abandoned factory or part of a sewer system. The human is given weapons that can hurt vampires, such as handguns, knives, blow-torches, or chainsaws. The participating vampires, starting in different locations in the maze, hunt the human, while the human tries desperately to escape the vampires. Whichever vampire captures and drains the human first, wins. An alternative to the Rat Race — the Bat Race — involves vampires only.

• **Rousing the Beast:** The participant has to dig up the victim of a failed mass-Embrace. Once the crazed creature breaks the surface and frenzies, it is up to the game participant to immobilize her and destroy her.

System: Storytellers and players are encouraged to develop their own Games of Instinct; basically, any mayhem works for this ritus as long as the Pack Priest recognizes it and bestows her blessing upon it. Once completed, for the duration of one story, the winner(s) of a given Game of Instinct receive one bonus die to the dice pool of the Ability they used the most during the game. A player may not have more than one Skill augmented in this way for any given story.

Monomacy

It is inevitable that, among vampires as headstrong and violent as those of the Sabbat, differences of opinion occur. While the vast majority of these conflicts are handled with all the civility and reason a Sabbat can muster, some grievances are so deep as to warrant a more serious solution. When two (or more) Sabbat are unable to come to a resolution, the ritus of Monomacy serves to settle the issue.

Monomacy is usually practiced by only ranking members of packs. Many young Sabbat are too violent and hotheaded to recognize the gravity of ritual combat to the death, and would resort to it every time a packmate took blood from a vessel they decided they liked. As such, this ritus is conducted by the Pack Priest (or a higher ranking Sabbat, if the challenge is cross-pack), to whom a challenge is issued simultaneously with the challenge to the rival. The priest then decides whether or not the grudge is worth Monomacy, and whether or not she chooses to preside over the ritual. Should the priest deem the cause worthy, the challenged vampire may decline. In theory, there is nothing wrong with declining a challenge, but unless the challenger is of such little consequence as to be below the challengee's notice, declining usually involves a great loss of face (and perhaps an *unsanctioned* duel afterward).

The actual practice of Monomacy varies widely — no formal code exists as to the choice of weapons, locations, or even terms of victory. Most often, Monomacy duels are fought to Final Death in some ridiculously dangerous or highly inaccessible place like an iron foundry or atop a skyscraper. Whether or not the vampires may use weapons, Disciplines, or other assets is typically the decision of the challenged. On the priest's invocation, the combat begins, and the last vampire standing is declared the winner, usually followed by other ritae and celebration.

System: The details of Monomacy are best left to the story — troupes should be encouraged to add all the pomp and circumstance they wish to the ritus, though the exact details differ from pack to pack. The challenger decides upon the time and location of the duel. The challenged decides whether or not weapons will be used and what they will be, as well as any other details (until first blood instead of Final Death, no Disciplines, participants must wear blindfolds, participants must ride the wave of frenzy during the duel, etc.).

The priest administering the ritus is an adjudicating official — the duel begins and ends on her word, and it may be aborted at any time. It is even within the priest's power to declare a Monomacy null and void after the fact, but the priest who does this to favor her

own candidate is looked upon with extreme displeasure thereafter by other Sabbat.

Sermons of Caine

Some members of the Sabbat value their knowledge of the *Book of Nod*. Others don't know or care about the book, and they see their role in the Sabbat as one of endless war and violence. Those members who take the story of their origins very seriously often gather to hear sermons on their history to remind them who and what they are. This reminder serves to strengthen their loyalty to the Sect and their ideology. Pack members take turns reciting from the *Book of Nod*, while the others sit in a semicircle holding lit candles and meditating on the passages. The sermons are sometimes followed by the Vaulderie, and, among more intellectual packs, intense deliberation. Pack members often discuss the passages read during the ritus almost until dawn.

Vampire history, particularly as far back as Cainite legendry is largely an oral tradition — very few copies of the *Book of Nod* actually exist. Few, if any, Sabbat packs can agree unanimously on the exact phraseology of a given passage from the book. The Sect is divided on this matter — some Sabbat believe that as long as the spirit of the *Book of Nod* is preserved, the letter is irrelevant, while others maintain that for all Sabbat to have the same reference, a standard book needs to be decided upon. This schism, of course, results in a wide variety of individual positions on the matter, from violent support on both ends of the spectrum to a profound ambivalence for anything outside one's pack's take on the matter.

System: While this ritus does not require a system for a mechanical effect, some Storytellers may wish to award experience points toward the Expert Knowledge: Noddist Lore or a specialization in Occult for participation in this ritus. Otherwise, this convention is simply an opportunity for Storytelling, roleplaying, and revealing bits of the great Cainite mystery.

The War Party

The Sabbat thrives on diablerie and the destruction of elders, and this dangerous ritus serves to facilitate both of those urges.

War parties consist of multiple packs that vie for the blood of a non-Sabbat elder. Packs participating in the War Party compete against one another for the privilege of killing and diablerizing the elder, but rarely do the packs come into deadly conflict with each other, reserving their violence for their target.

In preparation for a War Party, the participating packs gather and celebrate. They may also perform the Fire Dance, listen to Sermons of Caine, and participate in a Blood Feast or Vaulderie. The chief of the War Party, usually the most accomplished or highest-ranking priest among the packs, offers the assembled packs the challenge. She stands before the individual packs, each lined up behind their leaders, and asks each of the packs' leaders in turn, "Do you come freely to war, and do you take up this noble cause, never resting until the blood of our enemy is spilled?" The leaders respond with a forceful "We do!" Only after the packs have committed to the hunt does he reveal the identity of their target. A pack suffers great humiliation if it backs out of a challenge after its members have committed themselves to this most dangerous game. For the remainder of the night, the vampires hold a revel, preparing themselves for the hunt the next evening holds in store.

The War Party sets out after its prey on the night following the challenge — the hunt has begun. Sabbat vampires on the warpath stop at nothing to take down their prey. They kill, burn, smash, and overturn anyone or anything that stands between them and their target. The winning pack is the one whose member consumes the elder's blood first. The target, unliving or dead, or some recognizable portion of the target, must be brought back to the place where the packs accepted the challenge. The Chief of the War Party accepts this trophy and bestows her blessing over the winning pack. Once the chief recognizes the winner, all bets are settled and another celebration is held.

System: The vampire partaking of the diablerie gains the benefits of committing the Amaranth. Vampires who belong to the winning pack gain a temporary point of Sabbat Status. This point disappears at the end of the next War Party (unless the same pack wins again), or at the end of the next grandiose Sabbat affair. At the Storyteller's option, this Sabbat Status point may be made permanent if the hunted elder was of exceptional power or reputation.

The Wild Hunt

One of the greatest crimes a Sabbat can commit is to turn traitor, and the Sect protects its secrets. If a member reveals a Sect secret to the enemy, she is punished severely. If a Sabbat leaks information of a vital nature, a priest may call for a Wild Hunt. The Wild Hunt is much like the blood hunt, but ends with the eradication of the offending Sabbat Sect member, as well as anyone — Kindred or kine — who may have knowl-

edge of the betrayal. The gravity of the Wild Hunt depends upon the traitor in question — the packs are expected to police their own ranks, while high-profile turncoats receive the attention of Archbishops, Prisci, Cardinals, and all those who serve them.

The priest assembles the local Sabbat and formally calls them to the hunt, which is sometimes similar to the preface of a War Party. Once caught, the offending Sabbat is staked and immobilized. The pack takes her before the Ductus and Pack Priest (or Bishop, etc.), who recite her crimes to her packmates. The pack then torments the offender in whatever manner it deems appropriate — hot irons, Vicissitude, and mutilation are the least-creative forms of vengeance a righteous pack can inflict on a traitor. Finally, the pack destroys the traitor by throwing her (still staked) on a consecrated burning pyre.

After the traitor meets her end, the Sabbat pursues those who either learned of the secret or were involved. Sabbat justice is relentless — the Sect stops at nothing to ensure their security. Naturally, the Sabbat cannot know about every little (or even many of the big) secrets that slip through the cracks. Frustration over this fact often makes things doubly bad for those they do catch.

System: Sabbat who are subject to the Wild Hunt are no longer Sabbat, and thus, no longer considered by the Sect to be vampires at all. No amount of groveling can convince the Sect to take back a traitor, though this harsh reality comes more out of security than bullheadedness.

Ignoblis Ritae

Unlike the auctoritas ritae, the "low" or "common" rituals vary widely from pack to pack. Several of these ritae show up in some form or another in every Sabbat pack, but many of them are unique to regions or even individual packs. Storytellers and players are encouraged to adapt or create their own ritae, to give a sense of camaraderie and significance to the pack.

Acceptance Ritus

This ritus welcomes a new member to a particular pack, to recognize the ascension of a recruit, or any time a change in power or membership occurs (such as a new Ductus or Pack Priest). Each member of the pack must recognize the new position of their fellow Sabbat in a personal manner, be it by sharing blood, the giving of a gift, or whatever. The Sabbat being accepted must make an oath of allegiance to each member of the pack, and to the Sabbat cause in general. The Acceptance Ritus differs from the Creation Rites because it is more social than supernatural. A Sabbat may have received his Creation Rites, but may be snubbed by a pack that refuses to extend him the ritus of acceptance.

Contrition Ritus

Even Sabbat commit sins and indiscretions, for which they sometimes need to atone. The Contrition Ritus allows for this, much in the same manner a Catholic confession works. This ritus is perhaps the most important of the ignoblis ritae, as many Inquisitors, Black Hand operatives, Pack Priests, and Ducti offer a choice of contrition or death to Sabbat who have committed wrongs upon the Sect. All sensible Sabbat take these ritae as seriously as they would any other, for only by the grace of their betters can they continue to exist. Of course, many disingenuous Sabbat may make an insincere act of contrition, but they might not be extended the option next time.

Stealth Ritus

In the interests of maintaining silence, some packs take extra precautions and invoke favorable omens. In the Stealth Ritus, all participating vampires bite out each other's tongues and spit them into a fire. Though this causes no health levels of damage, the immediate bleeding and healing consumes one blood point. The Pack Priest or Ductus usually bows out so he can issue orders, but some packs have developed complex hand signal systems so they may communicate silently while on stealth-intensive activities.

Sun Dance

The Sun Dance tests Cainites' endurance and bravery. During the ritus, vampires writhe and gyrate in a hypnotic dance around a symbolic inscription of a fiery sun from sunset to sunrise without pause, until they collapse in exhausted heaps, covered in blood sweat. The ritus always takes place during a full moon, and pack members usually dress for the occasion, wearing frightening masks or red body paint. Pack members prove their courage by seeing who among them, after an exhausting night's dancing, can remain in the open the longest. A Blood Feast sometimes follows the Sun Dance (especially when it is performed at heavily attended Sect functions), as the vampires must replenish their spent energy constantly for the duration of the ritual.

My discourse is at an end; my treachery complete. By now, I hope you will understand in some measure what impelled me to those acts I shall always rue and why I felt it necessary now to place this document before you. I cannot ask for your forgiveness – my crimes are too great. But if there be pity in your heart, pray for me.

I have changed a great deal since we last met. For many years thereafter, I sought within myself for something inexpressible. Now, I believe I have found it, or am about to. If Golconda be truly within my reach, I may endure, for in the depths of introspection which promoted my writing, I have found a desire for quietus at any price. That was a partial reason for my discourse. I know full well that the knowledge I have imparted could lead to the destruction of myself and my kind. The will to live – if life this be – is too strong in any vampire to allow for a more direct suicide.

In parting, may I presume to render my condolences on the regrettable death of your husband, of which I read in the Times of London. Your love for him is only too well-known to me. If the prayers of such a creature may be of any comfort, know that you have mine.

You shall hear no more from me unless you wish it. I say again, my service is yours to command. I can be reached through the personal columns of any major European newspaper; merely mention my name, and your own, and my retainers shall pass on your message to me.

Adieu.

Your most devoted and penitent servant,



Game Terms Glossary

The following terms are used throughout the rules and are presented here for concise reference.

• **Ability:** These are Traits that describe what a character knows and has learned, rather than her physical and psychological make-up. Abilities are Traits such as Intimidation, Firearms, and Occult.

• **Action:** An action is the performance of a deed, which is a consciously willed physical, social, or mental activity. When players announce that their characters are doing something, they are taking an action.

• **Advantage:** This is a catchall category that describes the mystical Disciplines and Backgrounds of a character.

• **Attribute:** These are Traits that describe what a character inherently is. Attributes are such things as Strength, Charisma, and Intelligence.

• **Botch:** 1) A naturally rolled 1, which cancels out a success die. 2) A disastrous failure, indicated by rolling one or more 1s and no successes on the dice rolled for an action.

• **Character:** Each player creates a character, an individual he portrays over the course of the chronicle.

• **Dice Pool:** This describes the dice you have in your hand after adding together your different Traits. It is the number of dice you can roll for that action.

• **Difficulty:** This is a number that can range from 2 to 10 (but usually from 3 to 9) which measures the difficulty of an action a character takes. The player needs to roll that number or higher on at least one of the dice in his dice pool.

• **Downtime:** The time spent between scenes, where no roleplaying is done and turns are not used. Actions might be made, and the Storyteller might give some descriptions, but generally time passes quickly. It also refers to a technique of "off-scene" roleplaying that Storytellers can use.

• **Extended Action:** An action that requires a certain number of rolled successes, accumulated over several turns, for the character to succeed.

• **Health:** This is a measure of the degree to which a character is wounded or injured.

• **Points:** The temporary score of a Trait such as Willpower and blood pool — the squares, not the circles.

• **Rating:** A number describing the permanent value of a Trait — most often a number from 1 to 5, though sometimes a number from 1 to 10.

• **Reflexive Action:** A situation in which dice might be rolled, but that does not count as an action for the purpose of calculating dice pools. Examples of reflexive actions are soak rolls and Willpower rolls to resist mind control.

• **Resisted Action:** An action that two different characters take against each other. Both compare their number of successes, and the character with the most wins.

• **Scene:** A single episode of the story; a time and place in which actions and events take place moment by moment.

• **Simple Action:** An action that requires the player to get only one success to succeed, though more successes indicate a better job or result.

• **Storyteller:** The person who creates and guides the story by assuming the roles of all characters not taken by the players and determining all events beyond the control of the players.

• **System:** A specific set of complications used in a certain situation; rules to help guide the rolling of dice to create dramatic action.

• **Trait:** Any Attribute, Ability, Advantage, or other character index that can be described as a number (in terms of dots).

• **Troupe:** The group of players, including the Storyteller, who play **Vampire**, usually on a regular basis.

• **Willpower:** A measure of a character's self-confidence and internal control. Willpower works differently from most Traits — it is often spent rather than rolled.

Index

Abilities, 100
at character creation, 80
cost to increase, 124
see also Knowledges; Skills; Talents
Academics, **107**
rolls using, 255, 265
Accounting, the, 23-24
see also childe; sire; Traditions
acid
blood into, 208, 217, 243
actions, **246-247**
aborting, 275
extended, 251-252
multiple, 248
reflexive, 247
resisted, 252-253
see also teamwork
Acute Sense, 481-482
Addiction (*see* Thaumaturgy)
see also poisons and drugs
Additional Discipline, 494
Age, **18-19**
chart, 79
of ghouls, 500-501
Ahrimanes, 414-415
see also Spiritus
aiming, 274, **277**
Alastor, 26
Alertness, **100,** 398
rolls using, 255, 262, 273, 451, 468, 471, 476, 484
Allies, **111**, 82
see also Contacts; Retainers
Ambidextrous, 278, **482**
ambush, 273-274
Amnesia, 486
Anarch Movement, the, 21, 25, 32, **44-45**
Ancilla, **19,** 29, 34
age of, 79
Anda, 416-417
Animal Ken, **103-104**, 128, 250,
rolls using, 129, 131, 133, 255, 466
Animalism, **128-134**
animals
stats for, 388-391
Antediluvian, 11, **19**, 29, 34
antitribu, 428-433, 436,
definition, 34
see also Sabbat
Appearance, 87, **98-99**
Clan flaw, 62, 84, 247, 400, 402, 410, 431, 501
mechanics affecting, 169, 172, 179, 185, 187, 202, 210, 211, 218, 241, 277, 296, 297, 467, 471, 473, 482, 483
rolls including, 195, 255, 259, 266, 454
Archbishop, 25, 118
see also Prince
Archetypes, 81, 84, **87-96**
see also character creation
Archon, 26
see also Justicar
armor, **273**
mechanics affecting, 441
rating chart, 280
supernatural, 159, 474, 476
art, creation of, 263
see also Crafts; Expression
Assamites, 48-49
Assamite Sorcerers, 433-434
Assamite Sorcery, 440-442
Athletics, **100**, 250
combat use, 272-273, 275-277, 279
mechanics affecting, 480
rolls using, 174, 201, 204, 205, 218, 243, 255, 258-263, 279, 461, 466, 508
attack
see combat
Attributes, **96-100**
see also character creation
aura, **135-136**, 140, 145, 151, 174, 178, 183, 373, 387, 455, 493
concealing, 187, 188, 493
diablerie streaks, 183, **294,** 469, 493
of objects, 177, 455
Auspex, 82, **134-142**, 294, 383
and drugs, 301
versus other Disciplines, **142**, 145, 146, 184, 188
Autarkis, **22**, 34, 118
automatic feats, 258
awakening, 263
see also Deep Sleeper; Early Riser; Light Sleeper
Awareness, **100-101**, 142, 184
and drugs, 301
mechanics affecting, 493
rolls using, 107, 137, 138, 139, 141, 142, 161, 163, 166, 188, 372, 465, 467, 475, 493
Baali, 394-395
see also demons
Backgrounds, 78, 82, 85, **111-119**
cost, 82, 123
pooling Backgrounds, 118-119
Bad Sight, 481
Bardo, 442-445
Baron, **25**, 44-45
see also Prince
Beacon of the Unholy, 494
Beast, the, **16-17**, 30, 32, 128, 171, 297
mechanics affecting, 230
and Virtues, 85, 120
see also Animalism; frenzy; Golconda; Humanity
Bestiary
see animals
biology/physiology of vampires, 7-9, 16, 293
Bishop, 27
bite, 158, **276**, 279, 422
mechanics affecting, 173, 210-212, 466, 482
see also Embrace
Black Hand, **112**
see also Tal'Mahe'Ra
Blind, 484
blind fighting, **274**, 279
blindness, 152, 171, 189, 279
see also Perception
block, 275
blood
Blood Pool, 86, 121, **270**
earning, 269-270
see also Efficient Digestion; hunting
spending, 268-270
transformations of, 173-174, 203-205, 207-208, 214, 217, 219, 242, 243
use of, automatic feat, 258
blood bond, 32, 226-227, 232, 269, 286-288
Vaulderie and Vinculum, 289-290
see also Bound; Broken Bond; Loathsome Regnant; Unbondable
Blood Brothers, 396-397
blood hunt, 23, **24**, 25, 28, 34, 39
see also Traditions
Blood Hunted (Flaw), 493
bloodline, 35, 37, 428-439
***see* Chapter 10: Bloodlines**
see also antitribu; Clan; individual bloodlines
Blush of Health, 480
Boon (Merit), 490
boons, 39
Bound, 490
see also blood bond
botch, **250**
on extended actions, 252
on teamwork actions, 253
see also failure
Botched Presentation, 489
Brawl, **101-102**
in combat, 271-272
rolls using, 171, 193, 211
maneuvers, 275-277, 279
mechanics affecting, 463
breaking and entering
see intrusion
Broken Bond, 489
see also blood bond
Bruiser, 480
Brujah, **50-51**
ghouls, 502
see also True Brujah
Bullyboy, 488
burns
see fire; sunlight
Caine, 14-15, **27-28**
Caitiff, 20, **32**, 37, 81
character creation modifications, 85, 118
Discipline costs for, 125
Panders, 431
Calm Heart, 485
Camarilla, the, **38-39**
Can't Cross Running Water, 495
Cappadocians, 418-419
see also Giovanni
Cardinal, 27
carousing, 103, **265**
carrying, 259
and Flight, 448
Cast No Reflection, 494
Catlike Balance, 480
Catspaw, 490
Celerity, 82, **142-144**
and drugs, 301
and initiative, 271-272
and Lupines, 380
and multiple actions, 248
see also Temporis
Changelings, 31-32, **383-384**
auras of, 135-136

seeing, 236
see also Kiasyd
character creation, **80-85**
ghouls, 497-499
overview 80-82
questions, 354
Storyteller characters, 353-354
character sheet
overview, 78
Charisma, **98**
mechanics affecting, 211, 463
rolls using, 130, 139, 145, 148, 150, 154, 155, 186, 194-196, 198, 206, 255, 264, 265-266, 453, 460, 461, 466
chases
see pursuit
Child, 484
childe, 24, **33**
see progeny
Children of Osiris, 420-421
Chimerstry, 144-147
Clan, 19-20, 25, 33, **37**
overview, 20
see also antitribu; bloodlines; Caitiff; individual Clans
Clan Enmity, 492
Clan Friendship, 489
claw, **276**, 279
see also Protean
climbing, 100, **258**
mechanics affecting, 199, 235
clinch, 183, **276**, 279
mechanics affecting, 242
Code of Honor, 484
Code of Milan, 41
see also Sabbat
Cold Breeze, 494
Coldly Logical, 484
combat, 271-280
blind, *see* blind fighting
close, 271, 275-277
ranged, 271, 277-278
multiple opponents, 276
summary chart, 273
see also combat maneuvers
combat maneuvers, 279
close combat, 275-277
complications, 279
defensive, 274-275
general, 273-274
ranged, 277-278
see also combat
Common Sense, 484
Computer, **107**, 110
rolls using, 263-264
see also Technology
Computer Aptitude, 484
Concentration, 484
conclave, 39
Conscience, 86, **119-120**, 300, 314
and Humanity, 80
mechanics affecting, 238, 310, 412
rolls using, 291, 295, 309, 311, 443, 486
see also Conviction
Conspicuous Consumption, 487
Contacts, 112
see also Allies
Conviction, 314-315
mechanics affecting, 238, 412
rolls using, 291
see also Conscience
Courage, **120**, 315
mechanics affecting, 224, 452, 466
rolls using, 141, 156, 179, 186, 189, 190, 191, 196, 197, 208, 211, 218, 220, 242, 445, 462, 464
and Willpower, 80
Crafts, 100, **104**, 441
rolls using, 181, 221, 225, 263, 264
Cursed, 494
Daimoinon, 445-447
damage, 284-286
Daredevil, 480
Dark Fate, 495
Dark Secret, 489
Daughters of Cacophony, 398-399
daytime actions, 263
dazed, 279
Deaf, 483
Deathsight, 494-495
Deceptive Aura, 493
Deep Sleeper, 485
Deformity, 482
degeneration, 309-310
see also Humanity; Paths of Enlightenment
Demeanor
see Archetypes
see also character creation
Dementation, 147-151
demons, 386-387
derangements, 290-293
Clan weakness, 60, 434, 504
Lupine blood and, 380
mechanics affecting, 133, 150, 207, 209, 263, 267, 454, 459
Dexterity, **97**
and drugs, 302
and initiative, 271
mechanics affecting, 142-143, 172, 202, 224, 450, 462, 467, 473
rolls using, 164, 171, 174, 176, 181, 191, 192, 193, 211, 229, 237, 239, 241, 243, 254-255, 258, 260-264, 268, **273**, 275-279, 442, 443, 445, 472, 474, 508
diablerie, 28, 33, 34, 48, 208, 228, **293-295**, 493, 510
black veins from, *see* aura
discovering, 213, 294
dice pools, 246, **247**
and damage, 121-122
maximum for daytime actions, 263
see also individual Attributes, Traits, and actions
difficulty, 249-251
disarm, 106, **278**, 279, 441
disease, 35, 172, 269, **295**, 422, 458, 483
Disciplines, 82, 85, **127**
***see* Chapter 4: Disciplines**
at character creation, 80, 86
cost, 125
for ghouls, 497, 499-500
spending blood for, 258
see also Additional Discipline (Merit); individual Disciplines
Disease Carrier, 485
Disfigured, 482
see also Appearance
Disgrace to the Blood, 492
dodge, 275
Domain, 23, 24, 33, 35, 82, **112-114**
see also Traditions
Dominate, 82, **151-158**
blood bonds and, 287
eye contact and, 152
Malkavians, 436-437
removing, 207
resisting, **158**, 292, 298, 372
zombies and, 164
downtime, 254, **361-362**
driving, **104**, 260-261
Drive (skill), 104, 229, 259
rolls using, 255, 258, 261, 262
starting a car, 260
see also vehicles
drugs
see poisons and drugs
Ductus, **26**, 42
Dulled Bite, 482
Early Riser, 480
Eat Food, 480
Eerie Presence, 495
Efficient Digestion, 480
Eidetic Memory, 484
elder, **19**, 33, 270
age of, 79
Disciplines, 127
electrocution, 295-296
Elysium, 33
Elysium Regular, 487
Embrace, 8, 9, **16**, 33
of ghouls, 500
Empathy, **102**
mechanics affecting, 238
rolls using, 130, 131, 134, 137, 139, 140, 145, 148-151, 154, 156, 157, 163, 186, 195, 206, 223, 265, 445-459
Enchanting Voice, 480
Enemy, 490
Escaped Target, 491
Etiquette, **104**
rolls using, 254
Expendable, 489
Experience, 78, 79
earning experience, **123-125**
Experience Costs Table, 125
starting experience, 79
Expert Knowledge, 110
Expression, **102**
rolls using, 255, 263, 264, 266, 460, 491
extras, 284
see also Storyteller characters
eye contact, **152**
powers requiring, 129, 134, 150, 151, 152, 196, 222, 459
protection from, 179
faeries
see Changelings
failure, **249-250**
see also botch; success
Failure (Flaw), 491
faith, 9, 158, 296
see also True Faith
falling, 296
Fame, 82, **114**, 260
fast-talking, 265
feeding, 8, 28, 290
Clan weaknesses, 56-57, 72, 408, 432
and frenzy, 297
from ghosts, 175
mechanics affecting, 172, 206, 408
terms for, 33-35
see also blood; hunting
Fifteenth Generation, 481-482
Final Death, 122, 282, **284-285**
see also blood hunt
Finance, **108**

rolls using, 255
fire, 285, **297-299**
see also Rötschreck; Thaumaturgy: Lure of Flames
Firearms, **104-105**
damage from, 284
readying a weapon, 258
use of and maneuvers, 272, **277-279**, 281
flank attacks, 274
Flashbacks, 487
Flaws
see **Appendix;** character creation; individual Flaws
fledgling, 16, **19**, 24, 32, 33
see also Embrace
Flesh of the Corpse, 483
Flight, 449-450
Movement of the Mind, 220
Followers of Set, **52-53**
ghouls, 502
see also Children of Osiris; Serpents of the Light
following
see shadowing
Former Ghoul, 487
Former Prince, 492
Fortitude, 82, **158-159**, 258, 272, 273, 285, 297, 302
for ghouls, 499
mechanics affecting, 170
see also soak
Fourteenth Generation, 481
frenzy, 121, **297-299**
and drugs, 301-302
ghoul, 501, 502
mechanics affecting, 132, 133, 134, 149, 197, 212, 463
resisting and controlling, 120, 131, 314-315
and werewolf blood, 380
Friend of the Underground, 489
Friendly Face, 480
Gangrel, 20, **54-55**, 81
City Gangrel, 429
Country Gangrel, 430
Mariners, 435
Gargoyles, 400-401
Gehenna, 11, 15, 19, **30**, 33
Generation, 18, 27, **28-30**, 78, 82
Generation (Background), **114**
Generational Trait Maximums chart, 270
see also Fourteenth Generation; Fifteenth Generation
ghosts, 32, **384-386**
see also Necromancy
ghouls, 33, 269, 496-506
character creation overview, 497
experience costs, 499
ghouling animals, 388
see also Retainers
Giovanni, 20, 47, **56-57**, 81
Giovanni family ghouls, 506
Glowing Eyes, 482
Golconda, 22, 30, 34, **299-300**
grapple
see clinch; hold
Grip of the Damned, 495
Guilt-Wracked, 486
guns
see Firearms; weapons, ranged
Harbingers of Skulls, 402-403
Hard of Hearing, 480
Harmless, 487
Harpy, 25
Haunted, 495
Healing Touch, 493
Health, **121-122**, 282-286
see also armor; damage
Herd, 9, 82, **114**
Hidden Diablerie, 495
Hobby Talent, 103
hold (combat), 278
Hospitality, 23-24
see also Traditions
Hound, 25
Huge Size, 480
Humanity, 78, 86, 263, **311**
***see* Chapter 7: Morality**
cost to increase, 124
roll to awaken, 262
torpor length, 283
see also degeneration; Paths of Enlightenment
hunters, 30-31, 35, **369-377**
Hunted, 491
Hunted Like a Dog, 492
hunting, 259-260, 365-366
immobilization, 279
see also staking
Impatient, 485
Incomplete Understanding, 490
Inconnu, **22**, 33
Independents, 46-47
see also Assamites; Followers of Set; Giovanni; Ravnos
Infamous Sire, 490
Infectious Bite, 481
see also disease
Infertile Vitae, 484
Influence, 114-115
Initiative, **271-272**, 273
ambush, 274
yielding, 260
Inner Circle, 26
Inoffensive to Animals, 493
Instinct, 86, 120, **314-315**
and blood pool, 268
and frenzy, 298
mechanics affecting, 198, 268
rolls using, 132, 133, 134, 197, 206, 208, 209, 223, 269
see also Self-Control
Intelligence, **99**
and drugs, 301
rolls using, 137, 169, 171, 172, 177, 215, 230, 239, 241, 255, 263, 264, 265. 295, 446, 447, 455, 459, 462, 468, 469, 493, 502
Intimidation, **102**
mechanics affecting, 169, 188, 190, 482
rolls using, 134, 141, 147, 150, 151, 155, 194, 205, 208, 255, 265, **266**, 445
interrogation, 265-266
Introspection, 484
intrusion, 260
Investigation, 108
rolls using, 264
Iron Will, 485
jumping, 100, **260**
Justicar, **26**, 39
Jyhad, **10-11**, 18, 33
Keeper of Elysium, 25
see also Elysium
Kiasyd, 404-405
kick, **276**, 279, 285
Kiss, the, 9, 33, **269**, 276
Clan weakness and, 56
see also bite
knockdown, 277, **279**
Knowledges, 107-110
see also individual Knowledges
Koldunic Sorcery, 439, 450-455
Way of Earth, 448-449
Way of Fire, 452-453
Way of Water, 450-452
Way of Wind, 449-450
Lame, 482
Lamia, 173, **422-423**
Language, 484
see also Natural Linguist
Larceny, 105
rolls using, 192, 255, 455
Lasombra, 20, **58-59**, 81, 436
Laughingstock, 493
Law, 108-109
rolls using, 255
Lawman's Friend, 488
Lazy, 482
Leadership, 102-103
rolls using, 154, 155, 157, 198, 266
lexicon, 32-35
Lextalionis
see blood hunt
Lhiannan, 424-425
lifting, 247, 260-261
Light-Sensitive, 495
Light Sleeper, 485
Loathsome Regnant, 492
see also blood bond
Lord of the Flies, 495
Lucky, 493
Lunacy, 486
Lupines
see werewolves
lying, 265
mages, 31, 142, **380-382**
Magic Resistance (Merit), 493
Malkavian, 20, **60-61**, 81
antitribu, 430
Dominate Malkavians, 436-437
ghouls, 502
maneuvers
see combat maneuvers
Manipulation, **97-98**
mechanics affecting, 211
rolls using, 129, 130, 132, 133, 134, 137, 142, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 152, 153, 155, 157, 161, 162, 168, 174, 176, 185, 189, 192, 196, 197, 255, 265, 266, 444, 454, 456, 466, 467, 469, 472, 491
Masquerade, the, **22**, 23, 33, 39
Masquerade Breaker, 491
Medicine, 109
rolls using, 156, 169, 171, 172, 236, 237, 241, 242, 295, 471, 472, 473
Medium, 493
Melee, **105**
in combat, 271-273
rolls using, 237, 255, 258, 275, 277, 279, 442, 474
see also weapons
Melpominee, 453-454
Mentor, 115
Merits
***see* Appendix**; character creation; individual Merits
Methuselah, **19**, 34

age of, 79
Mistaken Identity, 490
Mole, 489
mood, 14-15
Monstrous, 482
Mortis, 168
movement, 258
multiple actions, 248
and Celerity, 142
in combat, 274
see also actions
multiple opponents, 276
Mute, 483
Mytherceria, 455-457
Nagaraja, 406-407
Narc, 492
Natural Leader, 487-488
Natural Linguist, 485
Nature
see Archetypes
see also character creation
Necromancy, 82, **159-184**
paths:
Ash Path, 163-166
Cenotaph Path, 166-168
Corpse in the Monster, the, 168-171
Four Humors, Path of the, 173-174
Grave's Decay, the, 171-172
Sepulchre Path, 160-163
Vitreous Path, 174-177
rituals, 177-184
see also Mortis
neonate, **19**, 34
age of, 79
New Arrival, 490
New Kid, 490
Nightmares, 485
Nine Lives, 494
Noiad, 426-427
Nosferatu, 20, **62-63**, 81
antitribu, 430-431
ghouls, 502
Obeah, 457-461
Obfuscate, 82, **184-188**
seeing through, 142
Obtenebration, 82, **188-192**
Occult, **109**
mechanics affecting, 463
rolls using, 148, 161-165, 167-170, 174-177, 179, 180, 189, 191, 192, 208, 209, 215, 219, 229-231, 235, 238, 239, 255, 265, 382, 443-446, 448, 450, 454, 456, 462, 465- 471, 493
Ogham, 461-463
Old Flame, 491
Old Pal, 488
One Eye, 481
Open Road, 488
Open Wound, 482
see also Permanent Wound
opening doors, 263
see also intrusion; Larceny
Oracular Ability, 493
oration, 266
Overextended, 492
pack, 33, **42**
Pack Priest, 26-27
Paladin
see Templar
Pander, 431
see also Caitiff; Sabbat
parry, 275
Paths of Enlightenment, 313
Paths:
Blood, 316-318
Bones, 318-320
Caine, 320-322
Cathari, 323-324
Death and the Soul, 320
Feral Heart, 324-326
Harmony, 326
Honorable Accord, 326-329
Lilith, 329-331
Metamorphosis, 331-332
Night, 332-334
Paradox, 335-336
Power and the Inner Voice, 336-338
Typhon, 338-340
switching to, 315-316
see also Humanity
Perception, **99**
and drugs, 302
mechanics affecting, 200, 210, 229, 242, 398, 463, 466
rolls using, 106, 133-135, 137-139, 141, 142, 144, 157, 161, 163, 166, 167, 169, 175, 179, 180, 186, 219, 221, 222, 236, 239, 241, 255, 260, 262-265, 274, 315, 445, 449, 451, 454-457, 463, 467, 468, 472, 476, 493
Performance, **106**
rolls using, 181, 194, 255, **266**, 453, 454
Permanent Fangs, 482
Permanent Wound, 482
see also Open Wound
Phobia, 486
poisons and drugs, 301-302
supernatural, 173, 204, 207, 210
Politics, **109**
see also Influence
Potence, 82, **192-193**
for ghouls, 499, 500
and Lupine blood, 380
Praxis
see Prince
Precocious, 485
Presence, 82, **193-198**
reversing, 236
Prestigious Sire, 488
Prey Exclusion, 485
Primogen, 25-26
Primogen/Bishop Friendship, 489
Prince, 22, 23, **24-25**, 34, 39
see also Domain
Priscus, 27
Probationary Sect Member, 493
Professional Skill, 107
progeny, 23, **24**, 34
see also childe; Embrace; sire; Traditions
Protean, 82, **199-203**
Protégé, 488
punch
see strike
pursuit, 261-262
Quietus, 82, **203-209**
Rack, the, 260
Ravnos, 20, 47, **64-65**, 81
antitribu, 431
Brahman (aka Phuri Dae), 437-458
Week of Nightmares, 428
rear attack, 274
Recruitment Target, 490
Red List, 493
reflexive actions, 247
see also actions
Regent, 27
see also Sabbat
regnant, 34
see also blood bond
Rep, 488
repair, 264
Repelled by Crosses, 495
Repulsed by Garlic, 494
research, 265
see also Academics; Occult; Science
Resources, 82, **115-116**
Retainers, 82, **116**
see also ghouls
rising
see awakening
Rising Star, 489
ritae, 43, 117, 507-511
Rituals (Background), 117
Rival Sires, 491-492
Rötschreck, 299
mechanics affecting, 149, 169, 171, 173, 191
see also Courage; fire; frenzy
running
see movement
Sabbat, 21, 25, 26-27, **40-43**
antitribu, 428-433
rituals, *see* ritae
see also Vaulderie
Sabbat Survivor, 488
Salubri, 408-409
antitribu, 431-432
Wu Zao, 438-439
Samedi, 410-411
Sanctity, 488
Sanguinus, 463-464
Scholar of Enemies, 489
Scholar of Others, 489
Science, 109-110
Scourge, 25
Sect, 19-22, 34
***see* Chapter 2: Sects and Clans**
see also individual Sects
seduction, 266
Self-Control, 86, **120**
and blood pool, 268
at character creation, 86
mechanics affecting, 198,
rolls using, 64, 66, 132-134, 172, 197, 208, 209, 223, 294, 298, 428, 429, 431, 432, 438, 485, 486, 500-502
see also frenzy; Instinct
Serpentis, 82, **209-212**
Setites
see Followers of Set
shadowing, 262
see also tracking
Sheriff, 25
Short, 481
Short Fuse, 486
Shy, 485
sire, 23, 24, **34**
see also childe; Embrace; progeny
Sire's Resentment, 490
Skills, 103-107
see also individual Skills
Sleeping With the Enemy, 492
Slow Healing, 483
Smell of the Grave, 481
sneaking, 262
soak, 121, 247, **272-274**
and Fortitude, 158

see also damage; Health
Soft-Hearted, 485
Special Responsibility, 490
specialties, 96
see also Attributes; Abilities
Speech Impediment, 485
Spirit Mentor, 493
spirits, 215, 234, 240, 378, 381, 461, 462, 466, 467
see also ghosts
Spiritus, 465-467
staking, 9, **280**
powers affecting, 203, 211, 231, 237, 238
Stamina, 97, 272
and disease, 295, 302, 422
for ghouls, 502
mechanics affecting, 188-190, 202, 211, 224, 240, 448, 467
rolls using, 151, 159, 163, 169, 170, 172-174, 181, 191, 204, 205, 206, 208, 218, 255, 258, 259, 262, 372, 450, 459, 461, 462, 470, 471, 474
see also soak
Status, 118
see also Fame
Stealth, **105-106**
mechanics affecting, 188, 463, 466, 475, 482, 495
rolls using, 184-187, 206, 255, 262, 274
Stereotype, 486
Streetwise, 103
rolls using, 198, 255, 259
Strength, **96-97**, 261
carrying capacity, 259
and combat, 276-277
mechanics affecting, 211, 214, 224, 268, 446, 463, 467, 473
rolls using, 191, 201, 219, 242, 255, 260, 266, 276, 277, 294, 295, 476
strike, 276
Subterfuge, 103
mechanics affecting, 446
rolls using, 137, 142, 146, 147, 148, 150, 154, 188, 195, 196, 197, 222, 255, 259, 265, 266, 456, 471
success, **249**
automatic, 250-251
see also botch; failure
sunlight, 302
Survival, 107
rolls using, 130, 159, 236, 255, 258, 265, 461, 466
sweep, 276-277
see also kick
swimming, 262
Sympathizer, 490
tackle, 277
Tal'Mahe'Ra, 22
Talents, 100-103
see also Abilities, individual Talents
targeting, 274
see also aiming
teamwork, 253
Technology, 110
temperature extremes, 302
Templar, 27
Temporis, 467-471
Territorial, 486
Thanatosis, 471-474
Thaumaturgy, 82, **212-240**
countermagic, 228
paths:
Blood, Path of, 213-214
Conjuring, Path of, 220-222
Corruption, Path of, 222-224
Elemental Mastery, 214-215
Father's Vengeance, Path of, 227-228
Green Path, 215-217
Hands of Destruction, 217-218
Lure of Flames, The, 218
Movement of the Mind, 220
Neptune's Might, 218-220
Path of Mars, 224
Technomancy, Path of, 224-227
Weather Control, 228-229
rituals, 230-240
theme, **14-15**, 350-351
Thin Blood, 483
Thirst for Innocence, 486
throwing, 262
see also weapons, ranged
Tic/Twitch, 481
time, 254
Time Sense, 484
Toreador, 20, **66-67**, 81
antitribu, 432
torpor, 283-284
Touch of Frost, 494
tracking, 265
Traditions, the, 22-24
Traits, 77
ratings, 247
see also individual Traits
Tremere, 20, **68-69**, 81
antitribu, 432-433
and mages, 381
Telyavic, 438-439
True Black Hand
see Tal'Mahe'Ra
True Brujah, 412-413
see also Brujah
True Faith, 372-373
True Faith (Merit), 494
True Love, 493-494
Tzimisce, 20, **70-71**, 81
kolduns, 439
Old Clan Tzimisce, 439
Unbondable, 496
Unconvinced, 485
Uppity, 492
Useful Knowledge, 484
Valeren, 474-475
Vaulderie, 43, 288-290
see also blood bond; ritae; Vinculum
vehicles, 259
Vengeful, 486
Ventrue, 20, **72-73**, 81
antitribu, 433
ghouls, 502
Vicissitude, 82, **241-243**
Victim of the Masquerade, 486
Vinculum, 288-290
see also blood bond; Vaulderie
Virtues, 119-120, 314-315
at character creation, 80, 85-86
cost to increase, 124
and frenzy, 298
for ghouls, 497
and Humanity, 311
mechanics affecting, 484, 494
Paths of Enlightenment, 314-316
see also degeneration; frenzy; Rötschreck
Virtue tests, 269, 309, 311
Clan-specific, 64, 66, 428, 429, 431, 432, 438
and derangements, 291
diablerie, 294-295
Disciplines requiring, 132, 133, 134, 141, 156, 172, 179, 186, 189, 190, 191, 196, 197, 206, 208, 209, 211, 218, 220, 223, 242, 443, 445, 462, 464
frenzy, 298
for ghouls, 500-502
Merits and Flaws requiring, 485, 486
see also degeneration; frenzy; Rötschreck
Visceratika, 475-476
Vulnerability to Silver, 482
waking up
see awakening
Weak-Willed, 486
weapons,
at a game, 7
disarming, 276
length, 277
melee, 280
readying, 260
ranged, **281**, 277-279
striking with, 277
werewolves, 10, 31, **378-380**
Willpower, 77, 78, 86, **120-121**, 372, 388
and blood bonds, 288
at character creation, 80, 315
in combat, 273, 274-275
cost to increase, 124
in frenzy, 299
for ghouls, 499-500
mechanics affecting, 131, 132, 141, 155, 209, 211, 224, 290, 366, 467, 484, 486, 487
rolls using, 133, 144, 145, 164-166, 173, 174, 176, 183, 191, 193, 202, 203, 207, 209, 213, 219, 220, 229, 230, 235, 238, 291-293, 316, 438, 443, 457, 458, 475, 485, 488, 494, 506
spending, **266-267**, 285
regaining, 84, 88, **267**
see also Archetypes
witches
see mages
Wits, 99-100
and initiative, 271
mechanics affecting, 172, 463
rolls using, 110, 131, 154, 163, 164, 165, 185, 186, 187, 192, 208, 217, 236, 238, 255, 258, 259, 263, 264, 265, 266, 382, 445, 450, 453, 455, 456, 464, 470, 471
wraiths
see ghosts
zombies, 164, 165, 473

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VAMPIRE
THE MASQUERADE

Name: **Nature:** **Clan:**
Player: **Demeanor:** **Generation:**
Chronicle: **Concept:** **Sire:**

Attributes

Physical
Strength ●OOOO
Dexterity ●OOOO
Stamina ●OOOO

Social
Charisma ●OOOO
Manipulation ●OOOO
Appearance ●OOOO

Mental
Perception ●OOOO
Intelligence ●OOOO
Wits ●OOOO

Abilities

Talents
Alertness OOOOO
Athletics OOOOO
Awareness OOOOO
Brawl OOOOO
Empathy OOOOO
Expression OOOOO
Intimidation OOOOO
Leadership OOOOO
Streetwise OOOOO
Subterfuge OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Skills
Animal Ken OOOOO
Crafts OOOOO
Drive OOOOO
Etiquette OOOOO
Firearms OOOOO
Larceny OOOOO
Melee OOOOO
Performance OOOOO
Stealth OOOOO
Survival OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Knowledges
Academics OOOOO
Computer OOOOO
Finance OOOOO
Investigation OOOOO
Law OOOOO
Medicine OOOOO
Occult OOOOO
Politics OOOOO
Science OOOOO
Technology OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Advantages

Disciplines
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Backgrounds
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

Virtues
Conscience/Conviction ●OOOO
Self-Control/Instinct ●OOOO
Courage ●OOOO

Merits & Flaws

Merit	Cost

Flaw	Cost

Humanity/Path
_____
O O O O O O O O O O
Bearing:_____( )

Willpower
O O O O O O O O O O
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Blood Pool
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Blood Per Turn:_____

Health

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

Weakness

Experience

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

What is the Onyx Path?

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