

A SOURCEBOOK FOR VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

# COURTS <sup>of the</sup> DAMNED

# VAMPIRE

THE MASQUERADE



# WIELD POWER AMONG THE KINDRED

For the newly embraced Kindred, finding a place amid the changing landscape of titles and sects is crucial. Princes, primogen, barons, hierophants, and other leaders loom over each city, and in their shadows the rest of the Kindred make havens for themselves and eke out their domains and herds. Once free from their sires, neonates and ancillae alike must learn to navigate the twisted halls of power.

*Courts of the Damned* unveils the political landscape found in most Kindred cities. Whether vying for territory and blood among the Anarchs, the Camarilla, or independent domains, the stories of clashes between young and old, tyranny and freedom, or faith and reason repeat themselves across the globe. Whether the domain is small or large, isolated or in close contact with others, all Kindred must vie for blood, territory, and autonomy in their own eternal struggle.

*Courts of the Damned* provides:

- Guidance for portraying leaders and power players in your city, as a player or the Storyteller
- Strategies for navigating the ruthless schemes of the undead, grasping the resources Kindred fight over, and clawing your way to the top
- Expanded options for social combat to embarrass a rival or gain titles and status
- A deep dive into the internal and external feuds of Anarchs, Camarilla, and independent factions
- 4 new Loresheets and suggestions for using established lore (and Loresheets) in play
- 6 new Discipline Powers, 3 new Blood Sorcery Rituals, and 1 new Oblivion Ceremony
- 6 frameworks for a city full of political intrigue
- 5 easy-to-run stories full of plotting and scheming
- Traits for 16 prominent Storyteller characters, including Victoria Ash, Theo Bell, Salvatore Garcia, Fiorenza Savona, and Tegyrus, with 21 generic, influential Storyteller characters

*Courts of the Damned* is a guide to politics for **Vampire: The Masquerade**, a Storytelling Game of Personal and Political Horror.



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*Vampire: The Masquerade*



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***Yui: Thank you for being so gracious with me, Ms. Ash.***

***Victoria Ash:*** It's nothing, and please call me Victoria. They're just scared of you because they know what your sire has done. There are so many disturbing stories about the Tzimisce flitting about.

***Yui: Yes, Victoria. So I've heard. But I'm still thankful. I want to make something of myself here, and any help...***

***Victoria Ash:*** Oh, don't beg. Let's reserve that for the bedchamber. You want me to be your shadow... an advisor.

***Yui: Yes, please.***

***Victoria Ash:*** Let's look at you. You look sweet, you know how to dress for the Elysium, and your clan gives you a frisson of danger.

***Yui: Thank you...***

***Victoria Ash:*** But let me tell you something about myself. In a way, I detest the Tzimisce. I feel your whole damnable clan has been put on this Earth to test me. I've dealt with it in my own way. I've betrayed Tzimisce, romanced, destroyed... I don't like it when someone gets under my skin, literally or figuratively. My skin is perfect as it is.

***Yui: I don't understand.***

***Victoria Ash:*** So, if I'm going to help you, I'm afraid that'll come with a cost. If bad memories bedevil me, I might just feel the urge to take it out on the nearest Tzimisce.

***Yui: You should be careful, Ms. Ash. Maybe the nearest Tzimisce is going to make you beg instead.***

***Victoria Ash:*** Oh, darling. I like that. Now, I've promised some of my compatriots that they'll get to taste Tzimisce blood tonight. I trust you won't make a fuss. Don't worry—I'll stop them before they take too much.

—— A conversation at the Elysium between the Toreador elder Victoria Ash  
and the Tzimisce newcomer Yui

# INTRODUCTION

A decorative horizontal line with a central flourish consisting of two interlocking circles.

**P**olitics happens when people want things. More specifically, when people want power — power to make decisions for themselves or others, power to amass wealth, territory, and resources — and can't or won't use outright force to acquire it. Whether it's at the gang parley or the PTA meeting, would-be politicians negotiate with, intimidate, and flatter each other to get what they need.

The vampire is a political creature. In **Vampire: The Masquerade**, the undead plot and scheme to gain influence, avenge slights (real and imagined), and keep themselves busy after decades and centuries of boredom. Their machinations have horrific costs to those around them, but that's just part of the game. In the politics of the dead, politeness and brutality go hand in hand.

Characters in **Vampire** are embroiled in politics, whether or not they want to be. The demands of keeping their predatory activities secret, coupled with their ageless existence, mean they must constantly navigate relationships with one another

and with select mortals to keep the Masquerade intact and their prey in the dark. This is especially true in the context of the Beckoning and the newly invigorated Second Inquisition, leaving long-occupied Kindred strongholds and political positions vacant and in disarray. The political game has never been as open to newcomers, nor the stakes so high.

This book is a resource for creating and playing a political chronicle. For players, it's a place to find advice on making alliances, embarrassing enemies, and navigating Camarilla, Anarch, and autark political spheres. For Storytellers, this book provides support for creating and facilitating political roleplaying at the table: rules, dice pools, stories, and more.

What does it mean to make a political play? What are the stakes the undead fight over? How do you run stories about politics? Answering questions like these makes it easier to implement politics successfully in your game, not only as a theme but also as a set of actions.

*They say that the Kindred are poison to any community we're part of, but it doesn't have to be like that. It's always a choice. We're responsible for our actions just like mortals are. We're no better or more evil than any other living creature.*

*("We're undead," someone shouts.)*

*Okay. Fine, if you want to be superstitious, then yes, the Blood has cursed us for eternity, and there is no hope for us. But personally, I want to think I can do some good. Not just for myself but for the mortals.*

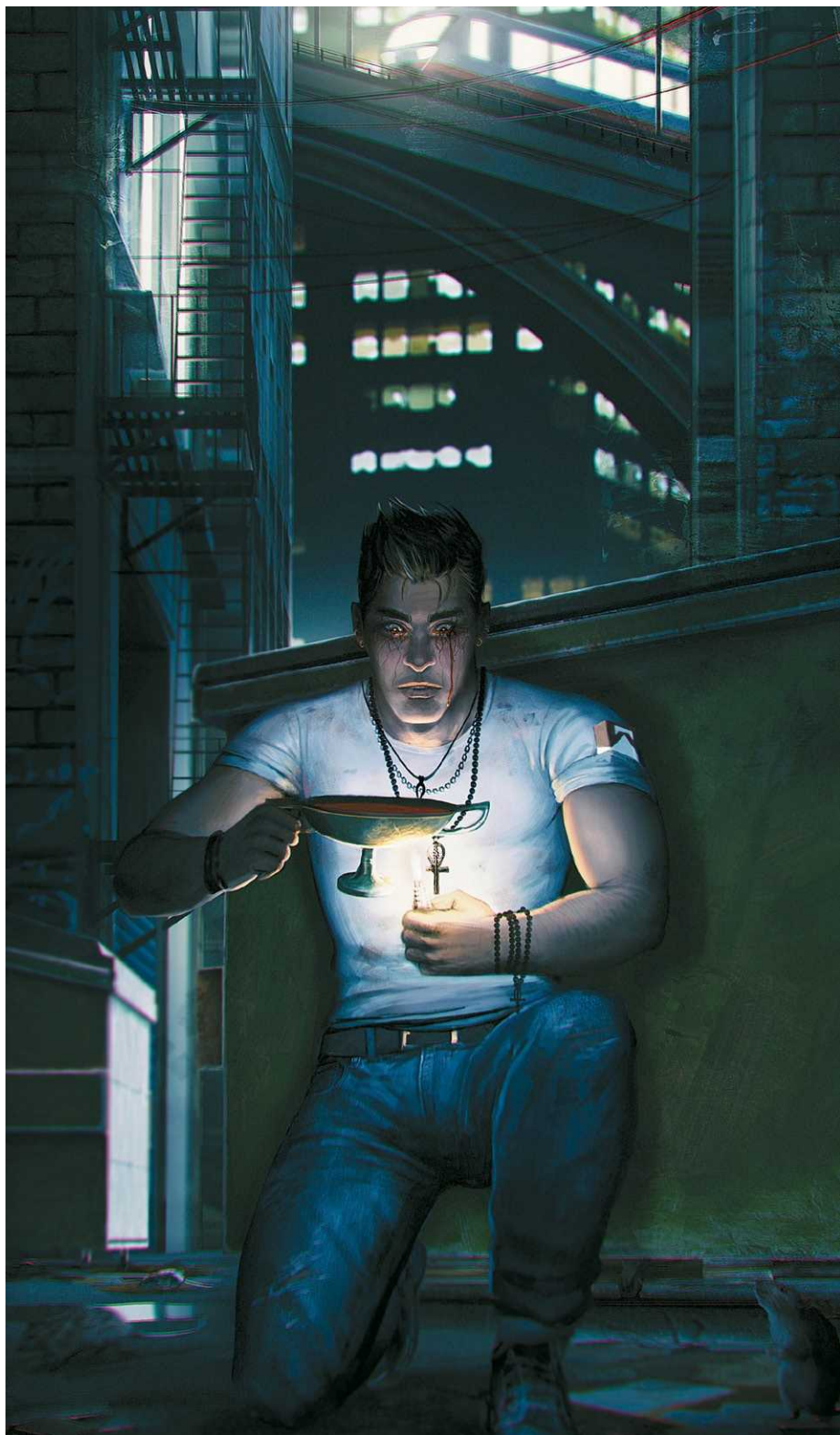
*("Like hunt Nazis," someone mutters.)*

*Yes. Vampires must feed. That unites all of us, and we can choose what to do with that. But you should be careful with drinking from those you hate because associating with them too much might start changing you before you notice. One night, you're feeding from a skinhead, and the next, you're protecting him because you need your herd to survive.*

*("Come on, Rudi," a voice protests.)*

*I know, believe me. There are no easy answers. I wish there were. Being a vampire means that we have to be part of both the societies of the living and the dead, and we have to consider how our actions affect both. Though the fossils of the Camarilla would never say it: everything changes. For good or ill, that's up to us.*

— The Gangrel Rudi holds forth at an Anarch assembly



## Stability and Chaos

There's a dichotomy between what's happening in the setting of **Vampire** in general and what works for the specific setting of a chronicle. Although the World of Darkness is in conflict and flux, most domains enjoy periods of calm interrupted by moments of strife. Typically, a political chronicle works best if it is set in one of the domains that happen to be in turmoil.

Instability creates opportunities for players' characters to take risks. This is why so many **Vampire** chronicles start with the sudden murder, disappearance, or attempted abdication of the Prince (such are much the same as suicide). The political vacuum created invites everyone to make a play for it. If you wish to imagine a successful domain, it makes sense to picture a just, capable Prince leading

a loyal Primogen Council in maintaining the proud Traditions of the Camarilla. But if you want to design a more playable domain, injecting chaos does the trick. Suddenly, the Prince is an incompetent figurehead, elevated to their position because the Primogen thought they'd be easy to control, while upstarts from every corner of Kindred society move to destabilize the domain for their own advantage.

When it comes to politics, vampires fortunately suffer from all the sins of humanity, often to a heightened degree. Greed, envy, contempt, and suspicion drive even the most seemingly idealistic Anarch ideologue. As does Hunger. Sometimes, the political systems of the Kindred collapse for no greater reason than that someone chose to hunt in a territory claimed by one of their peers. The tension between strategy and beastly impulses drives Kindred politics, as you will find detailed throughout this book.

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### MATURE CONTENT WARNING

**Vampire: The Masquerade** is a game of personal and political horror where you portray a bloodsucking monster in a world resembling our own. Characters routinely experience (and participate in) activities typical of vampire fiction: violence, seduction, exploitation, deceit, and murder.

This book, in particular, is about how the undead scheme to exploit the systems they operate within, involving themes such as political corruption, organized crime, warfare, conspiracies, and harming others for your own potential benefit. Furthermore, this is a book that centers a playstyle where players' characters could end up targeting each other in competing for status and power. Please take the time to negotiate limits for play in advance. See *Tips for Considerate Social Conflict* (p. 21) and *Advice for Considerate Play in Vampire: The Masquerade* (p. 421).

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## Chapters

**T**his book is divided into six chapters that examine politics from different angles. The first four chapters and appendix, the bulk of this work, are intended for both players and Storytellers alike. Everyone at the table can gain a better understanding of how to play politics through these chapters. Chapter Five focuses on the Storyteller's point of view, but players may find value in reading it as well, particularly for a troupe that collaboratively builds their chronicle. Only Chapter Six is primarily intended for Storytellers.

**Chapter One: Playing Politics** addresses the core question of how to approach political play across the whole troupe. What kinds of plots work well in a roleplaying game, what can you achieve, and how can you be successful with your stratagems? Along the way, the chapter explains the basic groundwork of vampire politics by examining topics like what's at stake (spoiler: blood) and how Kindred relations factor into the political landscape of the night. Social combat mechanics and a guide for session zero get you ready to start playing.

**Chapter Two: The Ivory Tower** looks at the Camarilla—for many vampires, the main stage of undead politics. Camarilla Kindred have the money, power, and influence to make their machinations affect large numbers of people. Understanding how the system works is your first step to making a move.

**Chapter Three: The Movement** is about the Anarchs in their variety. The Anarch Movement is fundamentally revolutionary, which means that the difference between idealism and reality is often on stark display. Although Anarch politics lack the formality of a Camarilla Court, they're deadly in their own way.

**Chapter Four: Outside the Gates** reminds us that beyond the great sects, there are the autarkis, Kindred who refuse to pledge themselves to any sect. Despite their independence, they, too, remain unable to escape political schemes that often take strange and unusual forms in unique domains.

**Chapter Five: The Storyteller's Manifesto** explains how to bring all of this together as the Storyteller and ensure personal horror remains at the forefront of political stories. The chapter also examines major events in the setting of **Vampire** and how to integrate them into your chronicle.

**Chapter Six: Characters and Stories** presents character types you can use to populate your political landscape, as well as stories that show how vampire politics can play out in practice. You can use everything here as is or adapt it to your chronicle.

Finally, the **Appendix: Systems** presents new Discipline Powers, Loresheets, and other game mechanics designed to help your character play politics in the world of the dead.



## Chapter One:

# PLAYING POLITICS

**L**et's say your character is a Ventrue, Embraced for their hard-won expertise from years running mortal election campaigns. They're a political animal through and through.

Or maybe you're playing a fledgling Anarch who has realized your best chance of making it semi-safely through the night is to advance as fast as possible in the gang hierarchy of your home city.

Maybe you're a middle manager in a Hecata autarky who dreams only of escaping the job you've endured in the family firm for the last 50 years.

No matter your position in the hierarchies of the Kindred, this chapter is written to help you understand what kinds of moves create interesting political roleplay. It explores what's at stake, examines how Kindred power structures typically operate, and offers strategies suited for the scheming vampire. For the Storyteller, this chapter helps clarify what players are aiming for when they engage with politics. Once you know their goals, it's easier to craft meaningful challenges and opportunities.

Finally, you'll find advice for the whole troupe on setting up a political chronicle, complete with a political landscape ripe for exploration and exploitation. Mechanics for social combat and the Political Map, with its key movers and shakers, get you ready to bribe rivals, blackmail the powerful, and make false promises to the naïve.

You know, vampire politics.

# THE STAKES



**M**uch of political conduct concerns itself with resources: who gets what, how much they get, and when they get it. The beginning of most resource negotiations is simple. Person A wants X. Person B has X. They talk.

What comes next is less a straightforward economic exchange — one X for two Y — and more a delicate balancing act of personalities, assets, and circumstances. Person B might hand off X to Person A for a pittance if they believe it'll make them look generous, or ask for more than X is worth because they know A has no alternatives. Or perhaps they outright refuse to give anything to A, even if the deal is advantageous to both, because they despise them.

For vampires, as with mortals, there's a distinct hierarchy of resources based on their necessity for survival. How much a vampire values a particular resource under normal circumstances may have little to do with how much her own survival depends on it — until she reaches the breaking point and cannot go on without it. A hungry vampire yearns to feed, but she can push past her own instincts if someone she cares about (a Touchstone, a childe, a lover) is at risk. Without that, the only thing on a starving vampire's mind is blood.

## Blood

Everybody has got to eat. Big cities are the best place for Kindred because there's simply more mortal blood in one place. Do the math: one coterie of five careful vampires is going to feed a minimum of approximately 920 times each year. Assuming they're not Farmers and they don't have a Herd, the coterie probably can't risk feeding from the same

person more than once or twice in a year. If there are a few hundred Kindred in a city, drawn by all the nice warm blood pumping away, the prospective number of vampire victims per year shoots up into the tens of thousands.

Mistakes need to be avoided, attention kept to a minimum. Mortals must be unaware of Kindred boundaries and authorities, and there's no way to silo all the blood in an area into one place. The Masquerade exists for this very reason. It's only with careful management that everyone can eat.

Usually, the responsibility for protecting Kindred access to blood falls on a domain's leadership, who grant or revoke feeding rights and enforce the laws created to ensure that access. But every vampire, powerful and weak alike, has a vested interest in making sure that they can feed. To some, that means preserving order; to others, that means toppling a leadership that stands between them and the kine.

## Shelter

Kindred slumber for approximately 12 hours each day, meaning they need a Haven (or at the very least a box to curl up in) to avoid being exposed to sunlight or mortals. The more secure the enclosed space, the better the chance to avoid a lethal accident. Kindred control shelter mostly by owning property. Cash greases the palms of city inspectors, police, and maintenance workers to keep the Kindred comfortable and safely stowed away during the day. In other words, shelter equals money, or vice versa.

Most Kindred need some source of cash to keep a Haven's roof over their head and clothes on their



## Force

Force — physical violence — is the big red button of politics. Almost every undead ruler in power tonight achieved their position through calculated use of violence, and most maintain it by reminding their subjects of their capacity for it.

If a ruler is particularly skilled in Fortitude or Potence, they might personally lead displays of force against their opponents. But every successful ruler, regardless of their capabilities, knows they need trusted enforcers to project that threat across their domain.

The stronger the enforcers, the more potent the threat. Some rulers prioritize enforcers accomplished in certain Disciplines, placing them in key positions within their Court. Others embed their soldiers in mortal systems of power, trying to steer them to serve Kindred needs. A vampire in the police system or coast guard can wield the sunlit world as a weapon.

Disrupting access to force can defang even the most established ruler. Create enough chaos, and their power weakens as they scramble to deal with multiple problems. Remove or turn trusted enforcers, and a ruler's control crumbles rapidly.

back. In the modern age, that means having a bank account, maybe multiple if you want to do some money laundering. A good Mask is crucial. A Retainer who can manage finances is even better, especially if they have experience covering up fraud. For vampires, Resources aren't necessarily financial, but they often end up expressed in dollar signs — which means accruing Resources can net better shelter, security, and comfort.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on whom you ask), the interconnected nature of finances, Masks, and Havens in tonight's world makes them ripe for attack. One good hack or a well-placed audit can have a Kindred scrambling to reconstruct their entire world with no attention for anything else.

## Information

Secrecy is paramount. Information — the control of it, as well as the monitoring of its channels — is as vital to a domain's security as its enforcers.

Like blood, information security is an unwieldy resource, constantly moving and changing. Those who specialize in it are more like fishermen than farmers, casting wide nets to catch fragments from the current.

The internet is the source of most knowledge these nights. There's still plenty of room for Kindred and mortal informants with eyes and ears to pick up rumors around a city, but the vast majority of seekers in the information trade now hunch over computers and phones, typing furiously. Most domains maintain a nominal ban on technology more advanced than a flip phone, though Kindred within their borders often stretch this rule. Some rulers employ dedicated enforcers to track down unauthorized devices; others turn a blind eye. Every

savvy ruler knows the price of missing the right piece of intel—a visit from the Second Inquisition ranks high on no one's wish list.

Special dispensations to access computers—“technology allowance” in the formal parlance, “plugging in” in the casual, or “getting my phone back” among the newly Embraced—may be granted to certain Kindred within a domain. Plugging in can be a job, serving as a digital proxy for a Prince or Anarch boss and maintaining the Masquerade, or it might be bestowed as a reward or political favor.

*What do you think about when the sun sets and you wake for another night?*

*The Hunger gnaws at your soul. There's blood all around you, housed in these fragile sacks of flesh. If you puncture their soft skin, it seeps out. If you prick them just right, it spurts violently, and you can relish its power to sate you. For the moment.*

*You can afford to waste the blood because it'll never run out. The billions of mortals out there are waiting for you to sink your fangs into them.*

*Is this all there is? If your values erode and the finer impulses of your conscious mind fade, the answer is yes.*

*This is why the politics of our kind cannot be just about self-interest, the zero-sum game of who gets to feed where. We must have principles, values, and ideas. We must have an ideology to believe in, faith that what we do really matters.*

*We cannot be nothing more than monsters lapping up blood from a corpse. Our minds have the potential to go on for an eternity, and we have to feed them with the beauty of truth and enlightenment.*

*If mortals are able to ascend beyond their base urges, surely we can as well? This is the goal of the Anarch Movement: on the local level, to provide a domain where all Kindred can exist with dignity. And on a wider level, some of us have never forgotten the dream of Carthage: to exist alongside mortals in open symbiosis rather than secret parasitic predation.*

*Striving for a better world is merely one way to hold on to who we are and resist the yawning abyss, but it's something we can do together to improve ourselves and our environment. Political activity is how we tend to our common interests. There's no reason to give in to Camarilla cynicism. We can look beyond power, territory, and control.*

— Salvador Garcia, Brujah ideologue

# POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS

While Kindred society can take countless forms, a handful of archetypal frameworks for how it can be structured recur time and time again in domains worldwide. Anarchs and Camarilla replicate these structures independently of each other, and there are examples of all the below on both the Ivory Tower's and the Revolt's sides of the chessboard.

No matter the model, these political frameworks touch kine governments unobtrusively and only as much as necessary. Even a small city has hundreds, if not thousands, of mortal government workers intersecting with each other all the time. No vampire can control a city's whole mortal administration without endangering the Masquerade — especially given the ever-watching eyes of the internet and the Second Inquisition. Kindred leaders can't afford to wield an iron fist without covering it with a velvet glove. A generous donation to the mayor's campaign and a charming request ensure a particular historic building remains untouched by rezoning; offering a connection to the ambitious alderman encourages him to tip a vote in one direction or the other. Kindred usually navigate their own politics in insular domains beneath these machinations.

In a collaborative or troupe-driven chronicle, everyone might review these frameworks and collectively pick an option that makes the most sense. In a Storyteller-driven chronicle, the Storyteller may choose one of these options and ask the players to create characters that fit the chosen option.

## The Monarchy

The Monarchy is as close to a standard political framework as the Kindred have — a city ruled by an absolute feudal monarch and their advisors. The Monarch's decrees are enforced by the Kindred to whom they have afforded titles or privileges, whether they're called Sheriffs, Seneschals, or something else. Like kingdoms of yore, the Monarchy is rich in territory, status, and violence. Its weaknesses lie in the loyalty of its enforcers and the potential for its territory to stagnate. A Monarchy is usually a place of history and formality, proud of the pomp and circumstance surrounding its proceedings.

The draw of the Monarch's rule is that very formality: petitioners or visitors know exactly where to present themselves and to whom to show deference. Local laws may differ based on a Monarch's latitude, but in Camarilla Monarchies the Six Traditions (*Vampire*, p. 51) take precedence. Punishments are typically brutal, rewards generous: blood, gifts, titles, or financial assets. Those in the highest echelons of the Monarch's city receive the most. Those in the lowest corners can expect the least.

It would be easy to assume the Monarch's city is Camarilla by default, but Anarch petty tyrants can be just as restrictive and prone to accidentally reproducing Camarilla culture as they tighten their grip on a region.

## In Chronicles

The Monarchy clashes with the Assembly and may find common ground or an occasional partnership with the Collegium. It despises the Caligula as a failed Monarchy.

**Succession Crisis:** A Monarch met final death, and there's no clear successor. Their old allies all back different candidates, and the conflict threatens to erupt into citywide violence.

**Viva la Revolution:** A group of revolutionaries wants to overthrow the Monarchy. They ask the players' characters to be their guerrilla agents, disrupting the Monarch's plans and fighting her enforcers. But there's a mole among the radicals.

**The Favorite:** It's the anniversary of the Monarch's reign, and her Court gathers in Elysium to celebrate. To everyone's surprise, an old favorite of hers returns for the event. The Monarch's new favorite believes he's trying to unseat her.

## The Firm

It's common to mistake the Firm for a Monarchy at first glance — the Director ruling over a company of underlings, assisted by a powerful Board of executives, looks an awful lot like a Monarch and their domain. But there is a touch more modernity in its night-to-night operation (or so it claims).

A Firm tries to emulate the corporations it takes its cues from. Most decisions are voted on by the Board, who command lower-ranking Kindred and rake in the cash. Meanwhile, the Director breaks ties in meetings, presides over operations, and makes alliances. Underlings are given tasks roughly based on merit and skill, and there's a promise of upward mobility for successful followers. Of course, the reality of advancement depends entirely on the whims of the Director and the Board, and a disliked underling will not advance half as fast as their less-skilled but more popular peer.

The ostensible goals of a Firm tend to be fiscal or technological. There's a literal business at the core of the Firm's operations, with both mortal and Kindred workers who have bought into the

long-term investment strategy of immortality. This allows a certain amount of built-in access to law and finance circles. The Director cares most about profit, plain and simple. Where the money comes from doesn't matter much in the grand scheme of immortality; the Firm is as likely to deal with the mortal underworld as with tech conglomerates.

The Firm's power lies in intelligence and status, with occasional forays into hostile takeovers through outright force. Cutting its ties to the outside world injures its function.

## In Chronicles

The Firm makes a point of being diplomatic with the Family and the Monarchy. It most loathes the Caligula as a source of unpredictability.

**Talent Scout:** The Firm's latest enterprise was a complete failure. The players' coterie is sent out to find promising new investors and convince them to ally with the dwindling Firm.

**Gold Rush:** The Firm has swallowed a rival domain in order to get a valuable resource. In the sudden gold rush for the material, how do the players' characters further their own agendas in a literally cutthroat economy?

**King of the Hill:** The coterie has the chance to become leaders of a small corner of the Firm. The only catch? They're in competition with another coterie, and the Firm wants to see who comes out on top.

## The Collegium

The Collegium centers on shared faith. Whether their faith is religion, knowledge, or idealism varies from domain to domain. It operates on the basic idea that all members, especially leaders, uphold the same laws and customs. Kindred in these domains tend to be either immigrants to the region, drawn by particular tenets of the faith, or childer inducted by a sire who discovered a promising mortal. Followers give all but a few of their possessions to the Collegium.

In an academically inclined Collegium, leaders (generically called Chancellors) style themselves as professors or mentors. They value research: Chancellors might assign vampiric study projects or welcome redworkers, such as Thin-Blood Alchemists or Blood Sorcerers. Some declare certain criminal acts legal, so long as the accused demonstrates they learned something valuable by doing it. In religious Collegia, leaders emphasize the tenets of a particular religion: cleanliness, prayer, nights of fasting, and attendance at religious events. Violations of the faith are punished in the extreme. Public apologies to the entire Collegium are required for even minor slipups, and serious breaches result in banishment or final death. In the cruelest Collegia, a neonate's finger is cut off every night for a week for losing a rare book; for failing to appear at prayer, an ancilla whips herself until her spine peeks through.

A Chancellor in the Collegium is as absolute a ruler as the Monarch. Unlike their autocratic cousin, Chancellors have a covenant with a “higher power.” This isn't misplaced belief on the part of their followers, either. Many Collegia are helmed by a Chancellor who truly believes in the sanctity of knowledge or has unshakable faith in Cainite doctrine. Their citizens are loyal precisely because of their leader's devotion. Corrupt Collegia ignore the doctrines they espouse to their followers. For them, the framework of the Collegium provides a way to use others' beliefs for their own gain. In either case, damaging their reputation hurts their base of power.

## In Chronicles

The Collegium locks horns with the Firm (eschewing “mere profit” as beneath it). It dislikes the Family, recognizing a rival cult when it sees one, but might collaborate if circumstances require it.

**Publish or Perish:** The coterie comes into possession of evidence showing a Chancellor failed his vows. Do they sell it to the highest bidder, ask the Chancellor himself to pay, or distribute it to the Collegium as they see fit?

**Top Secret:** The coterie has been recruited to research a secret project within the Collegium. They must keep their work hidden from rival domains and the rest of the Collegium alike.

**Confession:** The coterie violated the Collegium's code. Do they confess and risk retribution, or cover up their crime?

## The Family

“Mother and Father” (gender and relationship notwithstanding) sit at the head of the Family table. They direct their “sons and daughters” to act as lieutenants and enforcers — retaining final say on all business within their brood, of course. Usually, the “children” are quite literally Mother and Father's childer, although on occasion promising Kindred may be adopted into the family business. Each of the Family's offspring then creates their own block of childer or adoptees to be their officers. In fact, one key aspect of the Family is the ability to “marry into” a higher position by openly Blood Bonding with a more senior member of the Family.

The Family cares for its own. Each sire answers to their superiors on their childer's behalf, encouraging a closer relationship between the generations than in other Kindred power structures. Childer receive food, shelter, and familial comforts as long as they might need. But disputes within the Family turn nasty quickly as branches close ranks against each other. Outsiders caught in the Family's domain find themselves at the mercy of whichever lieutenant agrees to take them on as a responsibility, completely disregarded by Father or Mother until they're adopted or marry in. And if Father or his direct childer disappear, the system devolves into complete chaos. Given the family-tree structure, it's no surprise the Family is a favorite political framework for Tremere- and Hecata-controlled domains, and Gangrel territories tend to operate on similar terms.



## In Chronicles

The Family distrusts most other domains. They might work with the Firm on occasion, enjoying the cash flow.

**The Feud:** Two branches of the Family have sworn to destroy each other on sight. The players' coterie is charged with negotiating between them. They must reach a compromise or else Mother steps in.

**Inheritance:** Father's been Beckoned, and he divides his domain between his childer before he departs. When the favored son gets all the prime real estate, his disgruntled siblings begin to move against him and each other.

**Family Bonds:** One of the Family's members defects from the domain. She asks the players' coterie to defend her since her Family is trying to get her back by any means necessary.

## The Caligula

The Caligula follows no laws but rather its own desires. It insists its subjects have complete freedom to do as they will in its domain — provided they follow its personal commands to the letter. There's no law saying a group of mortals is off-limits to feed on, but the Caligula tells a random member of its domain she's not allowed to drink from drug dealers and tells another that he's forbidden to feed on all medical professionals — regardless of whether they routinely prey on such victims.

The Caligula rewards its enforcers heartily — and they tend to want to keep it in power as a result — but it's prone to promoting its favorites over the most capable. Rather than patrolling regularly,

its enforcers perform arbitrary spot checks on random vampires within their domain, telling their victims to perform tasks or prove their loyalty. If they refuse or fail, the punishment is usually lengthy and degrading. In this way, the city is kept in a perpetual sense of chaos, never sure of the capricious ruler's next move. The Caligula's framework is essentially based on raw force.

The Caligula's reign is also, predictably, short. After a few years, its subjects hit a breaking point and band together to drive it out or destroy it. Sometimes, if the Caligula is personified in an older Kindred with many friends in high places, it manages to last a shockingly long time.

## In Chronicles

The Caligula conducts diplomacy with surrounding domains based on their perceived strength and opinion of it. It especially clashes with the Assembly and the Firm.

**Gunpowder, Treason, and Plot:** The coterie must infiltrate the Caligula's court and build support from within to overthrow it — all while the Caligula is watching them closely.

**Best Friends for Now:** The Caligula has decided it's delighted by the players' coterie. It showers them with attention and gifts. It did the same thing for its last favorite, too — before it grew suspicious of her and hunted her down with hounds and sabers.

## The Assembly

Since the majority of world governance turned to democracy, the idea of a democratic government has taken root in Kindred society. Assemblies hold citywide votes led by a Kindred mayor and elect council members to govern them for a given period of time. Who gets blood isn't decided by decree but rather by vote — Kindred within an Assembly must petition to hunt in a certain area.

There's a shocking amount of red tape around voting practices and administrative positions, all designed to force immortal, ageless politicians into

ceding power at the appropriate times and places. At their most stable (and most stagnant, Assemblies are run by a rotating cast of backstabbing bureaucrats and aides who ascend the political ladder rung by painful rung. At their most unstable, one or two political ideologues can maneuver their followers into position and decide they're no longer interested in there being a vote at all. Some Assembly members dream of measured debates and general consensus, but it's a difficult ambition to achieve.

## In Chronicles

The Assembly considers the Monarchy and the Caligula threats to its existence. The Firm is also heartily despised, while the Collegium and the Family may be allies or minor rivals.

**Strongman:** A demagogue is on the rise within an Assembly. His enforcers and followers exert pressure on the city's Kindred. Smaller groups form within the Assembly in order to deal with the threat. Each believes they can use the turmoil to build something better.

**Town Hall:** A meeting is called to deal with a pressing issue, but clashing personalities and fervent opinions stall everything. The coterie is summoned to corral the competing sides and get a vote through.

**Election Night:** It's time for a new crop of Assembly members to be elected. Each has a different agenda for the city, and each evaluates if they can turn the players' coterie into an asset.

# MECHANICS OF POLITICAL PLAY



**T**he point of politics is to accumulate allies and resources and reduce enemies' power and holdings. Three strategic roles can help you understand some ways of achieving this: the Giver, the Builder, and the Destroyer. These aren't characters to be played — one player can vacillate between these roles several times during a chronicle or the course of a story.

**The Giver** isn't picky about which people they help out, working with several factions at once. They cast a wide net, leaving plenty of room for favors and resources from unexpected sources to fall in. The Giver uses their generosity as a tool to build a large, varied contact network, bouncing from contact to contact as needed. They rely on those contacts for protection against enemies or threats. If they fail, the Giver is out of luck.

**The Builder** focuses on a particular faction of people and builds that faction's influence, increasing their own power and reach by tying themselves to the group's fate. They seek out alliances to specifically aid their faction and focus on gathering resources for a particular project. If their group is strong, the Builder can amass enormous power and advance serious goals. If their group falls from grace, they fall with them.

**The Destroyer** takes the colder approach. They focus on a particular enemy, seeking out allies who mutually clash with their target. They broker deals with third parties to get more firepower against mutual enemies. If their target is particularly despised, they might find themselves accumulating quite a few assets — but once their enemy is taken out, they have to find a new strategy for accumulating or maintaining power.

## Social Combat

All these strategies require social combat. Since the point of politics is to (mostly) avoid using force, social combat takes the place of most Physical tests in political spaces, giving the advantage to those who wield it most effectively. Political social combat comes down to three basic approaches: negotiation, intimidation, and reassurance. Negotiation is front and center in diplomatic disputes — who gets what, what they'll give for it, and when they'll hand it over. Intimidation furnishes the why and how of these exchanges, usually by threatening to end political discussion and descend into conflict. Reassurance serves as intimidation's sweeter sibling, allowing allies to trade and deal with each other by promising good behavior from all involved.

As with all social combat situations, remember that fewer dice rolls are usually better. Not only does this keep players from getting tapped out — it's easier to come up with exciting action sequences or supernatural effects than convincing arguments on the fly — but it also tends to reflect the real world: people are either ready to have their mind changed, or they're not. In conversation between political rivals or allies, using the One-Roll Conflict system (*Vampire*, p. 298) usually suffices to determine whether players succeed or fail in influencing someone. If the troupe plays out an adversarial confrontation, try to keep to the Three Rounds and Out structure (*Vampire*, p. 295). This gives enough time for one side to act, their target to respond, and a final roll to wrap up the exchange.

## CONSIDERATE SOCIAL CONFLICT

Playing scenes of social combat, or just conflict, can be a very different experience from playing out violence and Discipline use. When we're sitting at the table, we don't get up to duke it out on the carpet. This creates a natural distance between the story and what's actually happening. But when we play out scenes of social combat, we are saying the things our characters say, maybe even yelling at each other. The distance between a player and their character is smaller, which can make it less obvious who the angry party is in that moment—the player or the character? Here are some quick tips to help make the distinction clear:

- Use character names frequently when speaking in character.
- Introduce yelling and similar outbursts with third-person narrative, so it becomes “Victoria is furious and exclaims, ‘You contribute nothing to this group!’” not “You contribute nothing to this group.”
- Include character habits and mannerisms, any particular compulsive ones that the character has, when portraying them. Perhaps the character laughs in a way the player does not.
- Target character weaknesses; avoid known player insecurities.
- Feel free to take a short break after confrontational scenes, to laugh it out. Or talk about them after the session, if you prefer to avoid interruptions, and compliment each other on what was cool.
- Pay attention to each other, so you notice the use of any calibration techniques (such as Lines and Veils, the Stoplight System, and others you'll find in *Vampire* pp. 423–425). Note that these aren't only for players. Storytellers are also allowed to want a change of direction.

No matter the social combat structure, there are dozens of ways to use Social and Mental Skills within a situation. Troupes may determine their own dice pools as appropriate, but some suggestions can be seen in Table 1: Social Combat, which demonstrates how Storytellers might vary the combinations of likely dice pools.

## Setting the Goal

The defining element of any combat, whether physical or social, is knowing what you're trying to achieve — after all, without that goal firmly in mind, you're just having a heated conversation.

Before entering into any social combat scenario, consider how your goal aligns with the following options:

- **Inception:** The most devious forms of social combat are those that the targets don't even realize happened. The goal here is to implant a suggestion without it seeming to come from you — the perfect crime.
- **Muckraking:** Your opponent has something you want, and they're holding out on you. Attempts at muckraking are all about teasing out some secret or another, whether through coercion, empathy, or a forced slip of the tongue.
- **Point of View:** You hold a perspective your opponent disagrees with and refuses to accept, and that just can't be. This combat involves each party trying to convince the other to see things from their point of view — they may not leave the conversation in full agreement, but they gain at least some understanding.
- **Self-Defense:** When you're attacked, you fight back with whatever you've got. This approach is less of a goal and more of an instinctive reaction, but the winning result is the same — you stand up for yourself without revealing any cracks in your armor.
- **Undermining:** Someone needs to be taken down a peg or two, and you're the exact bloodsucker to do it. Most attempts at undermining focus on the two (or more) characters directly involved in the social combat, each seeking to humiliate the other. It isn't limited to just the participants — the combat could be staged to elicit a reaction from the audience or even ruin the reputation of an uninvolved third party.

**TABLE I:**  
**Social Combat**

| <b>Attribute + Skill</b>                                                                       | <b>Charisma</b>                                                      | <b>Manipulation</b>                                                           | <b>Composure</b>                                                | <b>Intelligence</b>                                                               | <b>Wits</b>                                                                      | <b>Resolve</b>                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Animal Ken</b><br>(These dice pools may be tried on vampires' famuli or animal companions.) | Call animals to you; command a domesticated animal.                  | Calm or befriend an animal; stir the Beast.                                   | Project fearlessness, ferocity, or friendliness to creatures.   | Recall information about various animals.                                         | Intuit an animal's needs; predict their responses.                               | Make the Beast back down; notice animals' reactions to others. |
| <b>Etiquette</b>                                                                               | Charm a guest; overcome a social trap someone has laid for you.      | Use social graces to make someone look like a fool; cover someone's missteps. | Deflect insults.                                                | Memorize manners of the past and present; be considerate of cultural differences. | Notice unusual behavior; craft a good excuse.                                    | Plan and direct an important event; moderate negotiations.     |
| <b>Finance</b>                                                                                 | Find donors; convince investors to partner with you.                 | Conceal fraud; get patrons to give you money.                                 | Deal with mortal financial authority; advise corporations.      | Impress with financial knowledge.                                                 | Clock if someone's broke or just slumming it; discern real wealth from scammers. | Discover fraud; push your stocks to get a one-time cash bump.  |
| <b>Insight</b>                                                                                 | Persuade a target to confide in you; get good advice.                | Elicit a damaging public admission; sway neutral parties toward one side.     | Defuse a personal attack; notice when you're being manipulated. | Figure out who works for whom; cold-read a mark.                                  | See through deception; decipher what someone really wants.                       | Discern a target's weakness; hide your own.                    |
| <b>Intimidation</b>                                                                            | Project a frightening or aloof aura; shame someone into apologizing. | Present yourself as powerful; threaten a rival into backing down.             | Stand strong against a threat.                                  | Pick the perfect weak point; impress with erudition.                              | Exploit fear; discern who's most susceptible.                                    | Win a game of political chicken; stare down a rival.           |

| <b>Attribute + Skill</b> | <b>Charisma</b>                                                                       | <b>Manipulation</b>                                             | <b>Composure</b>                                                     | <b>Intelligence</b>                                                         | <b>Wits</b>                                                               | <b>Resolve</b>                                                         |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leadership</b>        | Get people to follow you; lead a conversation for a key moment.                       | Recruit someone to work for you; take control of a small group. | Reassure followers; parley with another group.                       | Discern who's in charge.                                                    | Intuit what inspires someone to action.                                   | Deflect rumors; soothe tension in a group.                             |
| <b>Performance</b>       | Captivate a room; attract someone's interest across a room.                           | Evoke a particular emotion in your audience; act out a role.    | Impress with a difficult piece; perform under pressure.              | Prove your art means something; encode a secret message in your art.        | Improvise an artistic display unprepared.                                 | Perform a piece you abhor; or perform in front of an hostile audience. |
| <b>Persuasion</b>        | Sweet-talk someone into giving you something valuable; cajole a sire.                 | Assure someone that your plan is in their best interest.        | Reassure or comfort someone.                                         | Convince the powerful to take your advice; convince someone to share intel. | Make up a convincing story on the spot; turn away mortal law enforcement. | Tell the truth and be believed.                                        |
| <b>Politics</b>          | Pressure mortal politicians to do you a favor; present someone in the best light.     | Create a smear campaign; negotiate peacefully with rivals.      | Act as a diplomat during parley; bluff a rival about political aims. | Understand who's in charge and who hates whom; reveal a damaging secret.    | Discern new relationships emerging in a room; guess someone's motivation. | Research and predict your opposition's tactics.                        |
| <b>Streetwise</b>        | Assure a member you're part of their gang; coax out the details of a meetup or event. | Maneuver groups against each other; forge a truce.              | Act like you belong; hide others' slipups.                           | Know where to go in a particular scene and whom to talk to there.           | Notice outsiders; sense a set-up.                                         | Figure out connections; discover strongholds and meeting-places.       |
| <b>Subterfuge</b>        | Seduce someone into a Blood Bond.                                                     | Cover up a lie; trick a target into taking the fall for you.    | Resist interrogation; convincingly "switch sides."                   | Convincingly pretend you know more than you do.                             | Figure out the lie someone wants to hear and the lie they expect.         | Detect white lies versus outright falsehoods.                          |

## Redefining the Risks

You know why you're fighting, but what are you risking? If you come out on top, what happens to your opponent? Social combat typically inflicts Willpower damage, but this needn't be your only option. In fact, many groups might feel hesitant to even attempt social combat, knowing that a large portion of that precious (and hard to recover) resource is at stake.

Before entering social combat, the group can look over this list of alternative options and decide what's appropriate. Crucially, both player and Storyteller need to agree on the stakes before the combat begins.

**Backgrounds:** Allies, Contacts, Retainers, Resources, Status — there's a long list of assets a character could leverage to win an argument. Of course, that means they're at risk of being impacted. These losses need not be directly referenced in the conversation. Perhaps other Kindred learn of the discussion and take advantage of the perceived weakness, or maybe the brooding vampire temporarily alienates their allies as they obsess over their loss. Background dots affected in this manner are equivalent to the amount of Willpower that would have been lost and remain unavailable for the rest of the session for Superficial damage or story (typically two to three sessions) for Aggravated damage.

**The Beast's Due:** Commonly, when someone's ego is being taunted, here the loser risks Frenzy (Terror or Fury could both be appropriate). At the end of each turn of combat, the loser rolls to resist Frenzy. The Difficulty begins at 1 and increases by 1 for each point of Willpower damage they would have taken (to a maximum of 7). Onlookers can notice the barely restrained emotion with an Intelligence + Awareness or Wits + Insight test at Difficulty 2.

**Compulsions and Stains:** The character obsesses over their loss, losing themselves in the distraction of their failure. Afflicting them with a suitable Compulsion is a great way to represent the vampiric undertones that drive this tantrum, but a Stain (or two) as the vampire lashes out in Tenet-violating actions can also be appropriate.

**Faustian Pact:** Both sides agree to strictly follow the results of the combat; if one side is convincing, the losers walk away in full agreement and change their plans accordingly. While this might seem obvious, this agreement ensures everyone knows their hard work is backed up by an (out-of-character) ironclad oath.

**Secrets and Lies:** Everyone has something they want to know, so why not put it on the table? The loser in this social combat discloses a secret they'd prefer to keep hidden (although they may not even recognize their slip if the interrogation was subtle enough).

**Social Standing:** Kindred society may be ruthless, but it's still a society, and with the Masquerade in full force, vampires are forced to stick closely to their own kind to be themselves. Losing face, being seen as untrustworthy, and, of course, abject humiliation can see you forcibly pulled down the social ladder.

Any loss in social standing can be represented by penalties to Status or a dice pool when interacting with other Kindred (a two-dice penalty is normal, while penalties of three dice are suitable for spectacular failures). These persist until someone else embarrasses themselves and distracts the masses. Interestingly, those who experience a loss of status within one group may find their social cachet increasing with the opposition.

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### WILLPOWER LOSS IN SOCIAL COMBAT

As well as the standard rules for Willpower loss during social combat, players may prefer to set a limit on how much they're willing to lose before they concede (even tying it to one of the options above). Another alternative is the all-or-nothing approach: here, the combat proceeds as usual, and at the end of each turn, the loser records how much Willpower damage they would have taken. At the end of the three rounds (or longer, if you're particularly masochistic), both sides compare how much damage they've accrued; the ultimate loser takes all the damage they had stored, while the winner takes none.

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# NAVIGATING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



From when they first meet others like themselves, **Vampire** characters become mired in a complicated web, where every move can have far-reaching, unknown implications and consequences. They either learn to act with purpose or become pawns in someone else's game. Camarilla Courts (see Chapter Two: The Ivory Tower) are mired in a byzantine tradition of patronage and influence, with older vampires vying

for position and power built on centuries of rivalry. Anarch stomping grounds (see Chapter Three: The Movement) run on a system of favors and bespoke laws, building up and tearing down leaders at lightning speed. Every inch of established Kindred territory has been the subject of countless political machinations over the years. It's possible to eschew politics entirely, but turning a blind eye means having little say over the law when the law starts having a say over you.

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## DAYLIGHTERS

The highs and lows of vampire politics are fertile ground, but don't forget—the Kindred exist within an urban landscape rife with countless mortal complaints and political rivalries of its own. Mortals can move during the day and stay awake all night if needed. With some preparation, a group of ordinary, tough mortals is a match for any thin-blood, fledgling, or neonate vampire. With a great deal of preparation, they're equal to most ancillae and (sometimes) older generations. On the political side, mortals need no Blush of Life to keep other mortals from getting suspicious. They have no Banes, no Beast, and no Hunger to distract them. They can buy out Kindred companies and rezone domain territory. Neighborhood watches can disrupt meetings and alert law enforcement. The right mortal ally in high places can be a powerful tool in a vampire's arsenal.

Just remember, no Kindred leader is powerful enough to keep an entire kine government in his sway. This extends to various mortal systems too. A vampire cannot affect a city's entire network of churches, pharmacies, or colleges with their Influence or Allies, unless that city is more of a village. Rather than simply declaring "I have Restaurant Influence so I can find out X and Y," using Influence should be concrete: "I email Chef George; he can set up a meeting with this restaurant owner for us." Mortal Influence and Allies aren't simply there to solve problems, but they can give the coterie an opening to solve them on their own.

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## Securing a Niche

The first and most important rule of politics is this: figure out how to make yourself essential. Give others no choice but to associate value with you, or they'll consider you dead weight at best, and a dangerous waste of blood at worst. The easiest way for players' characters to do this is to find a niche and protect it with everything they've got. Be it a connection at the city morgue, a talent for entertainment, connections to organized crime, or a knack for making deliveries faster than anyone, claim it, advertise it, and defend it.

Once you have it, grow it. A good musician or a fast courier tonight should be brilliant or legendary a decade from now, or else they'll be left behind in the dust by the next ambitious Kindred. If your coterie is moving in on another's territory, outperform them and outlast them. The ideal takeover isn't a battle but a merger: turn your rivals into allies, and they'll be competition no longer.

The players' characters are not the only ones thinking of their talents. Their sires most likely Embraced them for a reason. Even a sire motivated by guilt or loneliness noticed some quality of character that convinced him to request an Embrace or make a dangerous gamble. A sire might be a character's first political ally, willing to help the coterie protect their niche to preserve his childe's talents.

## Identifying Your Targets

You can't sell out without customers. A coterie may present as a new bud on the Camarilla vine, declare themselves as Anarch assets, be on the lookout for the highest bidder, or pretend at neutrality. No matter what, as long as they control access to anything at all, they're shifting the balance of resources in someone's favor. The trick is to figure out whose and ensure that they reward you for it.

A part of this is understanding the political landscape that you're trying to navigate — who holds a grudge against whom? What happened in 1982, since nobody allows references to that year within earshot of the Court? Whom should you absolutely not be seen with if you want to be trusted? Knowing how the existing Kindred are connected is an essential element in understanding what they want and why they want it.

## Understanding Your Assets

A deal is being struck. It's time for a player's character to hand over their half of the goods. If they've got it, cash, territory, or information might be the way to go. But what if their wallet is empty and they've got no data to trade during negotiations?

If immediate resources aren't on the table, offering the right skill set and willingness to get into the weeds can be a powerful bargaining chip. There's always a demand for unpleasant, difficult, time-consuming, or dangerous tasks to be handled. For organized crime or corrupt mortal politicians, a set of Blood-enhanced Skills and a clean Mask are catnip. For older Kindred, the prospect of a relatively unknown agent can be compelling. Offer Skills like they're a resume and back them up with evidence you can deliver.

Under the right circumstances, even Flaws can be exploited. Begging for a favor might be humiliating, but it can stroke the ego of the person being petitioned. After all, letting others know your weaknesses might serve them down the road. Borrowing from the future by setting yourself up to fail or promising favors you're not sure you can deliver on might not be wise, but politicians do it all the time. The trick is to manage future risks, and sometimes that future never comes — say, if the Kindred you're in debt to is destroyed before they can collect.

## Remaining Flexible

Targets move and change, especially for those trying to climb up from the bottom of the career ladder, and services must change as well. Sometimes a character finds themselves with their back to the wall, fangs at their throat. Then they'll need to think quickly and give their enemy a reason not to destroy them. A vampire wanting to thrive in the political sphere probably needs to be able to swallow their pride and do the unthinkable every once in a while.

And when they've got someone up against the wall, they should remember that enemies — particularly predictable enemies — can become assets with the careful application of mercy. Just don't trust them to watch your back.

## Working with Others

### Allies and Enemies

Kindred politics play out among a relatively small number of individuals. In many domains, getting

just three or four vampires to work together already marks the beginning of a promising coalition. A smaller pool of potential allies means Kindred are often willing to accept partners whose goals are partly at cross-purposes to their own. Unfortunately, this raises the chances of making enemies as well.

*What makes an enemy?* Someone working against you. Someone untrustworthy. Someone who just can't stand you. There doesn't have to be a grand reason behind animosity — people are petty and unkind to those they dislike, and more than a few enjoy rubbing salt into wounds.

Which is precisely why mutual enemies (and the destruction thereof) are one of the classic motivators for alliance. "The enemy of my enemy" may not be an outright friend, but they're useful to have in the coterie's corner. When their shared opponent is safely ground down into a paste, the allies may forge a lasting friendship built on their shared experiences — or they may break apart and become enemies themselves. Such is the nature of political deals.



*What makes a good ally?* Someone with aligned goals. Someone with something valuable to offer. Someone trustworthy. Someone who isn't an unbearable asshole. Of course, most potential allies don't check every one of those boxes. Most of them check maybe two at best. But any combination of those four qualities is worth looking into as a potential friend or partner.

Once a likely ally is found, the next step is figuring out what they want and need. The two aren't necessarily the same. Needs are fleeting, shifting with changing circumstances. Wants change, too, but they tend to be much longer-lasting — artistic fulfillment, love, fame, and so on. Doing someone a need-based favor is a good first step to earning their trust, but allying based on wants creates a stronger, more genuine relationship. Two Kindred seeking to bring a common enemy to justice will work harder to stick together than two searching for a place to crash.

## Building Coalitions

Once just two or three political allies have joined forces, they need some ground rules. Building a successful coalition necessitates ironing out differences until everyone can focus on the mutual goal. Define the endgame: a faction's control of the city, the final death of an enemy, the fall of a particular luminary. Set a few nonnegotiables for all involved — “don't touch X,” “don't work with Y,” “keep Z safe.” If one ally has a do-or-die demand the others don't particularly care about, it still goes on the list — otherwise, that ally won't see the reason to stick around.

Finally, determine the most important part of any coalition: who handles what. This doesn't necessarily mean deciding on a leader but rather delegating key tasks to specific members and agreeing that no one else will interfere to muddle their plans. Responsibilities might include recruiting new members, gathering intelligence, securing resources, spreading information, or acquiring rewards for coalition allies. If priorities

change, the coalition must adapt its structure to meet new circumstances or risk breaking apart under outside pressure.

## Appearing to Comply

If your schemes run counter to your city's leadership, you'll need to move carefully. Outright civil disobedience might work under certain circumstances. For instance if you have a strong union of mortal workers to back you up in what appears to them a mortal issue or if you're simply old and strong enough to get your way. Other times, it's safer to do one thing while appearing to do another.

Creative obedience can be a potent advantage, especially when dealing with a Firm or an Assembly. You might engage in malicious compliance, following the letter of the law so strictly that it becomes counterproductive. Perhaps you go above and beyond to do more than you were asked in ways that serve your cause, or you find reasons to stretch out a task way past its usefulness. A coalition that appears to obey can be difficult for an unsatisfied ruler to deal with, especially if they're popular within the domain and any crackdown would carry a heavy political cost.

## Handling Setbacks

Plans collapse, resources dry up, allies flake. Political setbacks can feel like total failure, but seasoned players know they're part of the game.

Start by asking: “Was this a setback for me, for my coterie, or for our alliances?” These overlap, but they're not the same. A personal setback — the loss of a patron, a fall from grace, a rival's triumph — affects the individual hardest. It can strain relationships, but the fallout is usually containable. These are best handled through personal action: an apology, a favor, a fight. In fact, recovering gracefully can win more respect than never stumbling at all.

Coterie or alliance setbacks have a wider impact. When everyone's affected, there's less stability

to fall back on. The crisis might bring the group closer together, but it also risks splitting it apart. The key is to hold on tight to allies, keep doing favors and (perhaps counterintuitively) showing generosity to keep everyone happy, and control the narrative. Consider how you want the situation to look to outsiders. Do you want your group to look like sympathetic underdogs, beaten down by an undeserving rival? Youthful fools? Or as strong as ever? Sometimes you can even get away with reframing failure as a win.

Setbacks are a perfect time to rethink your approach. If a particular tack failed, consider paths not taken. If subtlety fell flat, strike boldly. If a partnership with a certain Kindred ended in embarrassment, turn the fallout into opportunity by playing the wry ex to his rivals, now all too familiar with an old flame's nonsense. In politics, making it isn't about never failing but about how you recover.

## Taking the Fall

Sometimes a crisis reaches the critical point, and there's no one left to blame who isn't an ally. Someone must take the fall to give the rest a way to wriggle free and continue their work another night. It's a nasty job. At best, it leads to social ostracization; at worst, final death. If someone steps up — or draws the short straw — the group must manage their response carefully. If the scapegoat is banished, they should protect his interests while he's gone or risk him returning as an enemy. If he's outright destroyed, they must move cautiously, lest their enemies whisper to those in power that they're plotting revenge.

## Frame Job

Better than letting one of the coterie's own take the fall is pinning the crime on an enemy. A frame job needs a few things: a problem to blame on an enemy, a believable narrative, and a clear alibi for the players' characters. The first element is often easy to come by; either you already have it, or you cook up a

scandal or a major crime that the target can plausibly be linked to. The narrative must answer how, why, and where, and should be backed by witnesses and planted evidence; leave just enough wiggle room in to account for minor discrepancies.

The alibi is the most crucial element of this charade. In a world where Disciplines can force the truth out of unwilling subjects, ensuring the coterie isn't questioned to begin with is ideal. The next-best thing is creating an easily corroborated cover story for everyone. Most people don't remember everything about a particular night, so reciting the exact same story is suspicious. Instead, focus on a few key details like approximate time, conversation topics, or what was playing on TV wherever the coterie was totally, honestly spending the night.

Finally, decide whether the target should realize they were set up. Humiliation can be a delicious way to intimidate rivals, but it also creates a grudge that can last centuries.

## Taking Power

The coterie has gathered allies, done favors for Kindred in high and low places, and accumulated boons from important figures across the city. The time is right to strike. It's their moment to make a play for power.

The key to a successful power play is convincing one's enemy that surrender serves their survival better than resistance. The coterie must have equal or greater force at its disposal than whomever they intend to depose. Force needn't be physical — coterie can leverage public opinion or the support of their allies, threaten financial ruin, or make use of blackmail.

Mechanically, count each reasonable Ally and Resource at the coterie's disposal as one extra die in social combat against their opponent. This is a one-time bonus for that confrontation. The allies lend strength for now but won't let the coterie trade endlessly on their goodwill.

Any coterie trying to seize power must remember their strength isn't purely for show. If they fail in social combat, their opponent concludes they were bluffing or weak-willed. The characters then have to follow up on their threats. If they regroup to return another night, their opponent will likely attempt to take advantage of their weakness. Erase any positive connections between the two parties on the Political Map (p. 32–34) — the nights ahead are about to get far more dangerous.

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### PLAYING POLITICS BADLY

The advice in this section is all about how to carry out political plays that give the players' characters advantages in the complicated backstabbing of Kindred power games. But politics isn't only for the skilled. Sometimes it can be immense fun to roleplay as an incompetent politician (or as someone pretending to be more incompetent than they are while their allies discreetly carry out their master plan). These are some ideas for actions you can take if you want to play politics badly:

- Publicly declare your plans.
  - Offer boons you can't or won't fulfill.
  - Try to blackmail someone using publicly known information.
  - Contradict yourself.
  - Switch sides mid-meeting because "both arguments sound convincing."
  - Insult your allies.
  - Lie loudly and obviously about your abilities.
  - Change allegiances every time there's a shift in public opinion.
  - Work hard to get a post you're not qualified for and do none of the work it comes with.
  - Get caught breaking minor domain rules all the time, as you consider yourself above them.
- 

***Biryakov:** No, please. They sent me to help you...*

***Kevin Jackson:** I'm sure they did. They told you that you'd be recognized by the Prince and stay in the city if you did this little favor.*

***Biryakov:** Yes. Yes, please. I'm just trying to be useful.*

***Kevin Jackson:** This city is my domain, little rat. You want to stay here, you come to me. It doesn't matter if you're a Nosferatu or not. I wasn't born to the throne. I've seen every aspect of this city. You think you can play games with me, think again.*

***Biryakov:** Please, good Prince, no games...*

***Kevin Jackson:** So why are we here?*

***Biryakov:** It's a trap, sir. I don't know who they really are, but —*

***Kevin Jackson:** They told you that if their Prince were to replace me, it'd be no trouble at all to recognize you.*

***Biryakov:** Yes...*

***Kevin Jackson:** Let's go spring that trap. Afterwards, I'll think about what to do with you.*

——Prince Kevin Jackson of Chicago lays down the law for the Nosferatu Biryakov

# CREATING A POLITICAL CHRONICLE



**P**olitical play, at its core, is about personal connections and hard choices. Every political epic wrestles with trading morality for power, losing friends and family, and — in the end — possibly becoming a monster to achieve greatness. In other words, a perfect vampire story.

In some chronicles, politics might be the engine of a Camarilla Prince's Court — a series of delicate alliances and ancient agreements trying to preserve stability. In others, it's the weapon the players' coterie wields to carve a new Anarch stronghold into their city. Politics offers endless plots and subplots, from assassinations and rags-to-riches stories in thrillers like *The Day of the Jackal*, *All the King's Men*, or *Z*, to the petty feuds and dark satire of *The Death of Stalin*, *The Sympathizer*, or *Succession*.

## Making Politics Work for You

Players may wonder how their personal Ambitions (*Vampire*, pp. 173–74) can fit into a political chronicle. Have no fear: there is ample room to follow even the wildest character dreams. The simplest way is to align political goals with existing Ambitions. A Brujah with plans to overthrow Camarilla control seeks out Anarch allies and helps

them rise. A Ventrue with a personal vendetta against a rival focuses on publicly humiliating him before his superiors. Troupes beginning a political chronicle should encourage one another to link Ambitions to specific people or groups on the Relationship Map.

For characters with less political Ambitions, folding personal goals into political decisions can create strong roleplaying moments. A Toreador striving to achieve Golconda argues passionately for a humane approach to conflict. A Lasombra hunting for her elder's lost library convinces her coterie to lay claim to contested territory that might conceal it. Rather than waiting for a story to serve their Ambitions, players can make their goals the reason as well as the reward for the decisions their characters make. That library-seeking Lasombra won't just fulfill her own Ambition by taking over the library — it's also a potential prize to share with allies who join her search.



## Building the Political Map

A Political Map is a politically tuned chart of who's who in a city's power structure. It's essentially a Relationship Map of the city and its denizens. It functions very much like a redworking Scene Map (Blood Sigils, p. 48), highlighting important people and ticking-time-bomb rivalries. You can draw it up separately from your Relationship Map, using different colors for different factions, or add it directly to your Relationship Map in one bright, unique color.

Creating a Political Map as a troupe is a great way to start a political chronicle. Players are more invested in the world when they've helped shape it. Instead of asking the Storyteller, "Who's in charge of this?" or "Do I know about that faction?" they can plan and scheme, knowing everyone shares the same basic foundation.

For Storytellers, it's also an exciting way to create a political landscape, as it ensures multiple factions with conflicting agendas share the same stage. Letting players take the lead here can be a relaxing experience for Storytellers who dislike preemptively guessing what players will enjoy.

The player-driven approach doesn't fit every game. Adding a new player to a political chronicle means plunging their character into an already-spinning machine of intrigue and names. Rather than building out the Political Map with new, disconnected threads, the troupe can let them choose which faction or character they want a connection with. Similarly, for short chronicles, one-shots stories, new troupes, or troupes playing fledglings in over their heads, Storytellers may prefer to design the city's structure themselves. Drawing out a Political Map is also a great way for Storytellers to figure out a legible presentation of the city's power structure. For more Storyteller advice, see Chapter Five: The Storyteller's Manifesto.



## Step One: The Center of the Web

A character is a player's entrance into a story, so build your Political Map with the players' characters at its center. This doesn't mean a whole domain revolves around them — rather, it represents their forays into various conflicts and rivalries around the city. As with a Relationship Map, write the players' characters' names down first. Then jot down a short note that describes their place in the city's political sphere: “enforcer for my sire,” “spy for the Anarchs,” or “complete newbie,” for instance.

It's completely acceptable for characters to start with no background in Kindred power struggles or connections to existing factions. Write them on the map anyway. As the chronicle unfolds, they'll form links to the city's major players.

## Step Two: The Major Powers

Major powers can be anything or anyone wielding significant influence over a key resource (see “The Stakes,” p. 12). Examples include an influential Kindred leader, a powerful enforcer, an up-and-coming gang taking over a blood-rich district, and a dominant information broker. If there is a Prince or Baron, the Storyteller adds them to the map at the beginning of this step.

Each player gets to add one major power to the map. Give them a name, a clan if appropriate, and a few words of description. Note which resource they primarily control. Unless a particular relationship

immediately suggests itself, don't worry about linking them to the coterie just yet (this applies to subsequent steps as well). If a player wishes, they can skip creating a major power and instead create two minor powers.

Some troupes might like to assign individual clans to specific players, for instance letting the Tremere of the coterie decide how the Tremere fit into the city's political landscape.

Occasionally, a player might propose a major power that doesn't fit the chronicle's tone or themes. The troupe can suggest some tweaks to integrate it better, but sometimes an idea just won't work. In such cases, the Storyteller might reframe it as a minor power or ask the player to think of something else. Since the Storyteller plays these characters during the game, it's important that they also see their narrative and thematic potential.

## Step Three: The Minor Powers

Minor powers have some influence and ability but don't want or haven't achieved major power. They might be aides, informants, low-level enforcers, loyal Retainers — the list goes on. Don't shy away from including non-Kindred characters. As in Step Two, each player gets the chance to add a minor power to the map, giving them a name, a clan if relevant, and a few words of description.

## Step Four: Potential Missing Pieces

Look at your Relationship Map and character sheets. Are there Storyteller characters left who ought to be on the Political Map? Add them in with a short description of their position and any relevant links to connections from the Relationship Map.

- Sires and Mawali likely hold political allegiances. Whether a player’s character shares those allegiances is a great source of tension or support.
- Allies, Contacts, and Retainers may have indirect connections in Kindred politics or access to mortal institutions, giving players’ characters extra leverage.
- Touchstones probably have no role in Kindred politics but can become targets if rivals decide to use them as a bargaining chip.
- At least one or two Enemies and Adversaries (if the coterie’s got any) should be on the map, too. Their placement doesn’t have to mirror the players’ characters’ relationship to them — an Enemy working for the same boss as the coterie may be more interesting than an Adversary in a rival faction.

## Step Five: Alliances and Rivalries

Political play requires connections between characters to create juicy drama. Each player creates one alliance and one rivalry between characters on the map, including the players’ characters. Draw

a line between them and jot down a short phrase describing the relationship: “Reluctant allies against Harrison.” “Enemies since the ’60s.” “Everyone knows Elle is Park’s spymaster.” For the major powers, it’s a good idea to add a direct connection to the domain’s leader(s). If one alliance and one rivalry per player seems like too few, go for a second round.

Players’ characters can be connected to the same Storyteller characters, and it can be an excellent way to establish a relationship — perhaps weaving it into your characters’ opinions of each other.

## Step Six: Pressure

Some alliances and rivalries are stable and long-lasting. Those involved know each other well and anticipate each other’s moves. Others burn hot and move fast — alliances bloom and wither; enmities ignite and explode.

Choose three alliances or rivalries between Storyteller characters. Mark a series of boxes next to them in a contrasting color to represent Pressure — the strain politics and diplomacy exert on relationships. The most stable relationships get six boxes. New, tenuous alliances or rivalries get four. And volatile connections only get two. Pressure can dominate a story, or it can simmer in the background. Either way, it highlights the relationships the players can manipulate, mend, or push toward collapse in their chronicle.

The Storyteller can add new Pressure boxes to the Political Map whenever it feels appropriate. If

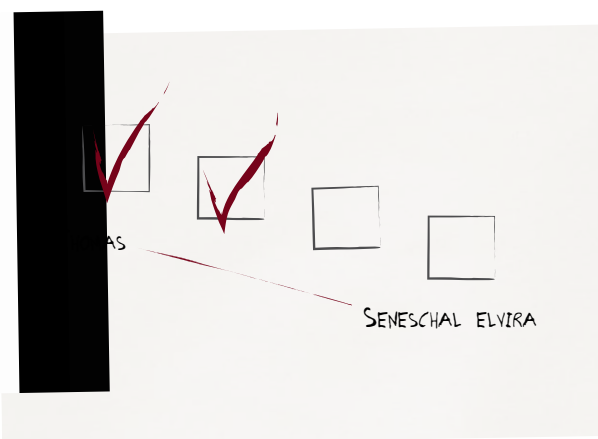
**TABLE 2:**  
**Sources of Pressure**

| Event                                                    | Pressure                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Regular passage of time.                                 | Tick 1 Pressure box per story.   |
| Players’ coterie undermines or aids one side.            | Tick 1 Pressure box per session. |
| One side is a major player or plot element in a session. | Tick 1 Pressure box per session. |
| One side’s goal is achieved.                             | Tick 2 Pressure boxes per story. |
| A new connection is added to one side.                   | Add 1 Pressure box per session.  |
| One side is disgraced or destroyed.                      | Instant fulfillment.             |

a new source of tension or strain emerges during play — especially if caused by player action — record it on the map. The more the coterie interacts with a particular Storyteller character, the quicker the Pressure boxes next to that connection fill. There's no hard limit to how much Pressure can exist on the map, but remember that too many relationships hitting their boiling point at once can be tricky to roleplay. Use your judgment.

When all the Pressure boxes for a connection fill, the connection is removed. One side takes action against the other, whether it's to attack them, ice them out, or declare their mutual goal fulfilled. It's always a change noticed and commented on by Kindred across the city. A new connection can be drawn in the next session if appropriate.

Table 2 exemplifies events that build Pressure and how much.



## Political Tenets

Politics needs rules to survive — laws, manners, personal codes. Even the most jaded, unscrupulous politician has some line he tells himself he won't cross: "I don't torture" or "I'll never be impolite." Perhaps he started his career with lines far clearer than the one he swears by now. Tenets (*Vampire*, p. 172) are the precepts forcing Kindred to measure their actions against their beliefs. Political activity demands painful choices, for Kindred and kine alike. In a political chronicle, the Tenets represent the core moral beliefs the characters must contend with in a backstabbing and partisan world. They're the ethical foundation they work up from, the ideals they betray.

Here you'll find some political Tenets ready to slot into your chronicle or serve as a jumping-off point to inspire your own. Remember, Tenets are never actual limits on what characters can do. They're meant to provide boundaries for characters to test, step over, and fall back on.

Choose Tenets that will be difficult to uphold if you want to bring mechanics like Humanity and Stains into the foreground and play a chronicle focused on moral issues. If you choose Tenets that are easy to keep, Humanity and Stains tend to fade into the background, and moral struggle fades with them.

## Courtly Tenets

- Never break your word.
- Respect others; demand respect.
- Do not cause harm unsanctioned by the Court.

## Egalitarian Tenets

- Let no king rule you.
- Do not replicate old systems.
- Do not cause lasting harm to those weaker than yourself.

## Intelligencer Tenets

- Do not let others discover your secrets.
- Never get caught in trouble without a backup plan.
- Do not leave evidence behind of any crime.

## Guardian Tenets

- Never leave a job unfinished.
- Do not kill an innocent.
- The guilty should answer for their crimes.

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### A RAT IN THE NEST

A good betrayal can give any story a marvelous sting. If a player is interested in making their character turn against the rest of the coterie in betrayal, it's best for them and the Storyteller to plan the twist together.

### FORESHADOWING

The best betrayal should be foreshadowed for the whole troupe, either with hints during play or scenes explicitly showing the traitor's actions. A sudden stab in the back is an unwelcome surprise to most; as the culmination of a story's creeping unease, it's a satisfying conclusion. If players are exclaiming "I knew it!" or "That's what that was?!" rather than "Why? What's happening?" a troupe has adequately laid out the clues to support a double cross within the coterie.

There's a sweet spot in the length of a betrayal plot: long enough to set up tension, but not so long that it adversely affects play. Try using a Pressure tracker (p. 34) set at four or six boxes, set up so both Storyteller and the "Rat" can see its countdown. After a few sessions of foreshadowing, fellow troupe members may have trouble separating character from player, hesitate to include the traitor in plans, or get frustrated out of character when wins are undercut by a traitor. The Storyteller should be sensitive to growing tensions to ensure play remains fun for everyone. One way of doing this is to make sure most of the coterie's wins or losses are independent of the upcoming double cross: personal victories, new allies, successful missions.

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# PLACES AND PARTIES

Schemers and lawmakers need places to meet and events to attend. Every city is different, and every domain has its own nooks and crannies. But if you're looking for a few places to wheel and deal, try these.

## Elysium

In Camarilla cities, Elysia are where the Court gathers, with and without its ruler — in their absence, a representative will usually be present. Some take place only rarely and move around; others happen once a month at the usual five-star hotel, as doors close “for a private event,” and the lights glimmer long past midnight.

For fledglings, Elysium is the best place to find patrons, mentors, and potential allies within their city. For the more established, it's where they confirm their alliances and get a good look at their rivals. Some Elysia are strictly open to the ruling faction only; others welcome even the unbound at the Prince's temporary mercy.

Non-Camarilla domains have similar gatherings and may even refer to them as Elysia, but nothing is as wound in etiquette and unspoken expectations as socializing in the Ivory Tower.

## City Hall

A big, square black steel building, City Hall is located fairly close to the city's center, surrounded by office buildings and the downtown courthouse. Closing hours are 7 PM, but there are always lit windows and people working late. It's not impossible to get a meeting with one of them — test Contacts, Influence, or any appropriate Social Skill at Difficulty 3.

Kindred society puts a great deal of effort into ensuring its finances and properties fly under the radar. But walking into the city tax bureau (4th Floor, to the right) and sliding over some fake tax returns is a great way to get a particular corporation or operation audited. Chatting with Planning and Development (7th Floor, just behind the potted fern) can get a street swarming with construction workers and rumbling backhoes. Efforts to manipulate mortal government must always maintain the Masquerade in order to avoid SWAT teams busting down haven doors or murder investigations. But City Hall is a fantastic place to plant seeds that blossom into distracting, delaying annoyances a few weeks later.

## The Pit

The skeleton of an abandoned factory surrounds the pit of a foundation dug deep into the earth. Weeds and chain-link fencing sprout around it, and there are signs of daylight visits from mortals looking for a place to graffiti or drink. The Pit is a domain's gathering place to let loose with Disciplines. Enemies challenge each other to duels in it, leaders hold gladiatorial games within its confines and execute traitors, and Blood Sorcerers perform large-scale rituals away from prying eyes. The crowd on the Pit's sidelines is ready to let loose, hungry to feel the Blood coursing through them. An insult or an accidental slight here could lead to a full-on brawl. It's a good place to watch your back to avoid getting jumped (Resolve + Leadership).

## The Server Room

It's the beating heart of a domain's digital sphere. The rows of blinking servers house financial documents, counterintelligence records, schemes against an agency of mortal hunters, and the backups and originals for dozens of Masks and falsified records. There may be two or three such rooms across a city, each carefully hidden and surrounded by protective measures. The pressure of ever-changing mortal hacking techniques means access is kept extremely exclusive. Even

vampires who are "plugged in" (p. 34–35) rarely get the privilege to use a domain's private servers. Defending this place is vital to a domain's security, and if players' characters have Masks linked to its contents, they have a vested interest in keeping it as safe as possible. Discovering where the servers of rival domains or factions are hidden (Wits + Technology) is the constant quest for spies and informants. They risk their unlives if they succeed in finding one.

## The Sanctuary

The faithful in a domain need a place to gather. They choose a tranquil, unassuming space: a repurposed house on a quiet street, an actual old church, a small museum. The central room is furnished sparsely but comfortably, much like any space of worship. A wooden cabinet against one wall houses religious equipment and prayer books. The only truly notable feature is the big square drain in the floor. Books line the walls in the study, and the kitchen has bags of blood in the locked fridge. This is a place of power for whichever faith is dominant in a domain. It could be a literal supernatural nexus or merely a factional stronghold. The faith leader holds enormous sway here. Getting a good word in with them (Charisma + Persuasion) can affect the entire congregation's opinion.

## The Hanging Gardens

Night-blooming flowers fill the air with sweet fragrance. A fountain splashes behind low vines. Tall hedges droop over the stepping stones. The gardens grow somewhere spacious and private in the city: in a private courtyard, a fenced-in backyard, or the roof of a reclaimed industrial building. They are a place of carefully cultivated beauty and conspicuous civility. Celebrations and solemn functions are held here: A Monarch's anniversary sees 261 lanterns hung from branches and floated on the water, one for every year since she was Embraced.

The Assembly holds a gathering here to celebrate their Independence Night. The Collegium honors visiting scholars with a drink beneath the lilacs. The gardens are only accessible to a particular faction, and internal rivalries must be set aside for the night. If a night here goes smoothly, it is a recuperative and centering experience for the faction as a whole. If the night goes awry, it's a very good place to embarrass someone (Manipulation + Etiquette).

## The Back Room

It's the basement of a social club, the blocked-off "event space" in the cafe, or the vast cavern of a furniture warehouse. It's not particularly beautiful or storied, and it belongs to no one in power. This is neutral ground — a place for factions to meet without having to set foot in each other's territory. The proprietor isn't allied with any major faction. She rents her space to anyone and holds weekly "speakeasies," where members of any faction can gather for drinks, entertainment, and debate. Here, vampires talk about anything and everything — religion, politics, movies, conspiracy theories — and tempers often flare, but the hostess has a strict two-strike ban rule for troublemakers. The opposing city leaders consider the place their go-to for necessary meetings. They're tense summits, with both sides bristling and ready to attack at the slightest hint of betrayal. If the proprietor is suspected of allegiance toward one side or another, her authority collapses.

## Solstice

The winter solstice is the longest darkness of the year, and it is a night of revelry and diplomacy in Kindred society. Princes and Barons host lavish events, and there's almost always the guarantee of an Elysium. Even the most aloof Kindred elders have been known to unbend for the night and

speak to lowly fledglings. Most importantly, in several cities, the Solstice is considered a truce night: conflict between Kindred is punished by their faction leaders, even if they'd usually welcome such skirmishes. It's the perfect time for undead from out of town to visit. The general party atmosphere and guarantee of safety make it a night for glad-handing (Charisma + Politics) or perhaps approaching a dangerous rival to broker a peace deal (Composure + Leadership).

## Fledgling Ball

In some Camarilla circles, once a fledgling has achieved a certain amount of experience, they're officially brought out into Kindred society with a ball and declared a neonate. Like a cotillion or quinceañera, a Fledgling Ball is an elaborate event. A fledgling's sire traditionally shoulders the cost of hospitality and costume. Guests mingle and marvel at entertainment designed to evoke the sire and fledgling's clan. The ruler of the domain is always the guest of honor at a Fledgling Ball, and he formally welcomes the new neonate into his Court with a small gift or token. Getting an invitation to a Fledgling Ball is quite easy — there's a relatively small number of Kindred in a city, and most sires want to have a big crowd at their event. Getting snubbed is a personal insult and indicates significant spite from either the neonate-to-be or his sire. ■





## *Chapter Two:*

# THE IVORY TOWER

**T**he Camarilla is a collection of city domains, a sect, and a value system dedicated to ensuring that the Kindred can remain hidden within a protective cocoon of comfort, power, and privilege.

Historically, Camarilla domains have provided a politically staid, conservative, and changeless environment where it was difficult for a young vampire to make their mark. Tonight, this has changed in many places. With the triple challenge of the Beckoning, the Second Inquisition, and the Third Anarch Revolt, power vacuums are opening up. Suddenly, even neonates have a chance to become Princes.

Understanding the Camarilla's political landscape is the first crucial step to gaining power and influence in the sect. This chapter takes you inside the Ivory Tower to present how its hierarchies work and what global and local issues it is dealing with now, helping you more effectively plan how to take advantage and begin your political ascent.

# THE POLITICAL ANIMAL



**P**articularly in the Camarilla, many Kindred see scheming and diplomacy as intrinsic to their being. They're liars and manipulators, they have several identities and Masks, and neither their allies nor their enemies know for certain what they really stand for. For Ventrue, Toreador, and even Tremere in particular, politics is part of their identity, but sometimes even the outcast Gangrel and the sorriest Ravnos make a play of their own.

Chapter One gives a selection of possible motivations, from status to feeding territory, and these remain as true in Camarilla domains as in any others. What's different is the environment in which the characters act, which is what this chapter is about. What kinds of moves can you make specifically in Camarilla circles?

Here are a few to start with.

**Acquire a Title:** You want to be the Prince, one of the Primogen, the Sheriff, or even just a Hound. It's a good, clear goal, and you'll know you've achieved something when you get there. The number of Kindred gunning for the less glamorous titles might be lower than you think, so it can be a good idea to start modestly.

**Assist with Governance:** Surprisingly few Kindred are actually interested in the nightly work of running a domain. Everyone wants to be the Prince for the power it brings, but once you have to hunt for unlicensed childer in the suburbs, there's a distinct dearth of volunteers. This means that the local Prince, Seneschal, and Sheriff are going to look favorably on anyone who wants to help with the boring aspects of their offices.

**Be a Gormless Lickspittle:** Kindred love flattery the same as anyone else. If you're willing to butter up your betters and don't suffer from a surfeit of dignity, you can get far by talking up those with power.

**Betray:** It's usually a good idea to keep your betrayals secret, but in a particularly depraved Camarilla domain, a flashy backstabbing might gain you status. It shows you have what it takes to swim with the sharks.

**Gossip:** Repeat what you heard or make up new stories about your allies and enemies. The Masquerade makes vampire media impossible, so gossip and spying are the main ways to know anything. If other vampires think you're in the know, it's even easier for you to seed stories that are to your advantage.

**Grant Favors:** Make yourself useful to other Kindred. You can acquire boons, but even less formalized reciprocity may also work to your favor. In addition to having others owe you, you also learn a lot about their goals and operations while you help them. On occasion, it even pays to ask for nothing in return.

**Gain and Hold onto Territory:** Meaningful territory will almost always be claimed already, but older vampires often act as patrons, liege lords, or landlords in return for favors. This means anyone can gain territory if they bargain well enough. The real challenge is holding onto it, policing its borders, and making sure others respect your claim. A vampire with a properly held territory has a lot more weight in the internal politics in and between Camarilla domains.

**Join a Political Block:** Maybe the local Nosferatu have formed a political opposition block, working against the inner Court because of constant discrimination in Elysium. Convince them that their cause is yours, and you can get them to do things for you.

**Leak Information:** You can send a local Second Inquisition agency the location of your enemy's haven. There's no way this can lead to blowback, right?

**Splurge on Hospitality:** It's one of the Traditions for a reason. The more extravagantly helpful you are when hosting other Kindred, the stronger your territory seems and the more powerful you look. In the world of the dead, things are what they look like. If you seem important, you are.

*For culture to endure, empowered order must raise walls to protect it and keep them strong over time. Libraries, for knowledge to be committed to parchment and ideas exchanged. Gardens, for the preservation of herbs and the study of medicine. Cities, where a society can develop traditions and sacred rites. The Camarilla is one such protective power.*

— Tegyrus, Haqimite representative  
in the Camarilla

## CAMARILLA TIMELINE

For a broader timeline, see *In Memoriam*, pp. 25–30; Chapter Three “The Rod of Lachesis: Kindred History” which goes further into depth with Kindred history.

**Late 1300s:** English peasant revolts fan flames of revolution growing among younger licks.

**1435:** Hardestadt the Elder calls a convocation of elders to deal with the problem of rebellious childer.

**1493 (The Convention of Thorns):** The leaders of the childer rebellion meet with titled elders to negotiate. The Camarilla is established and the Traditions formally codified.

**1990s:** The blood god Ur-Shulgi awakens and starts casting out Banu Haqim who maintain mortal faith, causing a schism in the clan and turmoil within the Ashirra.

**1999:** Xaviar withdraws from the Camarilla, attempting to bring the Gangrel with him.

**2006–2013 (The Fall of London):** Mortal hunters systematically target and destroy Kindred havens, driving the survivors out of the city.

**2008 (The Fall of Vienna):** The Tremere Prime Chantry is destroyed by mortal hunters, and the Pyramid topples.

**2012 (The Conclave of Prague):** Theo Bell takes out Hardestadt the Younger, igniting the Anarch Revolt to fire and blood again. Clan Brujah is formally kicked out of the Camarilla. Clan Gangrel follows.

**2017 (The Vermilion Wedding):** Tegyrus Blood Bonds himself to Victoria Ash, symbolically joining the Banu Haqim to the Camarilla.

**2019 (The Conclave of Chicago):** Lasombra diplomats make a deal with Camarilla dignitaries to allow individual Lasombra membership, though the price a domain leverages for the privilege is often high.

# THE KINDRED CLANS

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The Tower was founded by elders from seven clans: Brujah, Gangrel, Malkavian, Nosferatu, Toreador, Tremere, and Ventrue. These were the pillar clans, until the Brujah and the Gangrel left, and a sizable number of Banu Haqim joined in their stead. Individual Camarilla Courts can include members of all vampire clans, but these hold the most overall influence.

## The Pillars of the Tower

These are nights of political upheaval, and even the official Camarilla clans have challenges to contend with, as well as advantages, on both sect-wide and local levels.



### Banu Haqim

There were always some Banu Haqim in Camarilla cities, and following Ur-Shulgi's dominion over many of the clan in the late '90s, this number grew. Since Tegyrus and Victoria Ash were Blood Bound to each other in the Vermilion Wedding, the clan enjoys official membership. But this gift horse has a mouth full of rotten teeth and has caused tension in many city domains.

A Camarilla Child of Haqim often has to handle suspicion and jealousy from Gangrel and Brujah (who are upset that they are no longer treated the

same), Kindred who blame them for their loss of territory, gossipmongers, and the extraordinarily conservative. They cannot know, when they meet another Kindred for the first time, whether they will be perceived as a rising star within the sect or an unwelcome infiltrator. It's no easy position, but it can offer opportunities as well, especially for recent settlers who have yet to choose their closest allies.

### Rumors

- The Fifth-Generation methuselah Tegyrus is the current Banu Haqim Justicar, despite not having claimed the title.
- The Banu Haqim have old enemies within many Camarilla cities. The only reason they joined the sect was to get to them. And now they're coming.



### Malkavian

Prophets of any kind often receive a mixed welcome.

It isn't uncommon for other Kindred to look to the Clan of the Moon for insight in times of turmoil. Even individuals who are normally treated as outsiders can gain a glimmer of importance when they might be holding answers others want. Many a Malkavian has discovered that premonitions and knowledge granted through the so-called Tapestry, their rumored clan-wide psychic link, can help them grasp for power. Not every Malkavian is genuinely psychic, of course. But often, simply letting others think you have all the answers can get you where you need to go. Others

are tirelessly bombarded by premonitions of crises to come, but they either do not believe or are punished for spreading information they weren't meant to access.

It can be a tricky business, being a Visionary. And that's without including all the trouble for those whose symptoms manifest in ways that would be so unacceptable to the Tower they have to hide them and make up different ones. OCD seems to be in vogue at the moment. A very real affliction, it has garnered a reputation for predictability, which appears much more palatable to most Princes than, say, hearing voices.

## Rumors

- Ivo Reo, the Gaelic Seventh-Generation Oracle who is said to have foretold many important changes to the sect, works closely with the Inner Circle.
- Because of their mysterious psychic connection, Camarilla members of Clan Malkavian still work closely together with their Anarch cousins. Whenever the Tower attacks an Anarch city, the Children of the Moon get their own out first.

*Darling, the Courts of the Tower are simply a continuation of the monarchies of our old world. They're as complicated and dangerous to navigate, and just as fun. Learn to play by the rules, and when to break them, and you'll rise quickly in their ranks.*

— Victoria Ash



## Nosferatu

Many Princes have severely limited the use of digital networks within their cities following the widespread resurrection of the Inquisition, but among the Nosferatu, there are still those who find ways of staying well-connected, having practiced untraceably communicating over secret servers since the conception of the internet.

Chief among the political tools of a young Nosferatu is their perceived, and often real, ability to access information others can't. It's a bargaining chip that is only increasing in value, now only surpassed by their rumored knack for cheating mortal surveillance systems. Even a fledgling Nosferatu can shake up a Camarilla Court by trading in security, information, Masquerade-safe tech, or even just by taking blackmail money to shut up about the supposed secrets they've uncovered.

As a downside, many Kindred view Nosferatu with suspicion, worrying how much they know about them and what it'd take for them to share it with the wrong people.

## Rumors

- Certain members of Clan Toreador carry a deep grudge against the Camarilla's security expert Ambrus Maropis and won't reveal why. It's because he mercilessly catfishes them whenever he discovers them online.
- Before her term was up, elder Molly MacDonald, the former Nosferatu Justicar, was supposedly destroyed in Paris during a secret meeting with members of the Ministry. Depending on your source, it was a Second Inquisition attack or was engineered by the Ministers. Still, every so often, somewhere around Europe, there's a Kindred who claims to have seen a redhead fitting her description: stunning when seen from the right angle but with a face half-eaten by decay.



## Toreador

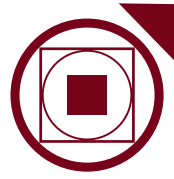
Prominent members of the Clan of the Rose often guide the sect's culture and handle prestation, which means that

in the race for control of a city, they tend to start ahead. A Toreador Keeper of Elysium makes sure to note every Kindred's habits when they visit and will remember when they need a favor, for instance.

A younger Toreador can also easily come off as frivolously eccentric, making other Kindred see them as someone easily manipulated or unimportant. This can become a weapon when they need an element of surprise — or backlash, when the trouble that comes to find them is more than they can handle.

### Rumors

- The Toreador Justicar appointed in 2011, Diana Iadanza, has been hunting down members of Clan Gangrel since their departure from the Camarilla. Stunning but ruthless, she prefers to keep this business private, striking suddenly and without mercy.
- The Fifth-Generation Prince of Paris, François Villon, has left his seat for the Beckoning, and Paris is in the hands of an impostor.
- Victoria Ash and her Banu Haqim husband never quarrel. When he is upset, he withdraws to work in a soundproof chamber designed to keep out even an army of Victorias. It drives her mad like nothing else.



## Tremere

With the fracturing of the Pyramid, thaumaturges have been forced to renegotiate their positions within the Tower. Some find that

their Blood Bonds to their masters being broken makes it easier to forge new alliances, while others struggle to influence Courts the way they used to.

Tremere who once implicitly trusted one another no longer have a reason to. A clandestine arms race for esoteric materials has begun — in the scramble to control clan libraries and the secret Rituals within them, it's every Tremere for themselves.

A clever sorcerer might make much of their newfound freedom, trading redwork for political influence or even offering hope to other Kindred longing to be freed from Blood Bonds. Blood Sorcery is as mysterious to many others as are the secrets of the universe. An up-and-coming Tremere can go far if they can master the art of appearing always to know more than they actually do.

*The Tremere Pyramid supposedly looked like this: led by a council of seven, each councilor had dominance of seven pontifexes, each pontifex had seven lords, each lord had seven regents under them, and each regent, naturally, controlled a chantry of their own. I'm not a numbers guy, but to me that doesn't sound right — do the math, and you'll see that we'd all be ruled by Tremere. Shit, we'd all be Tremere. That Pyramid of theirs was about to consume us all.*

— Anonymous Brujah

*My clan used to bring me such clarity. I knew what to do and whom to turn to when there was any kind of complication. I didn't have to worry about anything but keeping my head down and perfecting my craft. I miss it. Even the verbal beatings. After 200 years of being ordered around, it starts to feel like that's how it's supposed to be.*

— The Tremere Yordan

## Rumors

- The Pyramid didn't really fall. It was performatively pulled down from within to hide it from the wider sect.
- Karl Schrekt, former High Pontifex and the head of the traditionalist House Tremere, is known to be committed to rebuilding the Pyramid. But he won't stop there. No longer trusting large parts of his clan, he intends to purge the disloyal bloodlines. What he and his house are currently doing is determining who that is.



## Ventrue

As figures of authority, members of the Clan of Kings have, in many cities, been the primary targets of enemies

of the Tower. As a result, the clan has suffered significant losses. But the Patricians know to grip the throat of opportunity firmly when it's bared. Where one falls, another rises, and younger Ventrue stand ready to declare themselves for the freed-up thrones of their former kin.

Among the Kindred, members of Clan Ventrue are among the most fervent Camarilla traditionalists. They keep the Tower strong through strict belief in — and adherence to — its hierarchies. A Ventrue conspirator may scheme to topple his Prince but never think to do away with Princes in general.

Elder Ventrue sometimes refer to the clan's Directorate — a society of the elite for the elite, wherein decisions concerning the whole clan are made and obscured. In some cities, neonate Ventrue have started whispering that they should establish their own version.

Younger Ventrue often draw on their connections, or claimed connections, as a favored political weapon. They know half the battle is won in advance if you can make your opponent fear the consequences of defeating you.

## Rumors

- Anne Bowesley, the former Prince of London, barely got out of the city when it fell to mortal hunters and is licking her wounds somewhere, planning her return. A known diablerist, some wonder who she will consume to get there.
- Claiming to have been named Justicar for Unlife, the elder Lucinde is dedicated to eradicating the Camarilla's enemies by all means necessary. Specializing in covert operations, she is supposedly at the head of an intelligence network that regularly weeds out weak links from within the sect.

### THE USES OF FAMOUS KINDRED

Storytellers aren't the only ones using the names of recognizable elders to create a little extra excitement. Your average Camarilla Court may never see the shadow of characters like Tegyrus and Theo Bell, but names have power.

- A Prince whips his courtiers into submission, threatening them that a former despot will return if given half a chance.
- A sire entertains their childer with stories about the great deeds of their sire's sire.
- A Camarilla city becomes divided as a rumor flourishes that a famous Anarch is approaching to collect members for their revolution.
- A Toreador taste maker decorates themselves with silk kisses they insist have been pressed by Victoria Ash or Helena herself.
- A pretender claims to be someone feared and admired, taking the chance that no one in their city has the experience to tell the difference.
- A new Court law is presented as coming directly from a known elder.
- An unpopular Blood Hunt is defended as being sanctioned by a well-known Justicar.

## Other Clans of Influence

According to traditionalists with intel from the European epicenters of the sect, these clans are either no longer part of the Camarilla or, as is the case for the Lasombra, not officially included. This means they may be barred from Primogen Councils and certainly shouldn't have a Justicar representing them. Still, they have enough members that in some domains, when the Kindred speak of the sect, they think of these clans as well.

*You know, humiliating you would be much more entertaining if you had dignity.*

*(Sounds of Dee licking Blood from the floor.)*

*If I make a proud member of your clan beg at my feet, I know they're broken. Their pride, their will is crushed beneath my feet, and I can reconstruct them into an obedient little servant. But you...*

*(Sounds change as Dee licks the last of the Blood.)*

*You grovel at my feet and obey my most degrading commands, and then stab me in the back.*

— The Ventrue Fiorenza Savona,  
addressing the Brujah Dee

### Brujah



One Brujah is working for a cause that depends on them acting from within the sect. Another would like to rebel but has no one to turn to. A third has no idea that Bell defected and thinks they're still doing what their elders want them to. In cities that have little contact with the outside world, the Kindred population may not even be aware that the Second Inquisition has begun.

The trouble is that there are plenty of Kindred who do know and blame the actions of Bell on all his Blood. To be a Camarilla Brujah tonight is therefore to be the first suspect when the leaders smell something rotting in their city.

Often they are seen by other members of the Tower as one of two things: traitors or traitors-to-be. The best tools Camarilla Prometheans can reach for are planning ahead and moving carefully.

### Rumors

- Briefly the Justicar for Clan Brujah from 2011–2012, Manuela Cardoso Pinto has remained loyal to the Tower. A faithful Catholic, she doesn't shy away from extreme methods to get back at her enemies, but she always makes sure to seek absolution afterwards.
- The once-loyal Camarilla soldier Theo Bell defected to the Anarch Movement after shooting the head off the elder Hardestadt at the Convention of Prague in 2012. Since then, Bell has started a collection. The heads of elders don't last long, which is why he has them cast in plaster before they disintegrate.



### Gangrel

From the perspective of traditionalists, Clan Gangrel was awfully quick to leave the Camarilla once the Brujah did. Some claim that's because a large majority had already left and joined up with the Anarch rebellion in the late 1990s; others say they were never truly faithful to the Tower to begin with. The smeared reputation means that Camarilla Gangrel will often have to prove themselves repeatedly. It also means that the ones who do are sometimes asked to act as double agents or negotiators in dealings with Anarchs.

Most Courts also agree that throwing good soldiers out of a city when war is at its doorstep isn't the best idea. A loyal Gangrel can be a real asset in a fight.

## Rumors

- The last Gangrel Justicar, Geoffrey Leigh, disappeared following the events of 2012. Most assume he joined Gehenna, but the truth is he joined the Anarch Movement as a spy for the Tower.
- The former Justicar Xaviar encountered an Antediluvian before he announced his clan's departure in 1999. He was destroyed soon after by Lucinde, who personally drained him. As their souls did battle, she inherited his memories of the meeting in which the ancient in the ground devoured his entire coterie. It marks her now with a fear of being alone in isolated landscapes.



## Lasombra

There have always been Lasombra Kindred in Camarilla cities.

Tonight, there are more than ever before as the Sabbat has headed

into the heart of the Gehenna War. Lasombra, who had been able to fly under the radar in Sabbat territories before, were suddenly conscripted and realized that they would be much more comfortable as members of the Tower.

In domains with an existing Lasombra presence, new arrivals might be received graciously, depending on their Camarilla kin. Other places, it's not unusual for Courts to demand significant proof of loyalty before they will consider allowing Lasombra to settle.

Clan Lasombra's tendency to ruthlessness means others think twice before challenging them, and sometimes a moment's hesitation is all you need to get ahead. Their reputation as skilled schemers also equates competence in the minds of many, meaning that even a young Lasombra has a good chance at being taken seriously when they interfere with domain politics. No one fully trusts a Lasombra, but it's commonly agreed upon that having one on your side is a major asset.

## Rumors

- The elder Montano, who has been a part of the Camarilla since its inception and was branded a traitor by his mostly Sabbat clan, is a prominent member now. However, the former political firebrand now feels the pull of the Beckoning more than most and spends the majority of his time in deep trance, trying to find a path through the Abyss to suppress it.
- One of the first Lasombra to join the Sabbat, the killer Talley has been working to facilitate the Lasombra's entry into the Camarilla in Chicago by taking out high-ranking members who oppose it.

*The Tower is a web of intrigue and old grudges, precariously held together by spite, debt, and mutually ensured destruction. I have no idea how it stays as strong as it does. I suppose that's why I'm not in charge.*

— Yordan, Tremere survivor  
of the fall of Vienna

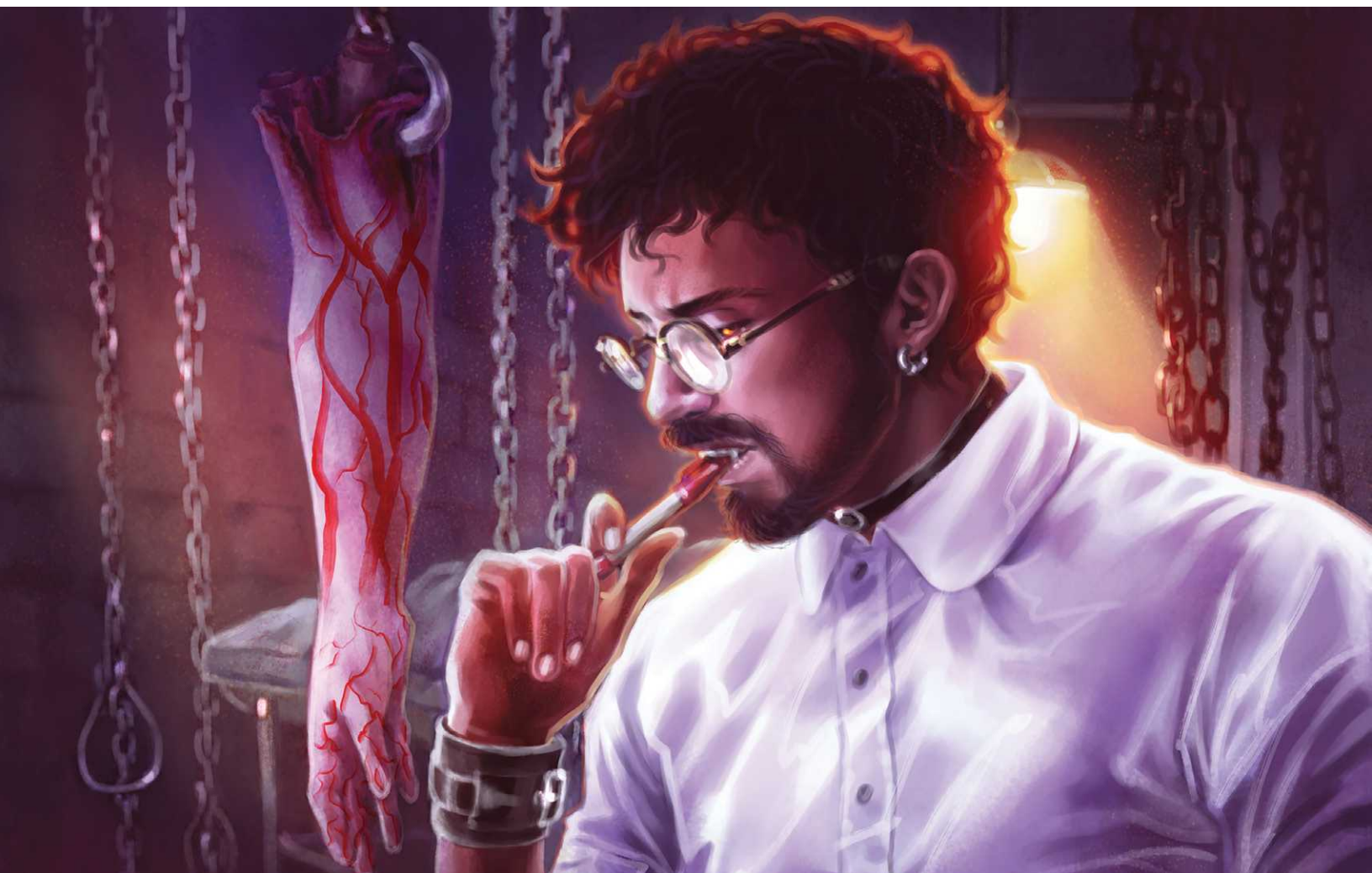
# FACES OF THE TOWER

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**A**s a system of power and authority, Camarilla domains are better at distributing information at the higher levels of power than their rivals among the Anarchs. Older vampires simply know more and have their own long-established methods of communicating with each other in ways that are inaccessible to the Second Inquisition, whether by messenger birds or redwork.

Because of the persistence of Camarilla power structures and the way ancillae and elders

communicate (or gossip) across domains, many famous Kindred are known for their influence. For a neonate learning about them for the first time, the only problem is that often the rumors are decades, even centuries, out of date. You may know what Rafael de Corazon did at the founding of the Camarilla, but does he even exist anymore? And if you meet someone claiming to be him, how do you know if they're lying?



## THE CAMARILLA ISN'T A CULT

CULTS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY:

1. ISOLATING MEMBERS FROM THE REST OF SOCIETY; REPLACING THE FAMILY UNIT WITH NEW SOCIAL UNITS.
2. ABSOLUTE AUTHORITARIANISM WITHOUT ACCOUNTABILITY.
3. NO TOLERANCE FOR CRITICAL INQUIRY.
4. NO MEANINGFUL FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE REGARDING WHERE FUNDS COME FROM AND WHAT THEY GO TO.
5. UNREASONABLE FEAR OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD, SUCH AS IMPENDING CATASTROPHE, CONSPIRACIES, AND PERSECUTIONS.
6. THERE IS NO LEGITIMATE REASON TO LEAVE. FORMER FOLLOWERS ARE ENEMIES.
7. FOLLOWERS ARE PUNISHED WHEN THEY TRANSGRESS.
8. FOLLOWERS ARE PUSHED TO CONSTANTLY BETTER THEMSELVES.
9. THE GROUP/LEADER IS ALWAYS RIGHT.
10. THE GROUP/LEADER IS THE EXCLUSIVE HOLDER OF THE TRUTH.

THE CAMARILLA IS NOTHING LIKE THAT.

**Note:** While the Camarilla isn't a cult in the traditional sense, the way the Bahari or the Church of Set are, it may still be useful to consider how certain cult-like tactics sometimes find a use where they are not expected.

Friday 23:15

X told me I have this night to pack my bags and head out of town. I don't know where to go.

Can we meet?

Saturday 00:05

Em?

Saturday 01:01

I didn't mean to break any rules. But it's my mom. She's not got long anyway, the doctors say... who would she tell?

Did they get to you?

Saturday 02:20

Pls stop just do what they want.

I'll try to keep an eye on ur mom k?

Saturday 02:25

Kk



Love you ))

**Not Delivered**



## Victoria Ash

One of the most famous Toreador in existence, Victoria Ash may be found both at the top of Camarilla society and in the gutters, in the Mask of a young ingenue accompanied by her latest mortal lover. Unlike many elders who eventually succumb to ennui and lose touch with the mortal world, she has somehow managed to stay interested in the ever-changing world around her.



An entirely self-created member of the vampire elite, in life, Victoria Ash was born out of wedlock to a poor French alewife. Hungry and lost, she became a military camp follower, exchanging sex for sustenance with soldiers far from home. Despite her dire origins, her remarkable beauty and ability to mirror whatever the people around her wanted to see brought her increasing success. The stature of her lovers increased as she remade herself into an increasingly sophisticated courtesan.

Embraced by an undead pimp, Victoria's entrance into the world of the undead was not the most dignified, but her chameleon-like ability to insinuate herself into any social scene soon saw her in the company of the most refined Toreador and Ventrue of the Camarilla. Her social influence is tremendous, culminating in the Vermilion Wedding with the Banu Haqim Tegyrus designed to symbolically bring the Camarilla and the Ashirra closer together. In a Camarilla Elysium, she's almost always the highest-status vampire present.

Yet Victoria spends only a small amount of her time in vampire politics or hosting glamorous galas. Usually, she's pretending to be a mortal or a neonate who doesn't know anything but is excited about everything around her. These personas rarely last longer than a few months, but a memorable one catapulted her to brief success as a pop star before she gave it up. This is at the core of her mystery to her fellow elders: how is it possible that she gets so much done, when they themselves feel the sands of time slipping through their fingers in an increasingly incomprehensible world?

**Clan:** Toreador

**Generation:** 8th

**Embrace:** 1650

**Blood Potency:** 5

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulty:** 6/5

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 9, Social 10, Mental 10, Disciplines 9

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 9, Willpower 10

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 12, Persuasion 12, Subterfuge 12

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4 (Heightened Senses, Premonition, Scry the Soul, Spirit's Touch), Celerity 4 (Cat's Grace, Fleetness, Blink, Unerring Aim), Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 1 (Resilience), Presence 5 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Entrancement, Irresistible Voice, Majesty)

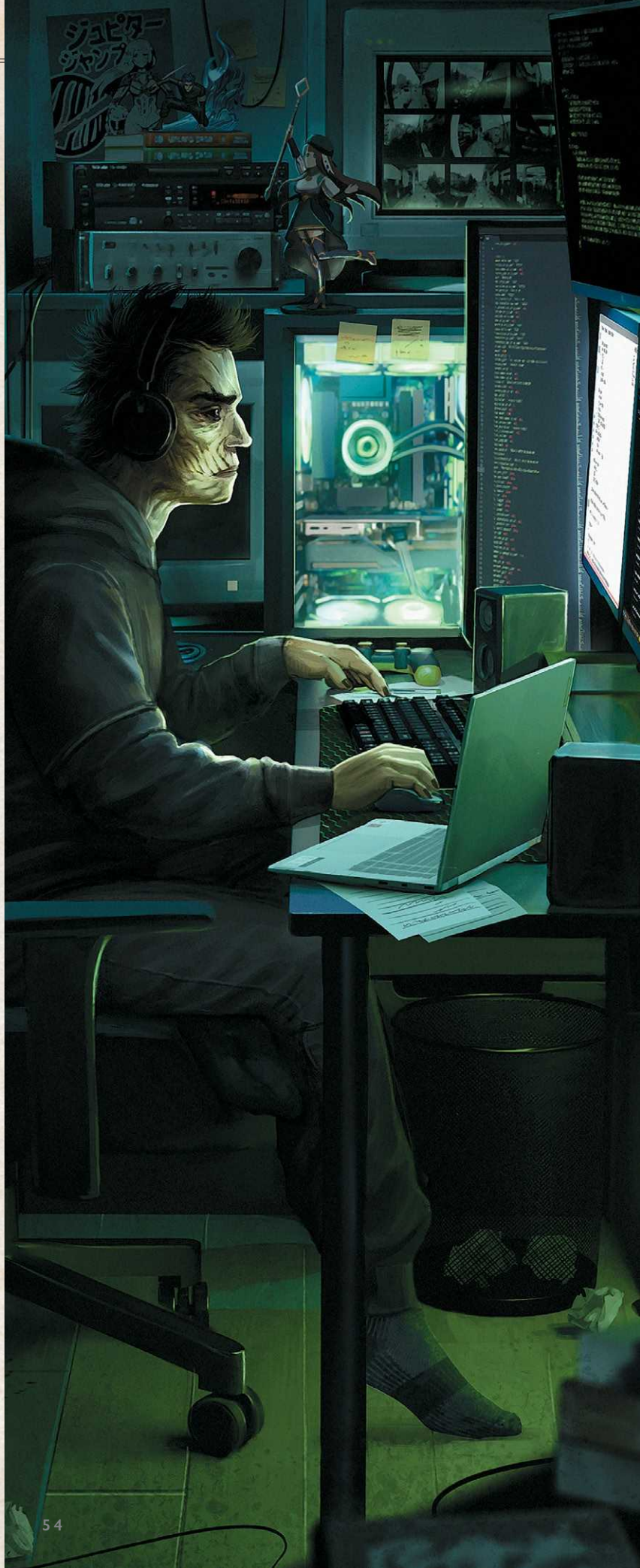
**In Stories:** Victoria Ash can be a powerful political patron. She's interested in the new and often supports neonates and fledglings due to their novelty value. She takes interesting people as lovers, but her favor tends to be fleeting, and she leaves a wake of discarded people behind her.

As a social force, Victoria can be extremely destructive. Toreador socialites compete for her favor, performing deranged acts of fealty just to be noticed. Anarch neonates realize the girl they were dating turned out to be a Camarilla elder out on a lark, and their trust in their ability to read people around them is permanently damaged.



## Ambrus Maropis

There are many ways to have political influence inside the Camarilla, and sometimes power is in the hands of Kindred who don't see themselves as political actors at all. Such is the case of the Nosferatu Ambrus Maropis, running one of the best Kindred information networks from an ostentatious apartment in Cyprus.



In terms of style and habits, he's nothing like the elders and ancillae who define power in the Elysia of the Camarilla, yet on a nightly level, his influence transcends the limitations of domain. In a world where the Second Inquisition forces vampires into an analog existence on a fragmented map of disparate domains, he has managed to retain a global perspective.

Embraced in his late teens, most of Maropis' existence, both while he was alive and now that he's dead, has been online. He's deeply connected to mortal culture, whether through anime fandom, multiplayer games, or online roleplaying. He has a rich variety of online personas, identities, and Masks he switches between depending on the needs of the situation and a wide variety of contacts who don't know who they're really dealing with.

Something in Maropis' style and ability to keep ahead of the Second Inquisition online has caught on among many younger Camarilla Kindred, turning him into an icon of Kindred culture. He's a legend, a ghost in the network rumored to help those who follow him. He has many disciples, though it's unclear how many of them actually communicate with him directly.

Although Maropis is envied by many Kindred much older than he is, his commitment to upholding the Masquerade and demonstrable effectiveness have made him untouchable. He sees himself as an iconoclast using mortal power structures and systems to play the role of an information broker under the noses of vampires far more powerful than he.

Yet in truth, Maropis is one of the more reputable members of the Camarilla. He plays the game of politics in his own way, leaking information, performing services, humiliating his Toreador enemies, and demonstrating his power as necessary.

**Clan:** Nosferatu

**Generation:** 11th

**Embrace:** 2008

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 7, Mental 9, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Persuasion 8, Streetwise 9, Technology 10

**Disciplines:** Animalism 3 (Sense the Beast, Feral Whispers, Animal Succulence), Auspex 1 (Heightened Senses), Dominate 1 (Cloud Memory), Obfuscate 4 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Ghost in the Machine, Vanish), Potence 3 (Soaring Leap, Prowess, Uncanny Grip)

**In Stories:** Maropis shows what a young, dynamic Camarilla might look like now that the staid rule of the elders has weakened. Although he spends his nights in physical isolation, he doesn't believe in sequestering himself when it comes to information, dealing happily with the young and the ambitious before anyone else in the sect has noticed them. He prides himself on always being the first to notice when a new player has entered the game.

As a character in your game, Maropis is a tool you can use to connect the players' characters to much bigger schemes. They may not understand the game the Nosferatu is playing at first, but in time, they'll come to realize that their small corner of Camarilla politics is just a piece of a bigger puzzle.



## Fiorenza Savona

What's the difference between the power of the Kindred and the mortal superrich? Money and political influence can take you much further than the powers of the Blood. At least, that's what the rising Ventrue star Fiorenza Savona believes.

Embraced late in life in a deal she herself initiated, Savona had already walked the halls of power for decades as a mortal. Born to wealth in an Italian family residing in Mexico, she chose a career in international politics, moving between NGOs and the UN. Both her parents had been career diplomats whose lives were eased by old money, and she made the most of what she inherited in contacts and opportunities.

Savona believed that wealth follows power and influence, always seeking to use what she had to change the world to her preference. In terms of values, she was a chameleon, always more interested in systems of power and how to use them rather than adhering to principles. She did have one rule, though: if you stuck with her, you would be rewarded.





She has held onto this idea in unlife, building a faction of young, wealthy, and ambitious Kindred inside both the Ventrue and the Camarilla that spreads well beyond her home base of Mexico City. They believe that the Beckoning presents a chance for a new generation of the dead to inherit the power of their sires, assuming control over both the worlds of the living and the undead.

As a person, Savona enjoys her luxuries and presents a façade of unshakable confidence, but many are surprised at how reasonable she seems. If you give her everything she wants, there must be something you desire that she can help you with. Her ability to influence mortal business and politics with such nuance is unsettling to many older Ventrue who have lost their touch with the world of the living.

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Generation:** 8th

**Embrace:** 2008

**Blood Potency:** 4

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 8, Mental 9, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 9

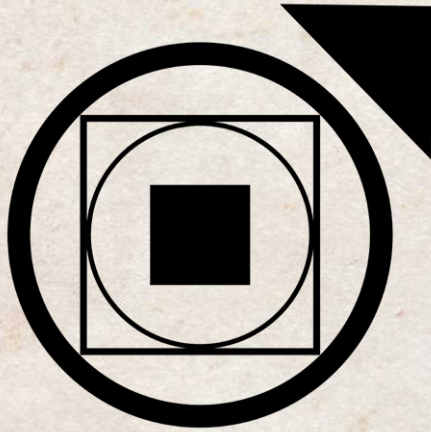
**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Persuasion 9, Finance 10, Politics 10

**Disciplines:** Animalism 2 (Sense the Beast, Feral Whispers), Dominate 5 (Compel, Mesmerize, Submerged Directive, Rationalize, Terminal Decree), Fortitude 2 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Presence 4 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Entrancement, Irresistible Voice)

**Clan Bane:** Fiorenza keeps her preferences a closely guarded secret.

**In Stories:** Savona's purpose is to demonstrate that in the modern nights, a neonate can become a Camarilla power player by leveraging their unique abilities. In her case, it's an understanding of mortal power and politics, but a player's character can leverage anything they have, as long as it's difficult for older Camarilla power players to access.

In this sense, Savona is a revolutionary figure in the conservative Camarilla establishment. Instead of being content to wait for the inheritance of power to pass on to her in the fullness of time, she shows that you can grab hold of it right now.



## Aisling Sturbridge

One of the best known and dynamic Regents in the Tremere traditionalist faction, Aisling Sturbridge differs from many of her clanmates in that she's building for the future, not just trying to survive in a collapsing hierarchy. Her leadership of the Chantry of the Five Boroughs in New York has brought enough notice to make her elders worry about her, but the Tremere are currently in such disarray that they can't do much to stop her ascension.

Born to a family in banking in upstate New York in 1890, Sturbridge's path to occultism was through the Catholic faith of her parents. She became interested in the mysteries of the faith and gradually moved to more esoteric pursuits. She had a knack for languages,



teaching herself Latin and Ancient Greek so she could read original sources.

Escaping family commitments, she arrived in London as a young woman seeking to learn more from the local occult scene. This also caught the attention of her future sire and his clan, the Tremere. She was Embraced in Vienna in a ceremony that later fell into disuse because of the vagaries of the 20th century.

Sturbridge sees herself as the inheritor of a grand occult tradition that she must protect, develop, and elevate. Although she has been initiated into most of the inner mysteries of her clan, she remains a seeker. She knows that this won't be a solitary pursuit but something that requires her entire clan... and the help of others as well.

Sturbridge's success has been due to two important factors: occult ability and the willingness to do the work when it comes to the politics of her local domain. A Tremere Regent can't just sequester herself in the chantry. She has to associate with the high and the low, conducting her business in cocktail parties and dark alleys alike. Sturbridge's habit of forming questionable alliances with outsiders when it suits her purpose is the biggest cause of controversy inside the clan.

**Clan:** Tremere

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 1911

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 7, Mental 9, Disciplines 9

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 9

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 10, Investigation 10, Occult 10

**Disciplines:** Auspex 5 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Scry the Soul, Spirit's Touch, Clairvoyance), Celerity 2 (Cat's Grace, Fleetness), Dominate 3 (Compel, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 2 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Obfuscate 2 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage), Blood Sorcery 5 (A Taste for Blood, Extinguish Vitae, Blood of Potency, Theft of Vitae, Cauldron of Blood; Rituals: Blood Walk, Craft Bloodstone, Communicate with Kindred Sire, Ward Against Spirits, Deflection of Wooden Doom, Ward Against Lupines, Defense of the Sacred Haven, Ward Against Cainites, Escape to True Sanctuary)

**In Stories:** Aisling Sturbridge is a dynamic young ancilla, one of the cohort of Kindred who have risen to prominence in the Camarilla in recent years. She has been able to operate freely as a Regent because the elders who might otherwise have checked her ambition have vanished.

Sturbridge's role in political stories is either as a dealmaker or an opponent. Despite her curt manner, she's good at finding arrangements that benefit both sides — or at least seem to do so. As an opponent, she's dangerous because of her ability to operate from behind façades. You won't know she's gunning for you because the attacks come from seemingly unconnected sources.



## Tegyrius

What's the difference between the Camarilla and the Ashirra? According to the members of both sects, they're separate in terms of traditions, power structures, philosophy, history, and geography. Yet in the broadest terms, both are conservative alliances of traditionalist domains seeking to preserve the Masquerade and the hierarchy of vampiric power. No wonder they get along.

The Banu Haqim Tegyrius is one of the architects of the current rapprochement between the Camarilla and the Ashirra. A Banu Haqim who had walked the halls of power among the Ashirra for centuries, he was prompted to seek closer relations because of the start of the Gehenna War and the awakening of the blood god Ur-Shulgi.



An ancient in his own right, Tegyrus served in the armies of Alexander the Great while still a mortal. As a vampire, he's been a staunch believer in the power of law, hierarchy, and justice as a method for keeping the Beast in check, both personally and across Kindred society.

From his perspective, the Camarilla is a young sect still in the process of establishing itself. He hopes that the current cooperation between the Ashirra and the Camarilla in fighting against the Sabbat lasts. To this end, he agreed to the Vermilion Wedding, where he symbolically entered into a Blood Marriage with the Toreador Victoria Ash.

In the modern nights, Tegyrus is a traditionalist of such pedigree that he stands out even among the elders of the Camarilla. Confused by his comparatively young wife, he has come to realize that the Camarilla needs him and his experience if it's going to last. As such, he has felt duty bound to seek ever greater power inside the sect he has joined by alliance.

Inside his own clan, Tegyrus stands against the power of Ur-Shulgi. Where the blood god seeks to return the clan to a pre-Islamic tradition under his own rule, Tegyrus aims to preserve the culture and tradition developed among the Banu Haqim and in the Ashirra. An erudite man, he sees Ur-Shulgi as a terrifying monster risen out of the bloody prehistory of all Kindred.

**Clan:** Banu Haqim

**Generation:** 5th

**Embrace:** 330 BCE

**Blood Potency:** 8

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 7/5

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 9, Social 10, Mental 10, Disciplines 10

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 12, Willpower 10

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 12 (History), Etiquette 12, Melee 12, Leadership 12

**Disciplines:** Auspex 5 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Scry the Soul, Spirit's Touch, Possession), Celerity 5 (Cat's Grace, Fleetness, Blink, Unerring Aim, Lightning Strike), Dominate 3 (Compel, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 5 (Resilience, Toughness, Fortify the Inner Façade, Draught of Endurance, Flesh of Marble), Obfuscate 2 (Silence of Death, Unseen Passage), Potence 4 (Soaring Leap, Prowess, Spark of Rage, Draught of Might), Presence 5 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Dread Gaze, Summon, Majesty), Blood Sorcery 5 (Corrosive Vitae, Extinguish Vitae, Scorpion's Touch, Theft of Vitae, Baal's Caress; Rituals: Wake with Evening's Freshness, Ward Against Ghouls, Eyes of Babel, Illuminate the Trail of Prey, Truth of Blood, Dagon's Call, Deflection of Wooden Doom, Ward Against Lupines, Incorporeal Passage, Ward Against Cainites, Shaft of Belated Dissolution, Warding Circle Against Cainites)

**In Stories:** Tegyrus represents a tradition of power spanning centuries. He seeks to preserve the structures with which he's comfortable, but in doing so, he has to associate with the young and the new. The only way for tradition to persist is through change, revealing the enduring paradox at the heart of his character.

For even established players' characters, Tegyrus represents ancient power out of place in the modern nights. Yet despite his alienation, he's still active in the affairs of the great sects, able to lay down the law when he finds it necessary. He's not an ally or an enemy but a force of nature, enforcing ancient customs and forgotten laws before moving on.



## Viraj Dey

Dey used to be a British civil servant working in Brussels before Brexit. He flew to see his family in India once a year, saved money for vacations with his wife and children in places like the Maldives and Cape Verde, and looked forward to retirement when he could devote himself fully to his passion for travel.

In his 40s when he was Embraced, Dey had been an ordinary man working in politics. Unfortunately, a Camarilla Malkavian ancilla needed somebody who understood how the European Union worked and chose to Embrace Dey precisely because of his simple competence. He looked like he'd make a loyal minion.



That didn't happen. Perhaps it was the trauma of the Embrace or the effects of Malkav's curse, but once undead, Dey suddenly had a grand vision of politics and power and how he could change the world. He believes in something akin to the Anarch dream of Carthage, but with a Camarilla twist: The time will come when the Masquerade falls, and a thousand years of enlightened vampiric rule begin. Sometimes Dey's vision becomes downright rhapsodic, as he sees Kindred Blood used to make mortals deathless and a mass spiritual awakening when the need for lies falls away and Kindred finally reconcile themselves with their Beasts.

For the time being, the world is not ready. Dey believes that the Gehenna War and its risen blood gods present a final test for Kindred and kine alike, a historical evil they must vanquish before they can emerge into a perfect world.

Dey's visionary approach to politics has made more than one Prince and Justicar decide that he's a threat to the Masquerade, but they haven't moved against him because he has proven to be supremely talented in manipulating mortal politics. Whatever the end goal, currently, what he does aligns perfectly with the needs of the Camarilla, so they have chosen to ignore his prophetic side. He has the ability to talk about defeating the Sabbat and the blood gods in a way that makes younger Kindred listen.

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 2010

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 9

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 4, Social 6, Mental 8, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Persuasion 8, Politics 10, Finance 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Share the Senses, Spirit's Touch), Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Dementation, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 1 (Unswayable Mind), Obfuscate 4 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Mask of a Thousand Faces, Conceal), Presence 1 (Awe)

**Clan Bane:** Delusions of grandeur (Social); Dey believes he can sometimes see the quality of a mortal's soul by looking into their eyes.

**In Stories:** Dey is a conservative revolutionary, someone who wants to vanquish the threats to the Camarilla so that it can evolve into a system of perfect, open global rule over the living. His arrival in any Camarilla domain is a crisis for the local Court because his apocalyptic visions may inspire the neonates and fledglings a little too much. However, Kindred also seek him out for favors in the running of their sordid businesses.

This is also a good perspective for the players' characters when they encounter Dey. They have a practical need for his influence over mortal politics and ability to manipulate the system in his favor, but in the course of their association with him, they hear some truly alarming ideas expressed with the sincere belief of someone who has seen the face of God.

FIORENZA CLEARLY READ PASTOR MORTALIS OR WAS TAUGHT BY SOMEONE WHO HAD READ IT. HOWEVER, SHE SEEMS MUCH MORE CONCERNED WITH CONTROLLING THE KINE THAN KEEPING A HEALTHY POPULATION, WHICH WAS THE POINT OF MY GREAT, GREAT, GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S WORK.

## Seven Laws for Controlling the Kine

### Play to their fantasies

People need hope, so let them think they have it. Say what they want to hear, even if it requires empty promises. They'll give you everything for the chance to fantasize.

### Make them depend on you

The dog may bite the hand that feeds it. But intelligent people do not turn on you if you offer them what they think they need. Often, even minor conveniences can be enough.

### Let them think they have power

People who think they can change their circumstances at any point won't feel pressed to do so.

### Do not isolate yourself

A lonely target is vulnerable to attack. Be a part of the community you feed on and make them feel they know you.

### Keep your hands clean

Never make yourself complicit in actions you can get another to carry out for you; have an alibi for every order given.

### But don't appear too perfect

Perfection is suspect to the kine. Let them think they know your weakness to avoid attracting their jealousy. Pay attention to any who try to take advantage.

### Never show doubt; act boldly

Insecurity is the mark of the outsider and the liar. Confidence signals right and will open any door and ward off suspicion.

— Hilmi An-Nasr, Salubri of the Ashirra, comments on a text by Fiorenza Savona

Dear Blood Sister,

You wanted advice on distributing power and territory in your domain. As you know, I'm glad to help because we share a lineage, and I'd rather see you in control than the feckless fools you had to take the throne from. But just so we're clear, I'll still count it as a favor, and you can expect to pay it back sooner rather than later.

First, identify your scapegoat. I suggest choosing the least bestial kindred in your domain. Their morals impair their ability to understand what's happening because they'll be looking for reasons it's happening, when the only reason is that of expediency.

Your rule is going to be tough but fair for all except this one kindred. When something goes wrong, it's their fault. When the Second Inquisition threatens the domain and the Sabbat is prowling at the door, it's because they did something stupid.

This is a shadow play. Never reveal your hand. While you keep up your performance against this poor individual, you can move against your real enemies in peace. All the while, they'll tell everyone you're a hardhearted tyrant who cares nothing for truth or justice.

When the kindred of your domain hear those words, their takeaway is going to be this: As the Prince, you can be brutal, but they're not the victim. The scapegoat is. They'll conclude that if they do what you want, they'll be safe. And in their heart of hearts, they'll believe that the scapegoat is guilty because it's always easier to side with power.

At some point, you'll call a Blood Hunt against the scapegoat and choose a new one.

When distributing feeding territory, strive to appear magnanimous. You don't need to feed in the nightclubs so you can distribute them to someone else. My recommendation is that you give the best domain to a coterie of young upstarts who plan to challenge your rule. Call it an olive branch or whatever you like.

Why would you do such a thing? Making concessions is a weakness!

Sure. But you give the most desirable territory to your youngest, most outspoken enemy because that makes everyone else envious. They'll have a hard time making alliances because everyone covets their territory. Someone is always making a play against them to gain access to their territory. If they try to grant access in exchange for favors, they'll lose it all the faster. It'll force them to spend their nights patrolling, not scheming against you.

Give your allies and sycophants other territories that are almost as good. It's fine.

Remember to grant both physical and intangible territories. If you give one ally exclusive access to the logistics business and another control over the harbor district, conflict is inevitable. Their mutual animosity will make them too distracted to fight you.

Divide. Rule. Above all, don't fail. I'll be watching.

Magnanimously,

Fiorenza

# TITLES IN THE TOWER



Every Kindred represents a risk to the society that they are part of, and that risk is only worth it because they contribute. In Camarilla domains, the Court structure organizes and legitimizes this, ensuring that everybody knows who is in charge of which branch of the city structure. Each title comes with responsibilities

and expectations, as well as opportunities for exploitation. Which ones are filled depends on the size of the city and its needs.

Use this section as inspiration for how to play as a titled Camarilla courtier and to better understand what kind of conflicts might arise when dealing with them.

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## COMMON TITLES

- Prince, also known as Sovereign, Prefect, Premier, Governor
  - Seneschal, also known as Chamberlain, Advisor, Lieutenant
  - Primogen, also known as Senator, Presidium member, Councilor
  - Whip, also known as Junior Councilor, Council Secretary
  - Herald, also known as Whisperer, Harpy, the News, Ambassador, Voice of the Prince
  - Sheriff, also known as Praetorian, Scourge, Inspector, Executioner
  - Keeper of Elysium, also known as Master or Mistress of Ceremonies
  - Principal of Faith, also known under various religious titles
  - Court Ritualist, also known as Court Sorcerer, the Redworker, Keeper of the Cyprianus, Prestidigitator
  - Shadow
  - Guest Hostage
-



## Prince

Claiming praxis in a Camarilla city can be a violent affair or one done elegantly through subtle manipulations. Tonight, ancilla and neonate Kindred have increasingly been able to take over from the elders who ruled before and, in the ensuing turbulence, have been replaced several times by others like them.

### Tasks:

- Interpreting and enforcing the Traditions
- Allotting hunting grounds within the city
- Holding Court and judging conflicts between courtiers
- Protecting the city's Kindred
- Deciding who gets to sire and how
- Keeping informed on what goes on in the wider sect

**Playing the Prince:** Who is planning to take over, and how are they already carrying out their schemes to take you down? Question your courtiers. Question their mortal servants, too. A Prince must never rest easy.

Playing as a Prince doesn't exempt you from the every-night existence of the vampire. You still must hunt and feed and find something to comfort your cold heart as well. But beyond your private haven, it's an existence that lets you spend a lot of time in the spotlight of sect politics, making and breaking alliances to make sure you stay in control of your Court.

Successful Princes do not rule alone but as the head of a network of political collaborators. To play as a Prince, you probably want your coterie to have roles in the inner Court and delegate as much as possible to them.

## Seneschal

A Prince's right-hand advisor is empowered to take over when the Prince is unavailable, and a clever one can be the difference between political success and ruin.

A Seneschal can be an official title or not, and often doubles as a Herald, Sheriff, Principal, or Ritualist.

### Tasks:

- Whatever tasks the Prince doesn't do
- Guiding and supporting the ruler
- Claiming temporary praxis to protect a city when the Prince falls or disappears without a replacement ready

**Playing the Seneschal:** As a Seneschal, you may spend your time investigating courtiers vying to get closer to the Prince, advising (or manipulating) the city ruler, and working tirelessly to ensure the Court trusts you (or has no alternatives) should something happen to the Prince. You might make regular social calls to all the Primogen, subtly attempting to influence a coming vote.

A Seneschal can move both in the shadows and the light of a Kindred Court. They're often the target of suspicion, but they aren't always watched.

## Primogen

Vampires aren't known for their inherent mutual trust in one another. This is why it's common for rulers to be supported by a Primogen Council of Kindred representing the most influential factions in their city. Traditionally, only the seven pillar clans were allowed representation, but tonight, the selection of Councilors often depends on who has most to say in a given city. In a city where 40% of the Kindred belong to the Church of Set, the Court will want to listen attentively to what the Setite Hierophant thinks. Sometimes each Primogen represents multiple factions, particularly in larger cities, where there are more factions than seats at the Primogen Council table.

Some cities do away with the Prince and are ruled only by the Primogen. Chicago famously was without a Prince for decades.

### Tasks:

- Representing the interests of their faction — whether coterie, clan, or something else — at Court
- Holding council to discuss city problems and come up with potential solutions to present to the Prince
- Informing themselves of Kindred concerns in the city
- Taking action to depose Princes who put wider Camarilla goals at risk

**Playing a Primogen:** To play a Primogen can mean engaging heavily with city politics, investing time, funds, and blackmail materials to work towards the future you envision. It can mean maintaining a mortal Mask who regularly meets up with local government officials. It can also mean simply attending the monthly meeting to vote and otherwise doing as you please.

## Whip

Many Primogen would prefer to limit the amount of time they have to spend listening to the complaints of their faction's members. They sometimes appoint a Whip, who will handle that task for them, sorting through what they should consider and what they can ignore. Some Primogen have their Whip report extensively to them on the actions of their constituents.

Whips are also often empowered to sit in the Primogen's seat temporarily, if the Councilor is indisposed.

### Tasks:

- Performing as the stand-in for the Primogen outside of the Primogen Council
- Ensuring that decisions made in the Primogen Council are sufficiently communicated to their faction

**Playing a Whip:** Playing as a Whip includes carefully maneuvering to keep the trust of your Primogen and faction while being the one who often has to carry bad news back and forth. For the most part, this is a role that allows you to be a part of the Court without most of the responsibility that comes with honor and dignity. Nobody outside their own faction really cares much about the Whip — until they have to fill in for their Councilor who mysteriously disappeared.

## Herald

Authorized to speak for the Prince, the Herald announces new decrees to the Court. As they sometimes act as ambassadors or get tasked with carrying important intel, they tend to have more cross-territory contact with other Kindred than most. In cities under lockdown, the Herald is sometimes the only one allowed to leave.

Heralds are sometimes also Seneschals or Keepers of Elysium, and a large Court can have a couple.

### Tasks:

- Announcing the decrees of the Prince
- Keeping the records of prestation
- Conveying messages between domains
- Representing the Prince in other cities
- Remembering and retelling the city's Kindred history

**Playing a Herald:** There are many ways to play a Herald. One is to pretend to be a silly gossip, letting your mouth run in all the wrong ears, so you'll know who you can trust when the stories start to spread. Another is to take advantage of the freedom of movement to travel between domains, maybe even making friends you shouldn't.

## Sheriff

It looks good on paper, being a Camarilla Sheriff. In reality, it's often a shitty, thankless job. You get the pleasure of chasing down ungovernable licks, all manner of dirt that has entered the city unannounced to drink, willfully obvious idiots, and half-crazed beasts. Is your night going to be spent minding your business, slapping some fingers for reaching outside of their personal domain, or tackling a crazed serial killer with the appearance of a 15-year-old girl and the strength of five horses? Who knows?

Most Sheriffs utilize a network of younger licks to help keep them informed about the goings on in the city and to handle lesser issues, often known as Hounds or Deputies.

### Tasks:

- Ensuring that the Traditions and any additional Princely decrees are followed
- Investigating suspected crimes and transgressions
- Capturing lawbreakers
- Carrying out punishments

**Playing the Sheriff or a Hound:** It's a privileged position to be the hand of the law. It's also a bloody difficult thing to do that no one ever thanks you for. A Sheriff might be tempted to help cover up crimes instead of carrying out consequences. They might even have to commit more to make the whole thing go away.

Playing as a Sheriff often means dealing with danger and high risk with no reward, but it can also give you the freedom to circumvent the Traditions more than most.

Playing as a Deputy or Hound is much the same, except you get a shittier deal, the Kindred respect you less, and if the Sheriff finds out you're bending the Traditions, you'll be in deep trouble.

## Keeper of Elysium

Being the Keeper of Elysium can be a real pleasure, assuming you have something of a talent for hosting and event planning. In cities with permanent Elysia, the Keeper is a titled courtier. In cities where the location moves, so can the title. Because of the services they provide, Keepers are often immensely popular, high-status Kindred.

### Tasks:

- Maintaining an Elysium location under the Masquerade
- Hosting regular Elysia
- Providing entertainment and cultural sustenance for the city's Kindred
- Ensuring the safety of Elysium attendants by taking the proper security measures

**Playing the Keeper:** You're a nightclub owner, some sort of blood-doll pimp, a charming hostess, and a cold war-type spy all in one. Either you're having an awful lot of fun, or you're just about to crack. The Court expects something extraordinary, but where can you find contortionist twins this time of year?

The role of Keeper is one that can be more or less demanding, depending on the expectations of the Court and the size of the city. It's never a full-time job, unless your mortal mask makes it one, so playing as a Keeper will give you plenty of opportunities to pursue different types of stories.

## Principal of Faith

Some Kindred Courts include a religious authority, whose task it is to guide the city's Kindred population to make the best choices for the sect. This can be an honorary title only, a ceremonial and mostly social role, or sometimes it can be a position of real power so influential it rivals Prince or Primogen. At times, the Principal is barely tolerated at Court but fulfills a desperate need among city Kindred for some sparks of hope and guidance in

what they experience as the end times.

A Principal of Faith can easily double as a Seneschal, Herald, or Ritualist. In very religious domains, perhaps the Principal is also the city Sheriff with the authority to punish a wide range of transgressions.

### Tasks:

- Guiding the religious community of a Kindred city
- Keeping an eye on cult activity
- Guarding and remembering holy texts and Kindred lore
- Leading Kindred ceremonies

**Playing the Principal:** Some city Kindred respect you above all other authorities; others want you fed to feral dogs. You get to figure out who is who, challenge your own mortal beliefs as they are confronted with Kindred reality, and heaven knows, if a blood god does manifest, you'll be the first one they all turn to.

You can also occupy yourself by grasping for as much power as possible. Look at what the other titled courtiers are doing. Why is it the Ritualist performing the coronation? Why does the Keeper of Elysium welcome the Court? Who told the Herald they were the best voice of the Prince when you are right here, speaking for the gods as well?

## Court Ritualist

A thaumaturge can make a decent existence for themselves in a Camarilla city as that city's chosen sorcerer. In return, they draw on their craft to strengthen the city's defenses or perform tricks and wonders for the Court. They may also be in charge of merely symbolic rites, such as the "coronation" of a new Prince or the welcoming of fledglings into the sect as full neonates. A Camarilla city can have several Kindred sorcerers, but there's usually only ever one main Ritualist.

In the past, a coterie of Tremere usually held this role in a city, but not every city had even a single

Tremere. What was once a rural or ancient practice has returned to larger cities in the modern nights.

#### Tasks:

- Learning and leading Rituals for the protection of the Court
- Guarding a Court collection of occult materials
- Leading Kindred ceremonies

**Playing as the Ritualist:** No one can know you invented all of these impressive rites by yourself and that they aren't actually from an ancient Tremere library. It worked for Blavatsky, it'll work for you. Add just a dash of real sorcery, Oblivion if need be, and the flickering lights of the dying satellites above your chosen ritual site will do the rest.

Regardless of the nature of your tricks, the comfort you provide can be very real. What will you use it for? How far will you go in manipulating and guiding the city's Kindred? What will you make them give you for your help? And how will you handle the Principal of Faith and all their claims on ceremonies that are rightly yours?

## Shadow

Sometimes when a coterie enters a city, the Court appoints a Shadow to keep an eye on them. A Shadow can also be assigned to a new coterie of local childer. The Shadow is officially meant to guide their wards and often doubles as a Mawla, but some are just glorified Court spies. Any city Kindred can be appointed as a Shadow. While it is a job that many Kindred consider as convenient as jury duty, others eagerly accept it for the chance to grow their influence.

#### Tasks:

- Welcoming, informing, and guiding their wards
- Ensuring that the culture and rules of the city domain are properly understood
- Reporting to the Court on the actions of their wards

**Playing as a Shadow:** A Shadow is just a normal city Kindred who has been given a temporary title. It

can be a way to wiggle your way into more influence, as you finally have the ear of higher-ranking courtiers, or an opportunity to delegate tasks you aren't interested in doing yourself.

For troupes that want to play mixed generations, having the older character play the Shadow of the younger coterie can be a good way to do it.

## Guest Hostage

Sometimes neighboring domains, or conflicting factions, find it useful to exchange hostages. In Camarilla cities, these are generally treated with respect, as befits a society sworn to the Tradition of Hospitality. This custom can be very elegant — as set by the example of Tegyrus the Vizier's arrival into Toreador territory — or it can be a simple transaction of insurance. Depending on the importance of the exchange, a Court may choose to send someone important to them or use this as a way to get rid of individuals who have fallen out of favor.

#### Tasks:

- Representing a Court, bloodline, or clan in another domain
- Acting as insurance that treaties will not be broken

**Playing a Guest Hostage:** You play as any other member of your coterie, doing as your Mawla tells you, attempting to work off your debt to the Court, seeking to please your elders. You make something akin to friends and find a kind of joy in the company of certain local mortals. Sometimes you remember you were stolen from your real home, your haven, your mortal connections and immortal loves — what will you do about it?

# RULES AND TRADITIONS



The Camarilla exists to protect Kindred interests. Three in particular: keeping the Beast at bay, shielding Kindred societies from their enemies, and ensuring that every member can feed (be that through population control or the division of territories). These aren't easy tasks, and everything the sect does is meant to serve them. This includes its culture. Where a bitter old lick might claim that the Sabbat is held together by a shared experience of otherness and the Ashirra was united by faith, Camarilla territories are held together by tradition.

## The Six Traditions

The Traditions are the closest thing the Tower has to a codified international law and the backbone of the sect's culture, as they determine what you should not do but also set the target for what you should. They are usually the first thing you must agree to before you are Embraced by a Camarilla Kindred, and you must confirm them when you are accepted as a full neonate member of the sect. That doesn't mean every domain interprets them the same. There are local variations, and, although ignorance is no excuse, just as with mortal laws, some individuals get away with more.

## The Tradition of the Masquerade

The most important of Camarilla rules is a promise to keep the mortal world ignorant of the existence of Kindred. It is a responsibility to mask as mortals, infiltrate mortal societies, and clean up any messes that might suggest to mortals they are prey.

### Variations

**Monstrous Destruction:** The Court actively locates and destroys all other non-mortals in their territory to ensure total control over the kine.

**Casual Compliance:** Trusting the mortal urge to self-gaslight, a Masquerade breach is not considered as such unless it has actual consequences.

**Absolutist Conservatism:** The Court has a clearly defined list of transgressions and punishes them harshly, even when they do not result in a Masquerade breach.

### Exceptions

**Prince's Pet:** A favored Kindred gets away with risky behavior; less-favored individuals are assigned to clean up after them.

**Impossible Challenge:** Some Kindred are walking Masquerade breaches because of their inhuman appearance, but as they offer something of importance to the city, the Court protects them and, if necessary, provides the infrastructure that keeps their existence from the kine.

**Fuckup Fixed:** A close-knit coterie and other allies who will clean up accidents and provide an alibi can mean the difference between destruction and walking away from a major fuckup without a scratch.

## Pitfalls

**Family and Friends:** Few Courts tolerate a lick baring their secrets to the ones they love.

**Beastly Behavior:** Feeding carries a risk; not feeding carries a bigger risk because it cannot be maintained.

**Mortal Surveillance:** The society of the kine is growing increasingly Orwellian, and Kindred should assume they are always observed.

The trick is to make your actions look innocent. The vast amount of data that can be collected is not often thoroughly examined, and even AI attempts to sort through the noise don't return as many real, damning details as many would suspect.

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## TEN WAYS THE SI INTERCEPTS KINDRED COMMUNICATION

1. **Utilizing existing surveillance systems:** Street-level surveillance is accessed following suspected Kindred activity.
  2. **Bugging:** Suspected Kindred meeting spots, dead drops, and hunting zones are bugged with microphones and cameras.
  3. **Wiretapping:** There's no real way to secure regular cellular calls from being intercepted. Two or three software commands are all it takes to listen in on any given phone call.
  4. **Backdooring Devices:** By hacking into a user's device and inserting malware, remote access can be achieved and end-to-end encrypted apps monitored.
  5. **Phishing:** SI scammers socially engineer content they assume to be especially tempting to Kindred to access sensitive data through fraudulent solicitation in email, on a website, or through fraudulent text messages.
  6. **AI Pattern Analysis:** SI organizations have started training language models on Kindred communications, including statements made under torture, to discover patterns. The plan is to let said language models trawl internet forums and social media for matching anomalies.
  7. **Honeytraps:** SI agents create profiles on social media, dating apps, trade sites, and more, posing as tempting vessels or other Kindred. They may monitor or even run supposedly secure forums.
  8. **Dark Web Scraping:** Using specialized web crawler tools, agencies extract data from websites and forums normally hidden from traditional searches.
  9. **Postal Interception:** SI agencies are not above the interception of traditional mail.
  10. **Undercover Agents:** SI agencies collaborate with Kindred traitors and mortal Camarilla agents for intel. They have reportedly even been experimenting with creating their own lick agents, forcing Kindred prisoners to Embrace against their will.
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### **I. The Masquerade**

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

### **II. Domain**

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

### **III. 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.*

### **IV. 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.*

### **V. 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.*

### **VI. 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.*



## **The Tradition of Domain**

The division of domains is what keeps Camarilla cities civilized and protected from mortal suspicion, ensuring that there are kine enough for every Kindred. It also lets the Court know whom to hold responsible when something problematic occurs. The city itself is the domain of its Prince, who divides it into lesser domains among their courtiers, who in turn can partition it out in return for favors, and so on. While each domain holder is the lord of their territory, they still answer to their liege lord.

### **Variations**

**Villeinism:** City Kindred who owe their domain directly to the Prince are what fiefs were to medieval kings. But less-favored Kindred, such as fledgling coteries that have not yet been formally accepted into the sect, often only have permission to establish their haven in another's domain in return for service and obedience.

**Moving Domains:** City domains aren't granted permanently but rotate every few years.

**Domain Neutrality:** Some cities are not fully Camarilla but also have a sizable Anarch or Ashirra population. In such cities, "enemy" activity in sect territory may be tolerated to protect the peace.

**Restricted Feeding:** Hunting in one's home domain is forbidden to protect the Masquerade.

**Mortal Responsibilities:** Domain holders are expected to answer for certain mortal activities within their domain. This is especially common where Kindred masquerade as mortal authorities.

### **Exceptions**

**Alibi Provided:** If a domain holder wasn't home at the time of the transgression and can provide a good reason for it, they can try to argue that they cannot be held responsible.

**(Super)Natural Disasters:** It is an unreasonable ruler who would blame a domain holder for the destruction caused by hurricanes or packs of lupines.

## Pitfalls

**Sudden Thirst:** Letting Hunger build in unknown territories can be troublesome, as not all domain holders allow unrestricted feeding.

**Free Territory:** Assuming that a seemingly unclaimed territory is up for grabs might cause problems when the original domain holder returns.

**Princely Whims:** The Prince can take and grant domains, but sometimes the vassal being punished refuses to cooperate or takes it out on the new owners.

## The Tradition of Progeny

Securing the right to decide who shall be allowed to Embrace and when helps the city ruler guard against Kindred overpopulation and the weakening of bloodlines. Increasingly, Courts are becoming aware that there is a correlation between generation and the abomination of the Duskborn and are planning accordingly.

The standard punishment for the unsanctioned creation of childer begins with the destruction of the childe.

## Variations

**Wartime Embraces:** Sabbat Cainites notoriously Embrace undiscerningly when needing soldiers. Some Camarilla Courts will also lift some of their requirements when conflict threatens.

**Planned Embraces:** The Prince doesn't allow members of their Court to choose or suggest their own desired progeny but has a list of mortal subjects to work through.

## Exceptions

**Special Childe:** Forgiveness for an unplanned childe can sometimes be achieved if no one hears about the fledgling until after they have proven to be essential to the sect.

**From Death's Claws:** Some Princes look more mildly on unsanctioned Embraces if the sire can prove it was unplanned and the childe would have

died otherwise (and why that would be a great loss).

**Neonate Deception:** This Tradition can be skirted if everyone can somehow be convinced the childe was Embraced long ago and only just resurfaced.

## Pitfalls

**Tragic Accident:** A Kindred who feels deeply for mortals can find it hard to resist granting the Embrace when there's no way to save their life.

**Guilty Conscience:** A Kindred who drinks too deeply and didn't mean to kill might be tempted to Embrace.

**Obsession:** It is dangerous to slake one's thirst on the same mortal often because their blood can become so sweet it feels like love.

## The Tradition of Accounting

Camarilla domains would never work if their members did not monitor each other for transgressions. This is partly ensured by the Tradition of Accounting, which holds every sire responsible for their childer until those childer are officially accepted as full members of the sect. In return, a fledgling childe must obey their maker.

## Variations

**Eternal Bonds:** Some conservative Courts honor the Tradition of Accounting even beyond a childe's full acceptance into the sect. Only their sire's exile, disappearance, or final death releases them.

**Shadow Guardianship:** Instead of the bloodline sire, a Shadow can inherit the charge of a fledgling ward.

## Exceptions

**Anarch Upstart:** A sire may be released from the expectation of Accounting if their childe declares for the Anarchs.

**Parricide:** A childe who attempts to destroy their sire, or in other ways acts with significant malice toward them, may no longer be considered their childe.

**Failure of the Blood:** Some Courts do not consider Caitiff and thin-blood childer to be of their sire's Blood as it has failed to express itself in them.

## Pitfalls

**The Kind Sire:** A childe can forget the Tradition of Accounting if their sire is too lax with them.

**Arranged Embrace:** Some Courts cannot maintain the Tradition of Accounting if they also do not allow sires to choose their own progeny.

## The Tradition of Hospitality

This Tradition is a remnant of pre-modern times, when people traveled on foot or rode horses and needed to rely on being welcomed along the way. Even though Kindred travelers can use more efficient means of travel, the road would still be too dangerous if they could not count on resting and feeding in Camarilla cities. Part of this promise is that visitors will present themselves to the city's leadership on arrival. This way, the Court can ensure the visitor doesn't pose a threat (beyond the expected) and point out any feeding restrictions.

## Variations

**Timed Presentation:** The grace period Kindred can expect when arriving differs from city to city. Some Princes do not care if it takes up to a week for them to present themselves; some expect it to happen on the first night of arrival.

**Cultural Expectations:** Some Princes look for any chance to claim disrespect of local customs so they can chase off visitors.

**Quarantined City:** In times of crisis, Courts can choose to go into hiding and will actively avoid all contact with visitors, pretending that they aren't even there.

**Borrowed Time:** Some Courts graciously accept visitors but limit the visit to a certain number of nights or weeks.

**Closed Domains:** In some cities, the Tradition is also honored in every smaller domain, and Kindred

cannot travel through one end of the city to another without clearing it with every domain holder on the way.

## Exceptions

**Visiting Authority:** In principle, Kindred who represent a higher Camarilla authority than the local Prince are free to travel in and out without announcing themselves.

**Known Camarilla Enemy:** The sect releases any city from the Tradition of Hospitality when there is an active Blood Hunt on the visitor.

## Pitfalls

**Assuming Free Reign:** Just because a territory seems deserted does not mean it is.

**Cultural Differences:** What is considered essential etiquette in one city may be rude in another.

## The Tradition of Destruction

A Camarilla Prince's authority is anchored in their right to judge a vassal for destruction. At the same time, no other Kindred in a city may freely destroy another without their Prince's leave. The Prince's power isn't unchecked, however. A ruler who destroys too liberally is quickly deposed.

## Variations

**Sire's Right:** Fledglings who have not officially entered the sect as full members also do not enjoy its protection. Considered to be their sire's property, that same sire is free to grant them final death if they desire.

**Abject Others:** Certain categories of licks are free prey for anyone, such as Duskborn, Caitiff, Anarchs, Sabbat Cainites, or Kindred of a certain bloodline.

## Exceptions

**Destroy or Be Destroyed:** Destruction in self-defense can find forgiveness.

**Punishment Befitting Crime:** Some transgressions are anathema to Camarilla Kindred, and unsanctioned destruction pales in comparison.

**Under the Influence:** If a Kindred can successfully convince the Court that they were manipulated or not in their right mind, destruction may not be punished as it usually would — but there will certainly be other consequences.

**At the Edges of the Domain:** Some ne’er-do-wells argue that a Prince’s right of destruction ends at the edge of their domain, rather than with their subjects. Heading to the “international waters” of lupine territory or a neighboring domain has other risks, but leaving a rival to meet the sun in the countryside is a time-tested tradition.

**Prince in Name Only:** As a result of blackmail or some other weakness, a city’s Prince has been barred from the right of destruction in practice. The reality is that the right either belongs to no Kindred in the city or lies with another, maybe hidden, authority.

## Pitfalls

**Frenzy:** A lick who cannot control their inner Beast, cannot control their drive to rip and rend without end.

**Unsafe Feeding Practices:** Kindred who tempt fate by Blood Bonding to one another over repeated feeding sessions or indulge in the practice of circular feeding\* risk accidental destruction.

**Being Embraced:** The Embrace requires a taste of vitae. If the sire is very weakened, they may not be able to fight off the fledgling who starts their undead existence as a diablerist.

\*Circular Feeding, also known as Bloodlooping or “the perpetual battery,” is the practice where two or more licks drink from one another unceasingly and only avoid being fully drained because they fill themselves at the same time. It is looked down on by most Kindred.

## PUNISHMENTS FOR CAMARILLA CRIMES

### THE SADISTIC RULER

- Memory edited: happy memories erased, trauma added in, wishes and directives changed
- Forced to feed only on animals for an extended period
- Torture, such as the repeated removal of an appendage over and over again; torture of mortal kin

### THE STRATEGIC RULER

- Haven, or other assets, including mortal connections, temporarily seized or re-allocated
- Blood Bonded to a loyal courtier
- Exchanged as a hostage

### THE HARSH RULER

- Forced into torpor in the ruler’s holding cells
- Branded
- Destroyed by fire, sunlight, or through diablerie

### THE DISTRACTED RULER

- Being fined
- Exile
- Being tasked with something no one else wants to do

## Common Rules and Courtesies

Camarilla domains have a culture as much as any society, and the Six Traditions are far from the only rules the Kindred are expected to honor. Below are some additional customs most cities observe. Naturally, Princes who rule through fear (such as the Caligula; see p. 18) can allow themselves a wide range of further eccentricities.

## Prestation

Prestation is the practice of trading favors and boons. A Kindred's word is their bond, and to break a promise in Camarilla territory is a good way to ensure that you lose all respect. In most domains, granting a boon is a ceremonial procedure, but in some, you're considered bound the moment you voice intention.

Kindred society generally recognizes four categories of boons: trivial, minor, major, and life boons. This can become culturally tricky when two Kindred disagree on the size of a favor.



## Variations

**Blood or Nothing:** Prestation primarily counts for matters of life and death. A Kindred who has been saved from final death must repay their savior with a life in return.

**Ticking Clock:** Favors incurred must be repaid within a certain time period, usually set during the negotiation.

**Inherited Debt:** A debt can be passed on from one Kindred to another, or even be sold.

## Exceptions

**Favors of Office:** A Kindred who acts in service of the Court usually will not incur personal prestation debt.

**Unfair Terms:** Kindred who can argue that they were tricked can sometimes get out of fulfilling an unreasonable debt—if they can get the Court to care.

## Pitfalls

**Favor Debt:** Kindred who aren't careful to keep count of the favors they incur can get in trouble when their creditors come calling.

**Nonchalant Promises:** Failing to negotiate the terms of a favor trade can mean that there are no limits to the demands the owed party can make in return.

## Blood Bonds

The Blood Bond is a contested subject in some Camarilla cities. Still, they are widely practiced to enslave mortal ghouls and often play a part in sire-child relationships. Until recently, the Tremere were almost entirely organized around them. And of course, they have been used to secure diplomatic relations. Perhaps this is the very reason most members of the sect prefer to pretend that they are one tool among several, an occasional necessity, rather than the sensual indulgence that is the actual experience of the Bond.

## Variations

**Ignorance Is Innocence:** The Court has forbidden informing fledglings about the Bond. It usually works about as well as teaching teenagers that babies sprout from flowers.

**Sanctioned Pairings:** The city sanctions pre-approved Kindred Blood Weddings and celebrates them with prominent rites.

**Only Almost:** The city exclusively allows one-way Blood Bonds to high-ranking courtiers.

## Exceptions

**For a Cause:** Blood Bonds done for a greater cause are exempted from limitations.

**To the Terror of Tremere:** A vengeful Prince specifically permits other Kindred to Blood Bond Tremere to mock the clan for its inability to Bond in return.

## Pitfalls

**Conversational Faux Pas:** In many cities, pointing out that two Kindred appear to be Bonded is extremely rude and something that might earn the careless commenter some serious trouble.

**Accidental Bond:** It usually only takes three drinks from the same source of vitae to become Bonded. Paired with ignorance or desperation, accidental Bonds do happen.

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### 10 COMMON CITY COURTESIES

1. **Greeting the Social Authority:** Most cities have both a formal leader and an informal social authority. Sometimes the Prince, or their representative, fulfills both these roles. But often, there is also a harpy or Keeper of Elysium who feel snubbed if city visitors fail to acknowledge them.
  2. **Elysium Etiquette:** It is common knowledge not to use powers of the Blood in Elysium and to be on one's best behavior.
  3. **Feeding Respectfully:** Unless a guest has been otherwise directed, most Kindred find it rude if they indulge too deeply on the mortal population.
  4. **Outcasts to Be Reported:** Any and all members of a specific faction are considered enemies of the city, and you're expected to report them to a member of the Court if you should spot one.
  5. **Respecting Mortal Domain:** The mortal contacts of one Kindred are not to be interfered with by another without prior agreement.
  6. **Courtly Amnesia:** When visiting a city Court, it is polite to forget all about interactions with former courtiers unless the ruler themselves should happen to remember in conversation.
  7. **Curfew:** Vampires are expected to be back inside their havens an hour before sunup. A host will invite guests to spend the day should they stay too long at a gathering.
  8. **Remnants of Past Times:** A Kindred from the 1980s expects a firm handshake and a gift when playing host. One from the 1880s will be angry if you don't remove your hat inside or feed without saying grace.
  9. **Certain Diet Restrictions:** Especially in Ventrue domains, a visitor can expect that certain flavors of blood are reserved for higher-ranking Kindred.
  10. **Honoring Age and Generation:** The way of the Beast dictates that strength begets respect. Many elders have left their positions, but most Courts still expect subjects to treat a Ninth-Generation ancilla with considerably more deference than yesternight's fledgling.
- 

*Halima bit the inside of her cheek, hard enough to taste the iron of her own vitae, to center herself in the moment. Three pursuers were stalking her from the north end of the tunnels; she'd heard their voices travel through the pipes to her hideout just in time to throw a flashlight in her backpack and get out of there. Her knowledge of the underground would allow her to stay ahead of them down here. But eventually, she'd have to exit to feed. Scanning her mental map of the university's subterranean territory, with its web of utility tunnels, sewers, and waterways, she gave a start as she heard the unmistakable shuffle of something moving ahead of her. Rats, or something worse? She sent a brief thought of longing back to a former self, who'd been up there in the light. Then she pulled herself together. She'd wanted to avoid going through the sewers, but it wasn't like she had to breathe. And she felt fairly certain the suits her sire had sent after her would hesitate to follow there.*

*Halima was a good half hour deep in human waste when she felt the pinprick sensation of danger ahead. Turning the corner, she saw the creature: more chimera than her, it seemed to be part rodent, part overgrown fetus, and it was nestled into a fatberg like it never wanted to leave. Bizarrely, it smirked at her.*

*"I've been promised a reward for your watery blood, kitten. Shall I collect, or do you have something better to offer me?"*

# THE CITY

The quasi-feudal domains of the Camarilla are mostly locked in mutual agreements to leave one another alone, united by their shared allegiance to the sect and its Traditions. These domains are almost always city-based and controlled by a Prince or regent, who, in turn, grants lesser domains to their vassals within the city's borders.

## Shadows of Mortal Cities

A Camarilla city is the parasitic shadow of a mortal city, leeching off its politics and businesses. Some Kindred Courts were there before the cities they inhabit were built, and their courtiers masquerade as pillars of their mortal society. Others have established themselves as racketeers, hiding out in high-class treatment facilities in the guise of therapists and doctors. Some have needed to found a tech startup. Whatever the cover, while some Kindred may prefer to gloss over their dependency on mortals, a lick cannot go far without mortal collaborators.

## Neighboring Territories

Most Camarilla cities function as self-organized ecosystems, but Courts are usually aware of who their closest neighbors are. Other Kindred provide a shield against mutual enemies, but they also should not be too close unless the mortal population is large enough to handle it. A city like São Paulo can easily host several Kindred city domains, while suspicion would quickly grow out of control in Leeuwarden in the Netherlands. Anarchs must be

closely monitored for signs of ill intent. Autarkies and cities with suspected Sabbat presence or lupine dominance might represent dark parts of the map that Camarilla Kindred avoid when traveling.

It's good practice for Princes who share border areas to show one another respect. Sometimes hostages are exchanged — one childe for another — and gifts will be sent through representatives, who also share intel on the greater sect. Individuals who have fallen out of favor in one Court might try their luck in another, although cities with friendly relations might be in the practice of handing over criminals.

## Manipulating Mortal Politics

A mortal city inhabited by Kindred will, in some ways, be influenced by their internal politics. These are some ways Court politics can blend with mortal politics:

- **Urban Planning Lobbyism:** Kindred with influence in city zoning can quietly push for protection of Camarilla buildings under the guise of historical preservation.
- **Misinformation Campaigns:** Manipulating mortal journalists to plant inflammatory stories can help you bury the truth of a Masquerade breach.
- **Crisis Engineering:** You can leak a mortal scandal to distract city police and authorities from vampire-related incidents.
- **Conduit Contributions:** Donate to a mortal political party through a straw donor to circumvent contribution limits and hide your identity as you influence the decisions of a mortal politician.
- **Philanthropic Work:** A charitable foundation can be an excuse to host elaborate late-night events and also lets you launder money. Of course, you need to actually support a cause a little. For the optics.

# SAMPLE CITY DOMAINS

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**T**he politics of getting a dozen Kindred to share a city peacefully and ruling over some 70 licks belonging to different factions, some of which you aren't even aware of, are different. These sample city domains let you know what kind of cultural particularities and problems you might expect from Kindred cities of different sizes as a vampire trying to gain influence or just make it as a citizen.

## Small

*At 12 or fewer Kindred, a domain is definitely small.*

*Examples: Matera, Bruges, Hoi An, Paraty, Burlington*

## Court Structure

In a city with no more than a dozen Kindred, there's no need to fill every possible position. Everyone has some informal role to play, but there's no need to bother with a Primogen Council or a Keeper of Elysium. Some titles remain particularly useful, however:

- A Prince, who can represent the city when other Camarilla Kindred appear in it and who can make the final decision when the domain cannot agree.
- A Herald, who can act on behalf of that Prince and who can travel around with news if the population is spread over a larger area or are avoiding each other purposefully.

- A Sheriff, who protects the mortal population and the domain in general.

The same Kindred likely have several responsibilities. Perhaps the chosen Prince is also in charge of hosting social gatherings, and that is how they got the role. The Herald and the Sheriff may be one and the same, declaring new rules while they punish transgressions. Perhaps a Guest Hostage from another small nearby domain is also the Court Ritualist and was chosen specifically because the domain doesn't otherwise have anyone skilled in Blood Sorcery.

## Cultural Particularities

**No Privacy:** Everyone knows everyone, including their usual habits. It's noticed pretty quickly when the Nosferatu Melchior, who feeds every night in different locations in the red-light district, stops showing up. He's also the first suspect when a Masquerade breach happens there.

**Gossip Runs the Show:** New arrivals can count on anything they do or say spreading quickly between locals, and if they piss off one, they may have a hard time winning over others. On the other hand, a small community may be more willing to entertain irregular ideas and behaviors, simply because the Court is itching for fresh entertainment.

**A Little Strangeness:** Small domains can sometimes get a little strange, especially if geographically isolated. If you haven't had a Camarilla visitor in decades and you only ever socialize with the same crowd of Enlightenment

enthusiasts, you may earnestly think Gehenna has already ended and the Ravnos are in charge.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

**Peacetime Versus Wartime:** Small domains are easy to control but hard to defend. Attacks from the outside can be devastating if they happen.

**Covering Your Tracks:** It's easy to get away with breaking the Traditions if no one catches you in the act, but if they do, you'll have a hard time shifting the blame onto someone else.

**Few Alternative Friends:** Once you fall out of favor with the majority of the group, or just with its leaders, the city will become cold to you indeed. There'll be nowhere else to turn, so you'll have to make good with the same Kindred or accept defeat and find another city to call home.

## Mid-Sized

Small domains tend to become mid-sized by the time they hit 15–18 members, and domains are definitely mid-sized at two dozen.

*Examples: Munich, Budapest, Florence, Atlanta*

## Court Structure

A mid-sized domain can make due with a small central Court, consisting of:

- A Prince and/or a Primogen Council to rule.
- A Seneschal or Herald to advise and speak for the leadership in its absence.
- A Keeper of Elysium to gather the community.
- A Sheriff or two to keep order.
- The existence of assistant courtiers, such as Whips, Hounds, and Shadows, is usually more a matter of temperament than need. In domains with several opposing factions, the number of titled courtiers can, however, grow to what might seem unnecessary proportions if everyone insists on being represented. The Court might not need three Principals of Faith to guide a population of 30 Kindred, most of whom are non-believers, but

if it offends the one Catholic ancilla not to have a title when there is one for the Mithraic faction and another for the Muslim, it might be easier for everyone to give him one.

## Cultural Particularities

**A Variety of Factions:** Mid-sized domains combine several factions of Kindred. There can be a fair degree of competitiveness, as they vie for political control and leadership's favor, but such cities are still small enough that it's unlikely they shelter large, undiscovered groups of outright enemies of the sect.

**A Good Place to Start:** For the ambitious neonate, this is the perfect place to attempt to propel themselves upward since the Kindred population is big enough to provide several opportunities to win over allies but small enough that they can get a sense of who is who.

**Some Normalcy:** Camarilla culture is more likely to align with what is generally true for the sect, as visitors travel through on a semi-regular basis. However, eccentric or strict rulers often add on more rules, using Gehenna, faith, sorcery, or mortal politics as the excuse. They may not get away with forcing a specific diet on every Kindred citizen, but they can certainly impose a strict curfew or influence a general hatred for Clan Malkavian.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

**Big Enough to Matter:** Big enough to be visible on the global map. Small enough to be vulnerable to attack by a few Sabbat or lupine packs, mortal military, or a wandering blood god from an ancient era. This vulnerability makes mid-sized Courts especially eager to attract and hold on to strong allies, and even young Kindred can get a chance to prove themselves here if they have something interesting to bargain with.

**Access to Feeding Rights:** Depending on the size of the mortal population, individual domains may be highly contested or spread out and comfortably large.

## Large

A domain becomes large around 50 Kindred.

*Examples: New York City, Chicago, Paris, Seoul, Johannesburg*

## Court Structure

A large domain requires a sizable Court with every essential position filled and a support system of assistant courtiers:

- The Prince (or Princes) needs a Seneschal and cannot rule without being regularly challenged unless there is also a Primogen Council in place.
- There is likely more than one Sheriff and a coterie of Hounds who support them in their work.
- The Keeper of Elysium is an important title since without them, the Court never gathers.
- If the geographical city is divided between several factions, some Camarilla and some not, there can be several Guest Hostages on each side to keep the peace, unless the city is in active civil war.
- Large domains are more likely to include small communities that insist on a Principal of Faith, even if the domain is otherwise irreligious.

## Cultural Particularities

**Culturally Diverse:** Large domains are less likely to have a citywide ban on specific Kindred factions, except for very rare or unpopular ones, because tolerance is required for the city to function night to night. While members of the same faction may clump together by having neighboring domains, you will still meet others who are vastly different from you when you attend Court and Elysium events.

**The Importance of Tradition:** These differences make the honoring of Camarilla culture all the more important — while you won't get stared at or punished for looking a bit different, crimes against the Traditions are harshly punished.

**Systematic Rule:** The Court doesn't have time to take individual particularities into consideration every time and tends to punish first and question later, if at all.

## Strengths and Weaknesses

**Easy to Fly Under the Radar:** No one can keep track of every member of a large Kindred population at all times. Cities this size have new arrivals appearing on a regular basis, Kindred who enter torpor and wake up again, and individuals who change sides in struggles that ebb and flow like an ungentle sea. This makes it easy for an unsanctioned fledgling to fly under the radar, as well as for Sabbat spies to enter and set up shop.

**Mouse in a Maze:** On the other hand, once the city has noticed that you're in it, it can become very difficult to remain hidden. If you are the target, a Blood Hunt through the streets of a metropolis teaming with enthusiastic hunters will almost certainly be the end of you unless you find a way out of the city quickly.

# CREATING A CAMARILLA CHARACTER

Not all Camarilla Kindred are created equal. If you're preparing a character for political play in the sect, you can find inspiration for what to consider here. Everything, of course, depends on whether your character is someone new to the sect or an existing Tower bat.

## New Arrival

Newly arrived Kindred have to prove themselves before they can expect even a lukewarm welcome.

## Accounting for Your Background

The Court will want to know where the players' characters come from, what they are, and what they've done before. A trusting or distracted Prince may take them at their word; most will require more.

**Sire and Bloodline:** Is your pedigree respectable? Is your sire someone with pull within the wider sect and this city in specific? If they aren't, sometimes you can trade favors for faked parentage.

**Clan- and Diablerie-Detection:** Courts have ways of determining a Kindred's clan and the nature of their vitae when there's doubt. Does your character have anything to hide, and if so, how will

they fool the Blood Sorcerer using Taste for Blood or the thin-blood alchemist with their suitcase full of chemistry experiments? If they can't, how do they convince them that their past is not a problem?

**Sponsorship:** Arrivals vouched for by a respected city member will be accepted sooner and start climbing the hierarchy. Do you already have someone on the inside who can recommend you?

## Negotiating Your Position

**Figuring Out Who Is in Charge:** It is one thing to identify the official ruler of a city, and it is another to figure out who really pulls the strings.

**Declaring Your Intentions:** Before a Court will consider accepting a new coterie, they'll expect to hear its binding declarations of intent — preferably in front of several Kindred witnesses who'll swear they heard the same. How will your group convince the Court to give you a chance?

**Making Connections:** It can be a struggle to prove that you are worth serious consideration as a young Kindred in Camarilla territory. Finding out who can help you on your journey and convincing them to do so is essential.

## Dealing with Mortals

**Identifying Retainers:** Knowing which mortals are in the service of the sect is the best way to make sure you aren't being observed by the Court when you don't want to be.

**Creating Your Network:** A Kindred needs mortals they can count on to help them navigate the mortal city. Building such relationships is an important part of establishing yourself.

## Existing Member

Perhaps you were Embraced into the city or have already been allowed to settle.

## Faction and Allies

**Sire:** Who is your sire, and how do they help you within the sect? How do they hold you back, and what are your strategies for dealing with that?

**Belonging to a Group:** Every mid-sized or large city has several political factions, be they determined by clan loyalty, political agenda, age, beliefs, or something else. Which one is yours?

**Allies and Enemies:** Whom can you count on and why? What did you do to make them owe you a favor? Who has it out for you, and how did you piss them off?

**Court Role:** Every Kindred has a function within the sect system. How do you make yourself useful? Is it just keeping an eye out for intruders on a regular basis? Are you tasked with providing psychological crisis help to the Seneschal's mortal victims? Are you scrubbing blood out of the Prince's hot tub?

## Navigating Court

**Advancing an Agenda:** The sect is a complicated political landscape, and even if you try to stay neutral, you will be used in the schemes of others. Eventually, you will have plans of your own as well. What are they?

**Collecting Favors:** Camarilla careers are made and broken in the favor trade. To climb high, make sure you are owed more than you owe.

**Defending the Sect:** Young coterie are usually frontline soldiers when a city has any kind of trouble. When have you been called into action?

**Working Off Debt:** Many Courts consider the Embrace the first favor a fledgling incurs and expects them to work it off. Arrivals from outside the city might incur their first local favor when they are allowed to settle. What other debts have you incurred?

**Negotiating for Lenience:** Every Kindred will at some point need someone to look the other way. It might be helpful to make sure courtiers like the Sheriff or the Shadow know what they can expect in return if you ever need their help.

## Your Mortal Network

**Protecting Friends and Family:** Unscrupulous courtiers will use your mortal contacts against you. You'll need to make arrangements to stop that from happening.

**Maintaining Your Network:** How do you keep your mortal contacts happy so they keep helping you out?

**Spies on the Inside:** Which mortals in the service of other Kindred are you aware of, and are you working to get any of them on your side?

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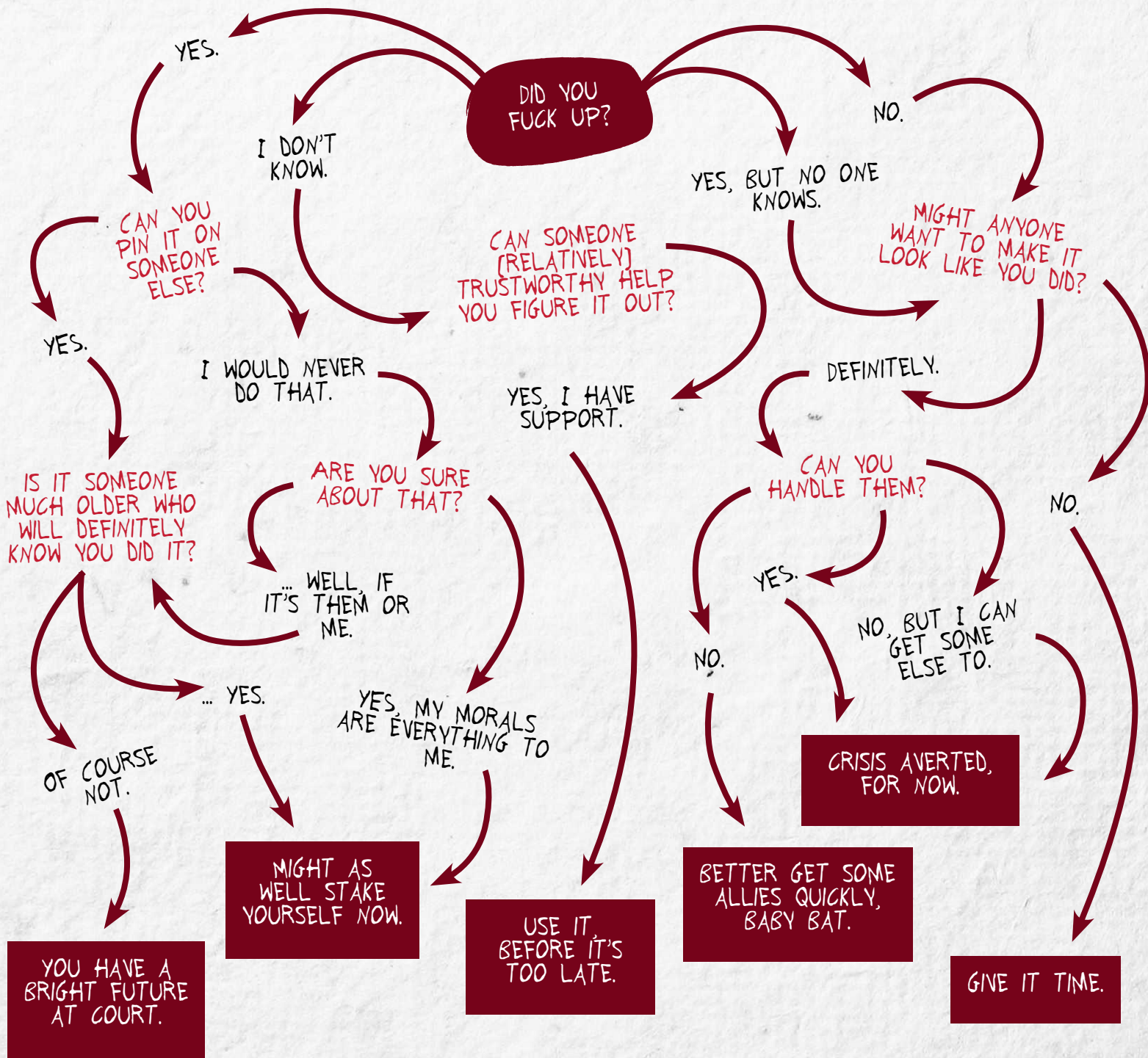
### WHAT CAMARILLA SECT POLITICS ARE REALLY ABOUT

The younger lick may fear that they won't survive long in the sect. They worry that if they fuck up, they will face destruction before they can make up for it. But the sect's goal isn't to destroy its members. It's to control them. Most courtiers want to take advantage of those below them. They want them to be afraid, but only enough to do as they are told.

This is also true: the Camarilla exists to shield its members from the Beast. Humanity is a resource like any other, and while Kindred must be in control of their emotions, pure psychopathy is not desirable. Thus, there is also softness in the system; it just doesn't often get to drive it.

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# CAMARILLA CRISIS RESOLUTION CHART



# GLOBAL POWER PLAYERS



**T**he Camarilla is mythologized as a globe-spanning secret society, strictly controlled from the top. This is a story that serves those in power and tickles the imagination, so it is often repeated among Kindred. Perhaps it's also true: the founders remain, influencing every echelon. Another possibility is that they have all been destroyed or fallen into torpor, or that their childer have devoured them and their ideals, and the Kindred are on their own with only fabricated myths of a united leadership to guide them. For most, it will be difficult to verify the truth; they'll never meet any power higher than the Princes who rule the cities they hunt and hide in.

Until one — or a pretender — does make an appearance.

## Inner Circle Member

The Inner Circle is said to be the true leaders of the Camarilla, to whom the Princes must answer if called. Their identities are a well-kept secret, but many believe them to be among the eldest from the founding clans.

### **Rumored Activities:**

- Meeting every 13 years to appoint new Justicars
- Orchestrating the sect's responses to global crises

### **Possible Truths:**

- The Camarilla founders were the Inner Circle and remain so — fewer than they ever were before, as several have been lost.

- The Inner Circle no longer exists, and the Justicars do what they please.
- The Inner Circle has gone underground to wait out the Second Inquisition.
- There are several Inner Circles competing for control behind the scenes.
- The Inner Circle has suffered a schism, and the wider sect will soon face civil war.
- The Inner Circle is a ploy by some ancient creature who plays the Camarilla Kindred as puppets.

## Justicar

The Inner Circle's chosen swords are supposedly authorized to break all Traditions to protect the sect. They're said to serve for 13 years at a time and be the only Kindred in existence who know the true identity of the sect's leaders. Awe-inspiring symbols of the sect's power to control its cities, the idea of them can be terrifying to those who have something to hide.

Through the ages, the identity of the Justicars has sometimes been widely known and at other times uncertain. As of 2011, the known Justicars were Juliette Parr, Molly Macdonald, Diana Iadanza, Ian Carfax, and Lucinde. Since 2024, their identities have been veiled in gossip and uncertainty, though most agree Lucinde continues.

**Rumored Activities:**

- Destroying Duskborn, Caitiff, wights, and mortals who know too much when a Prince fails to do so
- Culling childer in cities where Princes have let them become overpopulated
- Instating and removing Princes
- Punishing crimes against the Traditions
- Drafting Kindred to serve as Archons and for various other purposes
- Calling conclaves and negotiating on behalf of the Inner Circle
- Guarding the Camarilla's sleeping ancients

**Possible Truths:**

- Lucinde is the only remaining Justicar.
- The Justicars are the true leaders of the sect.
- One among the Justicars is a traitor and has been working against the sect from within.
- The Tremere have claimed an extra Justicar seat.

## Archon

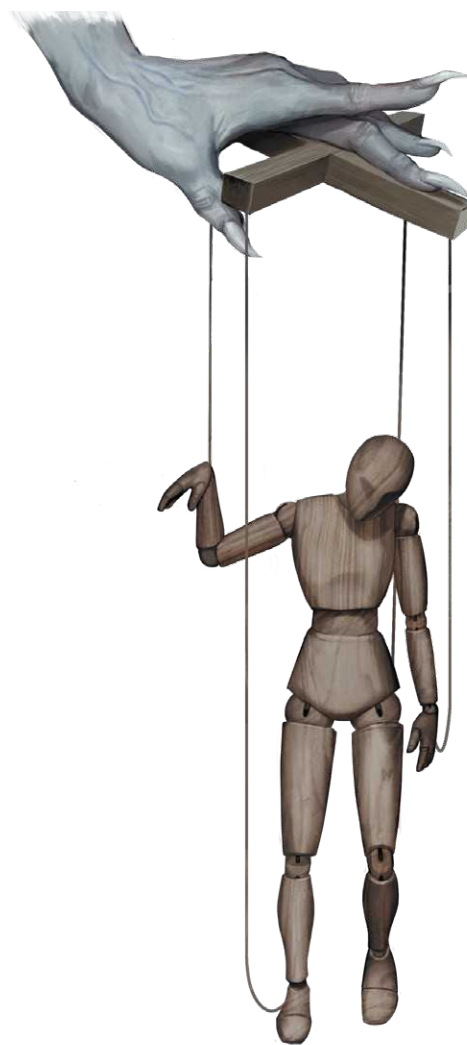
The Archons are the professed field agents of the Justicars. There have been known Archons, or those pretending to be so, functioning as inter-Court diplomats or traveling executioners. However, for the most part, they work quietly, fulfilling their orders as they travel between domains.

**Rumored Activities:**

- Spying on Camarilla Kindred to identify unworthy members
- Preserving the Masquerade
- Fighting the Second Inquisition
- Carrying out Blood Hunts
- Acting as the blindly loyal servants of the Justicars

**Possible Truths:**

- Every Justicar has several Archons beneath them.
- Archons serve for unlife.
- Archons are forced to serve for a set number of years, but are owed a life boon when they finish.
- Archons feed only on vitae.
- There are Caitiff among the Archons.




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### THE PRETENDER

There are many reasons a lick might pretend to be a Camarilla official. Doing so can mean a shield against critique or harm. It can grant them access to resources or services otherwise unavailable to an untitled domain visitor. Conversely, Camarilla officials are favored targets of the sect's enemies. Claiming to be an authorized autark can easily be the last thing you do before you become someone's meal.

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## Imperator

Imperators have walked among the undead before, so the elders say, and they do so again now. It is a wartime title, and it belongs to the lick that rises up among others to lead the Kindred into battle. As certain members of the sect begin to arm themselves and their cities and make plans to defend against the horrors of what is coming, the Kindred are talking of Imperators again.

### Rumored Activities:

- Leading Camarilla forces in the Gehenna War
- Building fortresses to protect the Kindred in future battles
- Choosing and training Kindred agents to protect the sect

- Hunting the lupine threat
- Hunting mortal hunters
- Committing diablerie on elders to thicken their Blood for war

### Possible Truths:

- The Inner Circle has personally chosen and named their Imperators as their answer to the problems facing the Camarilla in this age.
- Imperators are Kindred who have been Beckoned by ancients aligned with Camarilla goals and have answered the call.
- Those named Imperators are simply those willing to lead in a fight.

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## DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION IN THE CAMARILLA

**Down the Generations:** From grandsire to sire, and sire to childer, history and legend pass through clans and bloodlines. Where childer have been carefully watched and selected for the Embrace, there is trust in one's maker and lineage. Where the bonds of family falter, this information is seen as less reliable.

**Loremasters:** Never solely the province of the Nosferatu or Tremere, Kindred scholars have collected information from oral histories and written records. Supposed loremasters have always been sought out both by truthseekers and Masquerade purists seeking to prevent Kindred knowledge from being found by mortals.

**Peer to Peer:** The young trade their knowledge before they learn the value of secrets. The old sometimes exchange information for the right price. Though many take stories of Kindred history and governance at face value, the cynical or cautious suspect it's all a game of telephone.

**Publications:** Hand-written scrolls and codices, woodblock printing, and eventually movable type have concerned elders among the Kindred since their inception, yet stamping out the written word entirely has never been accomplished. A few texts have famously been printed and disseminated through the ages, including various fragments of the supposed Book of Nod (and Aristotile de Laurent's famous version, which Ayisha Jocastation widely published), the Pastor Mortalis, the Euagetaematikon of the Church of Caine, and others. Most believe that Justicars and their Archons suppress most of these texts and destroy all they can find. Occult grimoires containing descriptions of Blood Sorcery or Oblivion are sometimes targeted for destruction, depending on how much information they contain and if an Archon would rather quietly steal the text than destroy it.

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# THE CAMARILLA AT WAR

**T**here are whispers Gehenna will be the war to end our kind forever. Others imagine it will cast the world into eternal night, and so they welcome it. The truth is not so exciting. Wars never end anything but lives. The fight can be everything, but the world keeps turning around us, and no amount of brutal sacrifice and suffering will stop its movement. There's no relief in sight. Fortunately, some of us thrive in the center of that dance of death.

— The Hand of Vengeance, Fatima al-Faqadi

The Tower was created to protect the Kindred, and it has done so for centuries. In this age, with the growing Second Inquisition, the threat of the Gehenna War, and the resurrected Anarch menace, the Tower will stand the true test. While some domains continue more or less as always, others are beginning to take certain precautions.

## New and Old Adversaries

The Camarilla's enemies are numerous.

The hope that the **Sabbat** would consume itself has been disappointed. Instead, there is a fear that the Gehenna War is quickly approaching territories it was never expected to reach, and that the Sabbat are at the front of the forces.

**Anarch leaders** are probably already collaborating with mortal intelligence agencies to wipe out cities like Boston, Chicago, and Paris.

**Elders** are being Beckoned, not just to leave but to act where they are — sometimes against their former allies.

Even within the Tower, **minor cults** are growing, exchanging the Traditions for their own twisted sacraments.

Numina, the forces from behind the veil, which the Kindred being undead can only halfway grasp at, are gathering. **Ghostly presences, lupine congregations, mortal mystics, and ancient gods not driven by Blood** may be rising even now.

## States of Emergency

Camarilla elders haven't watched post-democratic mortal governments suspend normal constitutional rights and freedoms to tighten population control without getting ideas.

These are some signs Camarilla Kindred are preparing for war:

**Closed Domains:** Increasingly, some domains will halt travel in and out, breaking the Tradition of Hospitality to turn away Kindred visitors when they appear.

**Surveillance Cities:** Fear of enemies within the sect leads some Courts to categorically monitor every Kindred vassal, setting up informant networks and spreading rampant paranoia.

# WHISPERS FROM THE INNER CIRCLE

In 2024, the Inner Circle met to discuss the appointment of Justicars for the next 13 years... or so many Camarilla Kindred believe. As lines of travel and communication between domains have broken, it's hard to get verifiable information on the greater sect, and the Kindred are left with more questions than answers. Who sits on this global council? What changes to the Inner Circle have the Beckoning and the Vermilion Wedding wrought? Does this mysterious Inner Circle even still exist?

The thing is, whispered rumors can be as powerful as any authentic proclamations an Inner Circle might make. Decisions and proclamations slowly filter through the sect in the modern nights, and sometimes what started as one harpy's charmed invention at a dance party becomes a convincing reality a few domains over.

Camarilla neonates know there are supposed to be seven Justicars, but some say there are now eight. One rumor has it that several influential members of Clan Lasombra joined the sect at the Convention of Chicago, but the clan still does not appear to be recognized as a pillar member. Another claims the office of the Emperor, thought to have disappeared with Karsh the Turk, is back. What might it all mean? Most courtiers can only guess.

## Declared Justicars

According to rumor and hearsay, these are the Kindred who currently claim to carry the title of Justicar:

### Kasim Bayar, Clan Banu Haqim

*He's young, new, and out to prove himself. Kasim wears the mask of a corporate stooge, rolling into town with a business-goth aesthetic and taking over resources and connections left and right. His arrival upsets the local web of influence. He gives excellent, but unsolicited, advice, rarely letting others get a word in. He's one of those douchebags who wears an eyepatch... probably just for the vibes.*

— Rex, neonate Brujah



### Juliet Parr, Clan Malkavian

*Parr has maintained her seat, and I hope you never catch her attention. She resurrects old feuds and uncovers hidden connections everywhere she goes. Whenever she arrives, she seems to dig up one elder in hiding who was supposedly Beckoned, as though she can summon them like a Toreador ancilla calling a wayward ghoul.*

— Hafsa, neonate Tremere, to a friend



## Francisco Dos Santos Almeida, Clan Nosferatu

*Francisco is a relatively young Brazilian supported in his role as the Justicar by the venerable Archon Federico DiPadua. I hear that sometimes DiPadua manipulates his young superior, and other times Dos Santos Almeida moves so fast in his erratic theater of terror that the elder has trouble keeping up.*

— Overheard in Elysium somewhere in Argentina



## Diana Iadanza, Clan Toreador

*She was a longtime Archon of a previous Justicar, so Iadanza's second appointment looks like a move to entrench established power and create continuity. You know, she managed to hold onto her title despite a strong showing from Vidal Jarbeaux. I hear she's got a penchant for executing the young and ill-protected with quickly trumped-up evidence in theatrical presentations. I mean... A show trial is still a show!*

— The ancilla Marlene,  
former Herald of Atlanta



## Nathan Mendelssohn, Clan Tremere

*The former sorcerer-Scourge has been put forward as Justicar by the remaining loyalists of House Tremere. He's a blatant opportunist, using the office to shore up the badly damaged power base of his house. Many would like to oppose him, but few dare.*

— Whispered between neonate thaumaturges



## Alexandra Lau, Clan Tremere

*Lau Mei Yu is from Hong Kong and adopted a British name, like so many Cantonese people do. She only uses her traditional name with close allies, but it's not the most well-guarded of secrets. She led a conservative, reclusive existence until the fracturing of the Pyramid. Then she rose to prominence and power as one of the forces behind House Goratrix, quickly declaring herself as our Justicar. This is supported by an apparently legitimate missive from the Inner Circle. When Lau comes to town, the process of judgment tends to resemble a medieval witch hunt... If the accused burns in the sun, they were innocent. If they're immune, they're guilty.*

— Bastien, Tremere neonate of House Carna



## Lucinde, Clan Ventrue

*Lucinde is the perfect unreachable, inscrutable judge whom even Princes and elders fear. By clan and lineage, she represents conservative power, but she has been known to judge elders, ancillae, and neonates alike, preferring capricious, symbolic judgments of an ironic nature. She isn't going anywhere.*

— The Peacock of Warsaw

## The Newcomer, Clan Unknown

*I don't understand it. There are only supposed to be seven Justicars, but as far as I can tell, there are at least eight Kindred out there claiming the title. One of them is said to be a neonate, but you know the old fucks consider anyone under 100 that, so maybe that doesn't mean anything... The newcomer has been turning up in domain after domain with an entourage of Archons, and every time, they torch the place... Ghouls who've been around for more than a decade. Kindred who leave a paper trail. It's bizarre.*

— Toreador Primogen Albin  
Primrose to a colleague

**Tightened Traditions:** While a declaration of crisis can temporarily absolve breaks with tradition, it can also be used to tighten existing laws and introduce new ones. A city under attack by mortal hunters might, for instance, completely ban Camarilla lingo, including any mention of “Kindred” or “blood,” for fear of electronic devices picking up such words.

**Increased Ordeals, Punishments, and Blood Hunts:** Courts punish suspected transgressions much more harshly. There are fewer exiles and more Blood Hunts, and vassals are strongly encouraged to participate. Increased suspicion also means more Ordeals — trials wherein accused Kindred undergo some manner of test to prove their innocence.

**Examples of Ordeals:**

- Shared Memoriam to prove alibis and intentions (see Guided Memory, *Players Guide*, p. 101 or *In Memoriam*, p. 145)
- Interrogation of Kindred with True Faith using religious symbols
- Interrogation involving torture of a mortal Touchstone
- Destruction of Anarch, Sabbat, or independent licks to prove allegiance
- Psychological evaluation
- The fulfillment of dangerous tasks and challenges to prove loyalty

**Changed Relations with the Kine:** Courts that expect they’ll soon have to defend themselves change how they interact with mortal society. Instead of investing in relations with the financial sector or local politics, they might become interested in military institutions, innovative tech, and the weapons trade.

**Resource Hoarding:** War isn’t just battle and death. It’s also espionage, financial trickery, blackmail, the race for real estate, and the manipulation of public opinion. While some Courts try to secure their future by gathering powerful allies to barricade themselves behind, others run misinformation campaigns to prep the kine against panic or buy up commercial explosives companies.

**Enemies Become Allies:** Suddenly, there is an Anarch arms dealer grinning ear to ear in Elysium, and no one is allowed to do anything about it because the Primogen Council has convinced the Prince that this alliance is the city’s best defense.



## Red Lists

According to rumor, the Inner Circle has a list of official enemies of the sect, Kindred who have become *Anathema* through betrayal or who are active in the movements that fight to take the Tower down. Individuals like Tyler and Theo Bell. In practice, the red list looks a little different depending on where in the World of Darkness you are and whom you ask. But all Kindred agree that those on the list are free game; they have lost the Camarilla’s protection.

For Kindred on the ground, the reality is that local Princes and other rulers have red lists of their own, applicable to their domain and perhaps a few neighboring ones if they’re particularly influential. The Red List, which encompasses the whole Camarilla, has the status of a myth, talked about but rarely confirmed.

## Uses of Red Lists

These are some different ways Kindred might use a red list to benefit the sect or for their own personal gain:

**Barricading the Tower:** News of red-listed Kindred tends to travel quickly between domains and thus helps stop the sect's enemies from traveling freely inside its territories.

**United Against the Other:** A city of Kindred who think they're hunting for the same enemy is a city that doesn't fight itself.

**Political Victory:** "Naturally, an Anathema cannot be a titled courtier."

**Domain Annexation:** "Anathema shouldn't hold domain."

**Access:** Claiming to hunt a red-listed lick might gain you access to otherwise closed Camarilla territories.

**Revenge:** Making others believe that someone is on the red list can be a good way to neutralize them.

**Sanctioned Diablerie:** It's always open season on red-listed Anathema, providing a good excuse for someone looking to strengthen their Blood with another's essence.

**Anarch Status:** A Kindred looking to infiltrate an Anarch domain might have a much easier time doing so if the Anarchs think they're an enemy of the Tower. ■

*You think you know how they're going to fuck everyone over, but when it happens, they still manage to surprise you. For me, the surprise was when the Second Inquisition started, the Camarilla leaked the havens of many Anarchs. I didn't realize they could be so fucking stupid.*

*I'm sure that it made sense when those fuckers were gathered around that big mahogany table in their meeting room, pontificating about using their enemies against each other.*

*That one maneuver helped the Second Inquisition hunters learn more about vampires than whatever they've compiled over the centuries in Vatican archives.*

*I worked for the Camarilla as an Archon for a long, long time, keeping up the Masquerade, rooting out Sabbat scum. You had to play the game. So I had two childer in the Anarchs, feeding me information. They were both fuckups when I found them, but they shaped up well enough when the Blood gave them a second chance.*

*I thought Tamika might even be Archon material herself. Troy took down a werewolf once, so he wasn't useless either.*

*Both of them were burnt by the sun when those Second Inquisition bastards dragged them out.*

*That's what I've learned about these Machiavellian fucks in the Camarilla. Sometimes the cleverest of them do the dumbest things. Maybe there was a time the Camarilla really did represent the best chance at stability for our kind. Or maybe I was blind from the start.*

— Theo Bell, Brujah and former Archon



## Chapter Three:



# THE MOVEMENT

*You know that thing they say, that war is the continuation of politics through other means? It makes it sound so clean, but I guess it's true. We got fed up with the Camarilla politics in this city, so I'm going to drink you dry. That's the other means.*

— The Brujah Agata Starek,  
addressing a soon-to-be destroyed Ventruue

**T**he Third Anarch Revolt has been a success. The ongoing revolution has made major gains against the Camarilla, establishing the Anarchs as one of the great vampire sects on par with the Ivory Tower itself, the Ashirra, and the Sabbat. While the Anarchs held domains before the Third Revolt, it reignited the Movement and spurred expansion into numerous new territories.

There's always a price to be paid for getting everything you want. Anarchs in possession of new domains have had to figure out how to organize and prepare for counterattacks, mortal hunters, and other oncoming threats. While older Anarch domains have long-established practices, many newly minted Anarchs insist on doing things their own way.

This means that while the core tenets of what it means to be an Anarch are widely accepted, the actual political arrangements of individual domains differ dramatically. The current setup of a typical Anarch domain is not a tradition that goes back centuries but is something a successful revolutionary came up with a year ago.

# DOMAIN TYPES

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Anarch domains are in flux, with several common types prevalent around the world. The basic Anarch unit of organization is the gang, typically with 3–10 members. The equivalent of the Camarilla coterie, many gangs have clearly recognizable leaders, but the Anarchs wouldn't be Anarchs if there weren't a lot of different ways to organize out there.

## The Movement

Many among the Anarchs still remember the dream of Carthage. According to legend, Kindred and kine coexisted openly and peacefully in a utopian society where mortals gave their blood and vampires protected them and taught them wisdom. This perfect society was then destroyed by Roman Ventrue and Malkavians who were jealous of Carthaginian success, leading to two millennia of anti-Carthaginian propaganda.

Some of the most utopian Anarch dreamers espouse a return to these ideals. They argue that the Masquerade must be abolished and that there's no need for the Kindred to take by force what so many mortals would freely give.

**Leaders:** Utopian domains are often led by a single charismatic individual. The dream is particularly vibrant among the Brujah, but Malkavian or even Ministry visionaries are not unheard of.

**Success:** The odds are stacked against this dream, so any success is modest at best. On a local scale, it might mean a small insular town where every resident has been inducted into the Carthaginian blood cult.

Carthaginian domains are exceptionally unstable, but before they fall, they can provide wonderfully willing herds for an opportunistic Anarch gang.

**Failure:** The Second Inquisition. The Camarilla and its Justicars. Even fellow Anarchs. Both Kindred and hunters unite in seeking to demolish any attempt to establish a domain according to Carthaginian tenets. Failure is just a question of which enemy shows up first.

For an unscrupulous Anarch gang, spreading rumors that a rival harbors Carthaginian sympathies is a good way to cause trouble. Such domains have a way of attracting Kindred scholars interested in ancient history and sometimes feature visionaries and occultists able to teach unique abilities before they must escape the community's inevitable demise.

## Fake Anarch Domain

For most vampires, their very existence is predicated on pretending to be other than what they are. As such, it's no surprise that some Anarch domains are just Camarilla in disguise. Maybe the domain is surrounded by Anarchs, and camouflage is deemed necessary, or an Anarch boss is planning to become a Camarilla Prince step-by-step. Maybe the domain's Court defused an Anarch revolt by pretending that it was successful.

Whatever the case, the domain is Anarch in name only.

**Leaders:** The domain is ruled by a Baron with an advisory council composed of the oldest Anarchs in the domain. When asked, the Baron denies any resemblance to Camarilla leadership structures.

**Success:** The domain functions as if it were a Camarilla domain, and maybe one night it'll make the switch. When it happens, nothing changes.

It can be difficult for an Anarch gang to embrace Camarilla philosophy. The Ivory Tower has become paranoid, and fear of Anarch demagogues agitating among the neonates is founded in bitter experience. It might be easier to make the switch if the entire domain does so at once.

**Failure:** The Anarchs are not stupid. Many are exceptionally politically minded and will surely realize that this is not a genuine revolutionary domain. When that realization comes, the hapless Baron might be faced with an uprising of their own.

A revolution is a chance for an Anarch gang to make a name for themselves, regardless of whether it's against a Prince or a Baron.

## Gang War

Not every Anarch is a high-minded ideologue. Many, perhaps most, are just ordinary licks trying to make it night to night, keen to look out for their territory for fear of poachers. A domain rife with gang warfare has no use for principles or ideals. What matters is destroying the enemy before they destroy you.

"The enemy" being other Anarchs.

A gang war can be devastating, often leaving over half of the domain's vampire population in ashes and inviting in hunters who take note of the inevitable Masquerade breaches.

**Leaders:** Each gang has its own leaders, intent on taking out the others.

**Success:** A domain suffering from a gang war can stabilize in many different ways. One gang can achieve a total victory, shaping the domain to their liking. The gangs may tire of the war, negotiate peace, and become a different type of domain. Or the Second Inquisition may swoop in to destroy everybody.

If an Anarch gang is willing to engage in a bit of brutality, a war is when fortunes change very quickly. You might go from having no territory

to controlling the whole city in one night. Or you might be destroyed by someone else going for the same thing.

**Failure:** If Kindred conflict escalates into total war, even the ostensible winner is so weakened that someone else is bound to swoop in and take over. Camarilla Princes certainly have the ability to reclaim their lost domains by stepping in after the Anarchs have destroyed each other.

There's no reason the aftermath of a gang war can't be exploited by the players' gang or coterie. They just have to time it correctly — after the fighting has died down, before anyone else shows up.

## Old Anarch Domain

The old-timers in this domain remember the Second Anarch Revolt, and for a particularly venerable European domain, maybe even the first. For a long time, the domain was a rare bastion of freedom in the midst of conservative Camarilla rule. While it kept the fire of the revolution lit, the turmoil of the Third Anarch Revolt was a shock.

Suddenly, real change is possible and all these young licks refuse to accept the pessimistic attitudes of their seniors. More than one Anarch ancilla has been left in the dust as fledglings and neonates bask in the glory of the revolution.

**Leaders:** There's some variety in the leadership structures of old Anarch domains, but they tend to be stable and steeped in accumulated tradition. No matter if the leader is a Baron or the domain is ruled by a council of gang bosses, the system has grown comfortable, even ossified.

**Success:** An old Anarch domain is a repository of experience, knowledge, and even ideological principles. Older Anarchs who experienced the Second Anarch Revolt bring those experiences to bear to ensure new successes in the modern nights.

A gang from an established domain can leverage its experience and resources to become successful leaders in the Third Anarch Revolt, much like the Brujah ideologue Salvador Garcia has done.

**Failure:** Eventually, the revolutionary wave washes over the old Anarch domain, demolishing its elites, just as with any Camarilla domain.

For players' characters involved in the Third Anarch Revolt, such a situation is an opportunity to make sure that no dusty ancilla is going to claim their glory after the war has already been won. The future belongs to the young.

## Ongoing Revolution

The domain has only recently gone over to the Anarchs, and revolutionary fervor is still in the air. Perhaps there are Camarilla holdouts to uncover or neighboring domains that also need to be freed from the rule of the elders. Whatever the specifics of the situation, the fire and fury of the revolutionary spirit haven't had time to die down.

**Leaders:** An ongoing revolution is often such a messy business that its organizational structure is quite loose, consisting of a leadership council supported by various gang leaders. Common identifiable individual roles are those of an ideologue, who explains what the revolution is for; a war leader, who directs violent action; and emissaries and demagogues, who seek to win support for the cause in new domains.

**Success:** The revolution cannot be stopped. It spreads onwards until neighboring Camarilla domains fall as well in a shockwave of violence. Eventually, the energies of the revolution are spent, leaving behind a number of thriving Anarch domains.

For an Anarch gang, this presents an opportunity to grab new domains and make themselves the leaders of a pristine territory.



**Failure:** The revolution turns on itself. Now that there are no obvious Camarilla enemies to strike, Anarchs find fault in their comrades, turning the domain into a vicious free-for-all where anyone can be denounced as a traitor at any time.

The stakes are high, but for a clever, ruthless, and committed Anarch gang, the general melee is an environment rich in opportunity. You can rise to the top or get destroyed, but at least you'll get to take your shot.

## Open City

The domain has open doors to any Kindred who might wish to drop by for a peaceful visit. The local Anarch gangs are not particularly territorial, and core feeding territories, such as the nightlife district, are open to visitors. This is what the freedom promised by the Anarchs is all about! No Prince or Baron is going to tell you where you can or can't go.

Permanent residence might be a different question, though. In most open cities, visiting is fine, but staying requires bypassing all the usual barriers.

**Leaders:** To be able to function successfully, an open city usually requires a Baron or gang bosses who take an easygoing attitude to the affairs of the city but act with ruthless efficiency when basic security makes it necessary. If a visitor is breaching the Masquerade or acts like a Sabbat scout, there's no time for playing nice.

**Success:** The whole existence of an open city is almost always predicated on the fact that the free flow of Kindred brings some sort of benefit to the locals. This might be a tax of some sort, or a status as neutral ground for high-level meetings and the security this brings. Perhaps the locals calculate that the constant presence of visitors acts as a useful buffer against Sabbat incursions.

An open city presents plenty of opportunities for Anarch gangs who are used to more limited and guarded interactions between the undead. Enemies can parley, and deals can be made.

**Failure:** Sometimes, an open city is just a domain with leadership so weak that anybody can waltz in. Local Anarch bosses might pretend that it's because they believe in freedom, but in reality, it's because they can't defend their territory. As a result, hostile entities from all corners converge, eventually leading to the domain's collapse.

For a ruthless gang of Anarch cutthroats, this could be an opportunity. Maybe the players' characters sense weakness in the pirate utopia rhetoric of a nearby domain and decide to take over.

## Pre-Revolutionary Domain

A Camarilla domain on the brink of revolution is crawling with Anarchs. Brujah demagogues from long-held Anarch domains sneak around agitating the local neonates to overthrow their elders, while martially minded revolutionaries make maps marking the havens of their enemies.

Sometimes, a pre-revolutionary domain is Camarilla in name only, having already gone over to the Anarchs on the level of nightly business. The Prince holds Court, but nobody cares; their power is limited to what they can see, touch, and hurt.

**Leaders:** The leader of the domain is theoretically a Camarilla Prince, but in reality, various Anarch gang bosses and demagogues hold sway as the local Kindred prepare to oust Camarilla loyalists for good.

**Success:** The revolution happens. Camarilla-minded Kindred are kicked out, the Prince is in ashes, and the local Kindred get to work setting up a well-functioning Anarch domain.

For young, newly minted Anarchs, this is a golden opportunity to claim territory of their own, get revenge for humiliations suffered under the Camarilla era, and make sure they have a seat at the table with any future leadership arrangements.

**Failure:** It's embarrassing when a successful revolution devolves into bickering and infighting. It's even worse when it happens before the enemy

has even been vanquished. Sometimes, Anarchs manage to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory by turning against each other instead of making sure the enemy is really, truly destroyed. Patience is a common virtue among Camarilla Princes, and many are capable of just waiting for their enemies to destroy themselves.

A failing revolution is a wonderful opportunity for traitorous Anarchs. They can go to the Camarilla Prince and pretend to have been loyal all along, willing to help with squashing the insurrection in exchange for future considerations.

## Social Experiment

Only the youngest may lead. Anyone who's been a vampire for longer than a year is automatically disqualified. Ghouls are just another type of vampire and must be treated equally in the domain. Thin-blood supremacy is demonstrated by the obvious fact that only they can walk in the sun. All vampires must drink each other's Blood in monthly ceremonies to ensure harmony. A new Baron is chosen annually on New Year's and destroyed when they leave office.

An Anarch revolution presents an opportunity to put ideas into practice. Ideologues who have long cherished their own theories of how Kindred society should be organized get their chance to demonstrate how it really works.

**Leaders:** Experimental domains are commonly led by a single charismatic individual or a committed coterie of true believers.

**Success:** It really works! Somehow, the grand ideas of the experiment have produced a stable, successful domain. Sometimes, this is because the ideas are genuinely good, but it's also possible that success is the result of the personal power and charisma of the ringleaders who mistake their own influence for ideological success. The difference becomes clear when someone less capable tries to copy the concept.

Maybe you are the visionary at the core of the experiment. When revolution happens, take your

shot and build the paradise you've always seen in your mind.

**Failure:** Not surprisingly, the common outcome for Kindred social experiments is catastrophe. Vampires are selfish, greedy, treacherous backstabbers, and trying to redeem them into new social configurations is an uphill battle. Utopia devolves into accusations of brainwashing, crumbling Humanity, and wights running wild in the streets.

In such carnage, opportunity awaits. The ruins of a social experiment are often fertile territory for someone to come in and build a more conservative Anarch domain under their own rule.

## Wasteland

The domain is in ruins. Most of the local Kindred are in ashes, and the survivors cower in their havens, scared to come out. The cohesion of the local Kindred society has broken down, and nobody has a clear idea of who's where.

In its own way, the wasteland is a peaceful type of Anarch domain because there are so few vampires left to fight.

**Leaders:** None.

**Success:** Nowhere to go but up. The slate has been wiped clean, presenting an opportunity to create something new.

There's not a lot of empty territory for a young Anarch gang to move into, so this is a chance for those who dare to set things up according to their own preferences.

**Failure:** The reason the domain is a wasteland is still there — the Second Inquisition and the Sabbat being the most common. In both cases, new Kindred who try to move in get destroyed just as the original inhabitants were.

For players' characters fighting against the Second Inquisition or the Sabbat, the wasteland offers a chance to draw their enemies out into the open. After achieving a seemingly total victory, the attacker grows complacent, presenting an opportunity for those bold enough to exploit it.

# CLANS IN THE MOVEMENT



*Three clans dominate the Anarch Movement.*



## Brujah

*“We do not fear change; we ride it, steer it, control it.”*

Clan Brujah has always been the heart of the Anarch Movement, driving its uprisings and revolts. For the most part, that doesn't make them act as though they're better than other Anarchs. However, in some cities, younger gangs of Brujah have banded together in what's becoming known as the Brujah United movement, refusing membership to any not of their own clan. These rebels are disappointed in the Anarchs at large, angry that they're too moderate, and itching to set the night on fire. Other, more experienced members of the clan do what they can to keep calm and think ahead, trying to navigate a political environment that's almost impossible to control and even harder to predict.

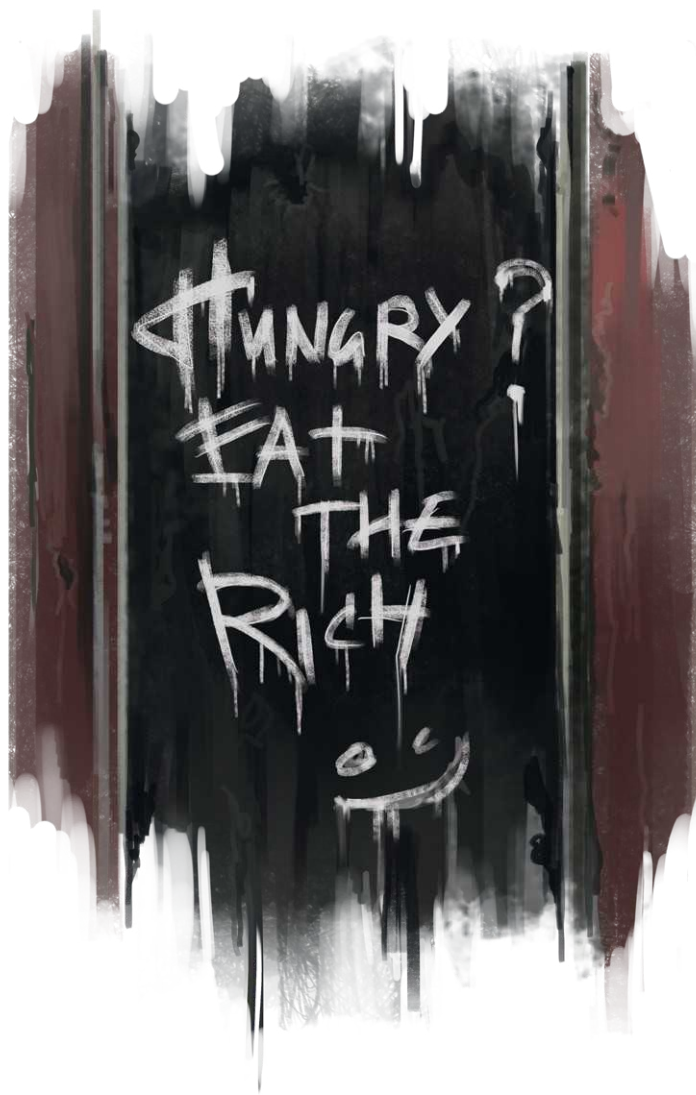
To be an Anarch Brujah tonight is to move between opposing currents in the revolution. Everywhere you turn, someone has an action plan or an ideology to sell you — and if you don't provide the right response, they may start to see you as another enemy. To stay true to your own ideals, you've got to be both slippery and decisive.

## Character Concepts

**Brujah United Member:** Convinced of their own strength and the superiority of their own clan, this vampire is quick to action and just as quick to jump to conclusions in support of their own beliefs.

**War Chronicler:** They document the revolution to learn from the moves of its enemies, report back to their domain leaders, or spread its hopeful message.

**Recruiter for the Cause:** This Brujah knows that the Movement can only continue by growing, and they've taken the dangerous path of infiltrating enemy territory to recruit. They probably have high Leadership and Charisma, or at least a very good story of Camarilla oppression.



## Gangrel

*"No rules, no masters."*

True Anarchs know that most of the Gangrel have been on their side since the beginning, yet too many remain loyal to the Tower. This means that while the clan is generally well respected in the Movement, it doesn't take much to be viewed with some suspicion, especially if you only recently escaped the Camarilla's claws.

Known to be uncompromising and deadly no matter their focus, members of Clan Gangrel can

do well both as warriors and negotiators among the Anarchs, gaining influence on the basis that others often fear the risk of crossing them. On the other hand, young Gangrel can quickly find themselves in deeper water than they can handle, as older Anarchs overestimate their chances of making it through dangerous missions.

The clan's past servitude as "Camarilla watchdogs" means that a young Gangrel sometimes has to work hard to prove that they're not about to be taken advantage of and that they're not eager to return to the welcoming embrace of their former masters.

## Character Concepts

**Survivor:** Betrayed by their former coterie or faction, this Gangrel learned that loyalty is just another tool. They use others while they can, telling themselves that their freedom and the cause they fight for justify any betrayal.

**Protector:** This Gangrel has been put in the unfortunate position of following a well-meaning but lacking leader. Out of loyalty, they do their best to follow orders, but sometimes they have to do one thing and say another to protect their gang and the very leader they quietly disobey.

**Warden:** Once a Sheriff's Hound in a Camarilla city, this Gangrel is now an Anarch enforcer who knows exactly how the other side operates. They offer their expertise to the Movement, but everyone wonders if they're still running errands for some Court.

**Nomadic Fighter:** Not connected to any particular city or domain, they travel to the fight, wherever it is.



## The Ministry

*"Ah, revolution, what a splendid religion."*

In recent years, a significant number of Ministers have joined the Anarch cause. This is partly due to falling out with power players among Camarilla luminaries, and partly to what they claim is genuine belief in the cause. Many Anarchs mistrust these new joiners, but they can't deny their usefulness. You gingerly welcome a Minister into your city, blink, and suddenly they've made themselves indispensable by installing security systems in all your safe houses, setting up a blood-smuggling system that totally circumvents mortal institutions, and introducing their mortal mask to the mortal union dock workers, so they now control the waterways.

They might not be eager to fight physically, but Ministers are natural leaders and planners. In some cases, their moral flexibility even makes them coolheaded enough to do more for the Movement than their more passionate allies.

## Character Concepts:

**Honest Liar:** This Minister is struggling to win the trust of their local Anarch community because they've been caught lying about their priorities before. This time, they're genuine, but how will they convince their allies of this? Perhaps they can pin the blame for their past misdeeds on someone else.

**Social Magnet:** Hardly the most fearsome bloodsucker in the city, they have this energy about them that makes others want to be where they are, hear what they have to say, and discover what they know.

**Community Pillar:** They're at the center of a mortal congregation, cult, or cultural community, guiding the lonely and helping the poor. They use this influence to support the Anarch Movement with information and with blood.

## Everyone Else

In general, everyone is invited to join the Anarch revolution. There's space for both the Unchained Malkavians, Red Nosferatu, Abstract Toreador, Ipsissimus Tremere, Emancipated Hecata, Caitiff orphans, Duskborn delinquents, and even, with a little convincing, the so-called Free Ventrue, the theoretical Enlightened Tzimisce, and childer of the Banu Haqim or the Lasombra, who are otherwise rumored to vie for Camarilla membership.

But being welcomed to join the fight isn't quite the same as being trusted. The Movement may be brutally disorganized at times, amid massive changes, and it grows too quickly to hold onto its territories without constantly expanding. This doesn't mean it's blind to danger from within. You'll have to prove yourself no matter what your background is, but especially if your bloodline stinks of Camarilla culture.

As for the rarer clans, the Ravnos, the mythical Salubri... Well, as with everything, it depends on the locals. Perhaps they'll be welcomed on equal footing like everyone else, or perhaps they'll be used as tinder in a bonfire planned for Camarilla courtiers.

# FACES OF THE REVOLUTION

If you're interested in Anarch politics, there are a few movers and shakers who have come to personify the Anarch struggle.



## Saima Aro

Like many Anarchs, Aro was once just one poor mortal among countless others, her appearance or ambition in no way indicative of a future existence as one of the undead. She came to the U.S. as an immigrant in 1868, fleeing the Great Famine in Finland, and worked as a serving girl in households in Milwaukee and Michigan. A staunch communist, she was often fired from her posts because of her unyielding agitation.

Aro originally became a vampire in a Sabbat mass Embrace in 1877, ending up in a pack of confused and ravenous undead with only a vague idea of the various Sabbat philosophies they used to avoid becoming wights. While many of her compatriots were destroyed or succumbed to the Beast, she managed to regain a semblance of her former humanity and dig herself out of a haze of blood and Hunger. She was never quite a wight, but for a time, she'd existed as a forest-dwelling terror, attacking small settlements at night with her pack for sustenance.

Aro found the Anarch Free States in her search of a community and something to believe in. Since then, she has become a grim sentinel of Anarch orthodoxy, subscribing to a belief that for a domain to be successful, it must be cleansed of Camarilla loyalists and other such scum. Never an intellectual, she takes her cues from Anarch leaders who, in her eyes, have proven their commitment to the cause. She focuses on the practical reality of finding traitors and destroying them.

Aro's reputation among Anarchs is dark, as she believes in quick field trials followed by a summary execution. Sect leaders support her, however, since she does their dirty work while allowing them to remain clean. She's also something of a hero to

many young Ravnos in the sect as the rare, comparatively older member of their clan who's capable of protecting the bloodline.

Her signature move is to weigh down the body of a vampire and sink it in a muddy lake to lie there in torpor for eternity.

**Clan:** Ravnos

**Generation:** 11th

**Embrace:** 1877

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 5, Mental 6, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 10, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 10, Firearms 10, Investigation 8

**Disciplines:** Animalism 3 (Bond Famulus, Feral Whispers, Animal Succulence), Fortitude 2 (Resilience, Toughness), Obfuscate 4 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Ghost in the Machine, Vanish), Presence 2 (Daunt, Lingering Kiss), Protean 3 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons, Earth Meld)

**In Stories:** Among the Anarchs, Aro is something akin to the Archons of the Camarilla, someone who comes to the domain on the trail of a traitor, seeking to destroy them before they can betray the sect. As an enemy, she's dangerous and relentless. If she believes the players' characters to be traitorous, she'll start picking off their contacts one by one.

As an ally, Aro's arrival can feel like a stroke of luck. She destroys the enemies of the players' characters, often in grimly inventive executions. The problems start if the characters have done something that could be understood as a betrayal of the Anarch Movement.





## Theo Bell

Theo Bell was known as a Camarilla Archon for much of his unlife until he famously betrayed the Camarilla and destroyed the Ventrue elder Hardestadt by shooting him in the face. The rumors of this act were crucial in getting the Third Anarch Revolt off the ground.

As a mortal, Bell was the child of an enslaved family in Mississippi. He was Embraced by a Camarilla luminary, the Brujah Justicar Udolfo Cerro de León, who brought him to Europe and took him on a tour of various Courts. Eventually, Bell became an Archon and a loyal servant of the Camarilla, always believing he was doing the most good by enforcing the Traditions.

In the later years of his service, Bell learned to detest many of the elders and ancillae who held power in the Camarilla. He saw the consequences of their actions up close

and understood the terrible toll they took on mortal society. Still, he believed that as an institution, the Camarilla was the better alternative. He fought against the Sabbat and against Kindred who broke the Masquerade.

One of the reasons Bell's attack on Hardestadt at the Convention of Prague was so shocking was that he was known for his loyalty. The action was motivated by a deep sense of betrayal from learning that Camarilla agents had leaked information about Anarch havens to the Second Inquisition. Bell felt that by doing so, the elders he served had put everything he'd ever worked for at risk.

Afterwards, Bell joined the Anarchs, where he immediately became a controversial figure. Some saw him as a cop, barely better than a Camarilla Sheriff despite his one revolutionary act, while others welcomed him because his defection was a sign of Camarilla weakness.

Bell himself has been uncomfortable in the Anarchs but has tried to make the best of it because he has no other options. He continues to do what he did as an Archon, protecting the Masquerade and fighting the Sabbat, even if his new allies sometimes worry him.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 9th

**Embrace:** 1857

**Blood Potency:** 4

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 9, Social 7, Mental 8, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 10, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 10, Firearms 10, Investigation 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Heightened Senses, Premonition), Celerity 4 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness, Blink, Unerring Aim), Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 2 (Resilience, Toughness), Obfuscate 2 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage), Potence 4 (Lethal Body, Prowess, Brutal Feed, Draught of Might), Presence 4 (Daunt, Lingering Kiss, Dread Gaze, Summon)

**In Stories:** When Theo Bell is there, something bad is about to happen. The Sabbat is about to attack, or there's war with the Camarilla. The worst, however, is internal dissension in the Anarchs. Bell's reflexes are still those of an Archon, and when he sees a Masquerade breach, he'll execute the offender, something that causes controversy among the hierarchy-averse Anarchs.

As an enemy, Bell is relentless. In physical combat, he's fearless, but he also has a faction of Anarchs behind him, and his opinion can sour them on the players' characters quickly. The Masquerade has its proponents even among the unbound.



## Salvador Garcia

A famous intellectual of the modern Anarch Movement, Salvador Garcia made his reputation in the Second Anarch Revolt. He was born in Spain to a family of farmers and participated in revolutionary politics while he was alive. His Embrace made it possible for him to fight for freedom without the limitations of mortality.

This is what he has done for a century and more. After initial losses for the Anarchs in Spain, he escaped to the U.S., plotting the Second Anarch Revolt in Los Angeles with other luminaries of the Movement, such as Jeremy MacNeil. It started in 1944 with the destruction of the Prince of Los Angeles and spread from there as other domains found inspiration in the act.

The revolution resulted in the creation of the Anarch Free States in Los Angeles, still one of the most successful Anarch domains anywhere in the world. For many years, Garcia was occupied with trying to put his ideals into practice in the Free

States, creating the ideal society he had envisioned and getting lost in the minutiae of local politics.

With the Third Anarch Revolt, Garcia was revitalized, deciding once more to concern himself with the Movement as a whole. This may have come as a relief because it freed him from having to deal with the nightly reality of his political dream, something he's never been good at.

Garcia is a handsome and charismatic Spaniard, Embraced in his 20s when he'd already experienced his share of action. He's energized by speaking to crowds and likes trying to make allies out of his enemies. After all, freedom ultimately benefits everyone. An ancilla, he has lost touch with mortal dreams and aspirations, and these nights, his idealism tends to ignore the rights and needs of the living. Whether this is a blind spot or not depends on who you ask.

Many younger Anarchs see Garcia as old-fashioned, even ridiculous, with all his high-minded talk of libertas, but he has plenty of followers because when the Third Anarch Revolt started, he joined the fight once again, unlike some of his contemporaries. Taking part in overthrowing Camarilla regimes lent him crucial credibility. In the eyes of many, he's still got it.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 9th

**Embrace:** 1892

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 7, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 8, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Leadership 9, Streetwise 9, Politics 9

**Disciplines:** Celerity 1 (Cat's Grace), Dominate 1 (Cloud Memory), Fortitude 1 (Resilience), Potence 2 (Lethal Body, Prowess), Presence 3 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Entrancement), Protean 2 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons)

**In Stories:** Salvador Garcia shows up when something big is about to happen among the Anarchs. He's a harbinger of revolution — a Camarilla domain overthrowing the Prince or an attack being prepared to topple the neighboring Prince. He's not particularly interested in the small and the local, preferring to think in terms of the entire Movement.

For players' characters, Garcia's presence may validate their ambitions or act as an unwelcome foil to them. He's an idealist and tends to favor plans to build utopian domains where all Kindred can be free. If the players' characters seek to emerge as the rulers of a new domain, this might not be what they want.



## Rudi

A grassroots-level Anarch leader in Copenhagen, Rudi has a knack for collecting strays, helping them get on their feet. In the process, he teaches them his version of the Anarch creed. His unofficial gathering of Anarchs is called Rudi's Army and wields surprising power despite its seemingly disparate nature.

Rudi still holds on to the remains of his mortal existence, and he's young enough that he can meet old friends without arousing suspicion. The milieu around him hasn't changed, and he tells himself that he's still the same person he always was, just trying to help the people around him. He knows that vampires poison the communities they're in but believes that he'll somehow make the exception.

A gay man in life, Rudi still tries to maintain contact with the community that meant so much to him, even as the associated emotions and desires start to get confused with the eternal Hunger of the

dead. He tries to be a good person even though he knows that his Hunger, and that of his Army, drains the life from the mortals around him.

A popular leader, Rudi is seen as someone who walks the walk, spending his time on the streets and in the havens of his followers. Although he often has the role of a teacher, he tries to avoid being cast into a leadership role because, in his mind, Anarchs must be equal. Still, his natural talent makes him someone others follow despite his ideals.

Copenhagen is nominally a Camarilla domain, but the Prince is weak enough that, effectively, the Anarchs have taken over. Paradoxically, being theoretically a Camarilla member has given Rudi more freedom to build his Army than he otherwise might have because he doesn't have to fight the Ivory Tower. The problem is that when something bad happens and his vampiric nature causes him to hurt someone, there's nobody to blame except himself.

**Clan:** Gangrel

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 2009

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 8

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 8, Mental 6, Disciplines 5

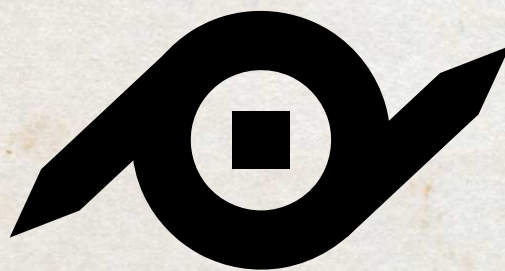
**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 7, Leadership 9, Streetwise 9

**Disciplines:** Animalism 3 (Sense the Beast, Feral Whispers, Animal Succulence), Fortitude 2 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Protean 2 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons)

**In Stories:** Rudi is what passes for a well-meaning, good person among the Kindred, but he's a vampire, which means that eventually, his Beast is going to sabotage his aspirations. He works best in an introspective, street-level story where the focus is on how the base Hunger for blood perverts and twists even those who try to do good.

As an enemy, Rudi's strength is in his ability to fade into the woodwork and emerge again with new allies. He seems to know everybody, and he's admired by a lot of people, mortal and undead alike. Because of this, he's hard to take out. The repercussions would be severe, and possibly from unforeseen quarters.



## Hesha Ruhadze

An elder occultist and Church of Set true believer, Hesha Ruhadze likes to present a benevolent façade for himself as well as the clan and faith he represents. Despite his sincere faith, he has at times found himself at odds with Church of Set orthodoxy because in the modern nights, the hierarchy is dominated by Kindred much younger than he is. While Ruhadze insists on genuine revelation, many in the Church prioritize their own political needs and adjust their faith accordingly.

Ruhadze affects a sophisticated manner, coming across as highly educated and even fashionable in his own way. All of this is a well-created persona, built over his actual roots as a mortal living village life in the 17th-century Funj Sultanate. His first experiences of a local version of the Church of Set were as a mortal, when many of the people he knew came to worship the Kindred leaders of the

blood cult. Ruhadze was Embraced by these members of the Ministry because of his intelligence and talent.

As Ruhadze learned more about the tenets of the Church of Set, he internalized a simple idea: occult and religious truth exists in the world, can be discovered, and has been known to ancient Kindred in ages past. By seeking to confer with the ancient blood gods and discover writings from those with direct knowledge of the Antediluvians and other entities of vampire myth, it would be possible to discover true wisdom.

While Ruhadze has kept his haven in many different domains across the centuries, his basic quest has remained the same. Now that the Gehenna War rages across the world, he feels that there are unique opportunities to make discoveries that have long eluded him. Ruhadze has always assumed that the true picture formed out of various pieces of occult wisdom is going to support his faith. If this doesn't happen, his intellectual integrity may lead him down strange paths indeed.

Ruhadze is not an ideological Anarch. He finds it easier to conduct his business in domains affiliated with the Movement, but if that changes, he'll switch to another sect without giving the matter much thought.

**Clan:** The Ministry

**Generation:** 8th

**Embrace:** 1687

**Blood Potency:** 4

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 9, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Subterfuge 9, Academics 10 (Ancient Religion, Philology), Occult 10

**Disciplines:** Animalism 2 (Sense the Beast, Feral Whispers), Auspex 1 (Sense the Unseen), Fortitude 1 (Unswayable Mind), Obfuscate 3 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Mask of a Thousand Faces), Potence 1 (Soaring Leap), Presence 3 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Entrancement), Protean 5 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons, Shapechange, Metamorphosis, The Unfettered Heart), Blood Sorcery 5 (A Taste for Blood, Extinguish Vitae, Scorpion's Touch, Theft of Vitae, Baal's Caress; Rituals: Blood Walk, Clinging of the Insect, Eyes of Babel, Ward Against Spirits, Essence of Air, Incorporeal Passage, Heart of Stone)

**In Stories:** Initially, Ruhadze comes across as a proponent of religious freedom and open inquiry, curious and generous to those who share his esoteric interests. He participates in the Anarch political process to the degree that he can protect his clan and church. It's only with time that the players' characters may figure out that he'll sacrifice anything and anyone for the wisdom he seeks, and that the apocalyptic ascension prophesied by the Church of Set is not going to be a paradise on Earth for most people.



## Agata Starek

A successful Anarch revolution requires two parts: first, you demolish or subvert the old order, and then you build a new one to replace it. An Anarch legend, the Bahari-inspired Brujah Agata Starek represents the nihilism of focusing only on tearing down what has been built.

Starek believes in fighting for the underdog, but her way of doing it is mercurial and destructive. Often, when the underdog finally wins, Starek turns against them.

Born in Kraków, Poland, Starek has traveled widely, often showing up at various crisis points and violent confrontations. She has a habit of inventing stories about her past, making it difficult to establish concrete details. The goal of these stories has often been to ridicule the idea that there's an explanation in her personal history for why she's like this, as she maintains that she merely embodies the revolutionary virtues of the Anarchs and the Bahari approach to personal growth.

Many Bahari have disowned her, claiming that she doesn't understand or follow their principles.

Starek is often seen as a terrifying, even demonic figure among Camarilla cities and more established Anarchs because of her penchant for gleeful diablerie. She seems to take particular joy from drinking her enemies dry, particularly the

Venture, and has a unique facility for escaping consequences that have doomed many less accomplished in the art.

Despite her destructive nature, Starek has many admirers among the Anarchs. To those who have suffered bitter humiliation under Camarilla rule, Starek is like an avenging angel, coming down to burn their tormentors to ashes. Who cares what happens after that?

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 9th

**Embrace:** 1955

**Blood Potency:** 6

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 9, Social 7, Mental 7, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 11, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Athletics 10, Brawl 10, Intimidation 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition), Celerity 5 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness, Blink, Unerring Aim, Split Second), Fortitude 3 (Resilience, Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Potence 3 (Lethal Body, Prowess, Brutal Feed), Presence 1 (Daunt), Protean 2 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons)

**In Stories:** In a political story set among the Anarchs, Agata Starek represents the nihilistic impulse for destruction. Whether you decide to use her as a Storyteller character or create a faction that embodies her values, she'll be the opposite of every Anarch who wants to build something.

She can also be useful after the Movement or the players' characters have suffered an overwhelming loss. Perhaps a Camarilla Prince has demolished their domain, forcing them into exile from their own havens. At such moments, the nihilistic promise Starek represents may feel like a last chance for justice.

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## ANARCH DOS AND DON'TS

Different Anarch domains have their own cultures, but some things are widespread.

### DO

- Contribute to whatever needs to be done. Do the outskirts of this city need to be patrolled? Offer to do it. Make yourself useful.
- Establish mortal contacts. Every Anarch needs to be in the loop when it comes to the mortal world, and a good Mask helps with hunters too.
- Keep your end of the bargain. You promise something, you deliver it.
- Bring the fun. Nobody likes a perpetual killjoy (known to some as a Venture).

### DON'T

- Be a poser. Bragging about things you can't back up is a bad idea.
  - Bring the heat. Just because we don't live under the Camarilla's boot anymore doesn't mean you can go around with your fangs out.
  - Relax. Keep on your toes. Things shift fast inside Anarch domains.
  - Think you can make friends with your fists. Charm and charisma will take you further than unnecessary violence.
-

# ANARCH ORGANIZATION



**T**he philosophy of anarchism is anti-institutional and anti-hierarchical. It tolerates no Princes and does not dole out titles as rewards. That doesn't mean that the Movement is without leaders. Rather, authority is earned through action rather than generation or Blood.

## Gang Rule

Most Anarch cities are shared between gangs of all sizes. The politics of keeping these gangs from open warfare can be intricate, and some cities exist in a perpetual state of tension.

In a city divided between different gangs, the local laws can shift from neighborhood to neighborhood. It's a dangerous environment, but it's full of opportunities for the daring.

A gang can range from a tight-knit coterie of four to five members to large groups of 20–30 members, protecting a bigger domain together. Often, gangs have both Kindred and mortal members — with most of the mortals knowing very little about what is really going on at night. Ghouls are the exception, since they often play an important role as messengers and henchmen between night and day rule, sometimes alongside Duskborn.

## Gang Rule Concepts

**War Council:** The Anarchs here are only focused on one thing: where to strike against the Camarilla next. Their hold on the city isn't permanent; it's

merely a spot to gather intel and strength. Cities visited by War Councils are usually packed with excited rallies and a lot of bloodthirsty Anarchs, but later they become almost empty when the fight has moved on.

**Capulets Versus Montagues:** The city is dominated by two gangs of equal size and strength that do not get along, whether that shows in small tensions or open animosity. To try to settle in a town like this, one has to choose a side quickly and then probably stick to it.

**Power Vacuum:** The dominant gang has been dethroned, and nobody knows who is in charge. A complex vortex of both dangers and opportunities, different gang-like factions control different parts of the city every night. Anyone can move in and try to claim domain; holding it will be a different matter.

**Anarch Commune:** Several gangs hold the city together, making decisions through (mostly) peaceful negotiations. It isn't always easy, but it's what they fought to get, so they endure the endless debates. This is more likely to work where a majority vote has been agreed upon rather than where everybody has to agree unanimously every time.

**Brujah City:** Gangs of Brujah rule this city together, tolerating the presence of other clans but not allowing them much say in any big decisions. If you're not Brujah, you'd better enter with someone from the clan who can vouch for you (see Brujah United, p. 103).

## Barony

In an Anarch city, a Baron is a single ruler with authority over the whole area. The most common way for a Baron to be established is for one of several Anarch gang bosses to rise to preeminence.

Typically, Barons are much more present among their subjects than a Camarilla Prince and must constantly negotiate with various other stakeholders to maintain their position. A few are authoritarian, claiming that the success of the revolution gives them a mandate to rule.

## Character Concepts

**Respected Ruler:** This Baron managing to be perceived as both fair and efficient. They've been in power for a good while or have even been asked to take the job. It's probably best to be on friendly terms with them.

**Appointed by the Majority:** Sometimes, nobody wants to fucking lead, and you gotta just pick a person. Often, the unlucky leader is given a time limit to prove their worth, and if they suck, they'll be kicked out of the city, maybe even hunted down (to motivate them to do a good job). This could be a great way to gain influence for the brave vampire, who volunteers to help, or a certain path to getting in big trouble.

**Agitator:** This Baron took the title to use it to go to war against other cities. They might resign when the fight is over or claim the city they've conquered. Sometimes these individuals are great leaders in battle but less so out of it.

**Failing Autocrat:** This Baron who bit off more power than they can chew; it's only a question of time before they'll be deposed. Their city is a pressure cooker of violence that's just about to erupt.

**The Benevolent Mobster:** This Baron rules over their domain with the aid of many loyal supporters. They're friendly, even welcoming, but have a strict set of rules for existing on their turf. They could offer you protection, but it comes at a price. Protection from what? Probably their own supporters.

## Common Roles

In many Anarch domains, the ones who step up to do the work that needs doing get to decide how it's done. If the community likes how they do it, they'll let them keep at it. If they don't, another soon appears to take over.

While the below are by no means official titles, they appear often enough in common parlance that most established Anarchs know what they refer to. There can be several of each in an Anarch city, as every bigger gang usually has its own.

**Gang Boss:** Some Anarch gangs are completely egalitarian, and every decision is made by voting. But many have a de facto leader the others look to for guidance when there's trouble brewing.

**Lieutenant:** A lieutenant in a leader's second-in-command who backs them up in conflicts and takes over for them if they're indisposed. Often, they are someone who has known the leader for a long time and has the gall to talk straight to them, even when no one else dares to. They are the Mercutio to undead Romeo.

**Secretary:** Somebody has to keep track of what's agreed upon at Anarch meetings. It can be hard enough to settle debates in the first place. Nobody needs to doubt what was said after the fact.

**Treasurer:** Revolution is expensive, and as money flows through warm hands into cold and back, this vampire makes sure to count it, clean it, and pass it on to where it's most needed for the cause.

**Tail Gunner:** Among bikers, the tail gunner rides in the back, making sure nobody gets left behind. Among Anarchs, they keep an eye on the youngest or weakest in their gang both on missions and when there's a fight.

## Mortals and Ghouls

Despite all the talk of independence and freedom, Anarchs tend to enslave a significant number of ghouls, now dependent on their vitae. It's hard to avoid, since they tend to be more integrated in mortal society, and ghouls become an important

shield against exposure. Some treat their ghouls almost as equals, justifying the way they use them by their closeness and shared goals.

## Interacting with Mortal Politics

While your typical Camarilla manipulator probably reserves most of their occasional engagement with mortal politics to lobbying and blackmail, Anarchs are often more involved. Few can keep up a mortal mask long enough to be an ongoing central force in government, but when it comes to the birth of grassroots movements, NGOs, and student rebellions, Anarchs are pleased to take part, painting banners, offering legal advice, or playfully suggesting making Molotov cocktails.

Anarch-flavored examples of interfering with mortal politics:

- Joining a movement or political party to take part in decision making
- Attempting to instigate civil disobedience and protests
- Using unions and nonpartisan organizations to delay decisions that would benefit Camarilla interests
- Volunteering to collect signatures for a potential new party, which is also a wonderful excuse to knock on doors

## Common Groupings in the Movement

These are some common types you'll find in an Anarch city domain. Use them for inspiration to create stories for your players or to think about where your own Anarch character belongs.

### Idealists

*The ones fighting at the front lines, driven by idealistic fervor or pure hatred towards the Camarilla.*

This group is mostly composed of young, angry Kindred who are eager to test themselves in the fight against the establishment. To be one of them is to be in a state of the rush of roused Blood and bold words and to bask in the glory of finally learning something useful and having real purpose. The hidden hierarchies here are about who has proven themselves in battle. This is a fast-paced culture of dares, where violence and battle scars are celebrated. Cynics might claim that getting people to feel more important than they are is a great way to get them to sacrifice themselves for the cause they were rallied to believe in. Many Anarchs consider time spent with this group a rite of passage to join the Movement.

### Character Concepts

**The Eager Acolyte:** Inexperienced but willing to learn, they want nothing more than to follow a passionate Anarch general into battle — or anywhere else, for that matter.

**The Seasoned Fighter:** They could still be a fervent believer in the cause, or they understand that no other group will let them indulge their lust for chaos and mayhem.

**The Former Camarilla Goon:** This vampire is out for payback against the ones who made them a slave in the Camarilla grinder. Revenge is what motivates them, and it can't come soon enough.

**The True Believer:** The Anarch Revolt must be spread like wildfire everywhere a Kindred population exists. No one is free from Camarilla oppression until all are!

### Protectionists

*Having tasked themselves with protecting Anarch territory, they defend when others attack.*

This group is dedicated to guarding what has already been taken. Its members engage in city politics oriented toward the future, focusing on infrastructure, peace between opposing city factions, and maintaining a functional relationship with the

mortal population. Just as ideologically invested as the Idealists, these Anarchs are usually ready to take up arms when their territory is attacked, but in the meantime, they care about building something worth fighting for.

Protectionist Anarchs can be peaceful punks or swift and harsh in their response to anyone who acts against the interests of their domain. For these Kindred, anyone acting against the Movement from within is just as big a threat to it as outside enemies.

## Character Concepts

**Sweeper:** This type of Anarch keeps an eye out for unwelcome elements inside a city domain. When newcomers step out of line, they deal with it. It is sometimes a thankless job, as some consider sweepers little better than snitches.

**The Fanatic:** Following a calling to protect the Movement as a whole, the fanatic travels from domain to domain to remind power-hungry Barons what they should be fighting for and help newly established Anarch domains to get settled.

**The Lurker:** Some revolutionaries are better suited to the shadows, collecting knowledge, spreading misinformation or rumors when needed, lobbying for lasting change, or infiltrating Camarilla holdings.

**The Good Soldier:** Loyal to their post, this Anarch soldier protects a city by patrolling its borders, defending its inhabitants, and doing whatever else smarter, more established Anarchs tell them to.

## Go-Betweens

*Their closeness to the mortal world is how they serve the Movement.*

Some Anarch factions welcome the Duskborn as equals; others are just as antagonistic as any heavily traditionalist Tower city. It's the nature of the Movement that attitudes toward anything other than the shared goals differ vastly. These mostly Duskborn Kindred, along with some fresh-faced, but true vampire fledglings, make themselves indispensable

by acting as the Movement's agents on the inside of mortal society. To Anarchs who value mortals highly, which many do, and cannot easily pass for mortals themselves, Go-Betweens are essential.

## Character Concepts

**Tech Boi:** A Go-Between with some crucial modern tech skills that older Anarchs lack. They trade their knowledge for the privilege of getting hunting access on another's domain or in the fight against the technology-averse Tower.

**Procurer:** Someone who procures things, services, or vessels from the mortal world that are otherwise difficult or annoying to access. They may be daywalkers, accessing offers that are closed at night.

**Indentured:** A Go-Between who has earned the protection of a more prominent Anarch, bordering on being a servant. They might even be Blood Bound. Their treatment might be against Anarch philosophy, but it's OK since this individual isn't really considered a member of the Movement.

## Opportunists

*They might believe in the cause, but they sure do get a lot out of serving it.*

Of course, they're in the Movement too, the power-hungry climbers who take any opportunity to move up in the world. More driven by their own ambitions than whatever goals are presently at the forefront of their Anarch allies' minds, they're here primarily because it serves them. It's easier to fly under the radar in most Anarch domains while doing something shady, at least if you say the right things and make the right facial expressions.

## Character Concepts

**Weasel:** An instigator of trouble, sower of dissent, always acting to their own benefit. Embedded in a gang, Baron's inner circle, or another prominent Anarch faction, they reach for power from the sidelines.



**Mobster:** They prove themselves in a crisis by providing aid no one else can give, but afterwards they make sure to take full advantage of whatever power it earned them, with no intention of ever letting go.

**Indispensable:** Having made themselves crucial to their faction or city domain, they reap more benefits from their work than is just or well deserved. They might control a blood bank, an NGO, or the inside man in the local SI agency.

**Fixer:** This is the “I know a guy” guy. They’re ready to do the dirty work of procuring whatever is needed and will do what it takes, especially bending Anarch ideology for the sake of a practical purpose. They won’t tell you what it took, though, so you can stay confident that you’re doing the right thing.

## Semi-Camarilla

Not full Anarchs, these Kindred represent a Camarilla presence within the Anarch city.

Some Kindred leave the Tower willingly; others are simply forced out and have nowhere to go. Sometimes, for whatever reason, Kindred who remain tied to the Camarilla end up with the Anarchs. They are watched closely and probably have limited freedom of movement in the city,

but they still serve a purpose of some sort. The Anarch Movement isn’t only a battle, it’s also diplomatic relations and carefully planned political moves — things that require a little moral flexibility and for the social scene to sometimes get messy.

## Character Concepts

**Informant:** This defector or double agent holds a lot of information about a particular Camarilla city or faction, which they readily turn over to the Movement on a regular basis. No one likes or trusts them.

**Diplomat:** A Camarilla representative in an Anarch city, this Kindred exists among Anarchs on a nightly basis and has sympathy for certain aspects of their philosophy. Probably a decent orator, they have contacts in both sects.

**Brainwashed:** This former Anarch-turned-Camarilla is back with the Anarchs without wanting to be. The Tower convinced them of their purpose and gave them a sense of order and belonging. Unwilling to give up on them, the Anarchs are attempting to deprogram them from what they broadly can agree is cult-think.

**Guest Hostage:** A beloved childe of a Camarilla Primogen or some other hotshot being kept as leverage in an Anarch domain — with or without Stockholm syndrome.

# TWO WAYS TO LIBERATE A CITY DOMAIN

**T**here are many ways to take over a city, but only a few that work if you want to have a chance to hold it. The Masquerade may be “a Camarilla thing,” but that doesn’t mean that secrecy isn’t of the utmost importance for Anarchs, too. They’ll therefore try to make battles coincide with mortal civil unrest or other big events that’ll have police and media distracted. Sometimes such events need a helping hand to happen.

Here you find two examples of the process of taking a Camarilla city:

## The Swift Takeover

**Preparation:** A mere Anarch foot soldier may not notice that anything is going on, but months of preparation can come before an attack that lasts minutes. Fighters need to be recruited, intel collected, deals struck, and plans and backup plans laid out.

**Attack:** When the attack comes, it’s organized chaos. Fighters strike in key positions, and if the attackers have the intel, the most dangerous players are taken out first.

**Aftermath:** Assuming the attack was successful, the domains are divided between the liberators.

They might get to pick based on who was most impressive in the battle, if they didn’t already divide the spoils in advance. Tensions may arise if some feel cheated.

## The Back-Door Play

**Preparation:** It begins with a small gang of disguised Anarchs gaining access to a Camarilla city. Once in, they begin gathering intel on the domain’s weaknesses and sow dissent among Kindred with lower standing in the Court.

**Attack:** If the infiltrators have been successful, the city begins to turn on itself. While the Court is busy, they let their Anarch allies into the domain through some back-door passage. The Court won’t even notice it’s under attack until Elysium is already burning.

**Aftermath:** The attackers take out key Camarilla figures but may give other Kindred the choice to join the Movement or get out of town. In the months that follow, some unrest is to be expected between the Anarch settlers and the ex-Camarilla Kindred — those who switched sides under duress or found the revolution wasn’t what they’d hoped may question their choice for some time to come. ■



## Chapter Four:

# OUTSIDE THE GATES

*That is not for you, Beckett. I know you have an obsession with the secrets of our ancients, but some truths are better left buried. How could any Kindred of the modern nights trust and venerate their elders if they knew the reality of what had gone before?*

— The Banu Haqim Fatima al-Faqadi chides  
the Gangrel archaeologist Beckett

Autarkis. Independent clans. Nomads. Cults. The unbound. These outsiders are traditionally dismissed as bit players in the cold-blooded power games of the dead. But if a Primogen Councilor or Anarch firebrand would bother to ask the independent coterie of Caitiff feeding off single mothers in a low-wage district of their city, or the cultists who never leave their 60% Farsi-speaking suburb, and actually listen, they would learn more about real politics than any Machiavellian courtier could teach them. Welcome to the deadly liberty beyond the gate, to the often-bizarre politics of the forgotten and the hidden, the inbred family predators, the necromancers, the cannibal yoga teachers, the weird and lonely tenants, the night truckers, the true and the voluntary ignoramuses, and, last but not least, the post-terminally unhinged.

This chapter describes several lesser-known types of independent dead and the unique political challenges they face. By choice or not, they've set themselves apart. Their independence from the sects doesn't mean they're free from cutthroat politics; it just means the players are different, the stage smaller, and the outcomes often even deadlier.

# OUTSIDER CLANS AND GROUPS

Among the Kindred, a few groups are particularly known for their independence from sectarian conflicts among the Camarilla, Anarchs, the Ashirra, and the remnants of the Sabbat. Primary among these are the Caitiff and Duskborn, who tend to exist on the margins of Kindred society and often find themselves going it alone or in small groups.



## Caitiff and Duskborn

Rejects and outcasts, their othered nature makes them mistrusted by other Kindred because they break the known conventions of the Blood. Numerous in recent decades, Caitiff and Duskborn are likely to band together and forge their own domains, though many such domains are brought into the Anarch Movement sooner or later.

## Political Assets

**Blending In:** Vampires of weaker Blood more easily blend in among mortals, making them harder for true vampires to keep track of and giving them the advantage of working with mortals who might actually be loyal to them for reasons other than dependency.

**Flexibility:** When you've never gotten to be comfortable for long, you get good at adjusting to new circumstances and can get something useful out of any situation.



## Hecata

Famously divided before their family reunion, individual Hecata have found homes within Camarilla and Anarch cities, but some leverage their old money and maintain domains independent of the sects — Venice famously belongs to the Hecata and probably will as long as it remains above water.

Hecata characters of various bloodlines make interesting options for neutral coterie selling services to other factions.

## Political Assets

**Connections:** When family is everything to your bloodline, you never have to handle any problem on your own unless you want to. Even those who cut off their relatives can come back, although it may cost them.

**History:** Many Hecata bloodlines have existed in the same domains for many decades. They have roots in the business and culture of their cities and can leverage that knowledge against outsiders as long as they're on their home turf.



## Salubri and Ravnos



Though each clan survived apocalyptic conditions for their bloodlines, neither is particularly numerous tonight. Individuals may

achieve some measure of acceptance in the sects, but many simply eke out their nightly existence without much companionship. Occasionally, small broods of Salubri or Ravnos travel together, join smaller factions, or serve as couriers between domains.

### Political Assets

**More Fiction than Fact:** What other Kindred aren't aware of or don't even believe in, they won't have prepared for.

**That Fascination Factor:** Their otherness marks them as targets but also as something utterly fascinating to the average Kindred, who will hear out what they have to say to get a little closer to them.



## Gangrel

Stereotypically, the Gangrel are seen as independent minded and inclined towards a solitary or nomadic existence. Great swaths of their childer were convinced to join first the Camarilla and now the Anarchs, but many prefer the existence of the autonomous traveler.

### Political Assets

**Respect:** Many Kindred treat the independent Gangrel with more respect than other outsiders, considering their wandering ways as their true nature. They can often act as mediators between different sects and the autarkis.

**Pack Mentality:** Independent Gangrel recognize and help each other. Even the ones not currently on the road usually have a past as nomads or vagabonds or know somebody who does.



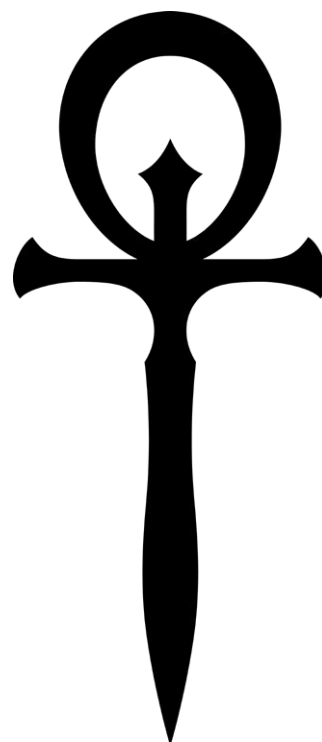
## Tzimisce

Many Tzimisce find their covetous natures abhor the power structures and community of adherence to sect rules. While some of them thrive within the Sabbat, others prefer the ultimate freedom of being their own lords, ruling over small, independent domains or carefully guarded sections of sectarian domains.

### Political Assets

**Ruthless Strategists:** A Tzimisce will stop at nothing to defend their territory. Sheer will can take you far, even against an overwhelming greater force.

**Boundless Servitude:** The mortal servants of certain Tzimisce are much more loyal than is normal, even for a ghoul. Where the Dragons have nurtured Revenant families over generations, they can often count on competent mortal allies to take care of much of their business, almost as equals.



# TYPES OF OUTSIDERS



**K**indred on the margins tend to fit in one or more of four categories:

- **Hermits :** Some Kindred go it alone. Whether they're isolated by choice or by circumstance, this individual or small coterie is without a larger group of outcasts to back them up. Most commonly, Hermits have their haven far from any city domain.
- **Nomads:** This type moves around between domains, requiring either staunch independence or craven pandering to every local authority. Nomadic Kindred often trade in favors or information as they travel, making them useful enough that even if the locals aren't always pleased to see them, they won't go out of their way to hurt them either.
- **Settlers in Sectarian Domains:** Within a Camarilla or Anarch domain, Hierophants

of Kindred churches and dons of a Hecata crime family may play by the rules to a degree but operate as neighboring factions. Kindred businesses, such as the Circulatory System, the Hunt Club, and smaller, local establishments, such as the Succubus Clubs or their imitators, often maintain an air of neutrality in mixed domains or provide their services to Kindred of any affiliation for the right price.

- **Citizens of an Autarky:** Sometimes enough independents band together to claim a city domain of their own, and any sect-aligned Kindred settling there has to answer to them. Some sectarian cities are sect in name only, autarkies in reality. Ancient Constantinople is often held up as an ideal autarky, once ruled by a trinity of elders with their own laws and traditions.

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## THE INCONNU

The Inconnu is a rumored sect of non-interventionist elders, who are occasionally considered autarkis. Most ancillae and younger Kindred these nights only know of instances of Inconnu that were revealed to be frauds. Older tales, from before the Beckoning, suggest they once had considerable power and used it to manipulate the great sects in secret.

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# WHO IS THE AUTARK?

**A**utark comes from the Greek *autarkeia*, meaning “sufficiency in oneself” and *autarkhein*, “absolute ruler.” These are two very different meanings, and the reality of the autark’s existence can be just as varied. While one makes do with scraps to exist unnoticed and unbothered in the crevices of Kindred society, another has become the absolute ruler of their city domain, powerful enough that challenging them would be more trouble than it’s worth for their sectarian neighbors. Some autarkis prefer to go it alone; others are part of bigger groups, and their independence is a relative thing — while they don’t answer to any sectarian ruler, they’re still tied through Blood, faith, or other bonds to the Kindred they share the autarky with.

## What Makes Autark Play Interesting?

Even in the Court of Prince Villon, being introduced as “the Autark of Heidelberg University” casts a reverential silence over Elysium. There’s potential in playing within one of the sects, as an outsider who can engage with its intrigues but isn’t necessarily a central part of them. But an autark can also easily avoid the political bullshit, making this kind of play perfect for groups that want to focus their game on the classic core experience of being a vampire — hunting, being hunted, and maintaining or denying their own humanity.

Or, if you’d like, an autark coterie can ignore most of the Kindred world while engaging solely in mortal politics, perhaps championing a cause from their breathing days. Whether the Kindred come knocking with their own schemes at some point depends on the Storyteller.

## Autark Archetypes

Every autark is different, but these are some common types:

### Exile

Not all autarkis have chosen to be cut off from the sects. Instead, they are exiles or refugees who wear their stigma like a crown. They were banished by their peers or soft sires, who could not bear the thought of destroying their progeny, or they had to flee in the last moments before dawn, hiding under coats and carpets.

Exiled autarkis in enormous city domains like Rio often gather around a shared set of Convictions and Touchstones related to the reason they stay apart and hidden. For active exiles, politics becomes centered around sheltering from the sects, hot mortal politics, running interference, distractions, and maintaining clandestine connections with sect agents.

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### HOSPITALITY FOR NOMADS

Nomadic independents are often met with several restrictions they must abide by, with many of these selectively enforced and levied on a coterie-by-coterie basis. Others make similar rules for themselves to avoid problems before they arise. Possible restrictions include:

- Feed only in certain areas or from specific populations.
  - Avoid feeding entirely within claimed domains.
  - Slumber only in designated areas.
  - Stay no longer than three nights.
  - Communicate only with designated liaisons.
  - Attendance at Elysium or similar events is mandatory.
  - Visits must be chaperoned by an established coterie or Shadow.
  - Visitors must recite and swear to uphold the Traditions, Prince's Courtesies, rules of Elysium, or other local rules.
  - Visitors must submit Blood to a local sorcerer to ensure their clan, sire, and crimes of diablerie are known.
  - Visitors must report news from recent travels to the local authority or the entire domain.
- 

## Fake Exile

Fake Exiles want to return to their parent sect, preferably with a large enough bang to win them praxis or a seat in a body like the Primogen Council. They are despised by the true outsiders and hunted by their enemies. Their unlives are defined by constant political games of counterespionage, distraction, and paranoid fantasies of regaining lost status. They play the long odds in a high-stakes game that will, later if not sooner, present them with the choice of betraying the outsider world they have been kicked out into. Sheltering in a rival sect may be an option, but this is often a fool's game.

For an ex-Camarilla autark to be let into the Anarchs, they must gain trust, represented by a major political boon or by offering something of significant value to the Anarchs. Playing a Fake Exile

desperate to regain a lost position is excellent for a short and deadly political chronicle with a set end goal: to return from exile or face final death trying. Longer, more complex arcs of this type could see the outside world of autarky exert a stronger, more attractive pull, perhaps ultimately proving to be the lesser of evils.

## Collaborator

Collaborators attempt to turn their independence into a marketable asset. Ferrying goods or vessels between domains, carrying messages, acting as spies and neutral parties in negotiations, they do not necessarily want to join any of the larger factions but might enjoy the position they've created for themselves. They are often hated by other autarkis, who see them as two-faced cowards.

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## NOMENCLATURE

Kindred language, much like mortal language, is wonderfully imprecise. Ambiguities lead to humor and poetry as well as conflict.

**Autarkis:** Self-ruled. One outside Kindred society. Among the ancillae and elders, the term is a singular and plural noun as well as an adjective. Younger Kindred often use autark as a singular. Some use this term the same way as they use independent; others claim that it refers only to those who are truly autonomous, excluding any independents who remain loyal to a cult or bloodline.

**Autarky:** A domain independent of the great sects. Plural: autarkies.

**Unbound:** Kindred who reject the Camarilla. Sometimes includes Anarchs as well as autarkis.

**Independent:** Kindred who are not part of one of the great sects: the Anarchs, Camarilla, the Ashirra, or Sabbat. See Autarkis.

**Independent Clans:** Formerly used to describe the Hecata (under the name Giovanni), Ravnos, Setites (both the Ministry and the Church of Set), and the Banu Haqim, whose elders wouldn't or couldn't join one of the greater sects. Tonight, few elders can command an entire clan, and the term is falling out of use.

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## Vagabond

Vagabonds move from domain to domain, refusing to settle down or commit to one sect. As outsiders, they're treated differently from couriers or messengers who primarily deal with a single sect or faction, but that difference is sometimes a matter of degree.

Autark vagabonds often avoid other Kindred when possible, slinking through domains without formal introductions or so much as a hello. Getting caught by the authorities is a dangerous proposition, and they fear other Kindred as much as lupines or Second Inquisition agents on the road, assuming they know about these in the first place. Local authorities may tolerate their presence but restrict feeding and shelter to certain disfavored districts.

## Subservient Autark

This is an autark who is loyal to one or more sect-aligned Kindred but has not yet been invited to join. Or perhaps they maintain some semblance of independence by holding off on the decision. They might be someone the dominant faction has need of, such as an individual with an important mortal Mask that makes collaboration with mortal decision-makers easier. They could be someone the local ruler considers of absolutely no importance — like a thin-blood failed Nosferatu whose haven is on territory that nobody else even wants to go near. Or they could be someone who has been “temporarily” ousted from Kindred society proper and is serving their sentence as a non-citizen with all the obligations and none of the rights of real Kindred.

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### PROBLEMS FOR OUTSIDERS

Political autark problems include things most sectarian vampires never have to worry about, like:

- **The Second Masquerade:** Non-sectarian characters may need to maintain a “second Masquerade” to remain unnoticed by a city’s major Kindred players or authorities.
  - **Close Mortal Connections:** Blending into tightly knit mortal religious organizations, social scenes, and fringe subcultures helps autarkis form the base for their power structure. This may even mean obeying a mortal who doesn’t know you are a vampire.
  - **Unusual Beliefs:** Proselytizing and celebrating an alternative ideological creed have often been frowned upon by the sects, who prefer to be the sole authority of their members.
  - **The Nightly Struggle:** Using politics can be necessary to sustain oneself night to night. To some independents, mortal pawns are all they have to scrape together resources and find a decent place to rest during the day.
  - **Isolation and Alienation:** It’s challenging to be the only coterie of Kindred in a domain dominated by another supernatural society, be it packs of werewolves, legions of restless dead, or even stranger, unknown forces beyond the coterie’s comprehension.
  - **Neutrality:** Some lesser factions are seen as a playground or staging ground for other Kindred. Managing a neutral domain, where the Camarilla Prince and Anarch Barons meet to parley under your watchful eyes, can take a skilled hand.
  - **Serving a Need:** Independents thrive on their own necessity. They must often provide a service to other Kindred, like collecting blood, erasing records, or guiding fellow Kindred through a treacherous part of a domain. These services may be needed by all factions on the front lines of the Gehenna War, or simply be dangerous tasks that local authorities prefer to stay clear of.
- 



# THE GEOGRAPHY OF AUTARKIES

**S**tories that take place in autarkies play out very differently depending on the type of territory and the proximity of other domains. Independent domains are often located either very far from sectarian Kindred or in harsh territory, such as undesirable slums or hard-to-manage gated communities. For where a Camarilla Prince or Anarch Baron sees something of value, they will eventually maneuver to have their vassals claim it. An independent domain near others must either keep its mortal territory undesirable enough to ward off such advances, or be protected by literal or metaphorical high walls to keep the neighbors out.

Some of the most common autarkies are bloodline cities and religious communities.

## Isolated Cities

Isolated cities tend to be just far enough away from other major Kindred domains that travel is difficult and can take several evenings and much planning. Communication with other domains may have been commonplace before the rise of the Second Inquisition, but now it is rarely and carefully done.

### Examples of Isolated City Politics

- Domain and haven allocation and negotiation to ensure that local Kindred can easily move around the city, but strangers struggle to find their way in
- Preparing to handle problems that would normally be sect business

- Handling the fallout when someone has broken the seal of silence and alerted nearby Camarilla domains to the city's existence

## Little Princes

Throughout Kindred history, these ultra-isolated domains have appeared from time to time. It's hard to say how many of them exist, because they are inhabited by one or a small handful of vampires who believe themselves to be totally alone in the night or have made the choice to pretend they are. Like the "Little Prince" of the famous French children's story, the autarkis here exists in splendid solitude. They may never have encountered others like themselves, or didn't have the knowledge to recognize them when they did. Some bloodlines have carried through millennia with only ever one member at a time, each vampire destroying themselves in the Embrace of a childe, believing their curse commands it.

### Examples of Little Prince Politics

- Engaging with mortal politics to justify or ease your undead existence
- Taking actions to keep the city domain hidden from the greater sects
- Religious or fanatical schemes that serve the isolated vampire's fantasy of their own extreme importance as the only one in existence

## Satellite Cities

Satellite cities are a common type of autarky. Smaller cities that house few Kindred tend to be about a four-hour commute from other, larger domains. Distance is a friend to autarkies, with stronger authorities forced to tolerate minor domains that are less accessible. When the local Church of the Angel is a four-hour drive down roads patrolled by lupines or agents of the Second Inquisition, it tends to be left alone. Depending on the latitude and time of year, such domains can be isolated for months at a time.

These cities tend to have few Kindred and may have a long-established local authority. A Tzimisce autark might proclaim herself Prince but follow old traditions passed down from her elders or new laws of her own design. A former Anarch enclave set itself up in an isolated city in the 1950s, inspired by Salvador Garcia, but over time, it has become the satellite city of a new Anarch domain.

Mortals and their cities tend to sprawl. What was distant in the age of steam is now much closer thanks to modern technology. A new overnight commuter line can wreak unexpected havoc among the Kindred. Once isolated cities become satellite cities or subdomains with time.

### Examples of Satellite City Politics

- Keeping things friendly with the nearby sect domain yet uninviting enough that those Kindred don't get the idea to come bother you
- Making sure the city autarkis are on board with the action plan for handling sect contact and that none of them are starting to agree a little too much with the sect
- Handling Anarch visitors trying to convince you to join their cause and lose your unives on the front lines of their battles for imaginary freedom

## Mortal Hubs

Occasionally, major territories are claimed by independent groups that are hubs of mortal activity: airports, major hotels or resort districts, cruise ships,

sports arenas or concert venues, specific hospitals or networks of hospitals, and so forth. Where blood flows, there will be Kindred. Autarkies in charge of prime real estate must negotiate with their neighbors, often maintaining neutrality until a tyrant grows the backbone to take them on.

### Examples of Mortal Hub Politics

- Negotiating deals with neighboring city domains
- Keeping up the charade of being an active, mortal community member who is just very invested in the running of the hub
- Dealing with common squabbles between community members who work closely together and see each other too much

## Subdomains

Minor autarkies often exist near, or even within, larger domains. A Hierophant of the Church of Set or a thin-blood support network may thrive in an affluent suburb or smaller city an hour's drive from a larger domain claimed by a Camarilla Prince. The greater city tolerates the autarky either because the leadership doesn't see it as a threat or because it has some use for it. A subdomain may be the buffer zone between a Camarilla city and lupine territory, or the autarkis are specialists who can provide something the greater city needs, for instance.

Domineering Anarch Barons or Camarilla Princes rarely relish rivals dwelling close. Not only does their mere existence inspire the young and impulsive to challenge a tyrant, but such domains can prove a safe harbor for bad seeds. By hook or by crook, such rulers will usually entangle small domains, eventually forcing them to bow and accept membership or service within the larger domain.

For younger Kindred, a neighboring autarky can be a source of learning, entertainment, supplies, or terror. Strange Kindred with odd beliefs and Disciplines can lure the curious to their side. Kindred churches tend to welcome neonates asking about history, myth, and salvation, when neither Prince nor Baron has answers.

### Examples of Subdomain Politics

- Pretending to lick the greater city leader's boots while secretly working to outmaneuver them in deals where you prefer a different outcome
- Ensuring that autark Kindred are not caught breaking the rules of the greater domain on their territory
- Competing for rank and status within the subdomain

### HOW AUTARKIES SUBMIT

Autarkies with powerful neighbors often give up some measure of freedom for their own survival, as Anarchs and Camarilla alike claim their philosophy is universal and applies to all Kindred.

Subdomain autarkies may have their own ambassador or Primogen representing their interests, so long as they agree to most or all of the rules of the great sect. A Church of Set domain might agree to follow all the Traditions but interpret their own Hierophant as the eldest for the Tradition of Destruction. A hacktivist collective may be tolerated operating out of a huge casino, hotel, and entertainment complex so long as they feed exclusively within their territory, send one emissary to every Elysium, and pay a tax of a major boon each month. The Circulatory System is tolerated at highway rest stops, train stations, and bus depots in exchange for providing a powerful coterie of Ventrue with the mortal vessels matching a rotating menu of rare vintages.

# INSIDE AN AUTARKY

These are some of the themes you can explore once the players' characters hold their own autarky or have their haven in one:

**Small Domain Politics:** Fighting for power without the looming expectations of a greater sect can mean that there are no rules and no expectations, and that final death is absolutely on the table. Political skirmishes for city rule can become deadly battles for survival.

**External Pressure:** The nearest sect might not currently be in control, but they absolutely want to be.

**Resource Control:** Even without a Prince, someone still needs to manage feeding rights and territory disputes — or the panic among the kine when feeding gets out of control.

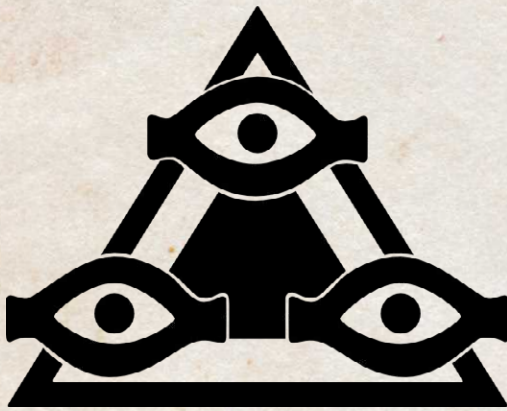
**Opposing Governance Opinions:** The vampires settled in the domain all have opinions on how it should be ruled. They may agree that they don't want to be sectarian, but their ideas of what they do want are vastly different.

**Trade and Diplomacy:** Independence doesn't mean not engaging with your neighbors. The ones you ignore are likely to come for you when you least expect them.

**The Creeping Dread:** Sometimes small domains become infected by strange ideas without their Kindred noticing before it is too late. Paranoia, cultish thinking, and conspiracy theories spread like lichen over a forgotten corpse.

# FACES OF INDEPENDENCE

More than a few Kindred have refused the enticements of the great sects over the centuries, choosing to walk their own path through the night. Some of them are among the best-known Kindred in history, their refusal to bow to Camarilla Princes or the Anarch Barons just the beginning of their iconoclastic approach to unlife.



## Malik Diallo

A New York club promoter and nightlife entrepreneur in life, Malik Diallo has become one of the few leaders among Clan Salubri. He saw a Tremere Archon destroy his sire on the night of his Embrace but managed to escape, finding refuge outside the Camarilla sphere of influence. As he has come to understand the history of his own clan, he has been radicalized, realizing that his bloodline has suffered through the centuries perhaps more than any other.

Diallo has come to represent a common idea among the few remaining Salubri of the modern nights: all Tremere must be destroyed. They almost succeeded in wiping out the Salubri, and vengeance and justice demand that they pay the price. According to Diallo, the Tremere never stopped persecuting his clan, something he learned through his own bitter experience. They may seem close to invincible, but he believes that fate is going to grant him the opportunity to see them swept away.

Because of his agitation and rising fame, Diallo has become a lightning rod for traditionalist Tremere who believe it is their duty to finish the job started by their clan founders so long ago. They try to destroy Diallo on a regular basis, proving him right.

Because of Tremere persecution, Diallo has had to spend his unlife using a mortal Mask to tour with his club in different cities. Unfortunately, every time he manages to establish a new mortal identity, the Tremere figure it out, and he has to start all over again.

He would have been destroyed already, but he has found unusual allies and protectors in autarkies where the locals don't much care for the Tremere. They support Diallo just to spite the Tremere, not for any great affection for the Salubri cause.

Along the way, Diallo has become something of a self-taught occult history wunderkind because to



him, understanding the past is crucial to his own survival. He must know why the Salubri are so hated and feared to be able to successfully lead a counterattack. He has a habit of siring new childer in domains he passes through, and he wants to be able to explain to them what the clan is all about.

**Clan:** Salubri

**Generation:** 12th

**Embrace:** 2019

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 4, Social 7, Mental 6, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Streetwise 8, Persuasion 9, Occult 8

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Heightened Senses, Premonition), Dominate 3 (Compel, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Fortitude 1 (Unswayable Mind)

**In Stories:** Diallo brings in the heat. When he comes to a domain, Tremere pursuers are usually not far behind. Furthermore, he doesn't care about rules for who can sire childer and when, believing that they were invented to keep his clan small and weak. Even if he leaves, the problems in his wake often persist to bedevil the locals.

For Salubri players' characters, Diallo can be an invaluable ally and source of information and identity. He can explain the clan's struggle and help players' characters do something about it. His focus is political, but he's very happy to meet Salubri of a more philosophical and visionary bent.



## Jaliah Imani

A stray vampire may only have a tenuous connection to their bloodline. That is the case with Jaliah Imani, Embraced in a fit of emotion in the bathroom of a Washington D.C. high school. Imani had just started as a teacher, and her unknown sire stole the future she'd finally secured for herself in an act of possessive frenzy it took her years to understand.

In her early years in Camarilla domains, Imani tried to understand both herself and the vampire society around her. It was a struggle to find enough information about her sire to realize that she was a Tzimisce and even more of a struggle to learn what that meant. Meanwhile, she was in constant conflict with the Princes and Sheriffs of every domain she tried to make a haven in because their rules didn't make sense to her.



It all boiled down to this: in life, she'd had the blessings of family and community, but as a Black woman in the U.S., she'd also had to eat a lot of shit. As an undead monster, she didn't feel like doing it anymore. She'd tried to be a good and decent person, but since life had been robbed from her, it was time for her to make her own decisions.

Unfortunately, the Princes of the Camarilla didn't agree with these ideas, forcing Imani to escape from more than one domain.

Everything changed in 1998 in New York when Imani met an old Romanian Tzimisce on his way through the domain. To her, the old man was like a prophet, a revelation of what the heritage of her Blood really meant. He told her about the European domains of old, before the Camarilla, when a vampire lord was the sole sovereign of their domain with no need to bow to anyone. He painted a picture of mighty and terrifying Tzimisce ancestors, their choice to dispense either cruelty or mercy entirely in their own hands.

From this encounter, Imani formed a philosophy of what it should mean to be a Tzimisce in North America in the 21st century. She became a teacher once again, finding other lost members of her clan and teaching them about their noble, terrifying legacy. By now, some of what she talks about is her own invention, mixed with stories from that one chance encounter in New York.

A Tzimisce needs her own domain. That's the case with Imani as well, and she attempts to fulfill the vision of her bloodline by building her own vampiric paradise in small-town America.

**Clan:** Tzimisce

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 1964

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 7, Mental 6, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Persuasion 8, Academics 8, Occult 8

**Disciplines:** Animalism 2 (Bond Famulus, Feral Whispers), Auspex 1 (Heightened Senses), Dominate 5 (Compel, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind, Rationalize, Terminal Decree), Protean 3 (Eyes of the Beast, Vicissitude, \* Earth Meld), Blood Sorcery 1 (Koldunic Sorcery — Earth\*\*; Ritual: Clinging of the Insect)

\**Players Guide*, p. 81

\*\**Blood Sigils*, p. 61

**Clan Bane:** Her charge is the leather-bound book of her teachings.

**In Stories:** The Masquerade means that access to the history of the Kindred is not at all a given if you're a young vampire. How do you know the traditions of your clan? It's easier in Camarilla domains (especially if you're a Ventrue or a Tremere), but for a stray Tzimisce, to say nothing of the Ravnos or the Salubri, you have to rely on hearsay and rumor.

The understanding of one's bloodline often informs motivations and future goals. That's the function of Imani in a chronicle: her teaching energizes young Tzimisce, motivating them to create breakaway autarkies of their own in a bid to claim their vampiric birthright.



## Gretchen “The Pale Scorpion” Vogt

A nurse in life, Gretchen Vogt was a serial killer who specialized in murdering elderly people in her care without getting caught. After a few years in her native Hamburg, she moved to the U.S. to avoid notice. She spent a year or two in each hospital before switching to keep under the radar.

Vogt’s sire had no idea what he was dealing with when he Embraced her. He thought he was getting an intelligent, attractive medical professional who could help him with the many ghouls he was running experiments on. Instead, he was soon a decaying corpse, his research operation taken over by his murderous child.



As a vampire, Vogt is quite open about her predilections. She says that even as a mortal, she felt a certain calling to be there at the end of life. The moment of death was so satisfying, fascinating, that she simply couldn't wait for it to occur naturally. Fortunately, the ancient art of the poisoner was alive and well, with all the updates provided by modern medicine.

As one of the Kindred, Vogt has discovered that there's a wider spiritual and intellectual dimension to the world. She finds the idea of ghosts annoying and wonders if they might also somehow be destroyed so that when she kills someone, they'll be well and truly extinguished. Her nickname comes from her appearance and her habit of turning on her allies when there's an opportunity to add their remains to her collection.

Declared Anathema among both Camarilla and Anarchs, Vogt rules a domain of her own, built around a decrepit, underfunded hospital. In its basement, she has the privacy she needs to continue her sire's intellectual work. Her shamelessness has made her something of a Hecata celebrity, a dark role model for Kindred who are troubled by their humanity and embrace their violent impulses without going over to the mysticism of the Sabbat.

This has created a political project of sorts around Vogt, a domain where nihilism rules and vampires believe their intellect will save them from the way of the wight. It's unlikely that this is sustainable at all, and many Kindred seduced into her orbit have already been lost to the Hunger. Vogt worries somewhat that what happened to them will also happen to her.

**Clan:** Hecata

**Generation:** 11th

**Embrace:** 1978

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 1

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 5, Mental 8, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Subterfuge 7, Occult 10, Medicine 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Scry the Soul, Spirit's Touch), Celerity 1 (Rapid Reflexes), Fortitude 3 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness, Fortify the Inner Façade), Oblivion 5 (Binding Fetter, Where the Veil Thins, Aura of Decay, Necrotic Plague, Skuld Fulfilled; Ceremonies: Summon Spirit, Compel Spirit, Host Spirit, Bind the Spirit, Lazarene Blessing)\*

*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

**In Stories:** Sometimes there's a reason why an autark is not welcome among the sects. Vogt is an example of this, the focus of an unstable, catastrophic political project built around delusional nihilism. Her followers believe that they can give in to their worst impulses without losing their minds, and if they start to doubt, it's usually way too late.

Vogt can also make for an unpleasant ally for players' characters who have ventured far from the familiarity of Camarilla or Anarch domains. Perhaps she knows something about the dead that the characters desperately need, so they have to ignore her confessed murderous nature.



## Leandro Cárdenas

When many Lasombra joined the Camarilla in a deal brokered in Chicago, one of the rules was that if an individual Lasombra wanted to join the sect, they had to prove their allegiance by destroying another member of their clan. This led to a spate of attacks on autark Lasombra and members of the clan who already existed in Camarilla domains.



For many Lasombra, this has been a difficult time, but for Leandro Cárdenas it was an opportunity. Originally driven out of Washington, D.C. because he'd betrayed local ancillae to the Anarchs and then the Anarchs to a group of hunters, Cárdenas had been cooling his heels in Gary, Michigan, when he heard about the requirements for Lasombra to join. This sparked an idea: he could sire new Lasombra vampires and sell them to his desperate clanmates to be destroyed in a suitably dramatic fashion as the price of entry.

An experienced fixer, rat, and turncoat, Cárdenas has a wide network of contacts among the Kindred and the kine. As part of his service, he'll make up an identity for the recently Embraced Lasombra, making it seem as if they were much older than they actually were. Thus, if a Camarilla Sheriff asks around, it sounds like the prospective new Camarilla member has destroyed someone with a reputation inside the clan.

While the operation has gained Cárdenas boons and money, it has also cemented his position as an autark doomed to skulk around small border domains. The Lasombra who have used his services don't want to be reminded of his existence, and many of his clanmates consider him a vile creep for sullyng the Blood in such a way. Lasombra are not known to be humanitarians, but something in the cavalier way Cárdenas has treated both his victims and his own Blood rubs many the wrong way.

**Clan:** Lasombra

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 1927

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 7, Mental 7, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Streetwise 8, Subterfuge 8, Occult 8

**Disciplines:** Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Mesmerize, The Forgetful Mind), Obfuscate 3 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Mask of a Thousand Faces), Potence 3 (Lethal Body, Prowess, Brutal Feed), Oblivion 2 (Ashes to Ashes, Arms of Ahriman; Ceremony: The Gift of False Life)\*

*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

**In Stories:** Cárdenas shows up when he smells an opportunity created by a new political alignment. He's good at figuring out power shifts and what different people need. He's also unburdened by ethical boundaries when it comes to providing for his clients.

For the players' characters, Cárdenas can be a last resort, who can get them something so objectionable, nobody else wants anything to do with it. Unfortunately, the price he asks isn't small, for he understands the value of the service he provides.

# RUNNING AUTARK CHRONICLES



After months, years, or even decades playing in Camarilla and Anarch cities, some troupes collectively yearn for something different or something more. Autarkies present a new option. Chronicles comprising only Hecata characters, domains ruled by Kindred churches, or mercenaries of the Circulatory System and Pony Express can be a welcome divergence from typical tales of Camarilla versus Anarch versus Sabbat.

These are some of the ways you can change up the dynamic from other **Vampire** chronicles in autark chronicles:

- Focus on clan stories that don't make sense in a Camarilla or Anarch domain, such as Hecata, Tzimisce, Ravnos, or Salubri.
- Explore Kindred faiths by focusing on a domain run by one of them, whether or not they also deal with the larger sects.

- Play unencumbered by the vast history of **Vampire** while focusing on the personal trials and tribulations of ignorant Caitiff, Duskborn, or others.

## Handling Lore

Autark chronicles come with their own challenges. Primary among these is the amount of setting knowledge that can be required. New players may not find a chronicle friendly if they need to learn the basics of a Kindred church, rare clans, and everyone's relationship to the Anarchs, Camarilla, and Sabbat. Consider using characters that don't know much either, letting the players discover the lore through their characters.

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### AUTARKIS MERIT

•• **Moral Dissident:** Autark Only. Autarkis do not have to compromise their morals to belong to a sect or ideological faction and are often much more humane. But as the saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished. To reflect strength of will, spite, and fierce independence, choose two extra Convictions and Touchstones.

The drawback is that the outsider can only take this Merit if they pay for it by buying appropriate Flaws. These represent enemies, fabricated sinister rumors, psychological scars, or even curses levied against them, or reflect a lonely life of someone judged too dangerous to be close to.

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## Autarkis and Convictions

Without greater laws, unbound are often driven entirely by their Convictions. Autark coterie may be united around shared moral or political values and fight anyone opposing them. Commonly, such Convictions are derived from struggles the characters burned for during their breathing days. Examples could include a coterie fighting for Irish

independence from the English or defending Romania from Russian and Turkish influence or a clique of immortals seeking vengeance for a crime long forgotten by the living world. Expect Touchstones and mortals to play a greater part in autark chronicles, especially where there is nothing resembling a political sect structure to advance within.

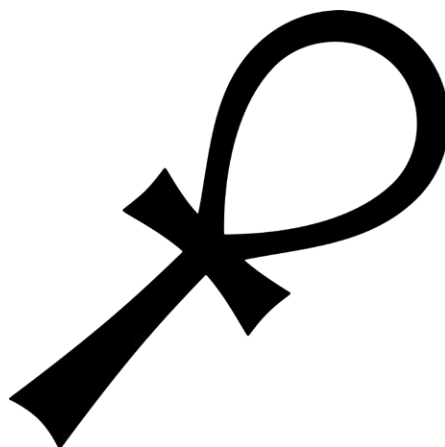
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### STORYTELLING STRANGE WAYS

Interacting with independents often means entering new social scenes or subcultures, where the norms and expectations are entirely different. What gives clout in a new scene, or what fashion and behavioral codes apply, is almost impossible to predict. To emulate this, as the coterie enters a new social group, decide on a single weird factor that is simply a must to be someone in a scene. It can be a drug to be used or avoided, a turn of phrase never or always to be used, an odd hobbyist group to blame or celebrate, or a genre of literature to be celebrated or loathed. Make it weird and hard to guess. And don't give any hints. If you don't know about it, no one will tell you. You'll have to observe or find out through trial and error, get under a member's skin, perhaps start a relationship with one of the locals to learn what seems so obvious to everyone else. Before they crack the code, all Social tests in the scene take a one- or even two-dice penalty if we're talking about a truly arrogant or secretive group.

This method is a crude simplification, but it works well to make the players' characters feel like strangers in a strange land as the in-the-knows snicker and scoff at them until they are finally let in on the secret and gain a more solid sense of belonging.

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# CULT POLITICS



A common independent faction is a cult or religious organization. In such factions, power plays look different compared to formal political structures. In cults and churches, power formally derives from what or who is being worshiped and is often transmitted through an immutable hierarchy of holiness, rather than being sold as an obvious need for structure. This makes all the difference.

For inspiration, Table 3 lists a selection of such organizations of the dead.

## The System of Holiness

Anyone claiming leadership or even influence among the faithful must keep up a façade of holiness rather than merely projecting power or trustworthiness. Depending on the cult in question, charismatic leadership, prophecy, divine favor, and grand gestures are often faster routes to power than the nurturing of contacts encouraged in societies attempting to emulate Enlightenment or even Humanist ideas of governance.

If mortal politics are a place where sociopaths thrive, cults and their power games suit psychologies that contemporary psychologists would describe as narcissistic or downright psychopathic.

In the churches of Blood, political games are played for different, more permanent stakes than in other hierarchies of Blood. Once a priest has been ordained, no matter if they are later ousted, they must always be treated as holier than the normal flock. A church cannot admit being wrong, since this would throw doubt on the faith itself, so even

defeated enemies must often be kept around in some capacity, rather than be exiled or executed.

Churches may be more static than even the great glacial sects of the damned, but church politics are still a vicious game. Here is a list of power moves and strategies found in social groups governed by faith:

**Revelatory Authority:** The leader claims to receive psychic messages and orders directly from the cult's divinity.

**The Theater of Martyrdom:** Those who suffer for the faith gain legitimacy and influence.

**Doctrine Manipulation:** If it can be justified by the holy text, it can be done.

**Sanctified Alliances:** Some potential allies are better than others because the divine leader would approve.

**Excommunication as the Cure:** The true believer quietly encourages the faithful to shun a rival, not for what they've done, but for how they've failed in their faith.

**The Proof Is in the Miracle:** The leaders of the cult stage miraculous acts to prove divine favor.

**Redemption as a Power Play:** Publicly forgiving an enemy for their sins makes you seem magnanimous and merciful.

**Shared Secret Knowledge:** Those in the cult share secrets no one outside the cult is in on, binding them together. The secret can be wonderful, shameful, or both. The one who controls that knowledge controls the cult. ■

**TABLE 3:**  
**Notable Kindred Cults**

| <b>Cult</b>                     | <b>Description</b>                                                                                                  | <b>Main Source</b>                                                      |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Amaranthans                     | Worshippers of the ancient Toreador Amarantha, whose diablerie they are avowed to avenge                            | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 114                                 |
| Ashfinders                      | Duskborn New Age cult dedicated to psychedelic euphoria of Ashe                                                     | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 35                                  |
| Bahari                          | Devotees of the Dark Mother's teachings of freedom through pain                                                     | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 46                                  |
| Church of Caine                 | Gnostics who believe this world is Hell and the Cainites are its Angels                                             | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 57                                  |
| Church of Set                   | Worshippers of the blood god Set seeking liberation from societal structures                                        | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 68                                  |
| Cleopatrans                     | Nosferatu cult whose members nurse a hope that the blood god Yima will rise and make them beautiful.                | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 115                                 |
| Cult of Shalim                  | Nihilistic cult that teaches members to rid themselves of joy to escape suffering.                                  | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 86                                  |
| Cultivar                        | Lilith cult dedicated to uprooting descendants of Caine                                                             | <i>Chicago by Night</i> , p. 271                                        |
| Eyes of Malakai                 | Predatory worshippers of the entity Malakai                                                                         | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 116                                 |
| Gorgo's Nest                    | Destructive cult inspired by the mythical murder of the Nosferatu methuselah Gorgo                                  | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 118                                 |
| Los Hijos de Si                 | South American moon worshippers who long for an age without sunlight                                                | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 118,<br><i>Gehenna War</i> , p. 118 |
| Meneleans                       | Seekers of Golconda, inspired by the Brujah methuselah Menele                                                       | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 120                                 |
| Mithraic Mysteries              | Ancient religion dedicated to seeking enlightenment through emulating and obeying the leader, Mithras               | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 95                                  |
| Nephilim; Children of the Angel | Devoted followers of the Dream of Constantinople                                                                    | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 105                                 |
| Praesidium                      | Militant Tremere cult dedicated to protecting the work to rebuild the Pyramid                                       | <i>Forbidden Religions</i> , p. 24                                      |
| Servitors of Irad               | Antediluvian cult whose followers believe they'll be spared by their ancestors if they work to spread chaos and war | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 122,<br><i>Gehenna War</i> , p. 112 |
| Shattered Spear                 | Ventruue descendants and worshippers of the ancient goddess Artemis Orthia                                          | <i>Forbidden Religions</i> , p. 11                                      |
| Shepherds of Ur-Shulgi          | Followers of the methuselah Ur-Shulgi who follow the five Laws of Haqim                                             | <i>Forbidden Religions</i> , p. 19,<br><i>Gehenna War</i> , p. 113      |
| Sons and Daughters of Helena    | Methuselah cult focused on wealth and influence, dedicated to the ancient Helena                                    | <i>Cults of the Blood Gods</i> , p. 120                                 |
| The one True Way                | Golconda-seeking pyramid scheme cult led by the mysterious Master of Ravens                                         | <i>Children of the Blood</i> , p. 79                                    |
| Throne's Keepers                | Autarky cult dedicated to protecting their land from the Gehenna War                                                | <i>Gehenna War</i> , p. 125                                             |



## *Chapter Five:*



# THE STORYTELLER'S MANIFESTO

**T**he personal is political. There's no escaping vampire politics once you have been bitten — at least not if you take part in one of the societies of the night. Because even if you try to mind your own business, others out there will see your choices as challenges to their rule and make how you feed, whom you share a haven with, and what bloodline you belong to out to be political.

This chapter is about how to use politics in your game as the Storyteller — whether it's the main focus or something that simply happens to the characters from time to time. First, it presents advice on how to make political themes work in your game, and then it moves on to big setting events in **Vampire: The Masquerade** and how to present them so your players can have fun with them.

# HOW MUCH POLITICS?

Politics among the undead is a core component of **Vampire**, but you decide how much spotlight it gets in your narrative. Below are three options to get you thinking about the role of politics in your story or chronicle.

## As the Background

Politics doesn't have to be at the front of your narrative for you to use this book. A handful of pointed events in an otherwise non-political story can create the feeling that the machinations of the Kindred are constantly simmering just beneath the surface.

### Examples:

- **Set Dressing:** The coterie enters Elysium. Powerful vampires vie for the Prince's favor, secrets are whispered into ears in hushed corners, and someone is goaded into a face-losing Frenzy. The character they came to meet has just been outmaneuvered by a rival and is now looking for someone to take it out on.
- **Enemy of My Enemy:** The coterie gets offers to work together from two opposing heavyweights, each with different strings attached. Choosing one automatically angers the other.
- **It's Just Politics:** The coterie suddenly faces an obstacle. Their usual allies refuse to help, claiming the coterie pissed off the wrong Kindred and that the timing couldn't be worse.

- **You Didn't Hear This from Me:** While talking with their contact, the coterie hears a rumor that their rivals are temporarily vulnerable. Maybe the rumor is coming from someone who has an axe to grind with their rivals?

If your players engage with political themes, you can gradually increase the intrigue by introducing more Kindred with stakes in the domain's power games.

**Well-Suited For:** Blood Cult, Champions, Fang Gang, Hunting Party, Nomads, Questari (*Vampire*, p. 197)

## As the Theme

A story can treat politics thematically even if your troupe isn't interested in playing politically. Cleaning up after or getting caught in the wake of a power struggle can drive the coterie's mission, create tension with others who have a stake in it, or hint at who might come after them if they walk away.

For inspiration, check out crime dramas where political power collides with the everyday or political fiction told from the point of view of non-politicians.

### Examples:

- **Political Assignment:** The coterie has been drafted by their domain ruler to kick down the doors of their political rivals or guard against an impending revolution.

- **Legacy:** The coterie is following in the footsteps of their sires or other predecessors and thus inherit their political rivals. Perhaps they're up against the political clique that was behind their predecessors' downfall?
- **Whodunit:** The coterie is investigating a Tradition violation. Unbeknownst to them, the crime was politically motivated — and the tracks lead all the way to the top.

A chronicle that features politics as a theme can evolve into a full-blown political game if the players pursue those avenues, or, just as easily, see its intrigues fade into the background when the focus shifts elsewhere.

**Well-Suited For:** Cerberus, Commando, Day Watch, Vehme, Watchmen (*Vampire*, p. 197)

## As the Activity

If you want to go all in, your story is about doing politics: the characters are after power, and your game will be about the political intrigue needed to seize and keep it. You can still have a diverse coterie — after all, every political mastermind needs investigators, spies, enforcers, and confidants.

Political thrillers are a rich source of engaging political stories, whether set in government offices or among those trying to undermine them. Stories of organized crime inspire exploring loyalty, betrayal, and violence outside the justice system. Soap operas show that lies, alliances, and double-crossing can be gripping even when the stakes are purely personal.

### Examples:

- **Infiltration:** The coterie is made to join a rival faction to gain information or influence decisions, either to accomplish a specific goal or as long-term double agents. The mirror of this story is a mole hunt, where the protagonists root out a suspected infiltrator within their own faction.

- **Securing Mortal Influence:** The coterie identifies a mortal institution they can bend to their will, be it a police department that can investigate a rival's underworld retainers, a zoning department with the power to demolish opposing havens, or a criminal organization with underworld resources.
- **Deposing a Leader:** The protagonists try to replace the leader of a faction — possibly their own. Such stories consist of subverting or eliminating the leader's keys to power (p. 158). Deposing a leader can be entirely bloodless, but keeping a deposed leader around is usually a bad way to start your reign.
- **Claiming a Vacancy:** A domain, title, or similar stake has become vacant, and the protagonists must triumph in the rush to fill the power vacuum. Perhaps there's a ruler who needs to be persuaded, or the coterie has to bribe, threaten, or convince all other claimants to take it.
- **Holding Your Spoils:** The protagonists have taken control of a stake (such as a domain or a nightclub) and must now fend off both the faction they took it from and everyone else who wants it. There will always be someone coming after what you have.
- **Becoming What You Hated:** The protagonists despise those in power and know they would do it better. But as they get closer to their goal, they have to keep choosing power over their principles, until finally they must resort to the same methods the old rulers used to maintain their power.

Remember to include opportunities for the players' characters to use non-political skills. After long scenes of intense negotiation, doing a bit of investigation to find your rival's weakness or fighting off an attack on your resources can be a great change of pace and let the players share the spotlight.

**Well-Suited For:** Maréchal, Plumaire, Regency, Sbirri (*Vampire*, p. 197)

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### PLAYING WITH TITLES

Based on the themes of the chronicle and the goals of the coterie, the characters of one or more players can start the game with a title or acquire one over the course of the chronicle. This is especially typical in a chronicle where the coterie is a part of an influential domain, such as a Regency coterie that rules on behalf of someone else. Different combinations of titles can create highly motivated coteries, such as the Sheriff and her enforcement team, or a young Prince and his title-holding advisors trying to hold on to their newly acquired power.

Keep in mind that titles come with authority and duties that set the holders apart from free political actors. Titles acquired during a chronicle can also put a strain on the players if title-holding characters overshadow the others. Make sure that having titles within the coterie aligns with the kind of chronicle everyone wants to play.

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*I love her, of course. Victoria, my Blood Bound wife. The ceremony demands it of me, and the Blood makes it true. But we are both too old to have any illusions about what this really is: politics.*

*The Camarilla and the Ashirra are brought closer together through our union. It's a noble goal, and if I'm to suffer emotional discomfort because of it, so be it.*

*I never expected Victoria to spend her nights with me. She's used to her freedoms and loves the changes in the mortal world more than any Kindred of her age I have ever met. She'll spend her nights engaging with the pretense of being a neonate, whether I like it or not.*

*I only wish she'd spend more of her considerable energies fulfilling the true purpose of our union. If the Vermilion Wedding is to be the symbol we need it to be, she should represent her clan and sect proudly by my side.*

*Now, I've often found myself in the strange position of being taken into the innermost confidences of the Camarilla, alone, without her to tell me what these old European Kindred truly wish to see.*

—— The Banu Haqim Tegyrius idly confessing to a terrified servant

# MECHANICS IN POLITICAL STORIES



**Y**ou have an idea for a political narrative but wonder how to best utilize **Vampire**'s mechanics in telling it? This section provides guidance for Storytellers on using Chronicle Tenets, Convictions, and Touchstones in a political chronicle, and on playing the Beast in political scenes.

## Chronicle Tenets

Tenets set the floor for what constitutes monstrous behavior in your chronicle. Politically focused chronicles tend to have fewer opportunities and less screen time for killing, so consider Tenets that can be broken without violence (see some suggestions on p. 36).

If you feel like you're not finding enough opportunities for incurring Stains, remember that 1 Stain can — as an option — be incurred by a breach that is justified by a Conviction, while a deliberately monstrous act can incur 2 or more Stains (*Vampire*, p. 239). A Conviction may negate 1 Stain from a truly vile act, meaning that 1 is still incurred.

## Convictions

Stories about accumulating power are often about losing sight of yourself or becoming what you hated. For the Storyteller, the players' characters' Convictions are invitations to put them in situations where their beliefs are challenged, allowing them to

affirm their beliefs and suffer the consequences — or play out the tragedy of losing themselves in the pursuit of power.

Fundamentally, Convictions are loopholes that let players and their characters break Chronicle Tenets. The Storyteller should hang their stories on the Tenets and their violation.

## Touchstones

If you want Touchstones to feature prominently in your political story, you can use them to make the stakes of your domain more dramatic to the players:

- A Touchstone lives in an area that is valuable for feeding, putting their fate at least partly in the hands of whoever is controlling it.
- A Touchstone has a powerful Resonance or even a Dyscrasia, making them a sought-after prize for many vampires in a way that actively puts them in harm's way.
- A Touchstone works, studies, or volunteers in a valuable but rarely visited domain, like the city's healthcare system or a prison, making the domain extra significant to at least one character and giving you a reason to set scenes there.

In any case, the fact that a player's character has a deep emotional connection to a mortal makes them vulnerable. Threatening or harming a Kindred's closest mortals should mark any character out as particularly monstrous.

## Messy Criticals and Bestial Failures

Political scenes often center on talking and involve fewer tests than, for example, intense action scenes. The outcome of a dramatic negotiation scene can be determined by a single contest between the main negotiators, although you can certainly have a pivotal political scene where the players make Skill tests for sizing up the opposition, making moves, catching implications, and rallying allies.

Every time the Storyteller decides that a test is warranted, both success and failure should take the narrative forward in some way, even as the characters may lose control over the Beast.

If your troupe still finds that the Beast is diverting too much attention from the political intrigue, remember these rules:

- A player can Take Half instead of rolling dice to automatically score a number of successes equal to their pool divided in half, rounded down (*Vampire*, p. 123).
- Instead of interrupting or derailing a scene, a messy critical could result in simple failure as the Beast clouds the character's senses (*Vampire*, p. 207).
- Instead of acting out a Compulsion, a bestial failure can result in the character taking a level of Aggravated Health or Willpower damage or increasing their Hunger by 1 (*Vampire*, p. 207).
- As the Storyteller, you have the option of keeping the consequences of a messy critical or a bestial failure in the fiction without imposing a mechanical penalty. This is especially powerful in political chronicles, where someone thinking less of your character is a real setback.

Table 4 presents ideas for messy criticals and bestial failures in scenes where the characters are primarily talking and everyone present is either a vampire or at least a trusted retainer participating in the Masquerade.

## Frenzy

Kindred etiquette needs to tolerate the Beast to some extent, much like how the violent tempers of gangsters in crime fiction are shrugged off—at least until they become a liability to the organization.

Below are alternatives for the Fury Frenzy rules presented in **Vampire** (pp. 219–220) when you don't want a Fury Frenzy to derail your political scene.

- **Incapacitated:** Instead of making a test to resist Fury Frenzy, a character can choose to leave the scene and vent their rage somewhere else. They're unable to contribute to the scene any further. At the Storyteller's discretion, the character can suffer 1 or more Superficial Willpower damage as they strain to stay in control.
- **Dragged Out Kicking and Screaming:** If the test to resist Fury Frenzy fails, the Storyteller can decide that the frenzying vampire has enough allies to restrain and remove them from the scene, leaving their opponents basking in the schadenfreude. At the Storyteller's discretion, the restraining characters can suffer 1 or more Superficial Health damage that cannot be halved.
- **Vicious but Brief Scuffle:** For a more brutal version, the frenzying vampire gets their claws on the offender right before both sides rush in. The frenzying vampire and the offender inflict Superficial Health damage to each other equal to the successes of a single Strength + Brawl test, taking into account relevant modifiers such as Discipline use and halving as normal. The frenzying vampire is then removed from the scene, and the restraining characters may suffer 1 or more Superficial Health damage that cannot be halved.

The same options can also be used to narrate Hunger Frenzy in a political scene, while a Terror Frenzy usually resolves itself as the vampire flees. Remember that failing a test to resist any Frenzy can result in Stains for the character, and Frenzy-fueled violence can warrant additional Stains.

**TABLE 4:**  
**Messy Criticals and Bestial Failures for Political Skills**

| Skill        | Messy Critical Examples                                                                                                                                                                       | Bestial Failure Examples                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Awareness    | <p>The Beast draws the target's attention, unnerving them with animal malice or craving.</p> <p>The Beast hyperfocuses on the target, missing something vital happening in the periphery.</p> | <p>The Beast derails the character's attention, focusing on whomever they can victimize.</p> <p>The Beast grows bored of observing and starts moving in on the target.</p> |
| Etiquette    | <p>The Beast pushes the character to claim a higher status than they should.</p> <p>The Beast demands obedience, gifts, or accommodations from the other participants.</p>                    | <p>The Beast breaks all formality to pursue its desire.</p> <p>The Beast tries to use the formalities as a cover to victimize whomever it can get away with.</p>           |
| Finance      | <p>The Beast rushes through the records, leaving obvious traces in its wake.</p> <p>The Beast takes greater risks or makes higher valuations than what is wise.</p>                           | <p>The Beast demands to gorge on profits.</p> <p>The Beast acts to bring financial ruin to its perceived enemies.</p>                                                      |
| Insight      | <p>The Beast makes the character appear threatening to the target.</p> <p>The Beast sees the target as prey.</p>                                                                              | <p>The Beast imagines a false weakness.</p> <p>The Beast makes the character demand information out loud.</p>                                                              |
| Intimidation | <p>The Beast is unimpressed and escalates the threat.</p> <p>The Beast demonstrates that the threat is credible.</p>                                                                          | <p>The Beast makes the character appear desperate and out of control.</p> <p>The Beast makes good on the character's threat.</p>                                           |
| Leadership   | <p>The Beast goads its audience into bloodlust.</p> <p>The Beast makes the character appear unstable and dangerous.</p>                                                                       | <p>The Beast demands subservience from those around it.</p> <p>The Beast dismisses the crowd as beneath its contempt.</p>                                                  |
| Politics     | <p>The Beast becomes obsessed with a direct attack plan.</p> <p>The Beast humiliates another character, antagonizing them.</p>                                                                | <p>The Beast underestimates a character or a faction.</p> <p>The Beast turns an ally or an unaligned party against the character.</p>                                      |
| Streetwise   | <p>The Beast encourages or creates chaos in the streets.</p> <p>The Beast stains the character's reputation.</p>                                                                              | <p>The Beast makes a show of street violence.</p> <p>The Beast makes others suspect the character is a snitch—or worse.</p>                                                |
| Subterfuge   | <p>The Beast weaves in unnerving or violent lies.</p> <p>The Beast offends a character with an insult or an insinuation.</p>                                                                  | <p>The Beast loses track of the truth, allowing it to be convinced by others.</p> <p>The Beast's crude approach makes it obvious what the character wants.</p>             |

# CREATING A POLITICAL DOMAIN



**W**hether you're using a published chronicle or creating your own domain, abstraction is the Storyteller's friend.

This section presents tools to prepare a domain ripe for power struggles and political maneuvering while keeping things manageable at your end.

## The Political Map

The Political Map of your domain is a type of Relationship Map you can use to illustrate the central political characters of your domain, their relationships, which faction each character belongs to, and the relationships between the factions (p. 31–35). Don't feel pressured to map out every character in the domain at the beginning of a

chronicle — the entirety of the Political Map should be gradually revealed as the players' characters learn more about the politics of the domain.

If you're struggling to get started, try to come up with a pivotal disagreement between two Kindred central to your domain. The sides of this clash will be the main factions you can elaborate on.

## Factions

Factions are efficient tools for both creating and running the politics of a domain. Just two or three factions with competing visions for the domain will create conflict and stakes before a single Storyteller character has been created (see major and minor factions in Chapter One, p. 33). Factions also help

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### STORYTELLER CHARACTERS AND THE BEAST

Make sure to have Storyteller characters struggle with the Beast as well! If your storytelling style involves using Take Half or static difficulty for Storyteller characters, use the players' characters' critical successes or high margins of success as opportunities to have their rivals build up toward a Frenzy or manifest a Compulsion.

You can also let the dice decide, and during a dramatic moment where a Storyteller character's Beast might come out, roll a single Hunger die. On a 1, consider it a bestial failure. On a 10, consider it a messy critical.

---

communicate the political landscape to the players as well as the opposing sides the domain's Kindred are pressured to take.

The number, size, and structure of factions depend on the size of the domain. In a small city capable of sustaining a dozen Kindred, coteries are the main factions. The factions of a huge metropolitan area are comprised of coalitions — or coalitions of coalitions — of aligned coteries.

While the factions of your domain might align with sects like the Camarilla and the Anarch Movement, every domain will have factions that struggle for power, even if they nominally fall under the same sect. In addition to sect-aligned factions, any domain can feature independent factions.

To make a faction feel like a political coalition, define some core properties:

- **Faction Identity:** A tagline that quickly establishes the theme of the faction for you and the players: “the business elite that dominate the Primogen Council” or “a ragtag group of revolutionaries.”
- **Agenda:** The wider belief or goal that unites individuals into a faction. “Authority must be wielded by those left rightfully in power by the now-gone elders,” or “the Camarilla in Helsinki should be torn down and its members made to face the sunrise.”
- **Modus Operandi:** How does the faction go about achieving their vision? Do they use intimidation and deep connections in the local government, or do they recklessly cause considerable physical harm to both their opponents and their resources?
- **Schisms:** What things are contested within the faction? Do the revolutionaries disagree on their methods or on what to do after the revolution? If you ever find that a faction has achieved its agenda, the faction's schisms will inevitably split it into new factions, trying to guide the emerging status quo toward their own visions.

- **Key Members:** You will need at least one Storyteller character to be the face of the faction for the players. As you create more members, use the agenda, modus operandi, and schisms to show both the unifying and divisive traits of the faction.

The above properties are in no way exhaustive. You might also consider listing the stakes the faction holds, locations where they congregate, and the faction's aesthetic symbols, colors, and coded phrases.

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### EXAMPLE FACTION: CRIMINAL UPSTARTS

**Faction Identity:** An unruly band of neonates embedded in the underworld of the city.

**Agenda:** “This domain has too long been ruled by those who refuse to adapt to modern nights.”

**Modus Operandi:** Using criminal organizations to destroy or incapacitate their rivals' resources, infiltrating mortal organizations with thin-bloods.

**Schisms:** Should thin-bloods be considered full members of the faction or just exploited because they have no other faction that will have them? Is using Thin-Blood Alchemy or Blood Sorcery a bridge too far?

#### Key Members:

- **Adam:** Gangrel gang leader with a chip on his shoulder after being passed over for Sheriff
- **Joy:** House of Carna Tremere Court Ritualist cozying up to the Prince
- **Strawberry:** A thin-blood who the others look up to for standing against Adam

#### Stakes:

- Has taken over the criminal biker gang Flamers
- Controls the waterfront for feeding and criminal enterprise

**Locations:** Closed-down factory, docs

**Aesthetic:** Tattoos, New Age mysticism, open carry firearms, biker jackets

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## Political Storyteller Characters

Preparing the needs and flaws of the characters on the Political Map helps you improvise their reactions to the coterie's schemes. To quickly create a political actor for your domain, pick an example Storyteller character from Chapter Six and jot down one of each of the following:

- **A want**, preferably something that advances their faction's agenda.
- **A personal weakness**, such as something the character will never do or would risk everything to protect.
- **A relational weakness**, such as an old enemy or a recklessly high boon they owe.
- **A key to power**, such as an Ally, Influence, Resource, Retainer, Status, or stake that keeps the character in power against their competitors. A character's key to power can be another Storyteller character, creating a relationship with political implications.

- **A prize** that the character is willing to give out as a favor or reward to fulfill their want. If a character will give out a boon, think what that boon might eventually buy.

Some of the above can be public secrets about a character to get the coterie started, but a complete and accurate understanding of a Kindred's wants, weaknesses, and resources should be a valuable and jealously guarded commodity.

### EXAMPLE

*Adam, the Gangrel leader of the Criminal Upstarts, wants to get a title in the domain to shut up anyone who still thinks the Criminal Upstarts are not a serious political threat. Blood Sorcery creeps Adam out, and he will always find another way to do things. He is in a situation with a Malkavian ancilla but has caught feelings in a way that makes him vulnerable. His keys to power are his control of the Flamers biker gang, his childe Jeffery, who runs arms trafficking in the city, and his willingness to let thin-bloods be part of the faction. To get what he wants, he is ready to cut someone into the gunrunning as a partner, or loan out his gang to solve a one-time problem with force.*



# KEEPING TRACK OF A POLITICAL DOMAIN

Creating an intricate political domain can be very rewarding, but Storytellers should be careful how they invest their time. These tools can help track events and characters in a way that allows you to adapt to changes.

## Faction Countdowns

A faction countdown is an ordered list of events that will happen if no one tries to stop the faction from acting. It can consist of anything from gathering resources to acting against other factions, consolidating gains, and recovering from setbacks. Two factions can have contradicting events in their countdowns to represent conflicts that hang in the balance. You can also use countdown events to reveal something about the goals, resources, or weaknesses of the faction, such as a faction's two key members having a public falling-out.

If you keep track of dates in your chronicle, you can put faction countdown events into a calendar and resolve them as they come up. The other way is to keep the countdowns as mostly sequential lists, where you can cross them out as they happen or when characters are catching up with the latest gossip. If politics is happening in the background of your chronicle, this more abstract way of using countdowns is a great way to update the political landscape in the downtime between stories.

## Plan Trackers

When a player's character sets out to reach a political objective that will take some time to achieve, you can start a plan tracker for that character that shows the number of activities that need to be completed to reach the goal, represented as boxes. Five boxes are a good default, but you can vary things by using more or fewer boxes for bigger or smaller plans, marking off two boxes for critical successes, or removing a mark as a consequence for a bestial failure.

### EXAMPLE:

*The Malkavian Anastasia wants her faction's leader to support her claim to the title of Herald. You reason that there are many things Anastasia could conceivably do to secure the leader's support, but it won't be a simple one-off thing, so you create a five-box tracker and write "The leader supports Anastasia for Herald" at the end. Every time Anastasia or one of her allies discovers a weakness they can leverage, she acquires a resource that can be used to buy off the leader, or similar, you mark off one box.*

Remember that a box tracker is only a tool for Storytellers to keep track of how much effort has been put into furthering the plan. If the shared fiction compels the project to come to an abrupt success or failure, let that happen.

## Tracking Storyteller Characters

Political chronicles can involve large casts of Storyteller characters who stay relevant from story to story as the coterie remains in the same domain. Remembering and switching between characters can be greatly enhanced by maintaining an index or an electronic spreadsheet with each character's name, portrait, needs, flaws, dice pools, and relevant history with the players' characters.

If you want to maximize your adaptability, you can even create spare Storyteller characters with names, personalities, portraits, and dice pools but no predetermined faction or relationships. When there's a sudden need for a political Storyteller character to enter a scene, you can slot one of your spare characters into a faction and introduce them without skipping a beat.

*We play two games of politics, you and I. One cold. One hot. The first one we pretend is the most important and dangerous, while those things truly describe the second. We obsess over the first, let it fill our nights, and talk incessantly about it. We wear our titles and flaunt our successes with pride, but without the second game, the one we play would be void. ... "sound and fury, signifying nothing."*

*Yet we love our cold game so much. We hinge all we are on a bet to earn a pretty title in the Courts of the damned, pretending the powers and principalities of Elysium actually have weight and true meaning. But what is a Prince but a lord of air and shadows, unless he can guarantee hot blood for his vassals? What, I ask, is our cold body politic next to the one from whose body we rip every bit of power we hold?*

# MORTAL POLITICS



Come now. Let us cease this pretense and talk candidly about the second game. The hot game. The game of power in the world of light and life. The mortal world.

Mortals can provide everything Kindred need. Money. Cover identities. Havens. Blood. Potential new Embraces. All are mortal resources, and to control them, Kindred must sometimes play the dangerous “hot game” of mortal politics. Almost no Kindred manipulator is ready for the cost and the consequences of dabbling in the fast-moving and unpredictable mess that is mortal politics in the 21st century.

Forget what you have been told about the Kindred controlling everything. Not even at the height of their power during the Victorian Era did Camarilla Princes have more than a handful of representatives in the House of Lords, and perhaps enough dirt on the royals to manipulate a prince consort or two. Control over the army or the navy? Not a chance. Influence over specific events and outcomes is the very best the Kindred can hope for if they give it their all. Especially in this age of Inquisition, the damned must carefully consider every attempt at manipulation a risk that may end in final death, exposure of their childer, or worse. Still, sometimes it must be done, because mortals, indeed, are the most important resource to the leeches.

Below are some of the ways Kindred use mortals for their own political goals and how you can reflect the risk in the game mechanics.

## Politics by Proxy

Kindred who want to affect a mortal political decision must work through a proxy. Downing Street employees, members of Congress, or members of the Duma do not generally take meetings after dark, and deals over drinks between party officials in D.C. cocktail bars only go so far, no matter the size of the campaign donation. Making any kind of political test through a Retainer or hired front is harder than doing so in person. Such tests are at a +1 to +2 Difficulty, and a failure means the effort is wasted or that the proxy betrays the Kindred manipulator. A bestial or total failure (no successes) or just two failures in a row means investigation by the authorities, or even a visit from SO13, SAD, BOES, or a similar agency.

## Defensive Moves

In the 21st century, most vampires rely on old contacts, proven allies, and associates who act without being prodded or poked at all. But sometimes, when the agency alphabet soup is boiling over in a domain, inaction is more dangerous than trying to redirect or discredit the opposition.

The rising trend towards authoritarianism and distrust in “the deep state” has made attacks against even deeply rooted intelligence organizations possible once again; however, the Kindred can only do so much. Instead of direct action, it is often through “oversight programs” and “fiscal responsibility” initiatives that the dead manage to defund, weaken, and misdirect assets like healthcare

and international intelligence corporations that threaten their existence.

In a city-sized domain, defanging the local SI by cutting their budgets, firing long-time employees, and casting doubt on the veracity of their data is not something to be settled with a test; it is the subject of a multi-session story, often going up against experts with 6 / 4 Difficulties, working in teams. A single failed opposed roll means armed officers at your Haven.

## Undermining Official Authorities

Most of the time, trying to affect mortal politics is too dangerous. Instead, many smart bloodsuckers try to influence institutions far away from City Hall or Capitol Hill. Prime among these is the world of organized crime. This is familiar territory to the undead; most crime networks operate along eerily similar lines as Camarilla Princes and Primogen. Some even argue that the Cosa Nostra is, in whole or in part, a mortal version of the Ivory Tower, with the Traditions being almost identical to the famous mobster code that emphasizes omertà and respect for its powerful members. For one thing, it is much easier to deal with criminal networks at night, eliminating the need for a proxy. Secondly, many illegal syndicates respect a copious capacity for applied violence, something Kindred excel at. On the flip side, such violence is often met with instant and total retribution. It matters little whether your opponent knows you are a monster if their preferred method of war is firebombing every single address that they can connect to you or your hirelings.

In general, allow tests at normal Difficulty when interacting with or influencing mobsters. But should a roll be a total failure, make sure violent retribution is the immediate consequence, costing the Kindred a variable amount of dots of Advantages (often Resources, Haven, Contacts, Allies, or even a Touchstone) fitting the scope of the attempted manipulation. This is known as blowback.

## Blowback

Suggested blowback costs in the number of Advantage dots:

- Attempting to direct an attack against another illegal or Kindred target.
- Attempting to use a criminal organization to buy out or destroy a legal company or minor institution.
- Attempting to affect local city politics or establish total control over a major local criminal gang.
- Making a criminal organization the target of a Second Inquisition agency instead of your own network; trying to affect the national response to a health crisis, for instance, by downgrading a total curfew to a mandate to maintain social distance.

This blowback is most immediate and felt when failing a test when interacting with criminal organizations, but the same system can be used to determine the cost of a bestial or total failure when playing the “hot game” with national institutions or directly with Second Inquisition organizations.

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### MORTAL POLITICS IN PLAY

A city's mortal political climate inevitably bleeds into Kindred reality as well. A city with deep inequality breeds unrest, corruption, and crime, making it easier for the Kindred to exist unnoticed. When the military gets more funding, Second Inquisition agencies are more likely to come after you with brand-new tech. An activist group might target a vampire-owned corporation because of what it trades in. A controversial urban redevelopment can spark feuds over domain territory. Mortal politics are not just something the Kindred use and hide from but something that sometimes targets them even without having a single clue as to their true nature.

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# HORROR IN POLITICS



**P**olitically active characters need a lot of information and opportunities to affect what takes place in their city, but too much influence can give them near-supernatural political power. This section explores how to keep the horror aspects of Vampire intact in political play.

## Information Asymmetry

Don't let players get a complete, reliable understanding of the city. Hinting at unseen events and occasionally blindsiding them with new twists keeps paranoia alive. Having a few central Storyteller characters act under false pretenses or betray the coterie once their goals are met reinforces that everyone is out for themselves. That said, be wary of overusing deception. If every lead turns out to be false and every deal is broken, your game will grind to a halt as players lose their sense of agency.

## Powerlessness

Make the stakes of other vampires' schemes feel immediate and severe for the players' characters. Petty vendettas between courtiers escalate into brutal displays of dominance, loved ones vanish across domain lines, and feeding rights are revoked on a whim to reward a ruler's lackey.

Unlike the fear of the unknown, the horror of powerlessness can come from knowing exactly what's about to happen. Faction countdowns (p. 159) can foreshadow disasters for the players' characters while also reinforcing that their

misfortunes result from the politics of the domain, not the Storyteller's whims.

And if the players' characters do find themselves with considerable influence or manage to pit stronger foes against one another? Then they should truly feel afraid, because nothing unites rivals faster than a shared threat.

## The Cost of Power

Make gaining power come at a terrible price. Offer the players' characters tempting advantages that require compromising their Convictions or the Chronicle Tenets, or let them think they got away scot-free, only to discover they made a trade they weren't prepared for.

Once they're successful, let them feel the burden of keeping what they've taken. Those at the top rule because they hold the loyalty of their keys to power — those who could topple the ruler if they chose. A shrewd ruler will replace any key whose loyalty is questioned and eliminate anyone whose loyalty is no longer needed. And the keys themselves, who sit in the ruler's inner circle? They have their own keys to power, which they must manage, and their own rivals who would gladly take their place.

Power then becomes a trap. Those with less envy what the characters have: their peers fear being left behind, and their superiors become paranoid that they'll be replaced. No matter how high they climb, they'll always feel someone reaching for their throats.

# THE WORLD OF VAMPIRE

The setting of **Vampire: The Masquerade** has a wealth of exciting, horrific, and dramatic events that can be used as background material for a chronicle. Here, our goal is to demonstrate how to make **Vampire's** history playable so it's relevant for your characters.

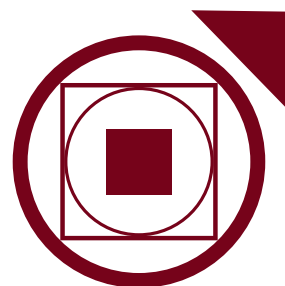
The principal game-mechanical tool for integrating lore into character is the Loreshheet.

## Using Loreshheets

For players, picking levels in a Loreshheet signals interest in a specific event, location, character, or other aspect of the world. When starting a chronicle, it's worth considering which Loreshheets (and lore topics in general) best match its theme and tone. In a chronicle developed from the bottom up by the troupe together, this is easily done in pre-game discussion, keeping everyone aligned. At the other end of the spectrum, the Storyteller might present chronicle concepts to the players, complete with a list of approved or restricted Loreshheets. Some Storytellers might find it natural for characters to start without Loreshheets and unlock relevant ones in play.

## Playable Lore

The following examples show ways Storytellers can make lore relevant to players and their characters. It focuses on recent Kindred events. For more, *In Memoriam* provides details for Kindred events going further back, as well as expanded rules for Memoriam and advice for using that mechanic to flash back to past eras.

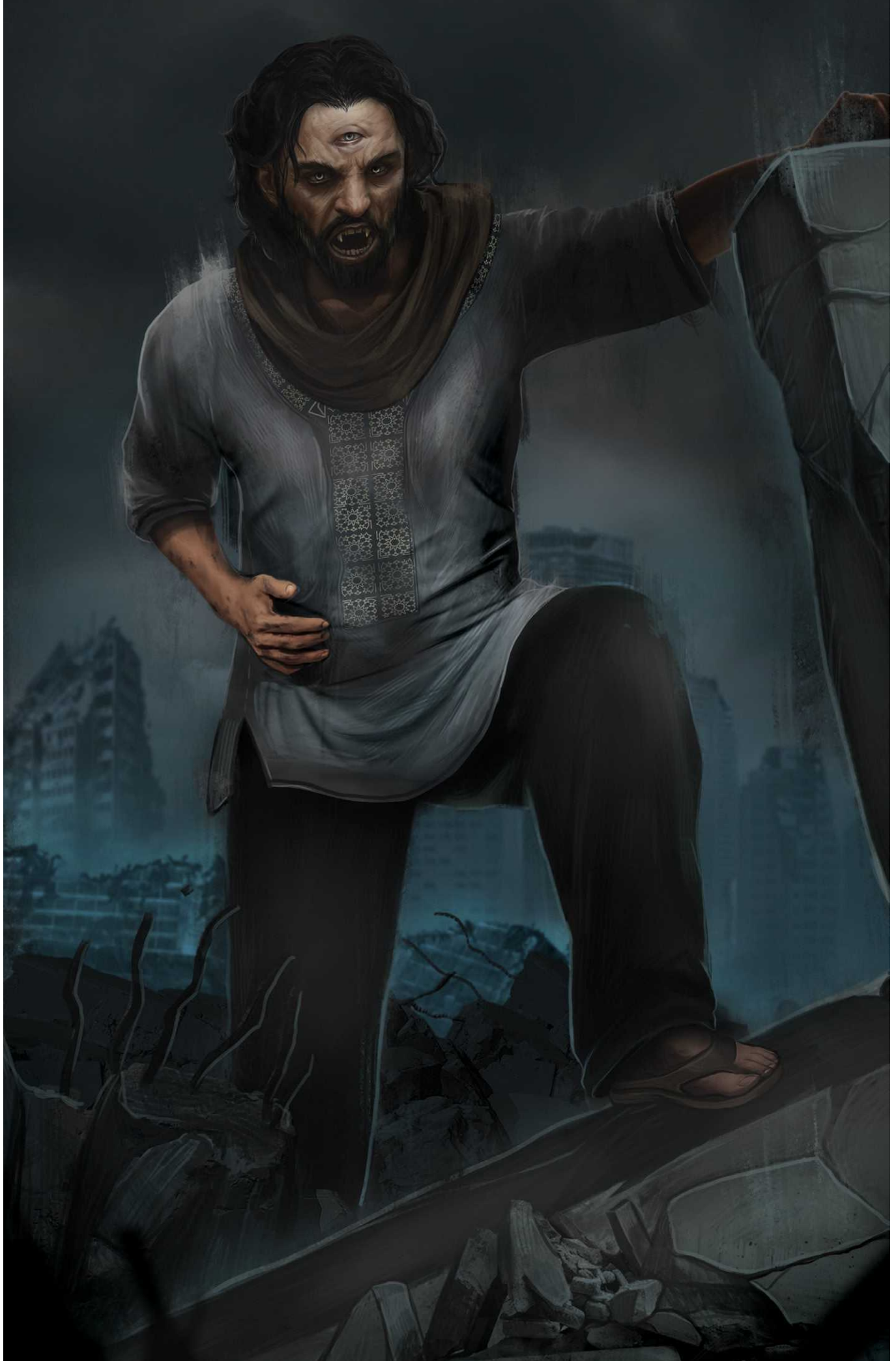


## Collapse of the Tremere Pyramid

**Loreshheets:** Descendant of Karl Schreckt (*Vampire*, p. 405), Descendant of Meerlinda (p. 220), Lost Secrets of the Milwaukee Chantry (*Let the Streets Run Red*, p. 288), Machinations of Saulot (*Book of Nod Apocrypha*, p. 39), Occult Artifacts (*Chicago Folios*, p. 166), Praepositor (*Forbidden Religions*, p. 92), The Pyramid (*Camarilla*, p. 189), Revenant Family: Ducheski (*Chicago by Night*, p. 283), Vienna Zero (*Blood Sigils*, p. 180)

In 2008, Second Inquisition agencies assaulted the Tremere Prime Chantry in Vienna, leaving behind rubble and confused accounts of a terrorist strike (see *Live from the Succubus Club*, p. 130). Some suspect the Tremere were sold out by other Kindred. The strike destroyed the clan's leadership or sent them into hiding, leaving an opening for long-persecuted splinter factions.

Since their inception, the Tremere have been a highly structured and hierarchical clan. Loyalty was maintained through the enforcement of Blood Bonds to a degree unknown in other clans. The



2008 strike shook the power of the Tremere Pyramid forcefully, giving rise to competing power centers and thaumaturgical traditions such as Houses Carna and Goratrix. The loyalist followers of House Tremere found themselves just one faction among many.

As a result, there are many opportunities for ambitious Tremere, such as the players' characters.

## Story Concepts

- **Reclaim Lost Sorceries:** As Tremere elders went into hiding, many took their most important occult books with them. Because of this, the remaining ancillae and neonates must rediscover rituals scattered in old havens and abandoned chantries.
- **Unify the Clan:** In the opinion of many loyalist Tremere, the hierarchy worked and should be rebuilt, with dissenters forced back into the fold. Similarly, members of other Tremere Houses,

such as House Carna, see themselves as the true inheritors of the legacy and envision a grand unified clan under their own leadership.

- **Undermine or Destroy Other Sorcerers:** The Tremere used to be *the* Kindred sorcerers, despite the Banu Haqim also possessing sorcerous powers. A few bloodlines of Tzimisce and Ministry were also rumored to have sorcerous potential. After the fall of the Pyramid, all these competing sorcerers have crawled out of the woodwork, and in some domains, there are entire communities of redworkers. All these rivals must be eliminated for the Tremere to regain prominence.
- **Study Your Own Way:** Whether by choice or necessity, many Tremere are on their own: fighting off rival sorcerers from other clans and trying to do it all. Can you make it by yourself, or is it time to Embrace or recruit other Tremere to help?

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## LEARNING BLOOD SORCERY AND OBLIVION

Learning Blood Sorcery is more difficult than other Disciplines, but it's not impossible to do even without Tremere or Banu Haqim tutelage. Ruleswise, you merely need to drink the vitae of another Kindred who knows the Discipline. And while some Kindred may spontaneously develop other Disciplines based on their feeding habits (Predator Types), Blood Sorcery doesn't work this way. This assumption leads to the underground redworking scene described in *Blood Sigils*.

If you want to make learning Blood Sorcery more difficult in a chronicle, add the requirement that anyone without Blood Sorcery as a Clan Discipline must be taught Blood Sorcery by a member of the Tremere or Banu Haqim, and Oblivion cannot be gained from a Predator Type except by Hecata and Lasombra. If it helps make a more interesting chronicle, learning Blood Sorcery or Oblivion could also be possible through certain occult books in addition to explicit instruction. Limiting the learning of these Disciplines restricts the occult scene.

To find an intermediate solution, some additional clans that historically possessed Blood Sorcery may still be able to teach it. In such a world, the Tzimisce, Ministry, and certain bloodlines of the Gangrel may possess the Protean Sorcerer Merit, and some members of the Ministry possess Oblivion's Corruption. These add rivals to the occult scene.

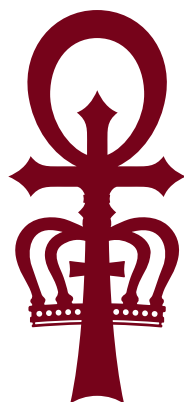
### Optional Merits

- **Protean Sorcerer** (Prerequisite: Gangrel, Ministry, or Tzimisce): You can learn and teach Blood Sorcery as though it were a Clan Discipline. This replaces Protean as a Clan Discipline for you.
  - **Oblivion's Corruption** (Prerequisite: Ministry): You can learn and teach Oblivion as though it were a Clan Discipline. This replaces Protean as a Clan Discipline for you. You cannot have both Oblivion's Corruption and Protean Sorcerer.
-

**Common Attitudes:** “We have other redworkers now. We don’t need the Tremere anymore.”

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** Learning Rituals and Blood Sorcery, feuding factions within Clan Tremere.

**Discoveries:** “The elders in Clan Tremere never told me that the Church of Set could teach sorcery...”



## The Conclave of Chicago

**Loresheets:** Archons (*Chicago Folios*, p. 158), The Convention of Chicago (*Chicago Folios*, p. 159), Cult of Shalim (*Chicago by Night*, p. 272), Descendant of Marconius (p. 219), Descendant of Montano (*Chicago by Night*, p. 274), High Clan (*Vampire*, p. 400), Justicar Lucinde (*Chicago Folios*, p. 162), Kevin Jackson (*Chicago by Night*, p. 277), Talley (*Chicago by Night*, p. 286), Sheriff Damien (*Chicago Folios*, p. 168)

In the early 21st century, after the assassination of Hardestadt the Elder, the Fall of London, and the Anarch insurrection in Berlin, Camarilla luminaries declared the Conclave of Chicago. The convention hosted luminaries from around the globe. Debates ranged from the growing thin-blood population to how best to combat the Second Inquisition.

The central item on the agenda was Lasombra admittance into the Camarilla. Following Prince Kevin Jackson and Sierra’s example, incoming Lasombra would pay a heavy price, such as handing over an elder clanmate, for acceptance. Individual Princes have created their own admission rules, but the Chicago Conclave established the precedent.

With the Second Inquisition and a violent Anarch Movement threatening the Ivory Tower, Lasombra inclusion couldn’t have come at a better time.

The Conclave’s decisions ripple throughout Camarilla cities, forcing characters to confront new political realities.

## Story Concepts

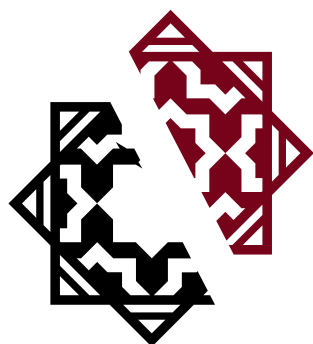
- **Off the Books:** While many scheduled conversations and committees filled the official agenda, informal discussions took place far from prying eyes. With numerous Princes, Primogen, and Kindred of note in one city, the Chicago Conclave provided perfect cover for backroom deals. Now, some may need to deliver on agreements they never knew their sires made.
- **A Lasombra Justicar:** Talley and Sierra paved the way for Clan Lasombra’s inclusion as Camarilla members, but that was only the start. The Amici Noctis blackmail, bribe, and influence Princes from around the globe, all in the hopes of one night claiming a formal, official Lasombra Justicar. And they are always looking for Kindred who can get a job done.
- **Generational Divide:** The original Lasombra converts paid a heavy price for Camarilla membership. They were often asked to destroy a single vampire of their own Blood to become members of the Camarilla. Those Embraced after the Conclave have avoided this terrible cost, with some hard-line Lasombra tormenting these youths who have had it too easy.
- **Word and Will:** When a Justicar or Archon empowers a Kindred to complete a task, they operate from perceived political strength. Who would deny someone working on behalf of a Justicar? Princes, however, despise being told what to do, especially within their own domain. Such an empowered Kindred may feel emboldened by their charge, but they may also find themselves with resentful rivals.

**Common Attitudes:** “You want sway? Then you have to be in the big rooms when the big things are

decided. Otherwise, you're just eavesdropping from behind the door."

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** Camarilla politics on a grand scale, using the famous event to earn reputation and climb the social ladder.

**Discoveries:** "Last year we were all Sabbat. Tonight, we're all Camarilla. The Justicars declared it so. But if that's the case, then why does every vampire I see still look like they want to drive a stake through my chest and toss me out for the sun?"



## Fracturing of the Banu Haqim

**Loresheets:** Descendant of Al-Ashrad (*Blood Sigils*, p. 177), Descendant of Idder (*Live from the Succubus Club*, p. 158), Fatima al-Faqadi (*Camarilla*, p. 185), High Clan (*Vampire*, p. 400), Occult Artifacts (*Chicago Folios*, p. 166), Tegyrus the Vizier (*Gebenna War*, p. 159), Victoria Ash (*Camarilla*, p. 190)

The culminating event that split the Banu Haqim in two was the return of the blood god, Ur-Shulgi. The ancient methuselah took command of their ancestral stronghold Alamut and demanded that all Banu Haqim abandon their mortal faiths or face destruction. With little recourse, Tegyrus the Vizier and Al-Ashrad the Amr led a faction out of Alamut and into the Camarilla's protective walls while deepening the alliance between Camarilla and Ashirra domains.

In the intervening years, the feud between schismatic and loyalist has only widened and, in most

cases, grown more violent. Even the fall of Alamut to the Sabbat has not mended the fracture. To their credit, Tegyrus and Al-Ashrad have solidified their alliances with the great sects through the Vermilion Wedding, but Ur-Shulgi looms ever closer.

Caught between loyalty and personal belief, every Banu Haqim has an impossible choice to make.

## Story Concepts

- **Dealing with Prejudice:** For centuries, the Banu Haqim hunted Kindred. Some for sport, others on contract, but their reputation as proficient killers remains intact. For some Camarilla members with long memories, the presence of the Banu Haqim is akin to letting a fox inside the henhouse. Proving loyalty often requires increasingly dangerous missions while suspicious Kindred wait for the slightest misstep to justify their paranoia.
- **On the Offensive:** While the most Banu Haqim solidify their position as Camarilla members, a select few, tasked by Tegyrus, go on the offensive. Their command is to hunt down those loyal to Ur-Shulgi and destroy them with prejudice.
- **The Envoy:** Most encounters between schismatic and loyalist Banu Haqim end in violence. But an ambassador from Ur-Shulgi, sent into a Camarilla city, presents a unique opportunity. The envoy intends to bring Camarilla Banu Haqim back into the fold, using a strict interpretation of the Laws of Haqim as a pretense. Even if the envoy's efforts prove fruitless, if they survive the initial encounter, they may gather intelligence on their former brethren.
- **Love-Struck Schismatic:** The Vermilion Wedding between Tegyrus and Victoria Ash represents a formal alliance between their powerful sects. But in the subsequent years, Tegyrus' love for his Toreador wife has proven genuine, or else he has chosen to accept the reality of their mutual Blood Bond. This gives many Banu Haqim pause, as they worry the great Vizier places his personal feelings above the political needs of his clan. No

doubt this is a weakness to exploit.

**Common Attitudes:** “Insane methuselah pops up and says, ‘Follow me or die.’ I understand the problem. Part of me might want to go along to get along. Another part of me might want to run for my fucking unlife.”

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** The war between Banu Haqim within Camarilla domains and those loyal to Ur-Shulgi, a dueling interpretation of the Laws of Haqim.

**Discoveries:** “This isn’t some pesky political debate. We’re past all that, past compromise and understanding. This is a civil war, a brother’s war. And this is a fight to the death.”

## Reemergence of the Salubri

**Loresheets:** Blood Plagued (*Anarch*, p. 197), The Book of Nod (*Chicago by Night*, p. 267 or *Book of*



*Nod Apocrypha*, p. 37), Descendant of the Fallen Lord (*Live from the Succubus Club*, p. 161), Golconda (*Vampire*, p. 389), Low Clan (*Vampire*, p. 401), Machinations of Saulot (*Book of Nod Apocrypha*, p. 39), Sect War Veteran (*Vampire*, p. 392)

A fallen clan, the Salubri were never numerous, even in their heyday over a thousand years ago. Among them, many bloodlines maintained they were pacifists, advisors, and tenders of mortal flocks. They kept mortal herds healthy and helped Kindred ward off the Beast. Among other Kindred, they were mistrusted politicians, knights, and soul-eaters. Legends suggest that the Tremere usurped their place among the 13 great clans. Court Ritualists were more useful than shepherds.

For centuries, the Salubri were a forgotten myth, epitomized by the legend of the Seven. In Eastern

Europe, the Levant, and North Africa, seven Salubri were guaranteed protection from the Princes of the Ashirra. Throughout Western Europe, the Seven were an odd bloodline devoted to the crime of diablerie. Rumors of hidden broods occasionally emerged among the Tremere, who taught their childer to hate and hunt these spiritually debased monsters.

This changed as the Fallen Lord emerged within the Sabbat in the '80s or '90s and spread his bloodline across Europe and the Americas. In the wake of the sect wars, errant Salubri have begun to make their way into Kindred society, with others emerging from centuries of hiding to connect with their new kin.

Salubri stories often focus on forging a place for oneself, discovering the history of their bloodlines, and eking out an existence from the margins.

## Story Concepts

- **Sabbat Refugee:** Outcasts among outcasts, a Sabbat survivor asks for haven within the domain, but no one has heard of their supposed bloodline. Camarilla and traditional domains may turn them aside or demand a heavy price for tolerance within the domain. Anarchs or less traditional domains may force the newcomer to turn on their brethren, leading a scouting party to find and eliminate any Sabbat threats.
- **The Knight and the Sorcerer:** A traveling pair of Kindred visit the city, seeking fragments of history from Kindred loremasters, Hierophants, and elders who can speak of an old clan known as the Salubri. As one claims Tremere heritage, the local Tremere see this Tremere-Salubri pairing as breaking an ancient taboo, but they may not know why their books and elders advised hunting the Salubri and suppressing any knowledge of them.
- **Claiming Station:** An outsider who has been tolerated has begun calling in boons from among the city’s authorities. Many have thought this individual a Caitiff, but they’re known for helping to pacify the kine of Kindred herds and

blood dolls. This outsider clearly wants to gain the authorities' ear — but to what end?

- **Itinerant Healer:** The domain has been troubled lately, perhaps by a blood plague or neonates losing themselves to the Beast. An outcast from a neighboring domain claims they can help, but how did they learn techniques to deal with these issues? What strange faith drives them, and how will the authorities react to this new, charismatic savior in their domain?

**Common Attitudes:** “What the fuck is a Salubri?”

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** Presenting oneself and one's clan to the Prince or local authorities, navigating as an outsider, seeking out knowledge of one's forebears.

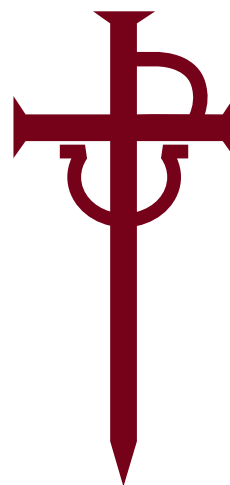
**Discoveries:** “I've never heard of a Salubri, but I've heard Chicago is still lousy with elders, and one of them must know something.”

## Rise of the Second Inquisition

**Loresheets:** Blacksite 24 (*Chicago by Night*, pp. 264–265), The First Inquisition (*Vampire*, p. 388), FIRSTLIGHT (*Chicago by Night*, p. 276), Operation Antigen (*Fall of London*, p. 237), The Society of St. Leopold (*Chicago by Night*, pp. 284–285), The Pony Express (*Chicago Folios*, p. 167), Road Courier (*Live from the Succubus Club*, p. 164)

When the NSA penetrated the Nosferatu SchreckNET in 2004, the first domino fell. The United States military, the Society of St. Leopold, global intelligence agencies, and dozens of other mortal organizations started working together to combat the vampire threat. Over the next decade, Kindred found themselves under attack and subsequently cleansed. Vienna, Montreal, Marseille, Las Vegas, London — one by one, they were toppled by the Second Inquisition.

After the initial shock and awe, Kindred adapted. Cell phones and other electronic devices vanished while analog forms of communication returned. Gatherings became smaller and less frequent. In this



conflict, younger, more technologically savvy Kindred stepped up and carved out niches for themselves in an ongoing war against an insurmountable foe.

Facing annihilation, players' characters act as spies, saboteurs, and in rare cases, informants.

## Story Concepts

- **Spy Versus Spy:** Just as the Second Inquisition monitors vampires, intrepid neonates actively surveil the Second Inquisition. Using human assets and signals intelligence, they shadow FIRSTLIGHT hunters, break into encrypted ESO servers, and assassinate Gladius Dei operatives. Surveillance networks and recruiting mortal informants are valuable for counterintelligence work.
- **Turned Traitor:** The best soldiers against the Second Inquisition are those plucked from its ranks. A disillusioned priest from the Society of St. Leopold or a seduced (and perhaps later Embraced) member of the UK's Joint Threat Response Group are turned assets that can tear the Coalition apart from the inside.
- **Soon You'll Be Eating Rats:** Some Kindred assume the conflict with the Second Inquisition is unwinnable, and if vampires are going to make it through the next century, they need to explore unconventional avenues. What if vampires' existence didn't require mortal bloodshed? If Blood Sorcery or Thin-Blood

Alchemy could make animal vitae palatable to all Kindred, regardless of age, the Second Inquisition would have less reason to consider vampires a threat. Can the Kindred make themselves so unthreatening that their enemies leave them in peace?

- **Turning of the Screw:** Hunter organizations occasionally turn their intended prey into assets. The hunters spare the vampire's existence for a price. The catch-and-release tactic transforms the intended pile of ash into an informant, sent back into the wild to gather intelligence. Some vampires find themselves in this position, feeding scraps to handlers to survive. And every night brings the same choice: sell out someone else to survive, or refuse and watch the hunters come for everyone they've ever cared about.

**Common Attitudes:** "Is that a goddamn cell phone in your hand? Are you trying to get us all killed?"

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** Adapting to a dangerous threat, navigating the digital age without being destroyed.

**Discoveries:** "We can't sit and wait for the SI to burn down our homes. We have to infiltrate their organizations and use their own tactics against them. That's the only way we survive."

## The Setite Schism

**Loresheets:** *The Church of Set* (Anarch, p. 193), *Descendant of Count Jocalo* (p. 218), *High Clan (Vampire, p. 400)*, *Hesha Ruhadze* (Anarch, p. 192)

With dangers from both the Second Inquisition and the Sabbat, the Ministry needed allies. Clan elders first made overtures to elders of the Camarilla, but those ended in a hotel bombing in the middle of Paris. Their second attempt to find a home in the Anarch Movement proved more fruitful. Now, the majority of the Snakes operate openly within Anarch domains.

Over the centuries, many outsiders have assumed that the Ministry and the Church of Set are one and the same, but that's not exactly true. The Church is a Kindred faith akin to the Church of Caine and



the Bahari, while the Ministry is a clan, a lineage of vampires. Historically, most members of the Church of Set have been from the Ministry (with two distinct influxes of Hecata refugees), but in the modern nights, this is less true than ever before.

As young members of the Ministry are Embraced into the Anarchs, many ignore their clan's own tradition of faith. At the same time, the Church of Set finds new adherents from other clans.

This schism between faith, lineage, and politics opens doors for those willing to exploit it.

## Story Concepts

- **A Murder in Paris:** When the Ministry's elders met with Camarilla diplomats in Paris, the gathering ended in an explosion that destroyed both delegations, effectively ending any hope of an alliance. The common belief is that the Banu Haqim are to blame, having sabotaged the endeavor to ensure their own admission. But is that the truth? And does anyone care to find out?
- **The Enemy of My Enemy:** The animosity between Anarch Ministry and the Church of Set runs so deep that the Church is making overtures to Camarilla Princes. Justicar Lucinde despises the Ministry, but the Orthodox Setites would rather work with the Ivory Tower than cede any more ground to their former brethren. The Anarchs in the Ministry would have an incentive

to infiltrate the talks, while Church loyalists could be willing to secure the alliance at any cost.

- **Religious Expression:** To worship the Red God is to place personal freedom over allegiance to any organized political faction. This often places members of the Ministry at odds with their fellow Anarchs if they remain loyal to the teachings of the Church of Set. When an Anarch leader orders a Ministry member to submit to the collective interests of the Movement, the faithful must choose between Set's chaos and Anarch loyalty.
- **Make Way for the End of the World:** The Red God is a force of chaos, and some Snakes, both among Ministry Anarchs and the Church, believe Set is not only awake but active. The thought is hard to deny when they point out the current state of the world with droughts, hurricanes, raging fires, economic catastrophes, political unrest, and military conflicts both large and small. Consider this: what if the Ministry's acceptance into the Movement is a ruse, paving the way for the Red God's inevitable return? Such theories do no favors for a clan whose members are already often believed to be traitors.

**Common Attitudes:** "Ministry, Orthodox Setites, Snakes, Church of Set... I honestly can't tell the difference."

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** The feud between the Ministry and the Church of Set, the conflict between one's political beliefs and faith.

**Discoveries:** "Maybe instead of accepting some Hierophant's interpretation of Set, you need to dig deep and determine your own relationship with the Red God."

## The Third Anarch Revolt

**Loresheets:** Agata Starek (*Anarch*, p. 191), Anarch Revolt (*Anarch*, p. 198), Birth of the Anarch Free States (*In Memoriam*, p. 149), Descendant of Tyler (*Vampire*, p. 397), Descendant of Xaviar (*Vampire*, p. 406), Hesha Ruhadze (*Anarch*, p. 192), Juggler (*Let the Streets Run Red*, p. 227), Rudi (*Vampire*, p. 396), Ruins of Carthage (*Anarch*, p. 196),



Salvador Garcia (*Anarch*, p. 190), Theo Bell (*Vampire*, p. 383)

The moment Theo Bell assassinated Hardestadt the Elder at the Conclave of Prague in 2012, he ignited the Third Anarch Revolt. The Brujah quickly abandoned the Camarilla and followed Bell into the loving arms of the Anarch Movement. During this same time, as the Gangrel left the Camarilla, many individual members of the clan also became Anarchs, as did many in the Ministry. United under a common cause, Anarchs began flipping Camarilla cities, including the age-old European stronghold of Berlin.

Now, the Third Anarch Revolt has been going on long enough for the fractures to show even as new Camarilla domains still fall. The great victory in Berlin led to long nights of terror and fear as Second Inquisition agencies moved in, attracted by the violence. Various Anarch ideologies clash, masking older conflicts over territory and resources. The wider Anarch Movement still has its leaders and luminaries, but on the local level, the sect often consists of local gangs with their small domains.

Some believe in the idealistic vision of Salvador Garcia; others lionize the nihilistic Agata Starek. Many who defected from the Camarilla, particularly Brujah, look to Theo Bell for leadership.

The Anarch Movement is on the cusp of something new, providing a wonderful opportunity for anyone willing to seize it.

## Story Concepts

- **Power of Personality:** A fledgling Anarch cannot stand alone. Their best means of survival involves gravitating toward one of the many personalities that influence the Movement, such as Rudi, Garcia, Starek, Ruhadze, Juggler, and Bell. But whom does one follow? Each demands different prices for protection and offers different visions of the revolution's future.
- **Chronicles of the Movement:** A Kindred historian has studied the Brujah's history in Carthage, the First and Second Anarch Revolts, and the birth of the Anarch Free States. They travel from city to city, offering their knowledge and expertise to those interested. Education is, after all, the first step toward enlightenment.
- **Breaking the Tower:** With Agata Starek and her ilk as prime example, the Anarch revolutionaries wage overt war against the Camarilla. In their eyes, the Inner Circle and their Justicar dogs are tyrants, and compromise is a dirty word. If the only good Prince is a destroyed Prince, who's the first to go?
- **Not Every Brujah Wants to Break Stuff:** A rare few Brujah still hold membership within Camarilla cities and find themselves in a curious position. Their Princes suspect them of treachery while their clanmates brand them as traitors. These Camarilla Brujah work especially hard to prove their worth, often acting as Sheriffs for a city or as undercover spies within the Movement.

**Common Attitudes:** "No one took the Movement seriously until Bell killed Hardestadt. Now they've got the Brujah and the Gangrel and the Ministry, and they're taking cities left and right. That's a problem we need to deal with."

**Rules and Narrative Elements:** Political among Anarch factions, freedom for the individual versus freedom for the organization as a whole.

**Discoveries:** "The truth is that the Anarch Movement is just a bunch of gangs. Right now, they're duking it out, but eventually, one of them will get the upper hand. When that happens, God help you if you're wearing the wrong color." ■





## Chapter Six:



# CHARACTERS AND STORIES

*The guillotine... A weapon from a more civilized age. I think I saw that in a film once. Well, old friend, you thought that the age of the guillotine was long past. No more rebellions, no more agitators clamoring for the blood of the privileged. You'd survived the French, American, and Russian revolutions and could exist in peace, sucking the blood of the living and every vampire younger than you.*

*Well, guess what?*

*I had this guillotine specially made just for you. Regarding the Camarilla, there is one thing I agree with you about: sometimes the old ways are the best.*

— The Anarch ideologue Salvador García addresses a skull

**M**eant primarily for the Storyteller running a political chronicle, this chapter presents characters and stories you can use as they are or modify to fit your needs. Politics is about people and their conflicting desires, so you need to populate your setting with characters in adversarial roles. Once you know who wants what, it's easier to come up with stories of your own.

The stories in this chapter also serve another purpose: to demonstrate what political stories can look like. You can use them as inspiration for how to add political themes to an existing chronicle in addition to running them as they are.

# CHARACTERS

Use the following characters as a quick means to come up with Traits for Kindred political figures, rivals, leaders, and adversaries. Storytellers may later augment these or craft complete character sheets for major characters the players' coterie encounters, but these can be used to easily add some additional variety to those found on pp. 374–75 in **Vampire: The Masquerade**.

## A NOTE ON STATUS

Status doesn't have to be uniform across titles. A Prince may have five dots of Status if their hold on their domain is secure and relatively unquestioned, or only four if they're threatened, ineffectual, or reclusive. Remember, though, that Status matters. Especially in Camarilla domains, dealing directly with anyone whose Status is significantly lower than your own is often frowned upon. Even the nominally more egalitarian Anarchs take Status seriously, sometimes as a result of seniority and trust, sometimes because they've simply constructed their own hierarchies of power.

- **Prince:** 4–5 dots
- **Herald:** 4 dots
- **Primogen:** 4–5 dots
- **Keeper of Elysium:** 3–4 dots
- **Sheriff:** 3–4 dots
- **Coterie Leader:** 0–1 dot
- **Primary Anarch Leaders:** 3–5 dots
- **Secondary Anarch Leaders:** 2–4 dots
- **Kindred Cult Priests:** 2–4 dots
- **Kindred Cult Defenders:** 0–1 dot
- **Circulatory System Higher-Up:** 2–3 dots
- **Road Courier:** 0–1 dot
- **Club Operator:** 1–3 dots
- **Court Ritualist:** 1–2 dots

## Camarilla Hands-On Prince

The average lick on the street is unlikely to have much cause to interface directly with the Prince of their domain. A Prince's influence will likely be felt chiefly through their agents and intermediaries. Still, sometimes a Prince needs to get their hands dirty. Some are more willing to do this than others.

Some Princes are known for their active approach to the management of their domain. They may be obsessive megalomaniacs, bent on observing and controlling every aspect of the territory over which they preside. Or they may be pragmatists, believing that the survival of the Kindred in these modern nights demands an involved and punitive leadership. A rare few may even be idealists, seeking to wield their power to ends that few can guess at. Regardless, this kind of Prince is not one you want to get in the way of.

The challenge facing the Prince who continually intervenes in the workings of their domain is to be feared but not hated. It's in their interest to be seen as harsh but ultimately fair.

**Name:** Viggo, Simon, Malin, Inga, Talha, Suhaib, Zulfa, Ghaaliya, Fedner, Lucien, Chantale, Yolande, Gabilus, Dérice, Somphone, Kimo, Nalani, Geethan, Asith, Jayani, Nadeesha, Henryk, Witold, Monika, Wisława

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Generation:** 10th

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 5 / 4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 7, Mental 6, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 8, Leadership 10, Politics 9, Intimidation 9

**Disciplines:** Dominate 4 (Compel, Mesmerize, Submerged Directive, Rationalize), Fortitude 2 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Presence 3 (Awe, Daunt, Dread Gaze)

**Clan Bane:** Must feed only on immigrants, pregnant women, or natural blonds.

**Equipment:** Disguised weapon (sword cane, razor pocket watch, or similar), access to the best vices in the city, multiple Havens ranging from decadent and obvious to secretive and well-guarded

## Prince with a Light Touch

This type of Prince is less of an overt presence weighing on the local Kindred and more of a name on the wind. They may act to influence, inspire, or curtail, but typically in indirect ways, and only when absolutely necessary. The reasons for their apparent inactivity vary. One may have been deliberately selected in a bit of political maneuvering by the Primogen Council because of their relative inexperience or unambitious nature. Another is an enthusiastic student of the teachings of a thinker such as Laozi, believing that letting go of control is the path to maintaining a harmonious system of rule. Or perhaps they are too absorbed in devising some gloriously elaborate, decades-spanning work of art to keep a close eye on their domain.

Regardless, while subtlety has its advantages, the Prince who prefers inaction is in danger of being perceived as weak or ineffective. Their withdrawn nature may even allow fresh and novel horrors to blossom in their domain, as Kindred squabbles over feeding grounds cause collateral damage to the kine population, which in turn attracts the interest of hunters.

**Name:** Jude, Emerson, Georgina, Imogen, Rémy, Ahmadou, Leke, Ndonyi, César, Arturo, Frida, Dulce, Rafael, Evandro, Mirela, Ivone, Panos, Yianni, Vassia, Katerina, Ryuichi, Oda, Itsuko, Mari

**Clan:** Toreador

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 8, Mental 8, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 10, Persuasion 9, Politics 9, Subterfuge 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 3 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Scry the Soul), Celerity 1 (Cat's Grace), Presence 2 (Awe, Lingering Kiss)

**Equipment:** Rare edition of the Dao De Jing or Montaigne's Essays, well-armed ghoul PA/driver, multiple relatively low-key Havens

## Overly Involved Herald

By necessity, whatever goes on at Elysium, whatever is happening with the city's powerful Kindred, you can count on this Herald to stick their nose in it. This can make them rather unpopular amongst Kindred who wish to keep their secrets to themselves, which is nearly all of them. On the other hand, this proclivity can be an advantage in dealing with them — a juicy tidbit can be irresistible bait for this Herald, who may, in turn, be willing to do a minor favor for their source.

**Name:** Gaspard, Evan, Rachel, Anyi, Javier, Cristina

**Clan:** Gangrel or Lasombra

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 6, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Awareness 7, Insight 8, Investigation 8, Stealth 7

**Disciplines (Gangrel):** Animalism 2 (Bond Famulus, Feral Whispers), Protean 1 (Eyes of the Beast)

**Disciplines (Lasombra):** Dominate 1 (Compel), Oblivion 2 (Oblivion Sight, Shadow Cast),\* Potence 2 (Lethal Body, Prowess)

**Equipment:** Dark lipstick, pricy sunglasses, analog notebook with coded information on all of the goings-on of the most important Kindred in the city, bloodstone

*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

## Aloof Herald

In theory, a Herald's task is to communicate the wishes of the Prince to the Kindred of their domain. In practice, not all Heralds enact their work as dutifully as one might expect. Heralds whose attention is drawn away from Elysium may neglect to relay a particular policy or proclamation in a timely fashion. Sometimes, this may be a deliberate tactic to further their goals. Other times, it's simple incompetence.

**Name:** Holden, Patience, Abdul, Zahra, Leo, Madeleine

**Clan:** Tremere

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 6, Mental 7, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 8, Etiquette 7, Occult 8

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition), Dominate 1 (Cloud Memory), Blood Sorcery 2 (Corrosive Vitae, Extinguish Vitae; Rituals: Blood Walk, Eyes of Babel)

**Equipment:** Ritual blade, many-pocketed trench coat, small occult library they'd rather be locked in than at Elysium

## Defiant Primogen

The relationship between a Prince and the Primogen Council of a city can be, to put it mildly, contentious. Primogen may harangue, argue with, undermine, or even plan direct sabotage against their Prince. Alternatively, a Primogen unhappy with their political situation may decide to go on the attack against other members of the council. These dynamics can result in unusual alliances as council members maneuver to secure a larger share of the city's resources for themselves and their factions.

A Primogen can represent a single clan or other group, such as a consortium of extremely rich Kindred, an ideological movement with influence in the city, or an astroturf group created by ancillae as part of a decades-spanning scheme.

**Name:** Ali, Deena, Jonathan, Hila, Artur, Lilli

**Clan:** Toreador or Nosferatu

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 5, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Insight 9, Leadership 9, Persuasion 8, Politics 10

**Disciplines (Toreador):** Auspex 3 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Share the Senses), Presence 1 (Awe)

**Disciplines (Nosferatu):** Obfuscate 3 (Silence of Death, Unseen Passage, Mask of a Thousand Faces), Potence 1 (Lethal Body)

**Equipment:** Minor incriminating or humiliating evidence against the Herald or Prince, suppressed 9mm handgun

## Enterprising Keeper of Elysium

A Keeper is a consummate host, an impeccable curator, and a ruthless peacekeeper all in one. One may jealously rule over Elysium as a domain in miniature, taking glee in punishing any social infractions, while another may see their role as parental in nature.

Keeping the backbiting, scheming Kindred at Elysium happy, or at least civil, means keeping them fed. Enterprising Keepers may coerce, seduce, kidnap, or purchase blood dolls as entertainment. The lucky ones may be stripped of their memories and then returned to where they were found. The unlucky might be injected with a fatal dose of some research chemical to provide a moderately interesting experience for some jaded Kindred.

**Name:** Sekai, Khari, Teodor, Estella, Dhanjeet, Asmani

**Clan:** Malkavian or Hecata

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 6, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Awareness 8, Etiquette 8, Insight 7

**Disciplines (Malkavian):** Auspex 3 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition, Scry the Soul), Obfuscate 2 (Silence of Death, Unseen Passage)

**Disciplines (Hecata):** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Reveal Temperament\*), Oblivion 3 (Binding Fetter, Where the Veil Thins, Shadow Servant; Ceremonies: Summon Spirit, Awaken the Homuncular Servant, Compel Spirit)\*\*

*\*Players Guide, p. 70*

*\*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

**Clan Bane (Malkavian Only):** Delusions of Grandeur (Mental)

**Equipment:** Impressive collection of contemporary artists, Herd, a variety of designer drugs

## Tired Sheriff

Everyone's heard about Sheriffs who are bloodthirsty maniacs. But some are just tired. Someone has to clean up when a neonate goes on a rampage in a club. Someone has to deal with a Cleaver's family members when they just won't stay away. This Sheriff doesn't take any real pleasure in killing mortals, enforcing the rules, or hunting down those who break them. All they really want is peace and quiet — shame they'll never get it.

**Name:** Masud, Saida, Grayson, Niamh, Silas, Harmony, Mike

**Clan:** Toreador or Banu Haqim

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 6, Mental 7, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Drive 10, Firearms 10, Investigation 8, Melee 9

**Disciplines (Toreador):** Auspex 2 (Heightened Senses, Sense the Unseen), Celerity 4 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness, Traversal, Unerring Aim)

**Disciplines (Banu Haqim):** Blood Sorcery 1 (A Taste for Blood; Ritual: Wake With Evening's Freshness), Celerity 2 (Rapid Reflexes, Rush Job), Obfuscate 3 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Ghost in the Machine)

**Equipment:** Compound crossbow, nondescript but reliable SUV, stakes



## Rival Coteries

Sooner or later, you're going to run into another crew of Kindred out there. Most obviously, coteries can come into conflict over territory, but there are plenty of reasons why two groups of Kindred might find themselves at odds. An upstart pack of Anarchs sets out to make a name for themselves by humiliating a Camarilla circle. Two groups of Kindred vie for the favor of a Primogen who has something they both need and only one can claim. Or maybe they've just been set against one another for the amusement of jaded ancillae.

## Coterie Leader

For reasons of seniority, personal charisma, connections, or simple, brutal efficiency, this vampire is in charge of their coterie. Having risen to the leadership, the head of a coterie is unlikely to rest there. They're going to be working the angles, trying to get in better with the local Anarchs or score invites to Camarilla events, building up their name recognition in the city. Some are going to be tight enough with their coterie that they'll take them with them to the top, wherever that is. Others might ditch their old crew as soon as a better opportunity comes up, then rationalize it as cutting out a toxic friend group or wrenching free of the dead weight that was holding them back.

**Name:** Roman, Olya, Huang, Jingyi, Mell, Quinn

**Clan:** Brujah or Lasombra

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6,

Mental 5, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Leadership 7, Awareness 6, Intimidation 8, Drive 8

**Disciplines (Brujah):** Celerity 2 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness), Potence 2 (Soaring Leap, Prowess), Presence 1 (Daunt)

**Disciplines (Lasombra):** Potence 2 (Lethal Body, Prowess), Oblivion 3 (Ashes to Ashes, Arms of Ahriman, Aura of Decay; Ceremonies: Gift of False Life, Awaken the Homuncular Servant, Shambling Hordes)\*

*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

**Equipment:** Ornate revolver, flashy or elegant clothes, worn-down or well-maintained vehicle

## Coterie Face

A particularly cunning, outgoing, or seductive Kindred may become the unofficial face of their coterie, helping to smooth over difficult negotiations, bait kine and rival vampires into traps, and otherwise assist the group in scenarios where the use of brute force is less effective than subterfuge and greasing palms. Having someone who knows the streets and the locals can be a real boon for an up-and-coming coterie.

On the other hand, if you're the one who knows all the right people, you might start to think you don't need your buddies to get on in the world. You might try to cut deals or worm your way into connections you don't tell your gang about.

**Name:** Doodle, Legs, Enric, Ysabel, Lucas, Magda

**Clan:** Malkavian or Salubri

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulty:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 3, Social 4, Mental 3, Disciplines 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 4

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 7, Insight 8, Persuasion 7, Subterfuge 7

**Disciplines (Malkavian):** Auspex 1 (Heightened Senses), Dominate 2 (Compel, Dementation), Obfuscate 2 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage)

**Disciplines (Salubri):** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Panacea), Dominate 2 (Compel, Mesmerize), Fortitude 1 (Unswayable Mind)

**Clan Bane (Malkavian):** Ennui (Mental)

**Equipment:** Expensive timepiece, compact mirror, a little stepped-on cocaine

## Coterie Bruiser

The bruiser specializes in getting rid of problems that are best solved through the injudicious application of force. They may be a mad dog, barely kept on a leash by the coterie's leader, or a cold and calculating killer. Typically, they don't have much of a taste for politics. That said, they're likely to be keenly sensitive to the possibility that they're being disrespected by their crew's leadership.

**Name:** Rex, Marlowe, Betty Lou, Angel, Salvo, Astrid

**Clan:** Gangrel

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 3, Mental 3, Disciplines 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 4

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Athletics 7, Brawl 8, Melee 8, Intimidation 8

**Disciplines:** Animalism 2 (Sense the Beast, Feral Whispers), Fortitude 1 (Resilience), Protean 2 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons)

**Equipment:** Barbed wire-wrapped baseball bat, brass knuckles, picture of their mother

## Anarchs

### Brutal Anarch Leader

Anarchs run the gamut from idealistic young guns to vicious bullies whose main problem with Camarilla philosophy is that they aren't the ones controlling the feeding grounds and rubbing other vampires' faces in the dirt. This Anarch leader is the latter — someone who rules through fear and brutality. Their domain may be run in an orderly, if draconian, fashion, or they might be an all-out despot, whose rule is balanced on a knife's edge.

If they're brutal to Kindred, they're downright cruel to kine. They'll feed, kill, and torture without compunction, ruining lives for things like weapons, influence, and simple pleasure. And if they even care about rationalizing their actions anymore, they can justify their behavior as necessary for the ongoing struggle against the Ivory Tower.

**Name:** Mikael, Camila, Serge, Clotilde, Solomon, Prudence

**Clan:** Brujah or Tzimisce

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 3

**Humanity:** 3

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 3, Mental 5, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 9, Intimidation 10, Leadership 8, Streetwise 8

**Disciplines (Brujah):** Celerity 3 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness, Blink), Potence 2 (Soaring Leap, Prowess), Presence 1 (Daunt)

**Disciplines (Tzimisce):** Dominate 3 (Compel, Mesmerize, Forgetful Mind), Protean 3 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons, Earthmeld)

**Clan Bane (Tzimisce Only):** Trinkets and offerings given by their "loyal" subjects.

**Equipment:** Sawed-off shotgun, human shield blood dolls, flashbang

### Diplomatic Anarch Leader

It's rare for Duskborn to rise up to positions of authority, but it does happen. Intelligent thin-bloods can use their connections to the human world to their advantage, working lines that would be tricky for true Kindred. They may be tied to a gang, an activist organization, a hacker collective, or some other element of kine society. Regardless, they've made a name for themselves through their ability to broker deals and get people what they want.

This sort of Anarch leader may be more connected to the world of the living, but as they achieve more status amongst Kindred, they may find themselves more willing to treat their former colleagues as tools rather than people. Unfortunately, the successful small-time Duskborn leader is likely to realize pretty quickly that no matter their connections, they're seen as a joke or a threat by many true vampires.

**Name:** Marcus, Poppy, Juan, Aisha, Branson, Shiloh

**Clan:** Thin-Blood

**Generation:** 14th

**Blood Potency:** 0

**Humanity:** 8

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 4, Social 5, Mental 4, Thin-Blood Alchemy 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Insight 9, Leadership 8, Politics 8, Streetwise 8

**Disciplines:** Thin-Blood Alchemy 2 (Haze, Counterfeit Discipline)

**Equipment:** Garage lab, smartphone, 3D-printed ghost handgun

### Occultist Anarch Leader

There's a lot of fucked-up shit happening on the streets these nights. Alchemists are messing with forces they barely understand, wraiths are floating around screwing with kine, and lupines are pushing into the cities to hit back against civilization. It all adds up to an unpredictable and dangerous

atmosphere, turning hunting grounds into madhouses. Under these conditions, someone who can keep an eye on and maybe even control some of this mystical BS can quickly find themselves in a leadership position.

This kind of Anarch leader has two reasons for cracking down on sorcery: one, it has the potential to draw interest from the Ivory Tower, the Second Inquisition, and Caine knows who else, and two, it's in their interest to keep it all to themselves.

**Name:** Amir, Roya, Sung-Min, So-Hee, D'Angelo, Jacinta

**Clan:** Tremere or Ministry

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 7, Mental 7, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 9 (Sociology), Investigation 9, Occult 9, Politics 10

**Disciplines (Tremere):** Blood Sorcery 3 (Corrosive Vitae, Extinguish Vitae, Blood of Potency; Rituals: Wake with Evening's Freshness, Truth of Blood, Ward Against Lupines)

**Disciplines (Ministry):** Protean 1 (Eyes of the Beast), Presence 3 (Eyes of the Serpent, Melpominee, \*Entrancement)

**Equipment:** Mystically warded library, silver blade

*\*Players Guide, p. 80*

## Religious Adversaries

Religious elements have always wielded political influence in human societies, from the Catholic Church to Daoist advisors. Things are no different among the Kindred, with powerful cults cutting across the Camarilla-Anarch divide and lesser ones struggling to gain a foothold through any means necessary.



## Kindred Cult Priest

Some priests concern themselves solely with the mysteries and internal politicking of their cult. Others make a deliberate effort to gain adherents in the halls of power. Sometimes, this involves outright evangelizing. More often, it's about laying the bait and waiting for curious, bored, or desperate Kindred to take it.

**Name:** Radko, Marika, Laust, Pernille, Gerald, Aoife

**Clan:** Malkavian or Ministry

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 5, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Leadership 10, Occult 10, Persuasion 10, Politics 8

**Disciplines (Malkavian):** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition), Dominate 1 (Compel), Presence 1 (Awe)

**Disciplines (Ministry):** Presence 2 (Awe, Lingering Kiss), Protean 2 (Weight of the Feather, Feral Weapons)

**Clan Bane (Malkavian):** Religious psychosis (Mental)

**Equipment:** Vestments, sacraments

## Kindred Cult Defender

These Kindred share one thing in common: dedication to their cult. Common duties include protecting priests and gatherings, doing heavy lifting, and “hands-on” evangelizing.

**Name:** Goran, Karla, Oleksandr, Antonina, Rolf, Henny, Martha

**Clan:** Caitiff

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**Generation:** 12th

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 4

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 8, Insight 7, Intimidation 7

**Disciplines:** Auspex 1 (Heightened Senses), Potence 2 (Lethal Body, Prowess)

**Equipment:** SMG, hunting knife, stakes, religious icons

## Cleopatran Cultist

Followers of the Cleopatran cult revere Yima, an ancient childe of the clan’s progenitor. They adorn themselves in elaborate clothing — some historical, some more avant-garde and of the moment — and style themselves as sophisticates. While they remain monstrous to kine and are seen as hopeless and vapid by many others of their clan, their sheer charisma makes them popular with other vampires at Elysium. Some among them even claim to receive daysleep visions from Yima herself — dreams that speak of a future in which they will rule all Kindred and that fuel the political ambitions of a clan that has for centuries been banished to the shadows.

**Name:** Aurelia, Caesulena, Septimia

**Clan:** Nosferatu

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 8, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Craft 9, Etiquette 9, Persuasion 10, Politics 10

**Disciplines:** Animalism 1 (Sense the Beast), Obfuscate 1 (Silence of Death), Presence 1 (Awe)

**Equipment:** Lavish and possibly ancient jewelry, professional makeup kit, couture or vintage clothing

## Kindred Services

The Camarilla, Anarchs, and Kindred cults aren’t the only political factions in modern nights. All manner of bit players, money men, entrepreneurs, gangsters, dealers, outfits, and splinter groups get involved in political struggles. Just as interest groups, lobbyists, and funders pressure and cajole human politicians, so too do myriad vampires attempt to influence the leadership of their domains.

## Circulatory System

### Higher-Up

Some Kindred rise up through the ranks of the Circulatory System, from humble beginnings as baggers and taggers to a world of personal assistants, obliging drivers, and dimly lit, immaculately appointed offices. They got there by being good at their job, to the point that even many other Kindred find them to be off-putting and grotesque.

Essentially executives of mass kidnapping and human trafficking, these Kindred represent a different kind of horror than a Prince or a Frenzy-prone vampire ruled by the Beast. Their domain is not limited to a neighborhood or even a city. They have vision. They see blood moving across the country, around the world. Human beings are

not prey to them but a commodity, which, like all commodities, must be allowed to freely circulate.

**Name:** Skender, Vanda, Lars, Tove, Ilyas, Sezen, Henrik, Tobias, Ezekiel

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Generation:** 10th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 3

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 8, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 9, Finance 10, Leadership 9, Politics 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Premonition), Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Domitor's Favor,\* Submerged Directive), Presence 1 (Daunt)

**Clan Bane:** Must feed from "unfucked vessels" or those who have been recently tortured.

**Equipment:** Sedatives, tailored clothing, classy office, winning smile

*\*Players Guide, p. 74*

## Road Courier

The road courier may not be a major political player, but as one of the few Kindred who regularly travel between cities, they tend to pick up quite a few connections. Of course, if they end up knowing too much, they may find that they're simply another disposable piece in a game being played well above their pay grade.

**Name:** Faraj, Zainab, Kea, Okitu, Berwan, Rona

**Clan:** Gangrel or Ravnos

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 5, Mental 4, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Animal Ken 8, Stealth 7, Streetwise 8, Survival 8

**Disciplines (Gangrel):** Fortitude 2 (Resilience, Toughness), Protean 2 (Eyes of the Beast, Feral Weapons)

**Disciplines (Ravnos):** Animalism 1 (Bond Famulus), Obfuscate 2 (Cloak of Shadows, Chimerstry\*), Presence 1 (Daunt)

**Equipment:** Beater car, tote bag, half a pack of cigarettes, vintage leather jacket, sunglasses, revolver, and a handful of bullets

*\*Players Guide, p. 76*

## Club Operator

The Kindred club operator likes stability. With rents in most major cities being what they are, margins are tight enough without hunters poking around, vampires frenzying and flipping their shit, or turf wars going down between rival Anarch leaders outside. In general, whatever local authority can enforce the law and keep things running smoothly is likely to win support from the owner of a Kindred club. Still, there are always small business owners who have greater ambitions.

**Name:** Fluke, Presage, Quince, Sugar, Avery, Marley, Sylvie

**Clan:** Nosferatu or Salubri

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 4, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 7, Performance 8, Persuasion 8

**Disciplines (Nosferatu):** Obfuscate 3 (Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Passage, Mask of a Thousand Faces), Presence 2 (Awe, Lingering Kiss)

**Disciplines (Salubri):** Auspex 2 (Sense the Unseen, Panacea), Fortitude 3 (Resilience, Invigorating Vitae\*, Valeren\*)

**Equipment:** Surveillance system, trustworthy (Blood Bonded or well-paid) staff, cellar of vintage vitae

*\*Players Guide, p. 75*

## Court Ritualist

A smart leader retains the services of those who can do things that they can't. For many Kindred, that's Blood Sorcery. While the practice of that particular Discipline is still suspect among many, few can deny that it's useful to have one of its practitioners on hand. Often more interested in their esoteric studies than in earthly ambitions, redworkers can be powerful allies to the vampire who can keep them happy and well compensated. Of course, there are those exceptions who see no conflict between the pursuit of mystical knowledge and the acquisition of political might.

**Name:** Simi, Eunike, Ianga, Ngaio, Vincent, Aspen

**Clan:** Tremere or Banu Haqim

**Generation:** 10th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 4

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 9, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 9, Medicine 10, Occult 10

**Disciplines (Tremere):** Auspex 1 (Sense the Unseen), Blood Sorcery 4 (A Taste for Blood, Extinguish Vitae, Scorpion's Touch, Theft of Vitae; Rituals: Clinging of the Insect, Eyes of Babel, Firewalker, Defense of the Sacred Haven)

**Disciplines (Banu Haqim):** Blood Sorcery 4 (Corrosive Vitae, Scour Secrets, Blood of Potency, Blood Aegis;\* Rituals: Blood Walk, Illuminate Trail of Prey, Dagon's Call, Eyes of the Nighthawk), Obfuscate 1 (Silence of Death)

**Equipment:** Arcane tomes, well-protected and outfitted ritual space

\**Players Guide*, p. 98

## Incompetent Court Ritualist

Good help is hard to find. For those who aren't able to get premium Blood Sorcery, there's always the knockoff, the imitator, the store brand. Sure, your full-on Tremere or Banu Haqim Court Ritualist is the real deal, capable of conjuring up all manner of chaos. But the less competent sorcerer and Thin-Blood Alchemists have a few tricks up their sleeves, too. And hey, if they can't do the kinds of scary shit that their more accomplished cousins can, then at least you don't have to worry as much about what kinds of terrifying things they might turn on you if they decide they're getting a raw deal.

This caliber of Court Ritualist may be working for trade — exotic materials, blood, hunting rights — or in the hopes of gaining access to greater mystical knowledge. At this level, they may also simply be trying to prove their utility to a Sheriff who's just looking for a reason to stake them, or they could be given the authority to practice their arts in an Anarch territory on the condition that they also accept being Blood Bonded to a particular Baron.

**Name:** Skipper, Onyx, Anton, Olivia, Clem, Reed

**Clan:** Thin-Blood or Nosferatu

**Generation:** 14th if Duskborn; 12th if Nosferatu

**Blood Potency:** 0 if Duskborn; 1 if Nosferatu

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulty:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 3, Social 3, Mental 5, Disciplines 3

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Medicine 7, Occult 8, Technology 7

**Disciplines (Thin-Blood):** Thin-Blood Alchemy 3 (Far Reach, Envelop, Defractionate)

**Disciplines (Nosferatu):** Animalism 1 (Bond Famulus), Blood Sorcery 1 (A Taste for Blood; Rituals: Blood Walk, Craft Bloodstone, Ward Against Ghouls), Obfuscate 1 (Cloak of Shadows)

**Equipment:** Impromptu and/or vulnerable ritual space, laptop, burner phone

# STORIES

## The Ferryman

### CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF AN ACTIVE INVESTIGATION

*Physical (optional), Social, Mental*

This story takes place in Camarilla territory. Run it as a one-shot, or replace the Kindred Storyteller characters with members of the Court in an ongoing chronicle.

A dead body is discovered in the players' characters' domain, bringing an old unsolved serial killer case back into the police searchlight. Some evidence points to one of the players' characters as a possible suspect, and there's a risk they'll take the fall if they can't clear their name. However, the real killer is a high-ranking Camarilla official. Can the players' coterie turn the lead investigator off the case before he solves it, pin the blame on someone else, or get the Camarilla authorities' blessing to turn in the murderer?

Players' coteries of three or fewer can be in the same scenes. Bigger coteries are best split up and can play through different scenes as they work on a solution.

## Why the Players' Coterie?

The players' characters get drawn into a problem they didn't create but which is nonetheless theirs to solve. This story showcases how membership in the Camarilla is a commitment that comes with strings attached; it also lets the coterie attempt to leverage intel and favors to get ahead in a game that seems rigged against them.

## Goals

The coterie will have to work together to clear their member's name in the ongoing investigation — in a way that doesn't get them in deep trouble with the local Camarilla Court. Whether they do this by working through members of the court to be able to turn in the real murderer, by influencing or threatening the mortal cops to drop the case, or by manipulating the facts of the case, leading to a wrongful conviction of a mortal, is up to them and their personal Convictions.

## Supporting Characters

This story can involve several Camarilla officials, but principally uses the following characters:

### Beau Willson, Investigative Lead

Beau has arrived in town to lead the investigation. At first impression, he doesn't appear difficult to manipulate. Short and friendly, with a significant widow's peak, the middle-aged investigator often seems lost in his own thoughts, as if he doesn't care that much about the case. But he takes note of every interaction and only seems approachable because it tends to make people relax and show their hand. An honest cop in a corrupt system, Beau will do whatever it takes to solve this old case that has been a thorn in his side for the majority of his career.

**General Difficulties:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Firearms 7, Awareness 8, Investigation 8

## Gill Miller, Camarilla Sheriff

Gill is the true Ferryman. He's had his haven in this city since the '70s and has been an active serial killer for just as long, with an intensity that goes beyond that of "normal" vampire activity. Gill doesn't just kill to feed or out of a lack of self-control, but because he enjoys it, needs it, never ceases thinking of it. Initially, he favored picking up people on the pier and taking them out to sea in his boat. This is how he got the moniker — abducting them out onto those black waters never to be seen again. There were witnesses, occasionally, but no one who could ever provide the police with a description.

It isn't generally known to the Camarilla authorities how many killings Gill has committed. The Court is aware that he used to struggle to control his Beast, but it is considered a thing of

the past. As the Sheriff, and masked as a security contractor for a major local corporation, he does essential work to protect the city's Kindred.

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Generation:** 10th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulties:** 5 / 4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 9, Mental 8, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Stealth 9, Intimidation 10, Subterfuge 10

**Disciplines:** Dominate 3 (Cloud Memory, Mesmerize, Submerged Directive), Fortitude 2 (Resilience, Toughness), Presence 1 (Daunt)

**Clan Bane:** Must feed from those who are afraid.



## May White, Seneschal

May joined the Court as its Seneschal only a decade ago and is still putting in the work to prove that she was the right choice. She has no interest in disturbing the existing power balance between the city's established Kindred if she can avoid it. Though she doesn't exactly trust the Sheriff, she also won't challenge him unless she has a good reason to do so and is confident that she'll have the rest of the Court behind her.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulties:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 7, Mental 8, Disciplines 9

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Leadership 9, Finance 10, Politics 10

**Disciplines:** Auspex 1 (Heightened Senses), Celerity 2 (Rapid Reflexes, Rush Job), Potence 1 (Soaring Leap)

## Harris Bronson, Cop

Harris became a cop because he wanted to be a hero, but he has since discovered that heroes aren't real and that cops get shit pay, endure constant disrespect, and have to work holidays. He's made minor trouble go away for the Kindred before, motivated by some light financial compensation, and he'll be happy to do so again. Major trouble, though, will require more than pocket change.

**General Difficulties:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 4, Social 3, Mental 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 8, Subterfuge 9, Streetwise 7

## Locations

This story is written to take place in a small to mid-sized coastal city in the U.S., but it can easily be adapted for a different part of the world. It can use the following locations:

**24/7 Diner:** The diner serves hearty home-style cooking and burned coffee to its guests at all hours of the night. The waitresses are bone-tired and their smiles forced, but this doesn't seem to bother Detective Willson, who still engages them in conversation and tips excellently even when they respond in one-word sentences and take away his food before he's finished with it. Officer Bronson comes here most nights, mostly to harass the waitresses.

**The Red Sparrow:** In this city, the Court can be reached through a specialty wine store with weekly tastings and ample space to host private events. In practice, many Court gatherings are held at Gill Miller's company offices, but The Red Sparrow is still where the Kindred go to request an audience with the Prince or Primogen, and May White comes here nightly to work from the shop office. A portly, elderly gentleman manages the shop and any business with the kine, taking messages to Miss White from Kindred visitors.

**Gill Miller's House:** The city Sheriff makes his haven in a villa in one of the fancier neighborhoods. He takes care of his house, and his garden is the pride of the local homeowner association. Gill doesn't usually have Camarilla visitors, preferring to handle Court business at Court. But it isn't exactly a hard-and-fast rule, and younger Kindred might be excused for not knowing any better — especially if they explain the issue is time sensitive.

The Ferryman has a collection of trophies from his victims in the storm shelter behind his house. His collection of torn fingernails proves beyond a doubt that he's been killing consistently for over 60 years and never stopped. Or, to the cops, they would prove that he has followed in the footsteps of the original killer, the grim heir to a horrid business.

At the Storyteller's discretion, further evidence

can be located around Gill's house.

**Storm Drain Outlet:** Just outside the city proper, there is a canal where, 30 years ago, storm drain pipes let excess water from rainstorms and flooding flow towards the sea. Wastewater from a recent construction project in the city center has meant that the storm drain is seeing use again. Some 20 meters up through the outlet, a heavy metal grating prevents any larger items from entering or exiting. However, the bodies have had time to disintegrate, and now bits of cloth, hair clots, and bones are pulling loose and drifting out through the canal.

**The Police Station:** At night, the only people in the station are the watch commander, the 911 operator, the elderly lady in records, the jailor, and, for at least half the night, Beau Willson, who is working on putting together the puzzle. There are also, of course, the meth heads in the holding cell. Four officers are out on patrol, and more can be called in if anything noteworthy happens.

The evidence from the Ferryman case sits in a box in the evidence locker when it isn't on Willson's desk.

## Scenes

**The Invitation:** It's not an arrest—it's just an invitation for a polite conversation when the players' characters find out one of them is a person of interest in a recently reopened murder case. Detective Willson, Officer Bronson in tow, runs into them when they are out on a routine hunt (preferably just before they pounce on a victim, making them aware how close they got to being noticed) and invites them to join him for a coffee at the diner.

Willson doesn't mind sharing details about the case: a body was recently discovered after having disappeared in a way that's eerily similar to how the Ferryman's victims used to disappear in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. The cops think they might be dealing with a copycat, which is why Willson's been called in. The funny thing is, the player's character was seen on the scene the night the victim disappeared.

It's a test of Intelligence + Insight at Difficulty 3 to discover that Willson isn't revealing everything

and thinks he has more on the player's character.

**Realizing the Stakes:** Following the interview with the detective, one or several players' characters are picked up by May White, who impresses upon them that the Court has reason to believe the police investigation may lead to Gill Miller as the next suspect, asking them to play along for now and, if necessary, find a way to botch the investigation.

A test of Intelligence + Insight at Difficulty 4 can reveal that May is uneasy about the situation.

**Manipulating the Investigation (optional):** The players' characters can attempt to misdirect the investigation by manipulating Detective Willson or Officer Bronson. Make a test at Difficulty 5 to influence Willson; a failure results in him becoming convinced the characters are hiding something and committed to discovering what it is, even if it turns out not to involve the ongoing investigation. Tests to manipulate Officer Bronson are Difficulty 4, and he demands a substantial bribe, no matter the result, either to help or to shut up about the attempt.

If Bronson helps with the investigation, Willson becomes suspicious, and the investigation continues as planned. If Willson helps, it will bother him subconsciously, and although the evidence against the player's character goes away, he doesn't drop the case. Regardless, the Storm Drain Outlet crime scene will be the next thing that is discovered.

**Destroying the Evidence (optional):** If one or several players' characters manage to sneak into the station and locate the evidence, they find gruesome pictures and newspaper clippings revealing how long the Ferryman has been active and that most of his supposed victims were between the ages of 15 and 25. This discovery also suggests that Miller was actively trying to pin his recent kill on a player's character.

**Negotiating with the Camarilla Court (optional):** If the players' characters choose to attempt to negotiate with the Court through May White, they can argue that the Camarilla Court

shouldn't let Gill Miller continue his activities. White is under the impression that one, maybe he never committed the murders and two, if he did, he stopped a long time ago. If the players' characters convince her that he is still killing and is an active threat to the city, she will want to put a stop to his activities. Convincing her that this will be possible with the coterie's support is a test of Charisma or Manipulation + Leadership, Persuasion, or Subterfuge at Difficulty 5; if the characters have hard evidence against Miller, the Difficulty is 3.

**Catching a Murderer (optional):** The players' characters can find evidence against Miller at his house, which they can gain access to by asking to discuss the case with him, bringing him some Sheriff-relevant business, or sneaking in while he is out. They may also locate evidence at the Storm Drain Outlet.

Successful use of Dominate or Presence on Miller himself or a test of Charm + Persuasion or Subterfuge at Difficulty 5 can lure a confession out of the ancilla. Thinking that the characters are in awe of him, or at least amused by what he thinks is their inability to do anything to stop him, he reveals to them how he used to kill out on the water and take the bodies to an old sewer in the harbor, where they'd be swallowed up and carried down into the pipes below the city. He'll demand that they clean up the mess and promise a reward when they have done so.

**Finding a Fall Guy (optional):** The players' characters can pin the crime on any mortal over the age of 70 who still appears to be relatively healthy by moving evidence from the Storm Drain Outlet or Miller's house to the home of their intended suspect. In an ongoing chronicle, this costs everyone involved a level of Humanity.

**Aftermath:** If the characters convince May White to take Miller down, the Court takes care of it. The cops find the evidence at his house, along with his staked body that has been arranged to appear as though he killed himself. The sect then either stashes him somewhere safe to consider his crimes in torpid dreams or destroys him permanently.

If the players' characters fail to interrupt or misdirect the investigation, one of them gets arrested and taken into custody. The Camarilla Court will have them out of jail again before the morning, to avoid a Masquerade breach, but they will have to leave the city as a murderer on the run.

If the players' characters cover for Miller and also avoid getting arrested, everything continues as it always has. Only now, every disappearance down at the harbor is on their conscience, and Miller seems to think he owns them.

## Variations

**Guilty as Charged:** A member of the coterie did actually commit the murder they are suspected of, and Gill Miller is merely taking advantage of an opportune situation. To do it like this, initiate this story when a player's character (accidentally) kills a mortal in an ongoing chronicle, or agree in advance with one of the players that their character will have done it.

**Not Just Any Body:** The latest body isn't just a random Jane Doe but was someone who meant something to a player's character. This will motivate the coterie to make sure they find a solution that includes getting revenge on Gill.

To do this in a one-shot story, have each player describe a mortal Touchstone and write their name on a note. Start the session by drawing a name at random. To do it in an ongoing chronicle, consider introducing a mortal character specifically for this purpose a few sessions before initiating this story — killing an established mortal relation without any prior warning may feel unnecessarily punishing to players, especially if it was someone they expected to have ongoing interactions with.

**Anarch Deceiver:** Adapt this story to take place in an Anarch domain by making Gill Miller a well-respected member of the Movement and one of the original Kindred who took the city. Mary White and the rest of the Court are the younger but passionate Anarch community who look up to him.

## Nowhere to Go but Up

### **A CHANCE TO REACH FOR POWER**

#### *Social, Mental*

This story is written for an established Camarilla coterie and takes place in Camarilla territory. To use it in a one-shot, consider awarding each player's character additional Backgrounds and Advantages representing the work they have already done to rise within the sect. To use it in an ongoing chronicle, replace any relevant Storyteller characters with existing ones.

The city's Herald disappeared several weeks ago without leaving a word of their whereabouts. The general assumption is that they have been hurt and fallen into torpor, were destroyed, or have defected to the Anarchs. Whatever the cause, their job has been left open. The Prince is growing impatient for it to be filled, and the task of picking a new Herald has fallen to the Primogen Council. The players' coterie has a real chance to take the position for one of them, if they can convince at least two out of the three Primogen that this would be a good idea.

## Why the Players' Coterie?

This story assumes that at least one of the players' characters is interested in taking over this prestigious position within the Camarilla Court and has been with the sect long enough to have demonstrated that they are worth investing in. The position of Herald will come with a significant status boost along with the possibility to directly influence city decisions by gaining the ear of the Prince and Primogen Council. It also comes with certain responsibilities, such as taking messages to other Kindred cities.

## Goals

The goals of the players' characters need not be aligned. They may all agree on one of them as a candidate for the task, but several of them can also be competing for it—be aware that this can significantly add to the length of the session. To get the job, a character will have to gain the support of at least two out of three Primogen. The problem is that each Primogen is suspicious of the other two, so being seen to be too cozy with any one of them will alienate the others. A player's character will therefore have to be careful how they communicate with the Councilors.

If the Council cannot agree on choosing one of the player's characters, they will give up and pick the Prince's upstart childe, the harebrained Pietro di Sole, who has been charming his way up the Camarilla career ladder despite being charming to absolutely no one but the Prince. Making sure Pietro does not become the new Herald can make a worthy goal on its own, even if the members of the players' coterie aren't that interested in the job itself.

## Supporting Characters

This story uses the following characters:

### **Alfio Francesco**

Alfio is not a new addition to the local Camarilla. Rather, his decades of commitment to the sect, in combination with the city's small but significant Lasombra community, are what have earned him his seat on the Primogen Council. A handsome, if somewhat stern-looking man, he appears to be in his early 40s and always dresses well. Alfio has spent his unlife building a significant fortune and a position in local business that earns him respect. He hates disrespect and punishes it harshly.

He distrusts Manfredi Gallo's sense of judgment because he finds him weak-willed and neurotic.

He understands Roberta's competence but enjoys thwarting her because he dislikes her dominant temperament. He thinks it is good for her not to

always get her way.

He chooses Pietro if he must because he thinks it will get him off his back at the casino.

**Clan:** Lasombra

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulties:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 9, Social 8, Mental 8, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 10, Stealth 10, Intimidation 9

**Disciplines:** Dominate 1 (Compel), Oblivion 2 (Shadow Cloak, Arms of Ahriman),\* Potence 2 (Lethal Body, Prowess)

*\*Players Guide, pp. 84–98*

## Manfredi Gallo

Manfredi Gallo can be particularly sharp and intelligent when he has a problem to solve. However, he can be just as unfocused and agitated when he grows restless, especially if he hasn't fed. He has the appearance of a man in his early 50s, with a great head of gray locks and a style that favors business casual. The Court tolerates his eccentricity for the brilliance that occurs when it is most needed, and besides, he has a way of finding out when people are plotting against him, and it never ends well for them. Manfredi doesn't currently consider replacing the Herald to be a particularly interesting mental challenge, but perhaps that can change.

He recognizes Alfio Francesco's strength and importance to the Court but thinks it is important to keep his ambition in check to avoid him getting any ideas about reallocating city funds to the Lasombra or such things.

He would quite like Roberta Macchiedo if she would be polite enough to like him back. Something to do with an old dalliance. Since she doesn't, he has convinced himself he detests her and prefers to avoid her, if he can.

He will pick Pietro di Sole if he doesn't find a better option, because he has a feeling about him



and thinks he can become a decent Herald given a few years of practice.

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulties:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 6, Disciplines 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Stealth 9, Subterfuge 10, Awareness 10

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Heightened Senses, Premonition), Obfuscate 2 (Silence of Death, Unseen Passage)

**Clan Bane:** Anxiety with occasional crippling panic attacks (Social)

## Roberta Macchiedo

Roberta has a great sense of ownership over the city's fate and well-being, having been a part of the Court in one way or another for close to 80 years. Obsessive about her Primogen responsibilities as well as her self-assigned tasks as a co-owner of Vivid Strategies, it is rare that she is out of her office. Her sharp black bob and prim dress suits don't quite make up for her youthful appearance, which is a continuous source of frustration for the oldest of the Primogen.

Roberta dislikes Alfio Francesco on a personal level because, through all the decades she has known him, he has always failed to pay her the respect she deserves.

She does not want Manfredi Gallo to get his way because she thinks he is working to further his own clan's interests at the cost of hers.

She will pick Pietro di Sole if no better option presents itself because she assumes she will be able to manage him indirectly — through a woman who fits his type if necessary.

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulties:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 8, Social 8, Mental 9, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Etiquette 10, Insight 10, Leadership 10

**Disciplines:** Dominate 1 (Cloud Memory), Fortitude 2 (Unswayable Mind, Toughness), Presence 1 (Awe)

**Clan Bane:** Must feed from women who are attracted to her.

## Pietro di Sole

The newest addition to the Court, Pietro, was Embraced by the Prince following a lengthy charm offensive, which had the Prince thinking he'd found a true friend to share eternity with. Pietro still amuses the Prince, who has, however, realized that his childe is not as ready for responsibilities as one could hope. Therefore the Prince won't push the matter of Heraldry if the Primogen can agree on a better option. Meanwhile, Pietro enjoys everything unlife has to offer, from his fast car to the semi-celebrity status his connection to the owner of Vivid Strategies offers him. The company offices bore him to death, however, so he tends to be anywhere but there.

**Clan:** Toreador

**Generation:** 13th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulties:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 3, Disciplines 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Drive 8, Persuasion 8, Subterfuge 7

**Disciplines:** Celerity 2 (Rapid Reflexes, Fleetness), Presence 2 (Awe, Lingering Kiss)

## Locations

This story is written with a mid-sized Italian domain in mind, without taking place in any specific city,

but it can easily be adapted for a different part of the world. It can use the following locations:

**Central Court, Vivid Strategies Headquarters:** The city Court is based out of the polished downtown offices of Vivid Strategies, a marketing company specializing in corporate branding. The top floor of the offices is management only, so Kindred-exclusive. This is where the Primogen Council has its meetings, and the workaholic Roberta Macchiedo seems to have located her haven on this floor as well, the better to keep an eye on everything.

**Soho House:** Before the members-only club opened a location in the city, Manfredi Gallo felt restless and without anywhere decent to call his home away from home. Now, he spends the majority of his free time in the Soho House gym, lounging on the rooftop, attending networking events as a representative for the Court branding company, or lying in his private suite with a cooling face mask over his tired eyes. He considers the mortal staff there his truest friends and will get very angry if he notices anyone disrespecting them. He rarely lashes out, so the rage can seem sudden and unmotivated when it manifests.

**Blue Diamond Casino and Theater:** The casino and entertainment palace is one of Alfio Francesco's favored haunts. As an investor in the business, he can usually be found in one of the exclusive VIP sections. The rich clientele and many beautiful women have also attracted Pietro di Sole's attention, and he has taken to arriving here most nights, making a pit stop to rouse his appetites at the blackjack table or in one of the cocktail bars.

## Scenes

**Sundown Briefing:** The players' characters find out that there's a possibility for one of them to become the new Herald at the weekly sundown briefing (which happens about an hour after darkness has fallen) at Vivid Strategies. The Primogen Council notes that they are among the candidates who have shown promise and that if there is interest, further interviews may settle the deal.

On their way out of the briefing, one or several of the players' characters run into Pietro, who antagonizes them, bragging that he is going to get the job and they might as well give up because he will soon be giving them orders. He appears not to entirely understand what being the Herald entails and doesn't care if corrected, claiming that he'll decide that for himself as the voice of the Prince, whose voice is law.

**Convincing the Councilors:** The players' characters can seek out each of the three Primogen at their respective locations. It doesn't matter if they go together or separately unless they are competing against each other. Convincing two of the Primogen to cast their vote for a player's character is Difficulty 6 in any Mental or Social test. This is lowered to 4 if they get the impression that one or both of the other Primogen would not like it, and it is lowered to 3 if they think the player's character would do a good job. Reward player creativity and attention to detail, and lower the difficulty further if the following things happen:

- **Alfio Francesco:** The player's character criticizes Manfredi Gallo for his neuroticism or Roberta Macchiedo for her bossy manners. The character wins big in the casino — use a d10 to simulate gambling: rolling a 9 or 10 is a big win, rolling a 1 or 2 is a big loss. Let them roll up to 10 times and suffer the financial consequences. Alfio will not vote for anyone foolish enough to lose a serious sum at the casino.
- **Manfredi Gallo:** The player's character criticizes Alfio's ambition or mentions that they think Roberta deep down respects Manfredi's ability to stand up to her. The character convinces Manfredi that the task of choosing the right Herald is very important to the Court's future in the city. Manfredi will not vote for anyone rude to the staff at Soho House.
- **Roberta Macchiedo:** The player's character criticizes Alfio Francesco's misogyny or questions Manfredi Gallo's relationship to his clan. The character asks interestedly about her long history with the Camarilla.

The players will be able to find out how to win over each of the Primogen using tests of Intelligence + Insight and by talking to them. They all know what the others dislike about them and will divulge it if they think the characters are likely to agree with them that it's ridiculous.

While at the Blue Diamond Casino, the players' characters are likely to run into Pietro again, who is being rather indiscreet about his powers, just not enough for anyone to do anything about.

**Aftermath:** If one of the players' characters manages to maneuver at least two of the Primogen to vote for them, they will become the new Herald, a decision that will be announced at an Elysium party. The party will be held at the Blue Diamond if Alfio Francesco voted for the character; otherwise, it will be gathering at the Soho House rooftop bar. If Pietro gained any of the votes, the loss disappoints him grievously, earning the player's character an enemy at Court. If he didn't, he notes that "the voice of the Prince" is probably just as important to impress as the Prince and starts flirting outrageously with them, ignoring the rest of the players' coterie.

Pietro will absolutely accept the role of Herald if offered, considering that it means more money and influence. He will like it, too, getting to hear his own voice as the Prince's representative at every single gathering of the Camarilla Court. Once Pietro gets a real taste for power, it may prove difficult to get rid of him again.

## Variations

**Minor Miscommunication:** Despite everyone's expectations, the lost courtier returns just as the coterie member has secured the position for themselves, potentially along with extra benefits, such as a new haven, a vehicle, or a mortal job. The returned Kindred fully expects to pick up exactly where they left off, and they won't take it well if or when they find out the player's character has taken over.

**Hot Potato:** Instead of fighting for a position, everyone involved is trying their hardest not to get

the job. Perhaps it is a position as Seneschal to a demanding and spoiled Prince, perhaps it has no official Camarilla title but requires taking over a mortal position of company accountant and doing unholy amounts of corporate tax equations every single week. Members of the Primogen Council all want one of the players' characters to do it. However, they can get out of it if they convince Pietro that he wants to do it or they convince each of the Primogen that picking him would be good for them and frustrating for the others.

## The Trial

**THE TRUE HORROR IS THE JUSTICE SYSTEM**  
*Mental, Social*

The members of the players' coterie are summoned to a trial that they cannot win. It takes place soon or never in a courtroom that they cannot enter on their own. They will never know what they did. They will not know that this is a hopeless situation, as the system dangles the hope of resolution just out of their reach.

This story is meant to rekindle a sense of dread about the political systems of the World of Darkness. It can be used in any chronicle after the inevitable breach of the Traditions or in a Little Princes chronicle (p. 133) where the players' coterie is ignorant that they live inside a domain ruled by other hidden entities. The enemy entity, The Court, mimics a Camarilla Court but can appear in other domains as well.

## Why the Players' Coterie?

Why does anyone become victims of cold unthinking power? Perhaps the players' coterie is well aware of everything they've done that could make them guilty. Perhaps they're haunted by their crimes, as they understand them. It will not be explained to them. They are simply chosen; the system doesn't require them to know why.

## Goals

The coterie's goal is to be acquitted of the crime they are accused of. They will no doubt seek out allies that may be connected to The Court and appear before them to plead their case. Every time they do so, they will be told that their testimony has been heard and that their case is still a very serious matter. In reality, the only way to escape justice is to ignore the impending trial or (see "Variant") prove that the whole trial is an illusion.

## Supporting Characters

### The Bailiffs

The bailiffs are the representatives and guards of The Court. They may be Kindred or something else entirely. For maximum effect, have them operate slightly differently than you'd expect vampires to. They may, for instance, only be active at dawn and dusk while the coterie is drowsy, and they may respond to staking by calmly pulling the stake out of their wound, writing a complaint to The Court with its pointed tip, and handing the characters a copy. They may be destroyed, but another pair soon appears.

**General Difficulty:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 8, Mental 7

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 8

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Intimidation 8 (Legal Threats), Melee 7 (Billy Club)

**Equipment:** Outdated police uniforms, billy clubs (Aggravated Damage +1), legal summons to trial that are impossible to understand (no matter what legal system's rules are applied to it)

### The Lawyer

The characters are appointed a lawyer. He appears to be a ghoul not in the employment of The Court, and he might be the only hope the coterie has to

clear themselves of the unknown charges leveled against them. He is a sleazy, thin-haired man in upper middle age, dressed in a colorful polyester suit. He is confident, fast-talking, and a master of deception, loopholes, and subterfuge.

His advice may restore a level of Willpower every time he offers his services, even if the legalese he spouts is utter nonsense to the coterie. He charges an exorbitant amount of some absurd currency to engage his favors. For instance, he could require a complete collection of film-star cards from a certain era, a ton of fine erasers of gum arabic sourced in the Dominican Republic, or a meeting with an aging movie star that he loves. For every piece of advice he gives, he also, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, requires the coterie to perform some humiliating action, like recording themselves crawling on all fours and barking like dogs, reviewing all the menu items in a diner (forcing the coterie to throw up again and again), or attending the advice session naked. He takes no pleasure in their debasement — it's "simply how things are done."

**General Difficulty:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 3, Social 7, Mental 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 8 (Law), Insight 7

### The Children

The children are a group of ever-present teenage kids that appear at regular intervals in the story. They seem to know everything about the plight of the characters and comment on their behavior in critical terms. The goal is to make the coterie feel they are being constantly watched and judged for their behavior, which will affect their upcoming trial. The children are mortal and do not know anything about the Kindred. They think the players' characters are ordinary mortals as well, perhaps neighbors, teachers, or friends of their parents. If pressured on how and why they know about the characters and

the crime they've committed, the children come up with perfectly rational explanations that seem to be true but fall apart on closer examination. For example: "Everyone watches your Twitch stream, it's really popular," or "You are a contestant on that new reality show." But no such stream or show exists. They are ordinary kids, possessed by spirits or mind-controlled by The Court through Dominate. Killing them incurs a heavy loss of Humanity.

The children attack the players' coterie in social combat every time they appear. This should whittle down the Willpower of the group to dangerously low levels very fast.

**General Difficulty:** 2 / 1

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 3, Social 4, Mental 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 4, Willpower 3

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Subterfuge 4 (Unnerving Explanations), Intimidation 6 (Pointing out Flaws)

## The Court

The Court is as weird and unknowable as the bailiffs that serve it. In a standard chronicle, it is comprised of the Primogen Council and appears to be completely beyond the power level of the characters. In an ideal version of this story, this is the first time the characters encounter the system that governs their unives, and they have no concept of who or what The Court is or why it exists. The Court is very serious when they hear the complaints of the coterie or perform one of the smaller trials that are part of progressing the characters' case.

But something is wrong. The Court attacks the



coterie in three rounds of social combat during every complaint they carry before them, the same as for every partial trial they summon the coterie to.

**General Difficulty:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 8, Mental 9

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 8, Willpower 10

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Persuasion 10 (Justice), Intimidation 8, Academics 8 (Law), Insight 9 (Guilt)

**Equipment:** If the coterie manages to have a look at the books of law they quote or evidence they claim to be relevant to the case but never read out loud, it consists of cheap romance novels and pages from pornographic magazines from the 1980s bound in impressive-looking leather.

## Locations

This story takes place in any city or domain where the characters operate. For a merciful version, it operates in a city where the coterie is sent to perform a mission, and the madness ends when they return home. But the story has more impact if this is just the way things are in the night world the coterie inhabits.

**The Court:** The Court, as a location, is identical to Elysium in an ongoing chronicle, and it should be the same place the coterie has been introduced to the Prince, met powerful allies, and so on. By default, The Court convenes in an impossibly expansive cellar underneath a local castle or mortal court building. Metal spiral staircases lead down and down, past rooms filled with the records of a million previous court cases like theirs, none of them finally settled. If the coterie comes to the courtroom and wants to be admitted, they find the door is guarded by bailiffs. They will be told there are several more doors before they can get in and that each subsequent door is guarded by a pair of bailiffs. If they sit down and wait, they will literally have to wait forever, and no one else ever comes. It is as if this door was created especially for the coterie's case.

## Scenes

**Summoned:** The bailiffs appear as the coterie wakes up any evening. This scene works especially well if the previous night was one of debauchery and the coterie or some of its members did something they regret or feel embarrassed about. The bailiffs control the situation, making sure they have the characters' attention. They then state that the coterie is under suspicion for a breach of the Traditions and that their trial begins in one hour and will continue until it is concluded. Confusingly, the bailiffs inform them that this trial is a serious matter but one they shouldn't be too bothered about, since it probably won't affect their unives in any meaningful way. With that, the bailiffs depart. If followed, they go to The Court and disappear. They can be found guarding the door to the court chambers proper.

**Legal Preparations:** When the coterie starts looking for more facts in their case, or talks to a Mawla or Contact about it, they're told it's perfectly normal not to be told what you are accused of or how to clear your name. Kindred justice is not mortal justice, they're told. Kindred are ageless and thus cases can run a bit on the long side. No matter whom they contact, they are given the name of a "reliable ghoul lawyer, the best in the city." All other Kindred they reach out to confirm that this is indeed how things are done in Kindred society.

**The Children:** The coterie gets the feeling they are being watched. Using Disciplines and Skills, they can figure out that a group of young teenagers is following them and filming them with their cell phone cameras. The children will continue following the coterie, openly or by stealth. If one group is scared away, another will appear.

**The Trials:** The coterie's best choice is to ignore the whole thing and go on with their unives, but it is highly unlikely they will. Encourage paranoid fantasies about who reported them — could it be one of the other members of the coterie? A trusted ally? A Touchstone? Sooner or later, the coterie demands a hearing out of sheer panic (this can only succeed if they do it through their lawyer; otherwise, they

will wait at their door forever), or the bailiffs appear at a really inconvenient dawn or dusk and summon them to a hearing.

At the first of many partial trials, the coterie is asked how they plead, and their lawyer stares blankly at them. He states afterwards that he is unable to affect the free will of the coterie during trial. Then they are asked to tell The Court about the circumstances of their crime and if there are any exonerating circumstances — without being told what their crime is.

In the audience sits one of their Touchstones, kidnapped and drugged, making all damage from social combat Aggravated. The Touchstone responds seemingly randomly to their statements, laughing and booing erratically. The Touchstone has been restrained and dosed with something (possibly PCP or horse tranquilizer) — this explains their behavior but does not make it any less horrifying.

The children also appear in the audience, constantly recording everything on their phones. Every trial consists of three statements or monologues from the coterie and The (unimpressed or condemning) Court, represented as a social combat in three rounds. If characters win, they are told they are getting an extension of their trial, that the case is still serious and will continue. If they fail, they are told that they are considered guilty now and should not leave town, and to wait for their punishment.

**Punishment:** If the characters are found guilty, because they are reduced to 0 Willpower and admit their guilt (even though they have no idea what they have done wrong), are crushed in social combat by The Court, or confess their guilt voluntarily, they will be sentenced. The sentence is always final death by greeting the sun, which will be carried out at “a later unspecified date.” But the next night comes, and the next, and the next. They are never called back to The Court.

In a continued chronicle, when one of the coterie members actually is about to meet final death (possibly much later), you can reintroduce the punishment scene. This can be done just after their

expected death scene, as a surreal and hellish post-final-death encounter. The player’s character finds themselves in front of The Court yet again. But this time, they are led by the bailiffs into a circular shaft hundreds of meters deep, with a strong iron grating on top. It is impossible to escape, and they are left to ponder the meaning of their unlife and the nature of The Court while the sun slowly rises. Perhaps to rise again and again in a repetitive, eternal punishment that will never let them go.

**Hey, Wait a Minute...** Players who enjoy a good read will no doubt recognize the setup of this story at some point and finally, perhaps in frustration, ask a Storyteller character why the hell it seems they are caught in Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*. When they do, their Mawla, the lawyer, or a Contact tells them that Kafka is currently residing in Prague and that *The Trial* is not a parable on the uncertainty of human life — it’s based on his observations of the Kindred system of justice.

*Kindred are ageless. So are The Court, but whether they are of your kind or simply functions of the cycle of death and rebirth is unknown. So, the powers that suspect you have time, all the time in the world, to ascertain your guilt. Just accept it.*

**Ending the Trial:** By default, this story never really ends. It continues in the background of other escapades, with the bailiffs, the lawyer, and the children appearing now and again, especially as the players’ characters gather more and more serious charges on their rap sheet. This is simply what it is to be Kindred in the surreal domain they are trapped in. Perhaps it is like this everywhere. Perhaps this is what life and unlife are like for everyone, constantly on trial by their peers, their own mind, or an unknowable God.

## Variation

For troupes that are not prepared to deal with the monumental angst of having *The Trial* hanging over

their heads for all perpetuity, consider this variant:

**Psychomachia:** The Trial is a psychomachia, a reality-deforming application of the Dominate, Auspex, and Presence Disciplines by a Malkavian elder or a group of Malkavian ancillae working together. Neither the bailiffs, the children, The Court, nor the lawyer are real. But the actions the players' characters perform are. The goal of this test of virtue may be one of the following:

- To prepare for a real (more conventional) trial; this is really a sophisticated way to elicit a confession.
- To test if the characters will try to rebel and destroy The Court. If they do, they are sent a letter tattooed on the scalp of a monkey (reported as escaped from a zoo, if the domain is not in a city where monkeys are a common urban animal), saying "Why Do You Obey" in red letters. This is an invitation to defect to the Anarchs.
- To test the coterie's mettle in general. If they survive a month under the spell of The Trial, they are offered positions as "bailiffs" for the Sheriff and sent to capture those suspected of having broken the Traditions.

## Black Rooster

### WAILS OF PAST BETRAYALS

*Mental, Physical (optional), Social (optional)*

*When the black rooster crows,  
It's because the day has ended,  
If the red rooster crowed,  
Another would crow too.  
They found each other in the sand,  
The two roosters face to face,  
The black rooster was big,  
But the red rooster was brave.  
Oh! If I'm lying,  
Then let the sound of my song  
Be erased by the wind.  
Black rooster, black rooster,*

*Black rooster I'm warning you:*

*A red rooster doesn't give up.*

*Only when it's already dead.*

— "Black Rooster, Red Rooster,"  
a song from the Spanish Civil War,  
1936–1939

This is a story about the intersection of the politics of the dead, the living, and the undead. It's designed for a Hecata or other coterie with at least decent Oblivion or Auspex Disciplines who are willing to accept that ghosts exist. It takes place within a predominantly Anarch domain; the players' coterie can belong to any faction or be unbound.

The coterie learns of a ghost that holds a piece of valuable information about the past of an Anarch enemy or rival. While investigating how they can communicate with it, they are hunted by a group of mortals connected to their enemy and an implacable supernatural entity that claims they are committing a terrible crime.

In the end, they must choose whether to obey the rules of human morality, the Traditions, or the unknowable laws of the dead.

## Why the Players' Coterie?

The antagonist of the story, George Moretti, has made an enemy of the players' coterie solely due to the fact that one or several of them are Hecata or otherwise able to commune with spirits. They quickly become embroiled in undead politics that go far beyond them. For an Anarch or very humanitarian coterie, revealing Moretti's secret, once they've had a whiff of it, can be reason enough to pursue the investigation.

## Goals

The characters aim to commune with a ghost that knows a terrible secret from the past about one of their worst enemies. To do so, they must find a recording or memory of a lost revolutionary song and play it at the unmarked grave of a volunteer of the Spanish Civil War who died under shameful

circumstances. Along the way, they must avoid or successfully confront a group of mortal radicals. The coterie will be tempted to end their investigation many times during the story, and should be allowed to do so. If they do, the Storyteller should narrate the truth to the players, play the titular song in Spanish, and end with the statement “but none of this will ever be known or remembered.”

## Supporting Characters

### George Moretti

*First Comrade of the Urban Liberation Movement*

Poised, tall, freckled, smiling, and clear-eyed, Moretti sports a mop of long, curly blond hair waving on top of a constantly animated and slightly too-large head. He talks too much and too intensely, coming off as a bit goofy. To many, he hardly seems to be a vampire at all. He is known to be a charismatic politician and is riding high from having closed a non-aggression pact with the local Camarilla. This will give the Movement time to consolidate over the coming decade. The price he has paid is promising to rid the domain of Hecata influence. Thus, he has made an enemy of the local Necromancers, including the players' characters.

Moretti was born in 1897 and was Embraced shortly after the Spanish Civil War in a French POW camp. He appears to be in his early 40s.

He was a communist firebrand in his youth and joined a group of volunteers traveling to Spain to fight fascism. There, he was taken captive by elite Italian troops sent by Mussolini in one of the early battles. The threat of torture was enough to make him a turncoat. In his mind, his betrayal helped prevent the unnecessary loss of lives as he disarmed and aided in the capture of a group of anarchist fighters in the buildup to a pitched battle outside Madrid. Shortly after, he deserted and crossed the Pyrenees.

After being transported to a French POW camp,

where the anti-fascist fighters were subjected to terrifying conditions, he contracted polio and was close to death. Desperate, he managed to send a message to his secret fascist masters, hoping for medical aid. Instead, he was rewarded for his loyalty with the blessing of undeath and placed as a mole inside the Brujah clan, still secretly serving his faceless master.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 9th

**Embrace:** 1939

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 5 (pretends to be higher)

**General Difficulty:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 8, Mental 6, Disciplines 6

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 7, Willpower 9

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 9 (Radical Politics), Melee 7 (Bayonet), Firearms 6 (Lee-Enfield Bolt-Action), Subterfuge 8 (Deflection)

**Disciplines:** Celerity 3 (Cat's Grace, Fleetness, Blink), Potence 3 (Soaring Leap, Prowess, Spark of Rage), Presence 4 (Awe, Lingering Kiss, Entrancement, Summon)

**Equipment:** Antique Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifle (very long range, Damage +3), bayonet (Damage +2)

### Study Group 77

*Mortal Radical Left Vigilantes*

A motley crew of mortals (at least twice the number of characters in the players' coterie) in their 20s, sporting Army surplus or tan trench coats with various radical slogans and patches on their T-shirts. They are strong believers in social justice and tend to romanticize the socialist struggles of the early 20th century. All are students or employees at a local university and attend night lectures given by Moretti. Learning the truth about their teacher's past would break at least half of them and make a few of them side with the players' characters in a confrontation against him.

**General Difficulty:** 3/2

**Humanity:** 7

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 4

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Academics 5 (Radical Politics), Melee 5

## The Haunting Shadow

The shadow is a ghost forced to serve the brutal hierarchy of the dead. It has a single mission — to haunt the coterie and make sure they understand that their meddling is breaking something it calls Stygian Law: “None dead may reveal the secrets of the dead, or fate will find them.” It seems to treat the characters as if they were ghosts and thus subject to this law. This in itself should be a terrifying realization. The players’ characters may misunderstand this as a reference to the Tradition of Masquerade, and for all intents and purposes, this law serves a similar function. The shadow will pack the strongest emotional punch if it is the ghost of someone the players’ characters know or knew in their mortal life — a dead parent, child, lover, or dear friend.

**General Difficulty:** 5/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical N/A, Social 5, Mental 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5 (the ghostly body can only be damaged by Necromancy or by hitting it with an object that held deep meaning to it in life), Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Stealth 9, Intimidation 8, Performance 6, Persuasion 6

**Special:** Their screams work like the Presence power Dread Gaze. When the shadow uses this power, they roll eight dice (their Intimidation pool) against the victim’s Composure + Resolve, no eye contact needed.

## Locations

**The Bandiera Rossa Record Shop:** A secondhand record store specializing in leftist folk and blues from Woody Guthrie to early Dylan. The owner

is a woman in her late 90s. She might remember meeting Spanish Civil War volunteers, and she may be used as a way to fill the players in on the history of the conflict.

She remembers George Moretti selling off all his records sometime in the 1960s. If shown a photo of Moretti, she will be absolutely shocked at how little he has changed. She will die if confronted by Study Group 77’s violence or the terror of the shadow.

Buried deep in a pile of thick jazz and blues records is a rare recording of “Black Rooster, Red Rooster,” a fighting song of the Red Republicans. It is marked as belonging to G.M. It has his Blood on it and has a powerful arcane connection to the fake radical.

**The Stadium:** An old stadium built on top of a prison that was active in the 1930s and ’40s. During this interim period, returning Spanish Civil War volunteers were imprisoned here, a stark reminder that the world had not yet recognized their service to mankind by opposing fascism before the outbreak of the Second World War. If the city is in America, the prisoners were considered to be “communist sympathizers” and imprisoned on false charges. The city and the nation have done their best to forget this shameful episode, and digging it out requires an Academics (Local or Radical History) test with a Difficulty of 6 or the use of Auspex or Oblivion to catch the echoes of the past.

Lena Cortez, a volunteer of Mexican descent and the last survivor of Moretti’s betrayal, haunts the place. Her bones are still hidden here, close to an old stone and ironwork tool shed that is the only remnant of the old prison. Playing the “Black Rooster, Red Rooster” record here will summon her ghost, and she will act out the trauma of being betrayed to the Italian Fascists by Moretti before the Battle of Madrid.

## Scenes

**The Crowing of the Rooster:** The characters are under pressure from Moretti. Perhaps he sends Study Group 77 to tell them to leave town.



Perhaps he has the group make a mural depicting the coterie's decapitated bodies smoking in the sun outside their haven. No matter, the coterie should feel the need to do something about their enemy.

**The Haunting:** Feeling the players' characters' anger against the man who betrayed her, the ghost of Lena Cortez haunts the characters. This haunting should indicate she is on their side and connected to Moretti. Perhaps she points at the mural, sings the first bars of "Red Rooster," or implores them by saying his name again and again. The haunting ends with the appearance of the shadow. It screams, tearing Cortez's shade to tatters, then turns to the coterie, saying something like, "The Rooster must never crow. The silence of the grave must be observed. Leave this alone, or you will break the laws of the dead." If needed to emphasize the seriousness of the situation, the familiar shade will attack the coterie, driving them into terror with its screams. No one else sees it. This should be sufficient to set the players on the right track.

**Research:** By researching "The Rooster," Moretti's background, or the like, the coterie should realize that the Spanish Civil War is somehow the key to learning more about him. If nothing else, he is known to have been a volunteer in the International Brigades by other Brujah who are not his friends, but he denies it himself.

**Stand Down:** As the coterie begins their research, perhaps finding the truth about the old stadium, the record shop, or Moretti's past, his Study Group 77 finds them and accuses them of being fascist sympathizers. The coterie is attacked as they go on a hunt for blood, perform a research task, or spy on Moretti. The students are easily scared off by violence, but they will return in numbers, perhaps armed with a handgun or two. Play up the confusion of the misunderstanding, but don't let the coterie talk things out with the misinformed anti-fascists. Save that for the climax. If need be, have the haunting shadow scare the mortals away. Remember, they do not see it, but its scream still sends shivers down their spines.

**Closer and Closer:** As the coterie gets closer and closer to the truth, use the shadow and the vigilantes to keep the pressure on, perhaps even letting Moretti himself confront them and reiterate his “leave town or else” ultimatum. This is where he would be backed up by the word of the Baron or the Prince, or perhaps the local Sheriff invites the coterie for drinks to calmly explain that they have overstayed their welcome and will leave or be left for the dawn the next night.

At the same time, other political forces of the Kindred community start contacting the coterie; perhaps another enemy of Moretti’s offers them aid or an escape if they can reveal his secrets. “Something is wrong with that man. I have lived a life among radicals and would-be world saviors, but he is not one. Not truly,” one of their contacts may state if they need to clearly understand what is at stake.

**The Climax:** When they find the record and the prison, they have all they need to summon the ghost of Lena Cortez and witness Moretti’s betrayal. Lena is not a conscious wraith, like the shadow

that hunts the players’ characters. The shadow play revealing Moretti’s betrayal will repeat every time someone sings “Black Rooster, Red Rooster” near the tool shed, allowing the players’ characters to show his treacherous nature to the Sheriff, Prince, or Baron at any time during the night. The testimony of the broken ghost, betrayed first by her friend, then by her country, and finally by a history that has forgotten her and the struggle she sacrificed everything for, brings any witnesses to their knees, crying tears of Bood. If Study Group 77 is there, even the mortals understand what is happening, and they turn on their master and teacher, some demanding answers, others wanting to kill him right then and there. Moretti sinks to his knees and accepts whatever fate may come, overwhelmed by the long-standing guilt and powerless in the face of his own disgusting betrayal, hidden for so long.

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## THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR AND THE VOLUNTEER BRIGADES

In 1936, the International Brigades gathered in Catalonia to fight against Franco’s fascist coup. The volunteers came from almost every country in the Western world, and within a year, more than a third of them would be dead. They faced off against the Spanish Foreign Legion—composed of volunteers from Hitler’s Germany and Italian elite soldiers serving Mussolini. Underequipped, untrained, crippled by language barriers or ideological differences, and lacking armored support, their fight nonetheless secured two major victories for the anti-fascists, but ultimately the war ended in defeat for the Republicans in 1939.

After Franco’s victory, some were incarcerated in Spanish concentration camps of the German model; some managed to escape to France and their home countries, where they were often imprisoned instead of being treated as defeated heroes. In America, the Spanish Volunteers were routinely suspected of being Communist spies and were discriminated against during the entirety of the Red Scare.

It was not until Franco’s eventual defeat that they received the recognition they deserved. In 1994, the few remaining volunteers were granted Spanish citizenship and commemorated in a ceremony in Cádiz. Their descendants, provided they have helped spread the stories of their struggles and bravery, are extended the same privilege, now and forever.

This story is dedicated to their memory. For accessible information, check out George Orwell’s novel *Homage to Catalonia* or Michael Leigh’s film *Land and Freedom*.

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## The Parley

### LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE

*Mental (optional), Physical, Social*

This story is written for an Anarch coterie and takes place in a city divided between Anarchs and Camarilla forces. It can be run as a one-shot or as part of an ongoing chronicle, where the players' characters are merely visitors.

The sire of a player's character contacts them with a request: An old ally of hers, Alexander Beaudry, leads an Anarch faction within the city, one that is currently teetering on the brink of conflict with a rival Anarch group. Both factions believe they can take over and oust the Camarilla Court from the city limits entirely. Unfortunately, the factions are enemies themselves. The character's sire believes it may be possible to negotiate a truce between the two groups and even encourage them to join forces against the Court—but it'll take careful handling. Since the sire herself can't attend, she's entrusting the parley to her childe and their associates.

## Why the Players' Coterie?

Loyalty and obligation to a sire rope the characters into playing host to the contentious parley. When complications arise, they've got to figure out how to negotiate difficult terms and survive a Camarilla attack.

## Goals

The characters must be the neutral hosts and negotiators between the rival Anarch factions to prove themselves trustworthy to the sire and further the Anarch cause. The story ends with a battle, and how well the coterie has done before influences the Difficulty of defeating the attackers.

## Supporting Characters

### Alexander Beaudry

The leader of the Anarch group based in the city's south side. He wears old-fashioned clothing and sports a gold pocket watch. Alexander leads a small but protective Family (p. 17), with four childer of his own and six grandchilder. The group has controlled the warehouse district for the past 10 years — it's a fairly hospitable area for Kindred in terms of safety (low security, lots of hiding places), but the feeding is sparse. As a result, Alexander keeps strict track of who drinks when and punishes any greedy offspring harshly. Members of his Family going hungry drove Alexander to seek further hunting grounds in Grange Park, right on the edge of Naomi's territory.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulties:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 7, Social 7, Mental 5, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 6, Willpower 7

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Brawl 9, Streetwise 8, Subterfuge 9

**Disciplines:** Potence 3 (Lethal Body, Prowess, Uncanny Grip), Presence 1 (Daunt)

### Nathaniel

Alexander's eldest childe and his right hand. Nathaniel is particularly furious with Naomi, as a fledging childe of his was almost destroyed by Naomi's followers in a scrap within Grange Park a few weeks ago. He's hot-headed but respectful of his sire.

**Clan:** Brujah

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulties:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 6, Mental 5, Disciplines 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Melee 8, Intimidation 7, Subterfuge 7

**Disciplines:** Celerity 1 (Rapid Reflexes), Potence 2 (Soaring Leap, Prowess)

**Equipment:** Brass knuckles

### Naomi Sato

The leader of the Anarch group on the city's southwest side. She wears a jacket covered in patches. She heads a Collegium (p. 16) of redworkers. Naomi's group controls two neighborhoods, focused around Lowry College, a community college situated in the larger of the two. The college is just a few blocks from Grange Park. Naomi's group fought off Camarilla influence in the area five years ago until they could comfortably call it theirs — so she's furious when Alexander's group starts making inroads into her carefully maintained territory. Naomi's Collegium has been losing members thanks to several Camarilla run-ins. She's in desperate need of security.

**Clan:** Tremere

**Generation:** 11th

**Blood Potency:** 2

**Humanity:** 6

**General Difficulties:** 5/4

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 6, Social 7, Mental 8, Disciplines 8

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Leadership 8, Academics 9 (Linguistics), Occult 9

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2 (Heightened Senses, Premonition), Blood Sorcery 3 (A Taste for Blood, Extinguish Vitae, Blood of Potency; Rituals: Clinging of the Insect, Truth of Blood, Dagon's Call), Dominate 1 (Cloud Memory)

## Ebin Thomas

A spy for the Camarilla Court. He infiltrated Naomi's Collegium several months ago, and he's led a double unlife ever since, volunteering for missions, making himself indispensable within Naomi's group, and informing the Camarilla Prince whenever he can. He's fanned the flames of hatred between Alexander and Naomi, subtly reminding Naomi of old slights and injustices at every opportunity. He's patrolled Grange Park for many months, goading Alexander's grandchilder whenever he encounters them. He's under strict orders from the Camarilla Prince to prolong the meeting however he can, until Camarilla forces arrive.

**Clan:** Tremere

**Generation:** 12th

**Blood Potency:** 1

**Humanity:** 5

**General Difficulties:** 5/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 6, Disciplines 5

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 6

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Subterfuge 9, Occult 9, Politics 10

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4 (Heightened Senses, Premonition, Scry the Soul, Spirit's Touch), Blood Sorcery 2 (A Taste for Blood, Scour Secrets,\* Rituals: Blood Walk, Communicate with Kindred Sire)

*\*Players Guide, p. 98*

## Lucia Herrera

Naomi's taciturn and loyal lieutenant. She is beginning to become suspicious of Ebin and looks askance at his goading Naomi. She dislikes Alexander intensely and believes he is a Camarilla wannabe.

**Clan:** Duskborn

**Generation:** 15th

**Blood Potency:** 0

**Humanity:** 7

**General Difficulties:** 4/2

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 4, Social 3, Mental 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 4

**Exceptional Dice Pools:** Survival 6, Insight 8, Streetwise 8

**Equipment:** Wooden stakes

## Camarilla Attackers

The Camarilla attackers are a crew of eight or so Kindred (the forces should be fairly evenly matched), most of whom are neonates and fledglings. They represent one faction of the city's Camarilla Kindred and are attacking on their own initiative. Defeating them does not solve the overall problem of the Tower's presence in the city.

In an ongoing chronicle, the leader can be someone the players' coterie recognizes; otherwise use Coterie Leader along with Coterie Bruiser and Coterie Face (pp. 80–81).

The remaining attackers have the following stats:

**General Difficulties:** 4/3

**Standard Dice Pools:** Physical 5, Social 6, Mental 5, Disciplines 4

**Secondary Attributes:** Health 5, Willpower 5

**Equipment:** Sword or bowie knife

## Locations

**Fairweather Condominium:** An innocuous condo building, facing a quiet residential street. The basement apartment is one of the sire's safe houses. The windows are covered with wooden shutters, masking steel blinds, and the master bedroom has a fancy double-thick door with a keypad lock. A laptop on the coffee table shows grainy security camera footage of the building's exterior, and a hacked speed camera on the street outside pings anyone moving at inhuman speeds (though it's sometimes fooled by speeding cars).

The condo has five main spaces: two bedrooms, the kitchen (blood in the fridge), the dining room, and the living room, which has been transformed into a conference space with several armchairs arranged around a coffee table. The decor is '60s chic with a few modern touches (mostly electronics).

## Scenes

**Everything in Moderation:** The players' characters sit in the comfortable living room of the large condo belonging to the sire. They consult a handwritten page of instructions left for them on the coffee table.

"If you can pull tonight off, not only will there be one less domain war for us to worry about within the city, but we might be able to plan an actual move against the Camarilla in the next few months. We just need Naomi and Alexander to agree to three terms: first, a truce between their people. Second, temporary borders for their domains—that's one they really won't like. Neither wants to cede ground. Finagle it however you need to. We only need them to keep it together until the Cam are driven out of town. Then we can renegotiate. Third, an exchange of some kind—a token of goodwill between them. Something they'll actually want and use.

"What you need to remember is these people hate each other, but they hate the Camarilla more. You can leverage that. The Camarilla's afraid of a united Anarch front, and they've let this little personal war between Alexander and Naomi fester as a result. I'm not sure, but Cam spies might have even had a hand in feeding it.

"If you're successful, we'll start working in earnest on a plan to move against the Cam. This is a big opportunity for us. Be diplomatic, and be careful.

"As always, destroy this message."

The Arbiters Assemble: The security cameras beep as several figures approach the door. A sign to the camera lets the players' characters know it's Naomi. She arrives with two Kindred in tow, Ebin and Lucia. They pick seats with their back to the wall, Lucia standing behind Naomi. Another beep as Alexander arrives. He's brought Nathaniel with him. The two leaders look at each other with loathing.

"I'm only here as a favor to an old friend," Alexander says, "Let's get this farce started, shall we?"

— Anonymous voice message

Negotiations begin slowly. Neither leader is willing to cede ground to the other or reveal what they really need. For now, they're coldly polite. The players' characters could use social combat to convince the leaders to listen to them, or they might try using their Skills to set the two sides at ease, facilitating conversation rather than compelling it.

If the players' characters are perceptive, they notice Ebin wandering around the apartment, looking at the doors and windows with apparent

appreciation. He asks about the condo, saying he's trying to get ideas for a safe house of his own. He seems particularly interested in knowing how the security system works.

Talking to Lucia or Naomi in private, the players can discover she is stretched very thin with a test of Wits + Insight at Difficulty 4. In recent weeks, when members of her group ventured farther afield, they were met by the Camarilla Sheriff. "It's like they know where we're going," she says, but she's warded

their territory with any number of privacy and security measures. She's worried: the Collegium's numbers weren't large to begin with, and they're dwindling fast.

Talking to Nathaniel or Alexander in private, it rapidly becomes clear that the Kindred are hungry on a nightly basis. Alexander's strict control of his Family has kept them safe for many years, but it's becoming harder to feed everyone as the warehouse district becomes more policed. Every member of the Family is one or two nights away from meeting their Beast, it seems.

**Sharp Words and Sharper Fangs:** When negotiations seem to be going well, Ebin begins to steer Naomi toward vindictiveness. He drops small references to various clashes and insults over the years. She picks up the bait readily. If Ebin has gathered any information that might turn her against the players' characters, he'll drop that in her ear as well.

Naomi says, "You want a big juicy steak and you don't want to pay for it? In my book, that's called theft."

Alexander spits, "Consider it recompense for when you attacked my grandchilde with no provocation!"

"No provocation?" Naomi says, "She was trespassing on our territory! You would've done the same, and don't deny it." Ebin leans down and whispers something in Naomi's ear. "And don't forget," she adds, "That we were the ones to run the Camarilla off the park in the first place. You're just vultures, landing on the prey we brought down."

The players' characters must take control of the situation. Social combat might convince Alexander and Naomi to negotiate or simply convince them that there's a larger enemy to be dealt with. Ebin tries to undermine these attempts at every turn. If the players suspect he may be more than he seems, they can attempt to force him to confess to sabotage. He seems quietly confident, even when being accused of betrayal — shaking him at all takes a Charisma or Manipulation + Persuasion

or Subterfuge test at Difficulty 6. Almost as if he's expecting backup.

And indeed, when Ebin confesses — or, when it seems like a deal might or might not be struck — unexpected guests arrive.

**Enemies at the Gates:** The security measures around the condo signal to the characters that intruders are on their way. It doesn't take a genius to realize it's probably Camarilla forces, here to kill two birds with one stone. They're armed with swords or bowie knives — quiet but deadly weapons. The three disparate factions within the apartment — players' characters, Alexander and Nathaniel, Naomi and Lucia — must fight together against the besieging Camarilla forces.

If the characters unmasked Ebin, they can get a small head start on calling in reinforcements or creating an escape route (Storytellers might present this as "you can do one thing before they're at the door"). With Ebin neutralized or killed, he won't join the Camarilla attackers.

If the Camarilla spy remains in play, Ebin suddenly appears behind Lucia and swiftly dispatches her. Naomi screams in rage. The Camarilla forces arrive as Lucia crumples to the floor.

The attack commences immediately. The attackers will only stay to fight for as long as it seems like they're winning. If they lose more than two or three Kindred, they move to retreat to lick their wounds and return another day.

Unlikely Allies? Assuming the characters emerge from their battle with their heads attached, they can impart a final warning to Naomi and Alexander: fight together or be destroyed. The Camarilla Court has been doing its best to drive the two groups apart, and the ruin of the parley is only proof of how strong they could be as allies. The Anarchs in the city can strike a mighty blow against the Court if they would only work together.

## Variations

The parley can end in a number of outcomes. These variations are just a few ideas to inspire Storytellers. Everything depends on the characters' success during negotiations — did they make a good case for why the two factions should ally, and did they offer reasonable apologies or reparations to satisfy the two leaders?

**More Time:** If the players' coterie manages to interrupt the attack — for instance by taking one of the attackers hostage — they can enter social combat against the Camarilla leader to convince them to withdraw with a hostage of their own. This means figuring out whom to send with the attackers — depending on who currently has the most trust in the players' coterie, either Lucia or Nathaniel can volunteer. It also buys everyone a bit more time to figure out what to do next, but there likely isn't going to be a long-term peaceful solution. The Camarilla forces are committed to ousting the Anarchs from their city.

**Brothers in Arms:** If the parley was about to be successful and the spy was revealed, Naomi stares down at what's left of Ebin. She wheels around and offers a hand to Alexander. "Take Grange Park," she says, "Just let us in it on new moons."

Alexander takes the hand slowly. "A deal," he says. "My kinsmen shall not harry yours any longer. And... we shall answer your call should you need aid."

She grips his hand tighter. "Deal," she repeats. She rips a patch off her jacket and presents it to him. "Show this to any of my guys, they'll listen to you."

Alexander takes it delicately, handing her his pocket watch fob after a moment's hesitation. "Show any of my offspring this and they will do the same."

The players' characters can glad-hand the two leaders and bask in the glow of a truly successful parley. Their sire contacts them not long after — it's time to start planning a large-scale move against the Camarilla domain as a whole.

**No Truce:** Alexander sneers. "A Camarilla spy as a confidant?" he says to Naomi, "I knew your judgment was poor, but this takes the cake."

The parley's a disaster. Not only are the characters exhausted from a nasty battle, the negotiations went nowhere and neither Alexander nor Naomi is willing to give an inch. The battle has confirmed their worst suspicions of each other, and the two groups may now openly go to war. Any hope for parley between the two sides will have to wait for tensions to die down or new leadership to emerge. Grange Park will now become a battlefield.

**Takeover:** As the dust clears, the Camarilla attackers are defeated, and one of the leaders has met their end. The remaining one doesn't do much to hide their pleasure. They've got the advantage of surprise if they can get back to their group and get them moving — they can take over their rival's territory before dawn if they're willing to get messy with it. The players' characters have the choice to aid the takeover and actively keep the mess to a minimum, or they can try to argue against the idea and present something more compelling in its stead. If they don't stand with the conqueror-apparent, they may be able to earn the trust of the unlucky territory that lost its leader, although they'll have to walk a delicate line if they want to keep the surviving half of the parley from thinking of them as a new enemy.

**Obvious Bias:** If the players' characters clearly take the side of one group over the other before the attack, the rival leader storms out of the parley early. Whichever side remains can be counted as a strong ally to the players' characters and the sire, but the offended leader swears they'll take revenge on the characters for embarrassing them. Worse still, the sire is disappointed, especially if the players' characters don't side with Alexander (her closer friend). Grange Park remains a contested territory, and if the players' characters visit it, they may be attacked by the insulted party.

**Kidnapped:** The Camarilla forces are too strong — they're clearly going to win. Naomi and Alexander make a break for it; only one of them escapes. The remaining leader is summarily executed.

The players' characters are staked, stuffed into a waiting van, and whisked away to the heart of Camarilla territory. When the stakes are removed,

they are standing before the Prince and his Sheriff, surrounded by Camarilla vampires. The players' characters must negotiate as best they can to escape final death. Above all, the Prince is interested in finding the sire who arranged the parley. He will exchange safety for information on her, especially if he can extract anything about her safe houses or her business deals.

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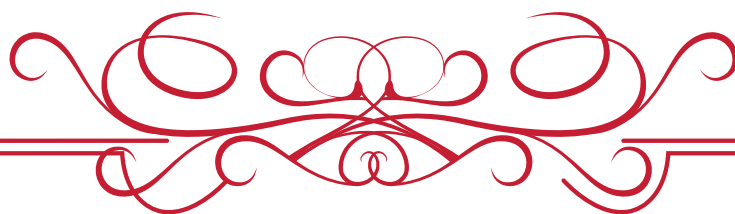
### AUTARK STORIES

Political stories can play out in autarkies as well. Perhaps you can use one of the above stories more or less as they are if your autarky is loosely based on the structures of an Anarch or Camarilla city, changing out the key characters for unbound alternatives. Otherwise, here are a few ideas for autarky story concepts:

- **The Fragile Pact:** In a domain shared between a few independent Kindred factions, peace is fragile but stable, until a feeding gone wrong threatens to shatter the arrangement. The players' coterie is expected to choose a side in the conflict, pushing the future of their domain towards one of several ideologies.
  - **The Mortal Broker:** A mortal fixer controls too many secrets about undead dealings. The autarks of the city will have to decide whether to protect their asset or remove the liability.
  - **The Refugees:** Displaced Camarilla Kindred arrive from a fallen domain, demanding shelter. Letting them in also means letting in their politics, animosities, and old habits. How will the players' coterie protect their way of unlife from the sneaking influence of the Tower bats?
  - **The Caputo Effect:** In what appears a perfect autarky, the players' characters discover signs that something more sinister is going on. Slowly, they figure out that the city's ruler has been using the domain as a cover for Sabbat dealings all along.
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## *Appendix:*



# SYSTEMS

**I**n this appendix, you'll find new Discipline Powers, Loresheets, and other game mechanics designed for characters interested in vampire politics.



# Disciplines

## Animalism

### Level 2

#### TRACING THE BLOOD

Though their deep connection to the Beast, the vampire understands when other vampires call upon their Blood.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Animalism

**System:** The character Rouses the Blood and tests Resolve + Animalism (Difficulty 3). Results are based on the margin of success, and all targets must be within their sensory range. Success reveals the target's general direction (forward, backward, sideways, etc.), whereas a critical win allows the user to know precisely which vampire triggered the effect.

- **Basic Win (Margin 0):** The vampire can sense when Blood is Roused.
- **Margin 1:** The vampire can sense whether the Rouse fueled a universal Kindred Trait such as Blood Surge and Blush of Life, or activated a Discipline (and which Discipline it was).
- **Margin 2+:** The vampire senses exactly which Power was activated and roughly what it does.

The Storyteller may call for a Wits + Occult test (Difficulty of a Discipline Power's level + 2) to recognize rare and uncommon Discipline Powers or gain a clearer understanding of the effect.

**Duration:** One scene

## Auspex

### Level 3

#### READ THE ROOM

The vampire senses the overriding opinion of a crowd, fueling their understanding about how many would support or oppose a suggestion. Crafty Kindred Read the Room before proposing a course of action or even declaring praxis.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Auspex

**System:** The vampire activates the power and mentally poses a question they want answered, as though they were taking a poll, then tests Intelligence + Auspex. Difficulty starts at 5 for a crowd of 12 (mortals or Kindred) and decreases for each additional 12 individuals down to a minimum of Difficulty 2.

Storytellers may decide that certain questions are too complex to answer, and while numbers are always vague (some, many, most, etc.), they otherwise summarize the crowd's general sentiment. On a critical win, they detect how this sentiment changes from any actions taken during the scene.

**Duration:** Instantaneous, or one scene on a critical

#### REVEAL THE INVISIBLE LEASH

With a simple touch, the vampire can sense who in a room their target considers themselves subordinate to.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Auspex vs Composure + Resolve

**System:** The vampire must be in physical contact with their target and test Intelligence + Auspex vs their target's Composure + Resolve.

On a win, the vampire senses who in the room the target considers their political superior (if any). If there are multiple such individuals, they only identify the most immediate present, such as a sire whose Blood Bound the target rather than the Prince. For every 2 points of the Margin, a secondary superior is identified, moving from the target's most immediate to the most distant.

**Duration:** For as long as the vampire is touching their target

## Blood Sorcery

### Level 2

#### VINCULUM MAGNUM

Savvy Kindred sorcerers manipulate their vitae to keep more Kindred under their control. This power has fallen out of favor with the Tremere since the destruction of their prime chantry and loss

of the ability to bind others. Still, many Princes, Hierophants, and other authorities seeking to maintain their dominance have sought it out from those redworkers who know of the power.

**Cost:** None

**System:** The user concentrates their Blood's bonding properties, and can force the Blood Bond on more Kindred than normal. Add the vampire's Blood Sorcery rating to the number of Kindred they can Blood Bond. Vampires who cannot bond other vampires for any reason (such as the Tremere clan Bane or being thin-blooded) do not gain this benefit.

## Dominate

### Level 3

#### CHAIN OF COMMAND

**Prerequisite:** Mesmerize

Those laboring under the will of the vampire drag others along with their actions, demanding help and obedience with a will fueled by their master. By delegating their authority, the vampire's reach extends that much further.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**System:** After delivering a Mesmerize command, the vampire can choose to invoke this power by immediately making another Rouse Check. Those affected become capable of executing slightly more complex tasks — even showing some degree of awareness — as they set about achieving their master's goal, seeking out other suitable candidates to help them. The target of this power adds the vampire's rating in Dominate to any Social tests they make when convincing others to assist them in their objective (and only those tasks), allowing them to better command underlings, delegate tasks, and spread the burden. Those so commanded aren't operating under any supernatural compulsion and are free to object — the main benefit is making people in authority better equipped to order around those beneath them.

**Duration:** Until the command is carried out or the scene ends, whichever comes first

## Presence

### Level 2

#### PREDATOR'S LURE

The vampire uses their presence to lure a victim closer, whether for conversation or for bloodier purposes.

**Cost:** One Rouse Check

**Dice Pool:** Charisma + Leadership vs.

Composure + Resolve

**System:** The vampire makes a Rouse Check to target one victim. Mortals are automatically affected. Against supernatural creatures, the user must win a test of Charisma + Leadership vs. the victim's Composure + Resolve. On a win, this Power compels an affected target to approach the user, whether or not the target knows or even is aware of the user. The victim won't drop everything or risk their safety to approach the user, and the power is ineffective in any kind of violent altercation. They politely finish conversations, complete their transactions, cross streets with caution, and wait at a safe distance until the Power ends or the situation becomes safe.

After using this power, the victim may recall an intense curiosity or an unexplainable compulsion to investigate or be near a person or location.

**Duration:** One scene or until they are within 10 feet (3 meters) of the user.

## Blood Sorcery Rituals

### Level 1

#### PRESERVATION

This Warding Circle variant allows a sorcerer to protect an object against the ravages of time. Entrepreneurial Kindred preserve the bric-a-brac of sentimental ancillae in exchange for boons, while those with a more criminal perspective use this rite to protect fragile valuables from damage during transport or theft. Preservation does not turn back the clock but preserves the item in its current state.

**Ingredients:** A quill or fountain pen, one or more Rouse Checks' worth of the caster's vitae

**Process:** The user inscribes arcane sigils on the item to be preserved.

**System:** The item withstands damage from normal wear and tear and the passage of time. Mold and rot do not take, pages do not yellow with age, insects will not damage the item, nor will the sun fade it, so long as some modicum of protection is maintained. Intentional damage still affects the item as normal, but scuffs or scrapes resulting from transportation or minor accidents, such as a spill or a fall from a height of only a few feet, leave no trace.

One Rouse Check of vitae is enough to ward an item about the size of a chair or guitar case, or a handful of small items such as chess pieces. The addition of a second Rouse Check during casting doubles the size of the item that can be warded.

### RITE OF INTRODUCTION

A Ritual that has mostly fallen out of use, the Rite of Introduction alerts the master of a chantry to the sorcerer's presence. In the age of the Second Inquisition, some cabals still find this useful for sending signals to their leader.

**Ingredients:** An iron pot or cauldron, a Rouse Check of the user's vitae

**Process:** The user brings the Blood to a boil and speaks a brief incantation while it boils.

**System:** The ritualist sends an impression of their face, their name, and a short, one-sentence message to any master of a Foundation of the Chantry (see below) within the same city. The caster can choose to withhold any of these elements but not alter them. If no Foundation is within range, the caster is aware that their message was not received.

## Level 5

### FOUNDATION OF THE CHANTRY

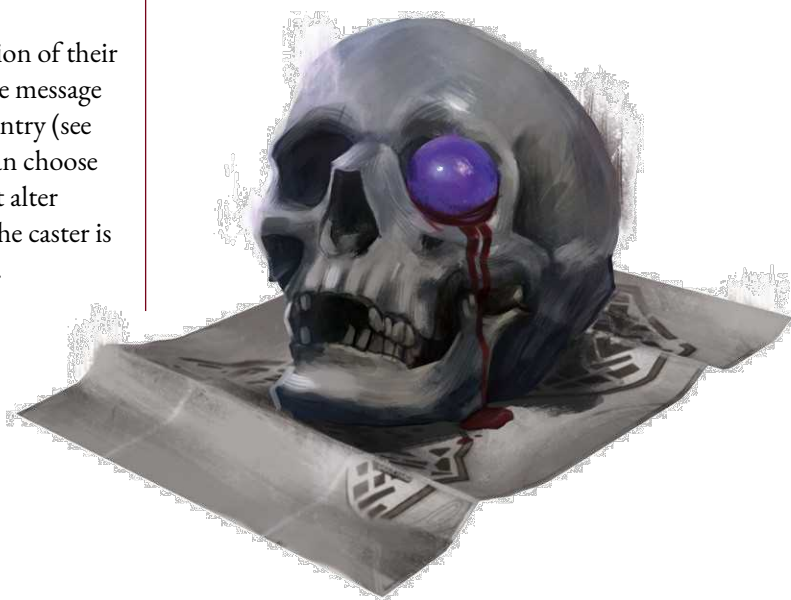
Once, the Tremere were the only sorcerous game in town, thanks in part

to this Ritual. Although all existing foundation stones cracked in 2008, this sought-after rite can still be used to bind a cabal of sorcerers together and communicate locally. Traditionalists lament that this Ritual has lost much of its power and once affected much larger areas; now it requires a more direct infusion of vitae than in decades past.

**Ingredients:** A polished sphere of amethyst, a white or albino mammal or bird indigenous to the region, and a human skull

**Process:** After slaying the animal and soaking the stone in its blood, the sorcerer draws a map of the area (up to about a 12-mile radius) on the skull and places the gemstone in the skull's eye socket or mouth.

**System:** The gem and skull are bound to a spiritually significant location (often called Veins of the Earth, Blood Sigils, p. 162) and become the Foundation of the Chantry. As long as the Foundation remains in place, the caster or their designee (who must be present to participate in the rite) can receive missives from the Rite of Introduction (see above). The caster knows whenever the Rite of Introduction is performed within the same city as the Foundation but must touch it to receive the introduction. Upon doing so, they may send



a signal back to the caster of the Rite of Introduction, consisting of an impression of their name, face, the location of the chantry, and a single-sentence message. As with the Rite of Introduction, the caster can choose to withhold, but not obscure, any of the above. The Ritual lasts until the Foundation is disturbed.

## Oblivion Ceremonies

### Level 3

#### MISFORTUNE'S HAND

By harnessing the powers of entropy against a target of their choice, the caster invites ruin upon their assets: funds get tied up in a bureaucratic knot, allies stop returning calls, retainers suffer debilitating accidents, and contacts find themselves under observation, unable to harvest or deliver information as usual.

**Prerequisites:** Shadow Servant or Touch of Oblivion (*Players Guide*, p. 89)

**Ingredients:** Something related to the asset being affected (bank account details, hair or blood of a living target, voice recordings), lead, a heat source sufficient to melt the lead, and a glass of blood from someone considered to have bad luck

**Process:** The caster drips blood into the lead as it melts while chanting the names of old gods, historic failures, and wishes of doom against the target. Once the blood is gone and the metal is molten, it's poured over the remaining objects. Once cooled, it's buried — tradition dictates a burial at sea, but anywhere will do.

**System:** The caster prepares the ingredients, selects one Background of their chosen target, and makes the Ceremony test. On a success, the Background is temporarily reduced by one dot; however, if the margin equals or exceeds the Background's rating, it decreases by two. Storytellers may prefer to make this roll if the rating should be kept secret.

The changes to the Background are subtle at first, with a series of unfortunate events, coincidences, and setbacks temporarily limiting access to the victim's assets. The change normally takes a few nights before it's in full effect and lasts a week after that. On a

critical success, the caster can choose to have the changes take effect immediately, as well as extend the impact for a full month. Backgrounds cannot be reduced below zero, and only one casting of this Ceremony can affect a given target at any one time, regardless of the source. All ratings return to their original level once this Ceremony expires.

## Loresheets

Loresheets are not just collections of cool powers — they also represent entanglements, obligations, and connections to the broader world. Chapter Five: The Storyteller's Manifesto provides some examples of tying Loresheets to specific events in Kindred history (pp. 164–173), but Storytellers and players are encouraged to make each Loresheet their own. Almost every Loresheet can be used in politically minded chronicles. Though each individual Loresheet doesn't always represent a person, consider putting any Loresheet connections on the Relationship Map to make them meaningful, recurring story elements.

### CHARACTER-BASED LORESHEETS

Many Loresheets reference specific Kindred, but the ties a player's character may have to that Storyteller character are left for the troupe to define. Some options include:

- A Kindred idol
- The character's political persuasion or approach
- A cautionary tale
- An influential Kindred whom the character is constantly compared to
- A close, personal relationship, whether positive, negative, or neutral
- A sire-child or grandsire-grandchild relationship
- The character's prior, lingering presence in the city

# DESCENDANT OF COUNT JOCALO

## (Ministry Only)

**A**mong the Kindred of Europe, one of the most infamous members of the Ministry is Count Jocalo, an Iberian noble turned spy for the Church of Set back when the Clan and Church were largely the same entity. Jocalo traveled between Europe, Africa, and Asia, visiting Court after Court to gather pawns and artifacts for the Hierophants of Set. Legend has it that he was even exiled from London for his role in the Great Fire.

Jocalo was very much the stereotypical tempter and schemer, and most of his descendants follow suit, using drugs, sex, religious beliefs, or occasionally plain burglary to obtain anything needed. His own religious convictions were dubious at best. His extensive travels and independence from the usual court system led Jocalo to sire many offspring across the world, and Ministers claiming him as an ancestor spread further still during the Ages of Sail and Steam.



### LORE



- **A Name You Can't Refuse:** Your reputation precedes you, providing the equivalent of one dot of Status with both the Anarchs and Camarilla—even autarks, the Hecata, and most blood cults won't refuse you entry into their domains so long as you don't overstay your welcome or cause obvious trouble. Most domains will also watch you like a hawk, with the fame of Jocalo's schemes coloring your reputation.
- **Tools of the Trade:** Jocalo's Blood gives you an understanding of his methods. You gain a free specialty in your choice of three of the following Skills, or the first dot in the Skill if you don't already possess one dot: Insight, Larceny, Persuasion, Streetwise, or Subterfuge. You are, however, known for inheriting Jocalo's teachings, and local authorities or boon holders often come to you to get underhanded tasks done—or consider you a suspect.
- **A Taste So Sweet:** Your Blood and Kiss are more potent when ensnaring others. You gain the Enduring Bond Merit (complete and partial Blood Bonds to you weaken every other month; see *Gehenna War*, p. 44), and gain a two-dice bonus to interact with any mortals during or immediately after feeding from them. Your Discipline powers relying on others drinking your Blood or receiving your Kiss (such as Lingering Kiss, Draught of Might, or using Scorpion's Touch to affect the Blood in your own body) have their durations doubled.
- **Relic Hound:** Following in Jocalo's footsteps, you're a collector of lore and relics. You gain a two-dice bonus to all dice pools directly related to seeking out texts or items pertaining to Kindred history or sorcery (including Blood Sorcery, Oblivion, and Thin-Blood Alchemy), and you may turn a single 1 or 10 on a Hunger die (your choice) to a 2 for these tests.
- **Rapid Entanglement:** The Blood teaches you to shed connections and forge new ones. Once per story or month of game time (whichever is shorter), you can exchange all the dots invested in an Ally, Contact, Influence, or Retainer for another, whether the same category (such as Influence with local law enforcement for Influence within the local funeral industry) or another Background (such as Influence with local law enforcement for a Retainer).

# DESCENDANT OF MARCONIUS

*(Lasombra Only)*

**M**arconius was already old when he and a coterie of his fellow Lasombra experimented with fell Oblivion Ceremonies. He disappeared for a time, emerging around Strasbourg in the late Middle Ages. Impeccably polite and erudite, Marconius and his brood became powerful members of the city, vying with the Ventrue for influence in the region. During the Age of Steam, many of his brood nominally accepted membership in the Sabbat while others remained loners and autarkis. From the Second Sabbat Civil War through the Sect Wars of the 1990s, Sabbat purges of moderates and “the undevout” within their ranks, as well as the expansion of Kindred metropolitan domains to include smaller cities in their orbit, led many of Marconius’ brood to leverage their ancestor’s name to abandon the Black Hand quietly. Whether prescient or just pragmatic, many of Marconius’ childer rejected the Sabbat before the cost to leave skyrocketed.

Marconius’ brood has a reputation for politeness and suffers from common superstitions. Few cities have more than one weirdling, as they tend to eschew the company of their clanmates and shoo their childer away after a decade or two.



## LORE

- **Darkling Ward:** You can master any ward or warding circle Blood Sorcery Ritual as though it were an Oblivion Ceremony with no power prerequisite. Your Wards deal Aggravated Willpower damage, rather than Health damage, and those affected by them lose all sense of direction and location until they wander away from the ward. The first time you learn a Warding Ceremony, you must also take a Folkloric Bane or Block Flaw.
  - **Abyssal Scholar:** Marconius’ Blood gives you a knack for Oblivion Ceremonies, gaining an Occult specialty for Ceremonies. You can learn Ceremonies without needing the prerequisite power; however, each time you learn a Ceremony without the prerequisite, take an additional Folkloric Bane or Block Flaw. If you later master the prerequisite
- Power, you may remove that Flaw. You must still possess the correct level of Oblivion to master Ceremonies.
  - **Fey Beauty:** You appear tall and lithe, with an odd, fey-like feature that makes you stand out in a crowd. You gain the Stunning Merit but suffer a two-dice penalty whenever attempting to disguise yourself, even supernaturally.
  - **Nightingale’s Song:** Dominate ordinarily cannot be used to force someone to tell the truth, but Marconius’ Blood helps you steal secrets. Once per session, you can use Mesmerize to demand a target reveal a secret; however, without a cleverly worded order, the secret may be unpredictable. Revealing damning information counts as harm, so getting specific secrets may still be impossible. Should your attempt to compel a secret
- fail, you visibly shed one large, bloody tear for each point of the margin of failure (or seven tears if the Power otherwise fails). These tears cause a Rouse Check if shedding four or more, and risk provoking Hunger Frenzy in other Kindred or uncomfortable questions among mortals.
  - **The Grandest Trick:** Marconius’ odd Blood embraces the light, if only for a moment. The effects of your Oblivion Powers or Ceremonies can survive three rounds of sunlight before they fade away. Whenever you are exposed to sunlight, you may choose to take Aggravated Willpower damage instead of Aggravated Health damage for up to three rounds. This is often enough for the weirdlings of Marconius to escape, though the damage to the Masquerade could be severe if they don’t escape the sun in time.

# DESCENDANT OF MEERLINDA

*(Tremere Only)*

**M**eerlinda was one of the first Tremere and a participant in the Ritual of Usurpation that founded the clan.

Whenever a schism arose within her cabal, she deftly walked the line between the accuser and the accused, preserving allies and avoiding enemies as she worked to rehabilitate the clan's image as usurpers and low-clan villains. Many say it was her intervention that allowed the Tremere a place in the Camarilla or that the Camarilla was a Tremere scheme to gain acceptance within Kindred society in the first place.

Her descendants tend to share her views, spinning neutrality to the benefit of everyone rather than scheming for their own gain. Now, in the era of a divided Clan Tremere, her descendants often bridge the gap between feuding houses and even work with solitarchs (autark chantries) or non-Tremere sorcerers.



## LORE



- **Strength of the Coven:** Your sire taught you when to step back and let others take the reins. You can assist in any Blood Sorcery Ritual (see “Teamwork” in *Vampire*, p. 122) even if you don’t know the Ritual. If you’ve ever assisted another Blood Sorcerer in a Ritual, you gain a two-dice bonus to Persuasion tests to convince them to share a Ritual with you or use one on your behalf. The other sorcerer may still request a reasonable payment or other compensation.
- **Wealth of Boons:** Your Blood compels you to exchange minor favors with other Kindred, often to your benefit. Once per story, you can treat one boon owed to you as one category higher or a boon you

owe as one category lower. Trivial boons treated as lower are immediately satisfied: no recompense needed.

- **Sanguine Understanding:** Meerlinda’s Blood whispers of politeness and politics. You gain a specialty related to Kindred or their factions for Etiquette and Politics, or the first dot in the Skill if you don’t have any. Furthermore, once per session, when dealing with Kindred, you can use your Etiquette or Politics (including specialties if relevant) instead of Insight, Persuasion, or Subterfuge in a dice pool.
- **Meerlinda’s Heir:** You emerge from Meerlinda’s shadow as a well-known force on your own. Increase your Status by 1 (to a maximum of 5). Once per session, you can

demand to be treated by your faction as though your Status were one level higher (if adding your Status to a test, this can bring it above 5), or use your full Status even when far from home or dealing with another sect.

- **Bestial Neutrality:** You excel at negotiating with your own Beast. You gain a Conviction related to diplomacy or neutrality, such as “Peace among the Kindred is worth any cost,” which is not tied to a Touchstone and cannot be lost. Once per session when acting in line with this Conviction, you can change a single 1 or 10 on a single Hunger die result to a 2 (a simple failure) after seeing the results of the roll.

# DESCENDANT OF MENELE

*(Brujah Only)*

**M**enele has walked the Earth since his breathing days as a philosopher-king in ancient Greece. His insatiable lust for enlightenment led him first to India, then to Carthage, a utopia purportedly built on the ideal of peaceful coexistence between Kindred and kine. A utopia reduced to ash by the treachery of Helena.

Apoplectic with rage, Menele razed Helena's beloved Pompeii to a cinder, lighting the spark of their unending rivalry. Helena and Menele fought across the ages until they beat themselves into mutual torpor near present-day Chicago. Menele was on the verge of renewing his ancient grudge with Helena when he was called east by the Beckoning, freeing his childer from his vice-like mental grip.

Many of Menele's descendants inherited his passion for philosophy, enlightenment, and greater ideals, while others became fearsome warriors selected for their ability to defend Menele from Helena's agents. Both were needed to realize Menele's weary dream of founding a new Carthage based on ancient Brujah ideals. Now, Menele's descendants are free to choose their destiny for the first time in millennia. The question is: What will they do with it?



## LORE



- **Symposium:** Menele always liked a good argument and sired many childer after debating the mysteries of life for evenings on end. You gain the ability to reroll a single die on all of your Persuasion tests.
- **Carthago Delenda Est:** Menele maintained an elaborate network of spies, informants, and retainers. His network fragmented upon his destruction, but you managed to claim a portion of it for your own. You have three dots to split between Retainers, Influence, Allies, and Resources, with the absolute certainty that Helena and her agents will attempt to take them from you.
- **Know Thyself:** Menele believed the Brujah needed

to return to their roots as thinkers and positive agents of change. You are trained to resist the pull of your Brujah fury. Once per session, you can spend a Willpower level to reroll a Frenzy affected by your Brujah Clan Bane.

- **Knowledge is Power:** Menele was impossibly old and held many secrets about the Kindred of Chicago and beyond. You were the steward of those secrets before the Beckoning drew him away. Once per story, you may request a single unspecified secret from the Storyteller about a clan or Kindred in Chicago or a similar domain that felt Menele's influence (Storyteller's discretion).

### •••• The Greater Mysteries:

Menele spent years learning the meditative practices necessary to perceive the astral plane in his quest for spiritual perfection. You inherited a portion of his ability and remain fully cognizant of your surroundings during your daily slumber. Reduce the difficulty of all Humanity tests to awaken during the day by two. You also have the ability to perceive fractured glimpses of events to come that may affect your character while you slumber. Once per session, you may roll Resolve + Occult to interpret your daytime visions. Each success brings the vision into greater focus, and the Storyteller may offer you one cryptic hint or fact relevant to your character.

# DESCENDANT OF RASALON

*(Nosferatu Only)*

**R**asalon believed in the unity of Clan Nosferatu; many of his descendants continue to maintain this belief: neither sectarian lines nor coterie should prevail over the unity of the Blood. A crusader who traveled in the Middle Ages, Rasalon established lines of communication between individual Nosferatu, and his name is still revered by many of the clan. As sectarian lines divided other clans, the legacy of Rasalon maintained lines of communication that benefited the Nosferatu for centuries. Many Nosferatu push for open lines of communication — even with their Sabbat brethren — out of fear of a mythical group of murderous elders, although Rasalon did his best to assuage those fears and focus more on clan unity.

Your ancestor's name has opened doors for you that may be closed to others, and you find yourself becoming a fulcrum of knowledge for the clan.



## LORE



- **Whisper to the Brood:** You communicate with the Nosferatu in the closest neighboring city, plus one additional city for each dot of Politics you possess. You speak through animal or mortal messengers, local cyphers and metaphors, and/or a hodgepodge of various languages, rendering the messages no threat to the Masquerade.
- **Shared Knowledge:** Your clanmates reveal secrets that help you excel in Kindred society. You gain the first dot of Etiquette, Politics, or Occult (choose any two) or, if you already possess the first dot, a specialty related to Kindred. Many Nosferatu seek you out for your knowledge, which occasionally costs you time. Once per story, you may ask the Storyteller to reveal any secret you may have heard that is relevant to a current plot or event, though which plot or event it relates to may not always be clear.

- **Underground Support:** Your reputation precedes you, at least among the sewer rats. You gain a four-dot Mawla representing all the Nosferatu neonates and ancillae in nearby cities. Once per story, you can petition a Nosferatu for shelter for one day (if it includes your coterie) or three (for just you), and at least one clanmate will offer refuge, though there may be a cost. Your connections often drag you into minor squabbles between clanmates.
- **Clan of the Hidden:** Your Blood resonates with other sewer rats. When activating Obfuscate Powers to hide or disguise yourself, you can extend that effect to include other Nosferatu (up to your Obfuscate + Blood Potency) so long as everyone maintains physical contact. Those losing physical contact become noticeable. With you, a group of Nosferatu can huddle under

the effect of Silence of Death for secret conversations, be hidden with Cloak of Shadows, or thwart cameras through Ghost in the Machine.

- **Hidden Primogen:** All the Nosferatu in the region look to you. No Nosferatu other than explicit Adversaries reject reasonable boons from you. Nosferatu treat any boons involving you as one step in your favor: trivial boons you might owe are instantly expunged, a minor boon owed to you is treated as major, or a life boon you owe is treated as a major boon.

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