VAMPIRE
THE MASQUERADE
WoD

Mature Content Warning

For the past several decades, ***Vampire: The Masquerade*** has addressed the darkness in the real world through horror stories: it has talked about AIDS, capitalist exploitation, sexual predation, the resurgence of far-right political extremism, religious fanaticism, state and private surveillance, and many other issues. This version of the game does not shy away from any of the above, and we believe exploration of subjects like these is as valid in roleplaying games as it is in other media. Including a problematic subject in a Storytelling game is not the same as glorifying it, and if you take the chance to explore it critically, it can be the exact opposite. If we understand the problems facing us, we are better armed to fight them.

V5 includes in-world references and expressions of the following: sexual violence, political extremism, physical violence and gore, mind control, torture, abuse, imprisonment and kidnapping, racism, sexism, and homophobia, to name a few. It's a game about monsters.

"Why are you telling me this?" you might be saying.

Someone at your table is not familiar with this game. Someone at your table has dealt with some of these issues in real life. Someone at your table wants to know that you read this warning and know you will be considerate to them as players, while putting their character through the wringer.

In the Appendix, you will find concrete techniques on how to handle difficult subjects in your game in a manner that is respectful to your players and their experiences. Calibrate beforehand which techniques your group wants to use. People have different needs and not every method works for every person.

This is a game about monsters. But it is only a game.

Don't use it as an excuse to be a monster yourself.

DEDICATIONS

To you, the reader, player, and fan of Vampire: The Masquerade, we dedicate our passion, work, gratitude, and love;
To our 20-something-year-old selves, who'd be pretty blown away at what we'd eventually end up with in our hands;

and

In loving memory of Stewart Wieck, co-founder of White Wolf and co-creator of the World of Darkness.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONCEPTS 33
A World of Darkness 33
Roleplaying and Storytelling 40
V5 example of play 43

KINDRED SOCIETY 47
Ancient and Contemporary Outlooks 47
Jyhad 48
The Camarilla 49
The Autarkis 56
Endings and Beginnings 56

CLANS 63

BRUJAH 65
Who are the Brujah? 65
Disciplines 67
Bane 67

GANGREL 69
Who are the Gangrel? 70
Disciplines 72
Bane 73

MALKAVIANS 75
Who are the Malkavians? 76
Disciplines 79
Bane 79

NOSFERATU 81
Who are the Nosferatu? 82
Disciplines 84
Bane 85

TOREADOR 87
Who are the Toreador? 88
Disciplines 90
Bane 91

TREMERE 93
Who are the Tremere? 94
Disciplines 97
Bane 97

VENTRUE 99
Who Are the Ventrue? 99
Disciplines 102
Bane 102

THE CAITIFF 105
Who Are the Caitiff? 105
Disciplines 107
Bane 107

THE THIN-BLOODED 109
Who Are the Thin-Blooded? 109
Thin-Blood Characteristics 111
Ways Out 113

RULES 115
Time 115
Simple Tests 117
Contests 123
Conflicts 123
Examples of Rolls 128
Experience and Improvement 130
The Golden Rule 130

CHARACTERS 133
Character Fundamentals 133

CHARACTER CREATION 135
The Role of the Storyteller 135
Character, Coterie, Chronicle 139
The Relationship Map 142
Your Human Life 144
Embrace and After 148
Summary Sheet 152

CORE TRAITS 155
Physical Attributes 155
Social Attributes 155
Mental Attributes 156
Willpower 157
Physical Skills 159
Social Skills 164
Mental Skills 168

BELIEFS 172
Convictions 172
Touchstones 173
Ambition and Desire 173

PREDATOR TYPES 175
Alleycat 175
Bagger 176
Blood Leech 176
Cleaver 176
Consensualist 177
Farmer 177
Osiris 177
Sandman 177
Scene Queen 178
Siren 178

ADVANTAGES **179**
Merits 179
Backgrounds 184

COTERIE CREATION **195**
Domain 195
Coterie Backgrounds 196
Types of Coteries 197

VAMPIRES 201
Truth and Lies 201
Hunger 205
Hunger Dice 205
Compulsions 208
Rousing the Blood 211
Slaking Hunger 211

THE BLOOD **214**
Generation 214
Blood Potency 215
Gifts of the Blood 217
Prices of the Blood 219
Dangers to the Blood 221

YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT **225**
The Blood is the Life 226
Hunting and Humors 228
Resonance and Experience 231

STATES OF DAMNATION **233**
The Blood Bond 233
Diablerie 234

HUMANITY **236**
The Downward Spiral 236
The Humanity Track 239

DISCIPLINES 243
General Rules 244
Animalism 244
Auspex 248
Celerity 252
Dominate 254
Fortitude 258
Obfuscate 260
Potence 263
Presence 266
Protean 269
Blood Sorcery 271
Rituals 274
Thin-Blood Alchemy 282

ADVANCED SYSTEMS 289

SCENES AND MODES **290**
Types of Scenes 290
Modes of Play 291

EXTENDED TESTS **293**
Versions of Extended Tests 293
Special Cases and Extended Tests 294

ADVANCED CONFLICT **295**
Three, Two, Done 295
Additional Conflict Options 296
Movement in Conflicts 298
One-Roll Conflicts 298
Advanced Conflict: Physical Combat 300
Advanced Conflict: Social Combat 304

SYSTEMS OF THE BLOOD **306**
Hunting 306
Kindred Intimacy 310
Compulsion Variants 311
Memoriam 311
Prestation 314

CITIES 317
The Feudal System 319
Atmosphere 328
Your City by Night 331

CHRONICLES 337
Planning a Chronicle 337
Styles of Play 340
Running a Game 354
The Second Inquisition in Chronicles 360
Hunters Hunted 366

TOOLS 369

ANTAGONISTS **370**
Mortals 370
Animals 373
Vampires 374
Creatures of Horror 376

ITEMS **378**
Gear 378
Conventional Weapons 379
Supernatural Equipment 381

LORE SHEETS 382

Index **407**
Appendix I: Standard Feats **409**
Appendix II: Projects **417**
Appendix 3: Advice for Considerate Play **421**

16 February 2018

Dearest Alex -

If you do not wish to hear what I must tell you, I entreat you to burn this letter to ashes for your own safety.

Do forgive that melodramatic touch, which I fancy would have pleased Mr Stoker, but I must convince you of my urgency. Not just in writing this to you but in the matter of our earlier meeting, which you must by now have realized was no mere liaison. The "Willa" you met indeed had ulterior motives, but not the ones you perhaps hoped and imagined that she had.

Instead, they were quite truly motives of life and death - and of their inversion.

I would not have approached you at all, neither as Willa nor as myself, were it not for two facts, inextricably bound up with each other.

First, you were going to die after decades of agony. The doctors would have recognized that your blood was tainted, and then, unable to discern the truth, given your condition whatever name felt right on their tongues at the time. To your mother, they called it "Chédiak-Higashi-like syndrome," while an esteemed specialist in Zurich diagnosed your grandmother with "thalassaemia major," and your great-grandfather Quincey died slowly of "chronic myelogenous leukaemia."

Secondly, the man - the Beast - who corrupted your lineage is gone. I believe he is truly dead at last, hunted down by some digitally aided Godalming or, as I must still hope, dead as natural things die, in sunlit sleep at peace with the Creator. I thought I felt his shadow lift from us when we had first defeated him, and I believed then that his blood had died with him. I came to discover the truth only after I had borne Quincey and unknowingly passed on the corrupted blood to my son.

Indeed, although nightmares and visions had perhaps whispered it to me before, it was by means of a letter uncomfortably like this one that I was confirmed in the truth. He still lived, and as it transpired, his influence over me had not been broken either. In the letter he attempted a confession, wrapped in a threat. He revealed that he had followed the lives of my son and grandchildren "with great interest." I knew then that I could do nothing for them while he maintained such an interest, and in truth that I should do nothing.

That certainty has ebbed as I have watched them all die, poisoned by his blood. Watched their bones and teeth rebel against flesh, watched them shrink from the light of the sun and the consolations of the world beyond. I could not even tell them why; not without endangering them and their loved ones still further. Here, at least, he was better than I. He provided me - at a risk that I have learned was quite grave - with an explanation of my changed nature, and of the world of darkness into which my folly and his rapacity had plunged me.

I burned his letter after reading it. I had an excellent memory for details even when I walked in daylight, and to have kept it would have endangered us all needlessly. But now the circumstances have changed. As I have passed on his blood to you, I feel that I should also pass on the meat of his knowledge, flavoured with mine where my observations differ.

By now you will have suffered the pains of the Embrace and the new agonies of hunger. Assuming you have watched your share of horror films, you must have guessed the essence of what has happened to you. While your guess is correct, your sources are by design and necessity incomplete at best. In fairness to those scriptwriters, however, even our own contain contradictions and perhaps some few deliberate falsifications. As is my duty, for so many reasons, I will try to guide your understanding.

To begin with, we pride ourselves that crosses, garlic, wolfsbane, running water, and other trappings of folklore do not threaten or cow us. But I myself have seen more than one Kindred (as we call ourselves) thrust back by sacred emblems, perhaps due to nothing but remnants of human belief. Likewise, more of us than will admit it can be driven by strain and hunger to behave in patterns reminiscent of folk tales: counting seeds, stopping at water's edge, or avoiding white animals. Of course, the more experienced of us avoid all animals of whatever colour unless our arts or skills grant us the ability to quiet them - they smell death upon us, and snarl or shy after their fashion.

While some things hold only the threat you allow them, others bring very real harm. The familiar wooden stake through the heart, or even sufficient damage from metal weapons and bullets, paralyzes the Kindred, sending us into a deep torpor from which we awaken but slowly - decades later, if our blood is thick and strong. Once staked, beheading and burning kill our kind as surely as they would any mortal. Even without the stake, fire consumes our flesh. The same is true for sunlight, although not in equal measures: Elders suffer the torments of Hell beneath the sun, while some of the newest-fledged of our kind, the so-called thin-bloods, can walk by day fearing no more than the discomfort of a light burn.

Despite the advantages of youth, in Kindred society influence comes with age.

This is more than aristocratic inertia - the blood thins and becomes less potent as our kind pass it down from generation to generation. The first of us, so the legends say, was Caine, cursed for killing his brother and then again for his arrogance in founding a city to rule. He sired three more like him, the second generation, who themselves sired a third generation, and so on, until the Flood destroyed their city and drowned almost

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them all. After this, Caine departed, leaving the Antediluvian survivors behind.

The Antediluvians had connived at the destruction of their sires and peers, cementing their power and preparing themselves for the feast. After the bloodbath, each of them sired a line of their own, a clan ruled by specific vices and virtues, which would spread out down the centuries, the blood growing weaker with each succeeding generation. With time, the Antediluvians went into hiding, not wishing to inspire parricide in their own turn. Eventually, they slipped into legend. Some Kindred circles consider even the idea of their existence myth or heresy.

I myself am partial to the tale of the Dark Mother, the sorceress Lilith, who taught Caine the alchemical arts he imbued in the blood of his childer, according to which she and he planned some great work which his impatience and desertion derailed. But I do not insist upon it. What you need to know is that the sins of the fathers do indeed seem to lessen their grip from one generation to the next, and that this is both a blessing and a curse. Our elders must not only fear the sun, they are also forced to consume more blood to remain active and cannot gain nourishment from animal blood even in extremis. Like all elders, alive or undead, they grow set in their ways, refusing to adapt. They slowly forget their mortal lives and even stretches of their immortal existence, save for grudges and slights. Even Kindred as young as myself find that memories fade without intentional submersion in them. And as memories dim, so do other human qualities; not just mercy and love but also proportion and understanding. As they lose touch, they become increasingly subject to the ravening of the Beast.

The Beast and the Hunger will be your ever-present companions.

If you dismiss the Beast as merely a convenient excuse for our transgressions, some sort of subconscious projection or whatever the current alienist variation posits, I for one shall not be offended. No, I shall be delighted that you have yet to feel its hot breath on your soul. The first time you betray a mortal promise for a monstrous desire will be soon enough to judge for yourself the reality of the Beast.

Every Kindred remembers when the Beast first held them in its grip. We all fear the night when nothing will loosen its talons, when we will no longer be able to return to ourselves. The knowledge that one shall lose control, that one must fail, it gnaws at your mind like a rat at a ship's cable, making a mockery of eternal existence. Some attempt to silence the gnawing with obsessions: art, gambling, elegant clothes, the endless politics. Others seek shelter in delusion, denying their bestial acts or explaining them away with the pretence of intentionality. They draw borders around their madness: they only kill the unworthy, the deserving, or to protect the truly good. Such casuistry may soothe the guilt, but it does not distract the Beast for long.

To keep the Beast at bay, our curse forces us to sate our hunger by feeding on blood. Thus, we must act as beasts lest we become them. Our hunger combines every pang of mortal starvation and thirst with the constant goad of achievement and the child's hopeless terror for safety. It is lust, motivation, a narcotic deeper than morphia, a needle sharper than cocaine. I fall into purple prose, but in truth the hunger throws this operatic limelight onto our sensations, and we gasp to keep up. It drives, maddens, and distracts and only fully departs when we drain the blood entirely from a human being. And still it returns the next night and the next, forever.

The blood we drink does more than slake our Hunger,

although if it did only that it would be enough. It also elevates our passions and, in some cases, our capacities. We drink from a melancholiac and feel our appetite for love fading, but perhaps improve our own ability to fade from view.

Each of the Antediluvians granted the successors of their line specific gifts: invisibility for the Nosferatu, mesmerism for the Ventrue, and so on. My blood also grants such traits, as well as others that may be specific to my own initiator - the seemingly inviolate boundaries around our rituals and beliefs, and indeed our physiologies, turn to mist and fog when pressed, much like my sire would in extremis.

We find ourselves connected by the blood, first among all to our sire whose Embrace ushered us into unlife. As you have now felt, the change itself is not the simple sip of romance, but an agonizing passage through death. She who wishes to turn her companion, must first drain them to a husk, drinking deeply of their blood. She then drips or smears her own vitae, her vampiric ichor, on the lips of the newly dead one. And, if all goes well, the corpse will suck her blood in turn from wrist or throat or breast, and become reborn as her childe.

If a living person consumes vitae - as I did, not knowing my actions - they are still changed by it. They age too slowly and can do more than they should, but they become slaves to their master's will. In rare cases there are other consequences, as members of my line are all too aware of. The sins of the mother forever visited upon her children.

A similar effect follows the Kindred who feeds on another's blood; the taste of vitae conveys a bliss incomparable to any other. They say it only takes three tastes from the same source to lock the drinker into the blood bond, making her subject to her donor as any childe to its sire. The effect is not absolute - some may feed on their childer without incurring it, and the Antediluvians could feed on lesser Kindred freely, at least in stories. There are also cases when certain rites or turns of fate weaken it enough that the bound may act to in turn ensnare their would-be masters. And then, there always exists the possibility of diablerie.

For if a Kindred drains another fully, they are only fortified by the act, not bound. Quite obviously every prince or Anarch baron condemns such fratricidal consumption utterly, naming it diablerie (they appear insensible to the irony of attempting to frighten the damned with the Devil). To survive even one such act requires more than the defeat of a predecessor. It requires concealment from every branch of our society, even those notionally at war with each other in their own constant and all-but cannibalistic Jyhad.

Kindred dignify their ceaseless and ambitious games of betrayal, conspiracy, and vendetta with the name of Jyhad, some claiming that the curse of Caine forces them into envy and malice. But whether divine or natural law creates such behaviour, the Kindred eagerly embrace it. Predators maddened by hunger and driven by the Beast make unlikely stewards for a perfect garden of peace.

The Camarilla, a worldwide conspiracy of Kindred dating back to the Renaissance, exists to contain this tendency, or at least to focus it outwards toward the unconforming of our kind. The order itself claims that it exists to enforce the

Masquerade, the truly necessary pattern of concealment required by the simple fact of what we are: frightening and outnumbered.

The vital importance of the Masquerade, of course, does not justify every tyrannical act carried out in its name. Camarilla elders and princes demand total control over their territories, determining who has the right to Embrace and commanding true death onto the disobedient as they will. Naturally, not everyone finds themselves agreeing with their methods. Those who oppose are generally known as Anarchs, although there are as many variations within their ranks as within any human revolution. Some seek to establish their own petty dictatorships, others wish simply to be left alone to hunt, study, or go mad. Regardless, the Camarilla considers all of them enemies, no better than the Sabbat, a sect of vampires fallen somehow into even deeper perversion, about which I thankfully know very little. At a mere century, I think, of unlife, I am not old enough to hear the Beckoning that calls elders into the Levant and points east to take up arms in the Gehenna War against the Sabbat. Some say this war heralds the true apocalypse of our kind. Others that the end of our age has already come and gone, leaving the world changed behind it with still more changes coming.

The need to hunt for mythical catastrophes seems questionable now, as all over the world mortal governments have begun to make us the hunted. It is a bitter thing, after all this time, to find myself in this position. The Masquerade, weakened by tyranny and pierced by rebellion, has parted in enough places to bring about a Second Inquisition. The Vatican, the Americans, and the British - a coalition much like the crew of light I once worked alongside, but vastly better armed - send soldiers to burn out our havens, and set their computerized police searching for our traces in banking, politics, and everywhere else records might exist. No doubt, other nations will soon follow suit if they haven't already.

...e that he had spared my life, my mortal life. The ...

All of this should reinforce my warnings about secrecy on your part.

I have tried to give you enough information to survive your first nights without tempting you into unwise involvement in the games of your elders. Whether the stakes of the Inquisition or the smiles of the Camarilla are truly the most dangerous is irrelevant - safety lies nowhere between the hunter and the wolves. And so, you have a choice to make.

Will you join the Camarilla, that refined regime that operates like a secret society in the shadows of mortal power? Or will you add your strength to the Anarch movement that opposes it and dreams of freedom? There are many other sects and factions among the dead, but none of them ascribe to ideals I would wish for you. You may have awoken with monstrous needs, but I know you treasure your humanity, just as I do. For this reason, I advise you to consider your options carefully. Most sires would make the choice for you, but I have seen too much of slavery and cannot enforce it upon you.

A Final Request:

As we find ourselves at the end, you may have guessed the truth about our relationship. For one who claims to value explanations and honesty, I have certainly taken a circuitous route to it. I am not only she who Embraced you, but also your great-great-grandmother. If you have deduced this much, perhaps you have deduced the rest, guided by family stories unwisely repeated at night by the fireplace. We - your great-great-grandfather and myself, your great-grandfather's namesake, and other brave souls - hunted one of the Kindred, and yes, distorted versions of our hunt appeared first in the pages of a novel, and then on the screens of cinemas.

We thought we had killed him then. In his letter, he claimed to believe that he had spared my life, my mortal life. The revelation of his return, which would years before have

frightened me, now gave me hope that he would be able to help you where I had not. I had perhaps expected him to take my life in return, and I felt ready for my rest. But as it was, that was not the prize he chose.

After my Embrace, the Beast, which had been waiting since I first evaded it, finally had its fill. For many years hence, it would not let me go, and I am glad that you were not there to witness my actions.

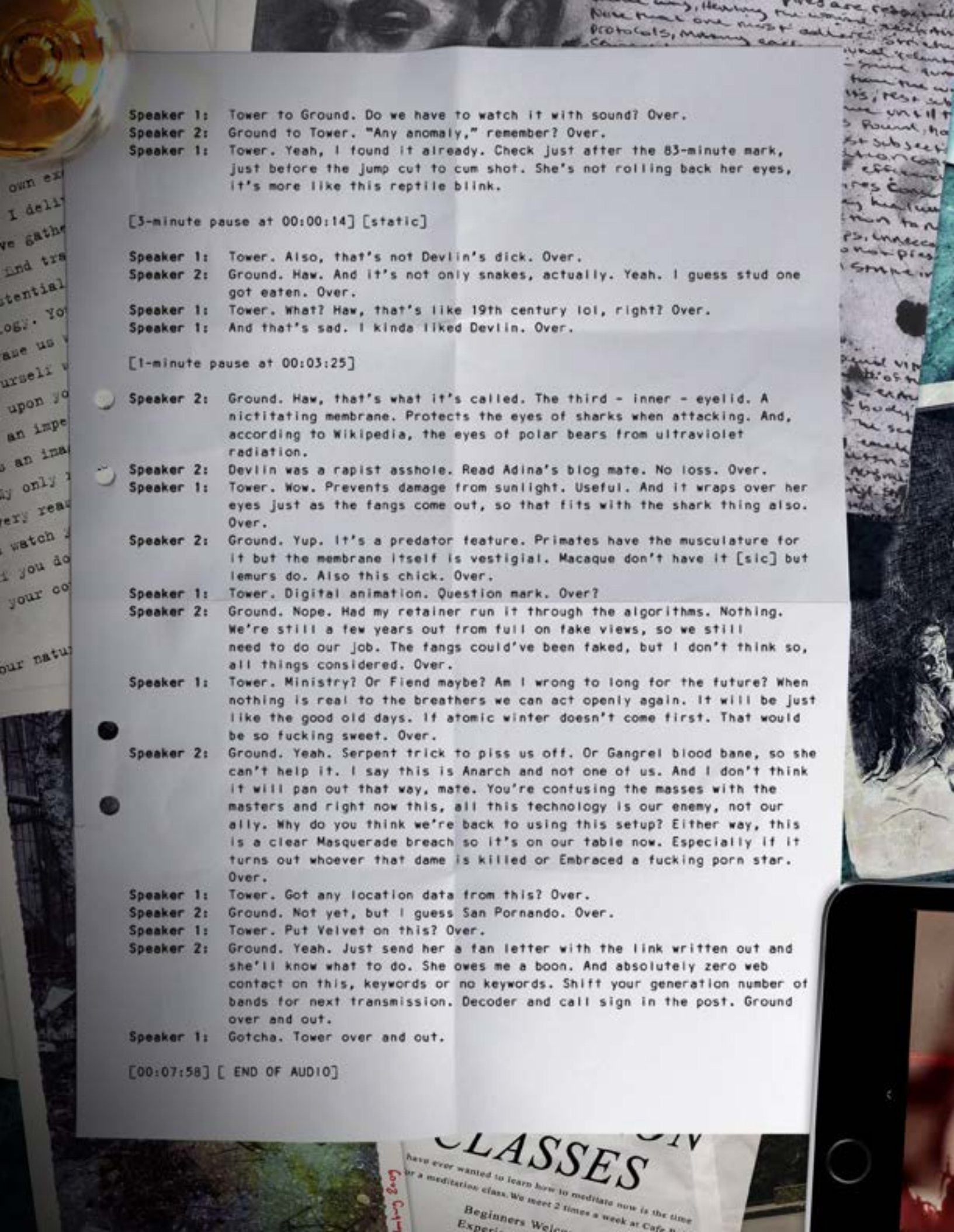
Therefore, I shall also avoid witnessing your own exertions as you discover your new true nature. In my stead, I deliver to you the dossier of testaments and fragments I have gathered over the years from a multitude of sources. You will find transcripts laying bare our histories and methods, and existential conundrums alongside accounts of our physiology and ideology. You will even find accounts compiled by those who seek to erase us with fire and faith. Study them well and decide for yourself what to do with the gift - or burden - I have inflicted upon you. You will not see Willa again, but nor will you have an imperious sire ordering you into danger or playing you as an imagined trump card in some nonsensical Kindred whist game. My only request is that you do me the same courtesy. You have every reason to despise me for choosing to damn you rather than watch you die as I have three generations of our family. But if you do, I ask for your condemnation to take the same form as your courtesy; as distance and disappearance from my unlife.

We must seek to be as free as our natures allow us. And for that reason, I can no longer remain,

Yours,

Wilhelmina Harker

W. Harker



Speaker 1: Tower to Ground. Do we have to watch it with sound? Over.
Speaker 2: Ground to Tower. "Any anomaly," remember? Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Yeah, I found it already. Check just after the 83-minute mark, just before the jump cut to cum shot. She's not rolling back her eyes, it's more like this reptile blink.

[3-minute pause at 00:00:14] [static]

Speaker 1: Tower. Also, that's not Devlin's dick. Over.
Speaker 2: Ground. Haw. And it's not only snakes, actually. Yeah. I guess stud one got eaten. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. What? Haw, that's like 19th century lol, right? Over.
Speaker 1: And that's sad. I kinda liked Devlin. Over.

[1-minute pause at 00:03:25]

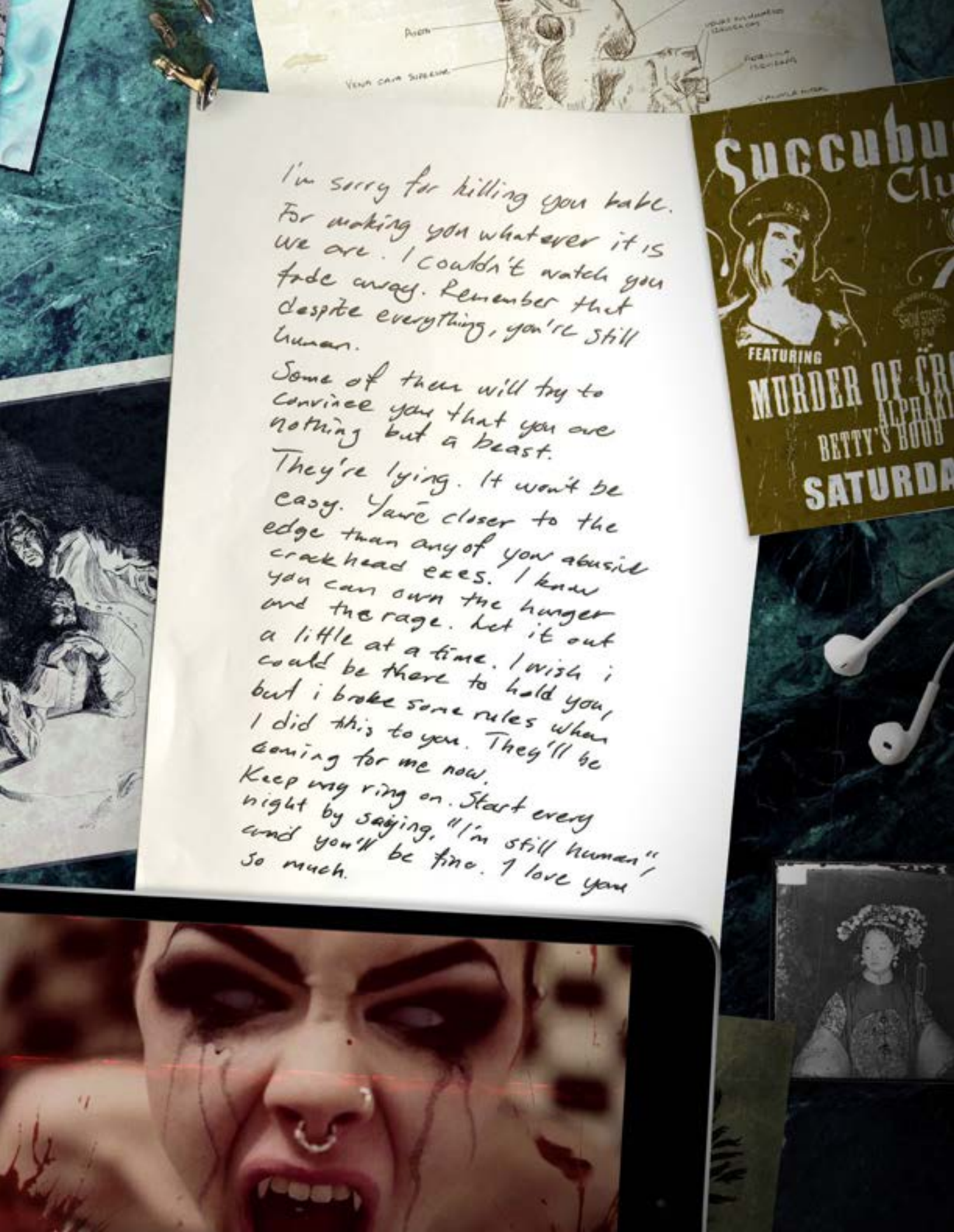
Speaker 2: Ground. Haw, that's what it's called. The third - inner - eyelid. A nictitating membrane. Protects the eyes of sharks when attacking. And, according to Wikipedia, the eyes of polar bears from ultraviolet radiation.
Speaker 2: Devlin was a rapist asshole. Read Adina's blog mate. No loss. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Wow. Prevents damage from sunlight. Useful. And it wraps over her eyes just as the fangs come out, so that fits with the shark thing also. Over.
Speaker 2: Ground. Yup. It's a predator feature. Primates have the musculature for it but the membrane itself is vestigial. Macaque don't have it [sic] but lemurs do. Also this chick. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Digital animation. Question mark. Over?
Speaker 2: Ground. Nope. Had my retainer run it through the algorithms. Nothing. We're still a few years out from full on fake views, so we still need to do our job. The fangs could've been faked, but I don't think so, all things considered. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Ministry? Or Fiend maybe? Am I wrong to long for the future? When nothing is real to the breathers we can act openly again. It will be just like the good old days. If atomic winter doesn't come first. That would be so fucking sweet. Over.
Speaker 2: Ground. Yeah. Serpent trick to piss us off. Or Gangrel blood bane, so she can't help it. I say this is Anarch and not one of us. And I don't think it will pan out that way, mate. You're confusing the masses with the masters and right now this, all this technology is our enemy, not our ally. Why do you think we're back to using this setup? Either way, this is a clear Masquerade breach so it's on our table now. Especially if it turns out whoever that dame is killed or Embraced a fucking porn star. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Got any location data from this? Over.
Speaker 2: Ground. Not yet, but I guess San Pornando. Over.
Speaker 1: Tower. Put Velvet on this? Over.
Speaker 2: Ground. Yeah. Just send her a fan letter with the link written out and she'll know what to do. She owes me a boon. And absolutely zero web contact on this, keywords or no keywords. Shift your generation number of bands for next transmission. Decoder and call sign in the post. Ground over and out.
Speaker 1: Gotcha. Tower over and out.

[00:07:58] [END OF AUDIO]

I'm sorry for killing you babe. For making you whatever it is we are. I couldn't watch you fade away. Remember that despite everything, you're still human.

Some of them will try to convince you that you are nothing but a beast. They're lying. It won't be easy. You're closer to the edge than any of your absurd crackhead exes. I know you can own the hunger and the rage. Let it out a little at a time. I wish i could be there to hold you, but i broke some rules when I did this to you. They'll be coming for me now.

Keep my ring on. Start every night by saying, "I'm still human" and you'll be fine. I love you so much.



CATHOLIC THEOLOGIAN Robert J. Fox wrote: "Hell is a place or state of eternal punishment inhabited by those rejected by God because such souls have rejected God's saving grace." It is my fervent belief that said state refers to the condition of us blood drinkers. Whether we choose the euphemism Kindred (meaning "those related by blood, the family of damnation") or the name of Cainites (meaning "children of the first murderer"), to describe ourselves, we consciously reject salvation on a nightly basis to benefit ourselves. This removes us from God, and our punishment is hunger. We are in Hell, and what does that make us? Devils.

AS DESCRIBED IN the Bible, there is a place in God's plan for devils. Their function is to tempt those who have faith away from it. But faith in what in this time and age of the disbelief? When Pope Francis made his controversial statement about the non-existence of Hell in an Easter interview with the Italian La Repubblica editor Eugenio Scalfari, I am certain he did so in relation to his recent awareness of us. Only this year, violent encounters with the Vatican's secret service, the Entity, indicate full disclosure of our existence in the upper echelons of the Holy See. In essence, it is a veiled threat when he states that "those who do not repent, and therefore cannot be forgiven, disappear." And when he says, "Hell does not exist," he is talking about his vision of a world without us. Do not be fooled by his unthreatening progressive image. His armed forces are waging a genocidal war against our kind at this very moment. A Second Inquisition that has already killed thousands of our side. Hence, the Sabbat are not that far off when they claim the end is nigh. As a Christian, should I not welcome it? It may be. But if so, I welcome it in the manner of the martyr or, dare I say it, Christ himself. For the saving grace that Rome offers and defines as the opposite of our Cainite hell is like the pardon offered by Pilate – a worldly grace, not a spiritual one. We tempt humanity to embrace perspectives far greater than the slave morality of Catholicism and all their beliefs. Consider this: The miracle on which Peter built his church was not sanctioned by the religious authority of the day. No, it was an act of spiritual rebellion flying in the face of Torah scholars and Roman authority. And it was a miracle fuelled by divine blood. The fluid that dripped from the cross made Longinus immortal, just like Caine. Christ rose from the tomb three nights after death. "I am the resurrection and the life." Before the Council of Nicaea, the humanity of Christ was an open question. Am I telling you he was one of us? No, I am telling you Rome is the seat of all lies, and that their salvation is a worldly prison. Our hell is liberation. From time. From matter. From sin. Caine gave the gifts of agriculture and of civilization; Abel the gifts of a goatherd, of tribal, nomadic indifference. And JHVH favoured the barbarians. Just like he withheld enlightenment from Eve and turned cities into dust when they displeased him with what he termed sodomy. What god is this? This cannot be the creator of the universe, behaving more like a spoiled child or someone running for office in the White House. I believe that Caine did not kill his brother to appease JHVH but to spit in his face. He was the first in a lineage of rebellious connection to the truly divine. So yes, our hell is rejection of god and his saving grace in favour of Caine and Christ and THEIR saving grace, as administered through the holy blood of our congregation.

BOW YOUR HEADS KINDRED, CAINITES,
ANGELS WEARING FACES OF MEN AND DEVILS,
AND PRAY WITH ME:
HOLY CAINE, WHO WANDERS NOD, SANGUINE
BE THY NAME _

You wanted me to write something about my new drinking habit and what it's done to my body. Short version: I'm dead. I'm a fucking creature of the night. It's chronic, it's freaky, and I like it.

There's no scientific explanation for what I am, but if what the old guard tells me is true, and the condition is a divine curse or gift, then God is surely visible in his creation, and this infectior **detectable** under a microscope. Right? Wrong. If a coroner were to examine my body in a morgue after dawn, she would find nothing but a corpse with more or less blood left in it. If starved, I would appear **drained**, or perhaps severely dehydrated. If full from feeding, I would look like any recently deceased body. No test in the world would reveal that I would rise again at sunset. There's be no weird blood-cells, no elongated or even sharp canines, no hyper-dense bone structure or subdermal mutations. Just a dead person. It's a useful trick and it doesn't even cost me anything. Even at night, when I'm active, I can choose not to will blood to my organs, and boom, I play dead better than any possum.

But everything else I do these nights depends on me using stolen vital fluids to make my corpse move and speak. To wake up in the evening costs juice. To make air flow past my vocal cords in order for me to speak or breathe or smoke my Newports burns quite a bit of it. To make my heart beat regularly (useful if I need to feel warm or rouse the parts I need to get down and dirty) uses even more. To look and feel fully human I'm required to turn precious **milliliters** of my vitae (the stolen blood sitting inside our necro-alchemical bodies) into lymphatic fluids, saliva, lubrication, tears, and sweat. I can't really enjoy eating, everything tastes like ash, but I can keep rare meat, a handful of veggies, and some red wine down long enough to get through a dinner date. But like my first girlfriend I need to hit the bathroom within an hour and get it up. Blood vomiting is costly, so eating human food makes me more hungry, not less.

And those are just the more mundane uses. Vitae can do some seriously cool shit once you learn to push it to the right places. If I need a lot of blood to power my limbs, say to climb up the side of a building with no ladder, I picture my heart pumping and I visualize blood rushing to biceps and gracilis. And then it happens. The blood supercharges the muscles it permeates and enhances the operation of any organ it temporarily reanimates. I fill my eyeballs to see in the dark, my inner ears to hear your digestion, my cerebellum to balance on one foot on top of a lamp post, and the neostriatum to recall how to play the accordion even though my last lesson was in spring 1954. If I put a hand to my chest while I do it, I imagine I can feel a single, gunshot-like heartbeat as the vitae pushes out at close to **supersonic** speed. If I will the blood to an open wound, a severed tendon, or even a broken bone the damage instantly starts to heal. All this is intuitive and requires no knowledge of anatomy. It's worked for tens of thousands of years and not every vampire was a medical student like me. Then there's fire and sunlight. And the fangs and claws of others like us. Blood, lots of it, can heal those aggravated injuries too, but it's just as slow and painful as it would be if I were still alive. I feel pain as acutely as you do. Sure, when you emptied your nine in me it hurt like hell, but it was really no more than an inconvenience. I don't bleed out unless I really want to pretend to be human. The only things

I know can stop me is a lack of blood, the sun, fire, or my own cleanly severed or blown up head. That, or my own Hunger.

I hunt every night and still need more. I wish I had been made in **revolutionary** Paris or something, like my sire. He didn't have to worry about forensics, camera devices, social media witch-hunts, or abnormal murder statistics. Blood is precious these nights and none of our stolen powers and tricks are free, you know. I can rip through a car door or make Taylor Swift take me home, but on occasions when I use more than I can get down my throat, I'm nothing but a starved blood junkie.

In the beginning of last year, it all got too much. They were onto me. I refused to suck neck and stayed in. Went for dogs and bags of shitty microwave heated plasma. Veganism didn't go great for me. Janice could tell you all about that if she were still alive. I learned the hard way that restraint is useless.

I take the hunt seriously, try to feed regularly and avoid killing. Doing shallow vein sipping while dreaming of artery tripping. I hear some of us manage for decades like this. Centuries even. So, I've made up my mind. I'll never starve. I'll never kill. I'm not virtuous (none of us are), but I can at least try my best, right? That means I take no more than three deciliters from each victim (that's about three mouthfuls) and never feed from the same source more than once a month, allowing them to replenish fully without the risk of anemia.

We call it the Kiss and it's like we're created, or evolved, to make non-lethal feeding possible. When we will them to, our upper canines (in some bloodlines cuspids or centrals as well as the lower canines) extend almost instantaneously. We go fangs out only when we want to bond with other haemovores or when feeding. Everything else is crazy risky. The Kiss makes our prey go limp with pleasure, usually in seconds flat after we bite down.

Our blood-borne saliva prevents **coagulation** and the force of suction we can muster with some training is quite impressive. Even when feeding from a vein with negative systolic pressure I can empty all 5-6 liters of blood in a human body in under five minutes, even faster if we go for something like the femoral artery. I'm never full. Never satisfied. Only a human life, no matter age or health, is the only thing that satisfies my hunger completely. I hear that the older you get, the more you need. For now, it works. Barely. And how do I avoid discovery? That's where the narco-erotic nature of the Kiss comes in handy.

A vessel's memories are foggy at best, and if circumstances allow they will rationalize what happened as weird sex, drugs, shock, or a panic attack of some kind. What about tissue damage? Them bite wounds should be pretty traceable? Yeah, they are, which is probably why evolution has gifted our saliva with an alchemical interaction with the Kiss that knits tissue and dermal damage together and leaves no detectable scarring at all (modern medicine is kinda missing out on a lot here). Coroners are usually **nonplussed** when they find a drained corpse, blaming heart attack or acute anemia. When I've killed I've always made sure there's been plenty of other damage to throw the suspicious off track. I carry a gun belonging to an asshole pimp. Not very subtle, but as the saying goes "if you're technical go crude, if you're crude go technical."

I'm a very technical girl. I prefer not to take any risks and feed from sleeping victims. Put them to sleep if I have to. The slang for my preferred method of predation is "the Sandman." I've known violent assholes who take what they need in surprise assaults or through intimidation. Sirens who only drink from willing sex-partners, and **consensualists**, who insist their prey be willing and aware, risking our existence in parasitic hiding to keep their conscience clean. Idiots. I think my way is the most ethical, and I've taken the Hippocratic Oath. I do run the risk of discovery, just like everyone else, and my prey sometimes have wet dreams or nightmares, but at least I'm not forcing the full experience on anyone. Those who do feed from awake victims usually have means of framing the experience as harmless to their prey or can even make them forget it outright.

You know how they say blind people hear better? It's not necessarily true, but I guess it's kinda comparable to this condition. It's like, once it's been infected, our blood shows a tendency towards certain endowments or skills. We can enhance them through practice and diet, and like the hunger they grow with time. My rebel blood seems to make me stronger, faster, and more interesting, especially when I concentrate on it, like I explained to you. But that's not all there is to it. It carries a special curse too, different for each lineage. Mine is really bad anger management. I don't get offended or passive agressive. My "blindness" is rip-your-heart-out rage.

Drowning the hunger in blood feels great. It shouldn't but it does. I know you really well, so let me use some comparisons I think you will grok on an emotional level. Just don't think it's the same thing, ok? First off, there's this sense of relief. You were dead and now you feel alive for a few minutes. Warm, sweaty, fleshy, sated, successful. In biochemical terms our dopamine levels are through the roof when feeding, even if we don't really have those substances floating around our brains anymore, being corpses and all. Beyond that basic gratification, the truth is that no blood works exactly the same way. Every person is like a new kink, a new high, and they all kick differently.

Speaking broadly, I've noticed fear tastes bitter and feels a bit like the first three glasses of bubbly on a hot summer day, the rush of a virgin line of cocaine or speed. Like **beating** the crap out of a boy who really likes it that way, as I'm sure you can relate to ;) Pure reward and power. I love the taste of fear. It makes me fast as fuck and strong as a horse. So yeah. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I go for those in the throes of **nightmares** if I can. That's why I sometimes stalk women's shelters and prisons like some weirdo. Damaged goods just taste great. I still pose as a nurse or drug-aversion therapist, that's how I get access. Horny tastes sweet and cranks my charm up to eleven. If I bite, wait for a hot dream to hit and then feed from a sleeper, I swear it feels better than fucking on Molly. It's been so much stronger those few times I've sucked from fuckboys during the act. I can't come since I'm kinda... dead, but when I drink and pretend-screw I get this orgasm-like high that lasts for minutes and the afterglow goes for hours.

Everyone's your best friend, and you are a star. It's hard keeping from moaning and shit, so I usually refrain from the lusty stuff unless I control my environment really well. But the weirdest part is that when I feed from those in deep REM sleep, especially those on medication (I do this almost every night) I awaken some kind of heightened senses in myself. I'm not supposed to be able to do that. It's not a part of Troile's bloodline to have that power, but I guess I do it so much the oneiromantic kick has somehow changed me.

It's not for my lack of trying, but both the blood we are infected with and the blood that we feed off can sometimes give us skills that just can't be explained. I've seen things you'd never believe. Men turning into snakes. Tattoos that bleed weapons of frozen blood. I have a friend who got caught dead to rights with his ex-girlfriend bleeding out in his arms as the SWATs burst in, his tan Brunello Cucinelli a wet crimson spectacle. He shouted at them to "just get the fuck out!" And you know what? They did. Out the window. From the 23rd floor. If this makes you feel excited about my offer, think again. It should make you feel terrified.

Or maybe not. You know how much I like the taste of fear.

CLASSIFICATION: TOP SECRET//FIRSTLIGHT//REL TO FVEY, RUS, VAT, FRA, BRA

FROM: CPT Anthony Gaviria, ESOG 10 Liaison EUCOM

TO: FIRSTLIGHT General Distribution

SUBJECT: BLANKBODY TYPE EPSILON FOLKLORE DIFFERENTIAL SUMMARY

Claim	Statistical significance α=5%	Comments
1. Direct sunlight harmful	Y	CONFIRMED in all tested specimens. Rate variable but always fatal. Tissue damage analogous to IV degree burns. On destruction subjects decompose into ash analogous to a cremated corpse.
2. Indirect sunlight harmful	Y	CONFIRMED in vast majority of tested specimens. Highly variable rate. Tissue damage analogous to III degree burns. Fatal over time. Investigate cause of anomalous resistance. On destruction subjects decompose into ash analogous to a cremated corpse.
3. UV harmful	Y	CONFIRMED. Limited soft tissue damage with prolonged exposure. Specimen 14 also shows coronal damage.
4. Nocturnal	Y	CONFIRMED. Activity typically ceases within one hour of sunrise and resumes in the same interval before sundown.
5. Longevity	Y	"Lifespans" of millennia confirmed with 98% certainty through the carbon-14 method. Individual periods of existence are highly variable. Potential is believed to be infinite or limited only by geological factors. Reference to "Antediluvian" Blankbodies indicate the oldest of their kind may be 10k years of age or more.
6. Hawthorn stake through heart fatal	Y	Staked specimen ceases motor functions instantly and dissection confirms them to be dead even after extraction of weapon. No decomposition of corpse after this method of destruction. Theorized but not confirmed that destruction of the heart has similar results. Composition of wood not relevant: ash, oak, cherry also effective. Fiberboard, polyfill, fiberglass ineffective.
7. Severed limbs re-attach or grow back	Y	CONFIRMED. Limbs remain inert when severed but reknit and resume function if subject has access to nourishment if reintroduced before the rapid decomposition. Decomposed limbs grow back over months if specimen is nourished, first as vestigial necrotic tissue and later as tumors subject to multiple stages of exuviation. Exuviated tissue decomposes into ash.
8. Immune to poison, disease and toxins when directly injected	Y	CONFIRMED. Blankbodies are immune to all toxins unless introduced through preferred nourishment from living source. Toxins or intoxicants introduced into nourishment exogenously are inert NOTE: possibly. AIDS and other sexually transmitted or blood-borne diseases can be spread by haemovores feeding off sexually deviant individuals, and thereby help establish tracking vectors. (Routed Trial eight report to CDC FIRSTLIGHT contact)
9. Affected by toxins in victim's blood stream	Y	CONFIRMED. Exceptionally sensitive to intoxicants in the bloodstream of victims. Experiences equivalent levels of intoxication as victim even if only a small amount of blood is extracted and ingested. Fatal poisoning of source followed by feeding results in systemic shock but not fatality.
10. Repulsed by exorcism and sacramentals	N	As observed in Codex C364 (Navarre, Credite Nemini) and Codex V876 (Institoris, Malleus Maleficarum, 1487) Type Epsilon Blankbodies (referred to as Sombra, Brujheros, and Cainites in sources, respectively) have been successfully immobilized by recitation of canonical texts as well as repelled by the display of sacramental relics. This is confirmed by field observation but has not been reliably reproduced in a controlled environment. NOTE: AAR and OPRES confirms ESOG 10 exhibits higher rate of success (+34%) in exorcising Blankbodies after merger with the recanonized Society of St. Leopold.
11. Repulsed by garlic, cannot cross running water, must be invited to enter the home of a victim, does not appear in mirrors.	N	NOT CONFIRMED. It can be concluded, that while some weaknesses and abilities of Blankbodies are analogous to historical and fictional material on vampires, the vrykolakas, strigoi, and other blood drinkers, most are not.
12. Have the strength of ten men, turn into wolves or bats, can transform into mist, etc.	Y	CONFIRMED. Blankbodies exhibit a wide range of extranormal properties that seem to derive from age, severity of the infection, and mental disposition. See Appendix 16 for full report on anomalies thus far encountered or extrapolated from earlier Inquisition accounts (1198-1594).
13. Condition is infectious	N	INCONCLUSIVE. It has not been possible to reproduce the process of infection in a controlled environment, but it is confirmed that bites or scratches do not transmit the condition on their own. NOTE: Transmission is referred to as "the Embrace" by interrogated subjects, who invariably claim to have died and come back from the dead as a part of the process. Further testing is strongly advised.

THINBLOODS? ELDERS? GOOD TO SEE THEY STILL HAVE SOME THINGS WRONG.

MANY ERRORS. UV DOES ABSOLUTELY NOTHING. HUNTING AT RAMADAN WOULD BE REALLY HARD OTHERWISE.

WRONG. I CAN WAKE UP FOR THE CALL TO DINNER EVERY DAY IF I'M WELL FED AND SET AN ALARM FOR NOON. IT GETS HARD AT RAMADAN, YES BUT I CAN STILL MAKE IT. AND I HEAR THINBLOODS CAN STAY UP ALL DAY AND NIGHT ON STRONG BLOOD IF THEY STAY OUT OF THE SUN. THIS GIVES US A MAJOR ADVANTAGE

PURE GUILE! NO KINDRED MEETS FINAL DEATH WITH JUST A STAKE THROUGH THEIR HEART. THAT ONLY HAPPENS WHEN THE HEAD COMES OFF, OR FIRE OR SUNLIGHT BURNS US TO DUST. I SUPPOSE THEIR TEST SUBJECTS WERE WISE ENOUGH TO RISK IT RATHER THAN REVEAL OUR SECRETS, THE PROPHET BLESS THEIR GENEROUS YET BEATING HEARTS.

DEVIANTS? REALLY? AND I THOUGHT MY GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON WAS A RIGHT.

SO THEY TAPED THAT AT US? AND THEY CALL US MONSTERS!

Slide 17: The next part of my presentation concerns theories of origin. Sources from our collection, like The Erciyes Fragments and The Book of Nod, claim the sanguine condition did not assert itself until Lilith, Adam's apocryphal first wife and the mother of monsters, comforted Caine and taught him to use his curse as a gift. Whether she or he was the original progenitor, most (?) sources agree that it was from his Blood that the second generation of Kindred, or Cainites, were created. As the legends will have it, these creatures in turn sired a third generation, the semidivine Antediluvians.

While representations of the events that followed differ vastly from one text to another, one narrative seems prevalent: that the 13 grandchildren of Caine turned on their parents, destroying the second generation and forcing Caine to flee the ancient city of "Enoch". That city is now thought to have been located somewhere in the fertile crescent of Asia Minor, notably in a region that is to this day a hotbed of both human and inhuman unrest.

The Antediluvians were supposedly godlike in power, but all too human in their weakness. Driven by a hunger deeper than life, they established royal dynasties, nurturing their bloodlines and feeding on their immortal children and human worshippers without distinction. Honing their endless appetites, each of the founders became reflected in the vices of their lineages, later known as the great clans.

The thirteen great clans all have their own stories about their origins. They will idolize, adore, dismiss, or despise their founders in turn, but ultimately, these actions only reflect their feelings about themselves. Each of the Antediluvians embodied a destructive human trait, against which the Kindred of that bloodline struggle. While it is true that the vitae of Caine is watered down with mortal blood and each new generation is weaker than the last, these traits remain – a reminder that the Antediluvians still watch over their debased progenies like sleeping gods.

GÖBEKLI TEPE. THIS 12,000 YEARS OLD UNDERGROUND TEMPLE WAS BUILT LONG BEFORE WRITTEN LANGUAGE WAS DEVELOPED, AND OVER MANY GENERATIONS USING STONE TOOLS AND SLAVES. TO MAKE IT EVEN MORE FASCINATING, IT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN BURNT AND DESTROYED SOON AFTER COMPLETION. COMPARATIVELY, IT IS THE MOST LIKELY LOCATION OF THE CITY OF ENOCH, WHICH WAS RULED BY THE DARK GODS OF THE THIRD GENERATION OR EVEN CAINE HIMSELF.

BECKETT, ALEPPO, 5 MARCH 2015

The clans are the true forces behind the old values and ancient power structures that keep humanity from realizing its full potential. The obsession with beauty, money, status, power, religion, and gender. All these things are in you, but the clans make damn sure the world is dominated by them. They need you to preserve the status quo, the terrible state of the world that makes you their victims.

They are literally the undying forces behind the greedy global banking system and the anorectic fashion industry. Their ancient prejudices are the reason you don't rise above the bad old ways of classism and racism. They are the parasites that control you, and they are everywhere.

RACHEL DOLIUM
Galway, 19 September 2010

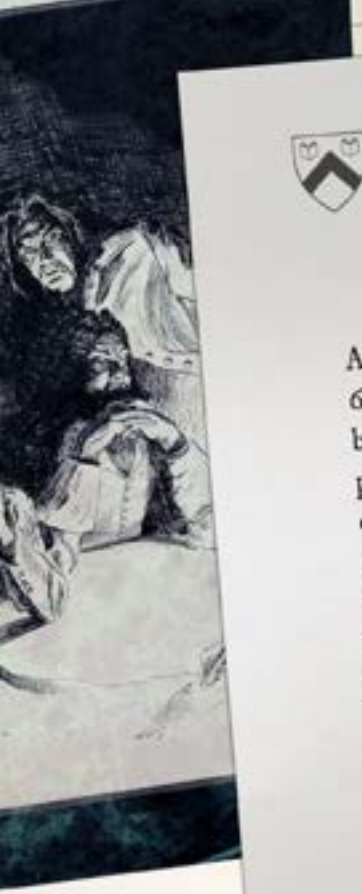
68

What would the humans be without us? Nothing. Without our ambition to drive them on they would still be beating each other over the head with rocks and sharp sticks.

They owe us everything. Without us no kings or empires, no gods, no masters, and no ideals of beauty. No ideology, no truth, just savagery and rutting lust. The inquisitors call us parasites, but they are the ones that destabilize the very order that allows them to exist.

Oh well, we have plenty of time and they have almost none left. Give it a century, and their wasteful industry and infinite capacity for self-destruction will bring a new dark age for us to lord over.

Hardestadt, Brussels, 23 February 2011



Beckett, G, 2009,
De Laurent Press

Almost all the 13 clans originate in Africa, China, or Asia Minor around the time of the first urban civilizations (10.000-6000 BC). One or two claim they are older than the human race but we all know that's self-aggrandizing nonsense. We are cultured parasites who have followed human migrations and the foundation of empires from the Yucatan to the Indus to the Yellow River. Some clans have entered a kind of symbiotic relationship with certain human cultures, or grown prosperous in specific geographic areas. Others have taken to only embracing members of a specific caste or social class. While no clan is bound to any one ethnicity, all blood-lines have, due to their preferences and cultural connections, different degrees of influence in different parts of the world.

Sometimes, in the rare case it's actually functioned as an active political entity, a clan has limited itself to influencing a certain geographical area - like the Ventrue and their traditional obsessive focus on controlling Western European civilization from Germania and Britannia. In Africa and Asia the Ventrue are still seen as dangerous outsiders - a permanent reminder of the traumatic results of Western imperialism. This is also the reason that, while many younger Ventrue in Africa are embraced from local stock, their clan is seen as inherently colonialist, no matter the colour of their skin. On the flip side of the coin we find the Sub-Saharan Guruhi, the dominant African clan, who share their ancestry with the Eurasian Nosferatu. The Horrors who migrated to Europe

changed their feeding and embracing habits gradually, and over the last ten millennia they have grown into a bloodline of their own. The Guhuri are in fact much more similar to Absimilard, the original Nosferatu, than the Kindred we know as Nosferatu today. Sadly, the western childer of Absimilard fail to see things this way. Some elders still believe the Guruhi are a different clan entirely, or a deviant bloodline. Remember what I said about antiquated values?

No matter our selective predation, the Kindred condition is infectious and knows no borders. Thinking that even the most localised of clans, such as the Banu Haqim or the various Laibon bloodlines, are limited to Arabia or Africa and can be identified by the colour of their skin is idiocy. Like AIDS or Smallpox, we have spread across the globe, following migration, commerce, and war to all corners of the earth. Do not be surprised when a cornfed beefcake from Wisconsin bows his head before a Vizier of the Assassins, calling him "Baba," or a K-pop star recites his lineage back to Hardestadt the Elder. The Kindred may have a history as selective cultural parasites, but in this age our young are nothing if not cosmopolitan.

MOST KINDRED ARE (APPARENTLY) NOT ABOVE PRECONCEIVED IDEAS LIKE RACISM AND CULTURAL SUPREMACY. ESPECIALLY OUR ELDERS ARE BY THEIR AGE AND TEMPERAMENT MADE PRONE TO VALUES THAT MOST REASONABLE BEINGS WOULD CONSIDER ARCHAIC OR EVEN HATEFUL. OUR FEAR AND HUNGER MAKES US NARCISSISTIC, UNSOCIABLE, SELFISH. AND SET IN OUR WAYS.

2.

1.

The Lifeblood Initiative is a Copenhagen-based NGO working to standardize the practices of blood banks across Europe. The surprisingly well-funded Initiative also engages with other issues that impact health concerns related to blood banks. Its money doesn't come from the Camarilla directly, but rather from a number of pharmaceutical companies who also use its philanthropic image to advance their own agendas.

The Initiative is an old Camarilla front, originally created in 1867. Its current name is from 1972 and came with the organization's new focus on lobbying to make blood bank practises more drinker friendly across Europe. Its benefits to the Kindred are on a decidedly elite level: An elder might have access to them, but a neonate certainly won't.

"Kill them all and let God sort them out." This quote, attributed to Arnaud Amalric at the massacre at Béziers in 1209, sums up the attitude of the Inquisition to our kind, known then as "the Cainite heresy". The investigations and punishments that followed the crusade against the heretics of southern France is well known. Officially created to root out the last remnants of the Gnostic Catharism and similar Catholic heresies, the religious courts of the Inquisition became the jurisdiction of the feared Dominican Order. Such was the infamy of these proceedings that the order itself soon became known as *Domini Canis*, "the hounds of God." What history does not tell us is that the Inquisition had a purpose far more important than maintaining scriptural doctrine or, in its debased renaissance incarnation, burning witches, Jews, and adulterers at the stake. Master-minded by the secretive Cardinal Marzone and his Society of Leopold, the Inquisition hunted and killed thousands of the Damned, revealing our existence to the general public.

THE ATROCITIES OF Tomás de Torquemada's Spanish Inquisition hit us particularly hard. To this day a majority of our clans are still known by their Spanish or Latin Inquisitorial names, misspellings and all. *Brujo. Torero. Sombra. Mala Carilla.* Even the name *Gangrel* (meaning "wanderer" in Scottish dialect) comes from an Inquisitorial protocol by William of Baskerville. These fanatics nearly ended the lineage of Caine forever, and using their derogatory names for our great bloodlines was supposed to remind us of this danger. The name Camarilla was initially coined as a part of a conspiracy theory about the "little room" in the Vatican where the secret masters of the Cainite Heresy turned Rodrigo Borgia to their cause. The entire raison d'être of the true conspiracy of the Damned is not influence but Masquerade. The greatest trick we ever managed was convincing humanity we never existed in the first place and that the Inquisition's obsession with witches and devils was nothing but baseless superstition and misogynistic fanaticism. Four hundred years of pretense had finally moved us into the realm of children's books and pornography. One misstep was enough to threaten all that hard work. For tonight, a Second Inquisition rises, one driven not by fear of heresy, but of terrorism. The same obsession with a world free of us and all our inexplicable and arcane race drives these latter-day Marzones and Amalrics, armed not with crozier and torch but with social media witch-hunts and drones spewing white phosphorous. And just as Amalric cared little about those caught in the crossfire, so too do these champions of the free West name their innocent victims "collateral damage."

Never believe we pretend to be human to be kind. That's just a side effect. Our beliefs our Traditions are about morality. They're about survival. They must be enforced not just by patronage, council or prince or decree, but by every single loyal Kindred. In the words of the Convention of Prague, our little chamber only admits the best and the subtlest of peers, but we chosen few must ruthlessly enforce the Traditions on all Kindred of Earth. The belief that the first tradition alone guarantees our safety is folly, for the rest are there to ensure the first can be achieved.

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

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

The Second Tradition: The Domain

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

The Third Tradition: The Progeny

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

The Fourth Tradition: The Accounting

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

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

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

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

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

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THE REBEL — BRUJAH

The philosopher—priestess Troile looks out over the teeming masses of Enoch. Brother killing brother for the profit of another. Slaves to unjust kings. She knows better. She can help them break free. But a lifetime is short and change always requires a sacrifice in blood. Her childer inherited her grand project and poor anger management. If you seek the lipstick trace of the eternal Rebel, look to the slaughter of Carthage, the terror of the French revolution, the Gulags of the Soviet Union, and the sonic scream of the electric guitar. Always at the forefront of the War of Ages, their battle—cry still echoes in the mortal voices of Johnny Rotten and Hunter S. Thompson.

THE USURPER — TREMERE

He is a mortal man. A Mage. Youngest of the progenitors. Awakened just before the first millennium. His understanding of the cosmos is almost boundless. He can move the skies and the earth. He knows the face of God, the history of the Devil, and mysteries older than both. Ultimate truth beckons just out of his reach. But he is growing old. Frail. Confused. Afraid. What is power and knowledge to he who is to die? So, Tremere refuses. Death is a disease and there must be a cure. No price is too high. Or so he thought before he stole Lilith's curse and made our Alchemy his own. It's like Chuck Palahniuk wrote: "to become immortal, first you have to die". And the dead have no true Magick. Desperate to recapture the flame, he founded a tradition of Blood Sorcery, stealing human vital fluid and soul to fuel their rites and find a way back to the sun. But that was long ago. The Pyramid Order they built trapped them in a rigid hierarchy, obscuring their once noble goals with a thirst for pure power. And power built on a theft can only last so long. The Pyramid is broken, and the truth about Tremere is about to be revealed in the Blood of his followers.

THE HORROR — NOSFERATU

To the living, he is Absalom — treasonous son of biblical King David. To us he is Absimilard. It matters little. He is a wound in the Blood and a curse uttered in rage. A plague that eats his own childer and forces them to suffer the same abject humiliation he once did. Most beautiful of royal sons, he masked his entitlement as justice, slaying his sister's defiler — his own half—brother as he bedded his father's concubines freely. How could anyone deny him? So perfect and just he thought himself, that everything was his by right, until he caught the eye of eternity and had a taste of real justice. The price of his immortality — the essence of his rotten soul writ large across his face.

> At least we'll never be like you, like our Father. We'll never think of ourselves as kings of anything but rats and shit. You fall apart on the inside, we are broken on the outside. I know which I prefer.

Men and women alike would kill for a moment in the Diva's arms. S/he was a superstar of prehistory, a being so beautiful not even God could imagine it growing old and ugly. Just as her tits were starting to sag and his cock began to weaken, the Rose made a deal. It would never fade. Never die. In return, the Diva would be the keeper of love, beauty, and art through the long ages. The devil smiled as it died and rose again — the tyranny of beauty enshrined as immortal murderer.

THE DIVA — TOREADOR

The Sheriff: Tell me about how you first saw the Sabbat lick.

M. Baker: I was at the club hunting. I headed for the dancefloor when I saw her. She was shuffle dancing, darting this way and that. People were giving her space, watching her, applauding, transfixed by the spectacle.

Remember, I had no idea about what you guys were planning. I didn't know she was a bloodsucker. I just thought she was some girl in micro-shorts and a baseball cap, enjoying a chance to show off.

The Sheriff: You didn't realize what she was doing.

M. Baker: No. It took me a long time to see the knife. Her movements were hypnotic, and she just seemed to enjoy herself so much. The happiness was contagious. I took a photo of her and she flashed me the heart sign with her hands.

The Sheriff: But she was...

M. Baker: She was stabbing people with the knife. Every time she bounced near the crowd, she ripped someone. The music was loud, and you couldn't hear the screams. Some people were looking at her and clapping their hands, others crumbling down bleeding on the floor.

Then the music stopped, and the panic started. I lost sight of her.

The Sheriff: Us too. Our guys came in just at that moment, but we had no chance of locating her in the middle of the panicking humans.

THE AFFLICTED — MALKAVIAN

Their real name is lost, but consider the similarity between Malkav, Moloch, and Malakai, a Cainite, a Biblical demon and an angel of the Lord. That's what people thought the "insane" were in ages past you know— men and women possessed by things beyond human understanding. Old ones still think of the first of the Afflicted as distinctly inhuman. I think it's simpler than that; Malkav was the only one of the ancients who understood what was really going on. They were dead but still hungered, and that realisation shattered their mind. A sensible reaction if you think about it. The lunatics carry this curse of clarity more or less proudly, each one a seer and madman, desperate to drown their condition in the resonant blood of the living. Some nights I fear them, others I want to be them, imagining madness the only sane response to the riddle of the Beast. One thing is sure: Malkav lives on in all their progeny, speaking with a thousand voices at once. Perhaps a better name for them is Legion.

THE BEASTS — GANGREL

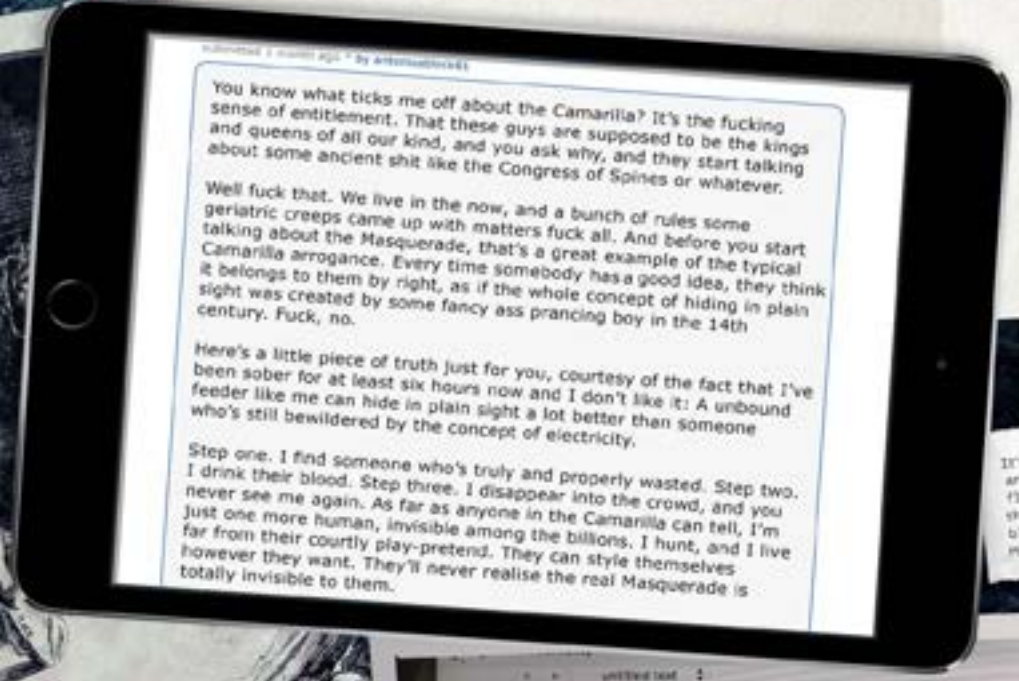
Ennoia cursed her mother Lilith as she birthed her, spat all suitors in the eye, and lived free as a wolf, laying only with the greatest of her kind. From her loins it is said sprung the moon mad Lupines, and she is known as "the female half of God" for hers was the fertility of the earth itself. She had no use for the world of men, their cities, or their customs. So, she set herself apart, died to the world, and rose again in the wilderness. First of outcasts, saint of predators and serial killers. Of all the 13 she alone accepted the Beast as a part of herself. Her descendants inherited her independence and lust for the hunt. In their Blood still awaits long buried animal traits, that once awakened make them devolve slowly until they run on all fours and howl their songs to the starlit sky as once did the pack mates of Ennoia.

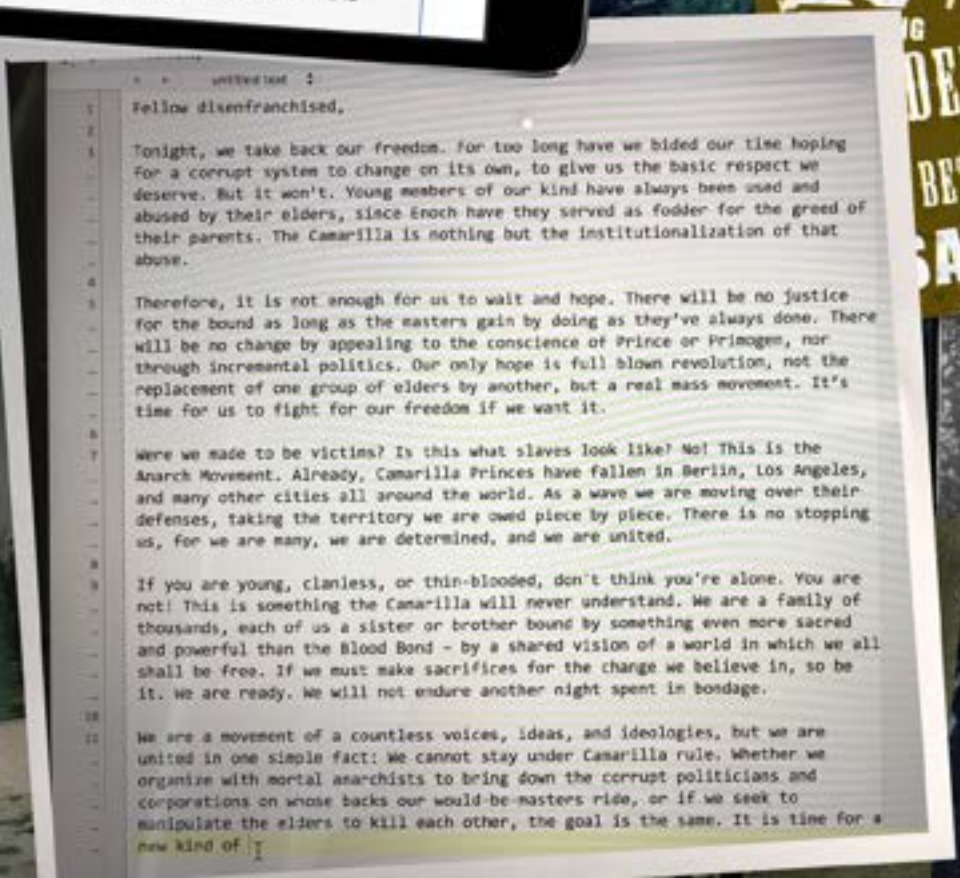
THE KINGS — VENTRUE

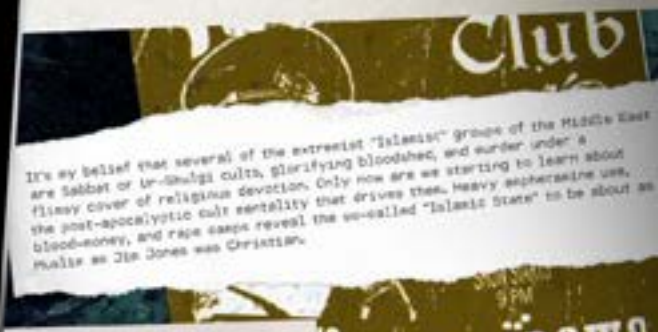
Once upon a time there was a perfect King whose every subject adored him.

"Let my reign last forever — not for my sake,
but for the happiness of my people."

And so, it was. But now the Clan of Kings lord over a kingdom of sorrow, dissent, and fear. Perhaps it is better to serve the devil you know than take your chances with horrors you've yet to discover? In return for their guidance and wisdom, they claim every being on the planet as their vassals or their subjects. With most elders having been raised in a time when blood was power, the clan is fiercely feudal in its outlook, and no equality will come as long as they remain on their thrones.







Let's take the bull by the horns and talk about 9/11. I know it's a sen-
sitive subject, especially to us New Yorkers, but it did happen. I per-
sonally know Kindred who met their last death as the towers burned,
so stop screaming and start listening.

We all did stupid shit those first chaotic nights. If we don't own up
to our mistakes we'll be held hostage by the shadow of the past for-
ever. So, let me be the first to admit something really embarrassing.
I thought our kind were involved for years after the official reports
proved me wrong. I obsessed over all the "I was the Sabbat" and
even "a wizard did it" conspiracy theories. I was a straight up Kin-
dred Truther.

The timing just seemed too perfect. The event itself so cinematical-
ly destructive it just had to be us. In the summer of 2001 the Sabbat
started preaching that the end had finally come around. Gehenna
was here! When the towers fell some batshit crazy Cainites actually
claimed responsibility for the attacks, said it was vengeance for the
recent Camarilla conquest of NYC, the opening salvo in their final
Gehenna War, a perfectly planned and executed strike against the al-
leged infestation of an Antediluvian hidden in the sewers, using con-
trolled demolition and hijacked planes piloted by dominated blood
slaves.

And we wanted to believe. It spoke to our overblown sense of impor-
tance. We acted as if this half-assed conspiracy theory was actually
true. 9/11 killed 2,974 kine, but we mostly cared about the three Kin-
dred - all Camarilla - who turned to ash that day. Two of them were
Riker and Yezlaweta, Sewer Rats in the sub-basement, but then there
was Meghan Truesdale, a fairly well-connected Ventrue elder with 17
blood-fed staff members on floor 46.

Ventrue elders needed to react or face the wrath of the masses.
The Inner C[illegible] took a huge risk: they decided to use the re-
sources of the (up until now) strictly not-to-be-meddled-with NSA
and threw their weight behind the Homeland Security Act in or-
der to trace the responsible parties. In their minds they sought to
determine how far the Sabbat had infiltrated Al-Qaeda and similar
extremist Islamist groups.

Nothing went as planned. They ended up realizing there were no
controlled demolitions, no dominated TSA personnel, no Kindred
conspiracy at all - just a group of suicidal and highly motivated,
but perfectly mundane young men. But by then it was too late.

Yes. It was us. We did it. We set off the Second Inquisition.

By hunting the Sabbat with mortal resources Camarilla point
man Jan Pieterzoon and Archon Theo Bell opened Pandora's box.
Their desperate strategy helped the mortal agencies look in all the
right places. They thought they could control their new allies or
discredit them if it became a problem. They were wrong.

Just a week after the first raid against a Kindred haven by
Homeland Security ended in the death of 14 law enforcement offi-
cers and the destruction of the Seraph Jalan-Aajav, a millennia-old
creature with its claws buried deep in Sunni fundamentalist groups
as well as Mexican narco-terrorism. This was just the first strike in
what quickly became known as the Second Inquisition.

[illegible]

Breidenstein: World War II. Now that was a time to be a vampire!

Ldescu: I thought we called ourselves the Kindred, nowadays.

Breidenstein: I'm older than the Camarilla! I call a bloodsucker a bloodsucker.

Ldescu: I remember World War II and the years leading up to it very differently. Many of the servants and younger members of our chantry were Jewish. One young man ended up wearing the pink triangle.

Breidenstein: You're too sensitive, Maxwell. That's going to get you killed one night. Why would we care about the kine? Or even the neonates, truth be told. I don't really consider anybody a person until they have at least a few centuries under their belt.

Ldescu: Answer me honestly, if you can. Did you try to control the National Socialists? You were the Prince of Berlin already at that time.

Breidenstein: I am Berlin! I was the first prince this city ever had, and I will be the last.

Ldescu: I see.

Breidenstein: You want the truth, Maxwell?

Ldescu: Yes.

Breidenstein: I tried to control the National Socialists, but I failed. That was the first time mortal politics happened too fast for me to keep up.

Ldescu: Would you have stopped the war and the killing if you had succeeded?

Breidenstein: No! I love war. That's what I was trying to tell you. Hunting in Berlin during the British air raids was some of the best I've ever had, and I've been hunting for a very long time. Imagine, the kine sweating in the dark bomb shelters, families packed close, the elderly, young men and women. It was like a buffet. You could follow your instinct, see if you found exactly the right kind of blood. I felt young, full of energy...

Ldescu: You know Gustav, I don't have much of my humanity left. I can kill tonight and forget it by tomorrow. Yet, you still manage to disgust me.

Breidenstein: I could rip you apart for insulting me like that.

Ldescu: You could.

Breidenstein: Ha! Don't take things so seriously! We live way too long to get caught up in silly little things like a couple of dead kine.

Ldescu: Or a few million.

Breidenstein: Right! You get what I'm trying to say! At the end of the night, only those who are going to be with you in the decades and centuries to come matter. All others are just food.

Ldescu: You're too arrogant, Gustav. This won't end well for you.

Gustav is now dead. Berlin is in the hands of the Anarchs. I still remain as the Tremere Regent. I suppose there's a lesson in that. You can decide for yourself whether the lesson is about holding onto your humanity or the dangers of arrogance.

And no, I didn't really foresee the Anarch revolution either, despite the warning I gave to Gustav.

- Maxwell Ldescu
Regent of Berlin

Theo? Agata speaking. I know you left the Camarilla and jumped over to the Anarchs, but in case you still hold some old prejudices about eating souls, I'm sending this to you on a cassette tape. Low tech to avoid the Second Inquisition. If it worked for Osama bin-Laden, it'll work for us.

Just remember, I'm not your enemy. We're on the same side now.

Here's my information on the Sabbat and the Anarchs. In the last fifteen years, the Sabbat has grown both smaller and more dangerous. They've realized that the Antediluvians won't wake up on their own, so they've gone to the Middle East to find their tombs and take a little proactive initiative.

You're asking what happened to the hierarchy of bishops and cardinals and to the packs of psychos who have joined in the Vaulderie to break their existing Blood Bonds. Many of the cardinals and their congregations are now in Baghdad or Kabul, fighting their Gehenna War.

Dear Camilla,

I greatly enjoyed our last meeting and I am honored to have you working for me. The restoration of antiques is an exacting business, and there is always the danger of causing irreparable damage in the process. It requires more than just talent to know how to bring the original qualities of an ancient artwork to the fore.

As you prepare for your work in my service, I would like to elucidate a few important things about history. From a mortal perspective, your abilities are unmatched. However, you are entering a new world, one populated by immortals such as myself. Those of us in the Ministry have been blessed with a long view of human history, and the same goes for the descendants of Caine.

You must learn to think in terms of two histories: The human history you learn from lectures, books, and primary sources, and the hidden history of deathless forces influencing the lives of mortals.

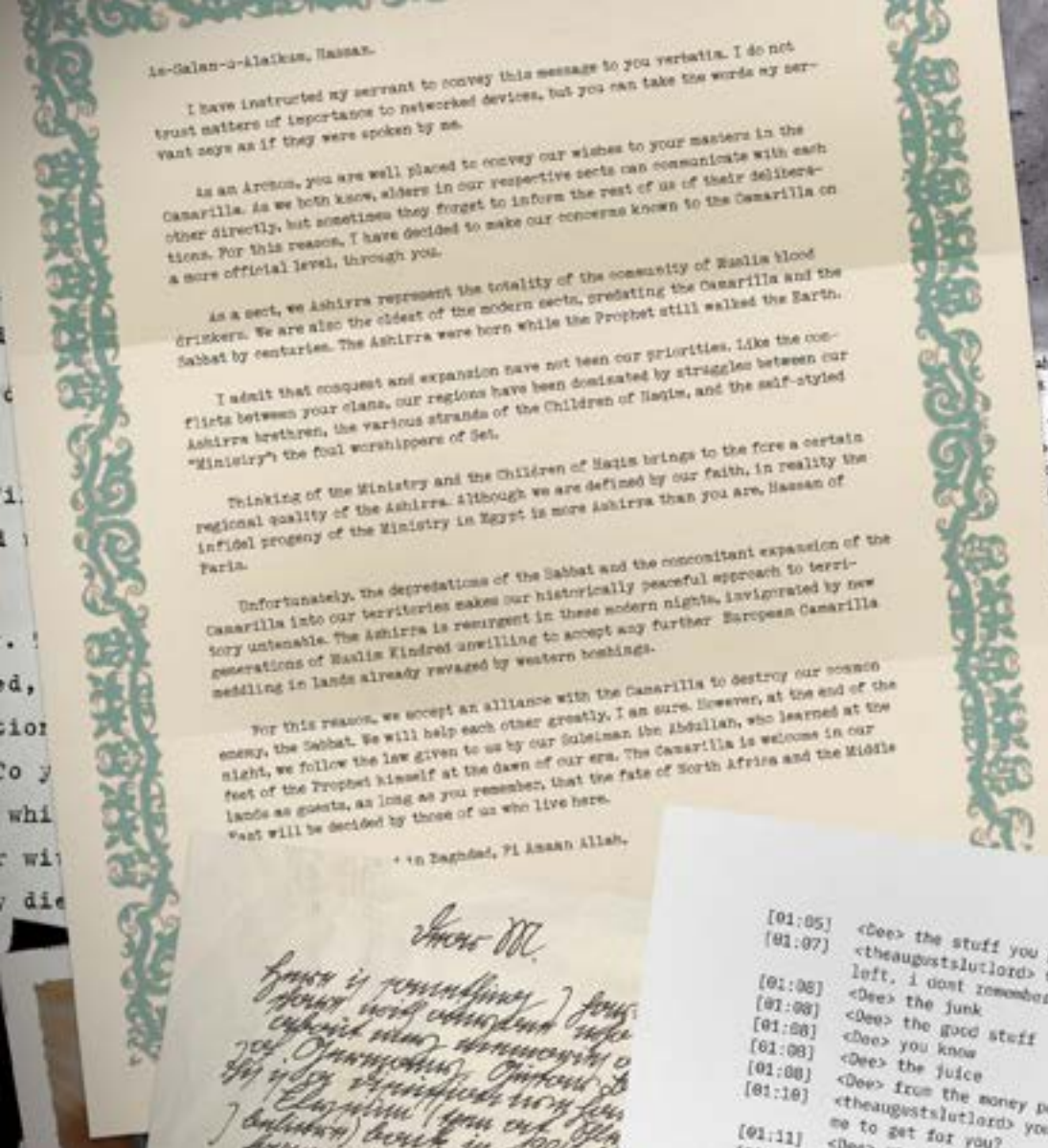
Some of our kind say that we control human destiny. I am too humble to claim anything like that, but it pays to remember that behind seemingly inexplicable human events, there is sometimes a hidden explanation. These factors are especially important in your work with restoring antiques I acquire, as often this is the quality I am most interested in. A mortal historian might miss the fact that a painting was originally commissioned to commemorate the Giovanni Promise or a chalice crafted so a Cainite lord might drink the blood of her enemies.

This hidden history goes back to the dawn of humanity. In some ways, it is easier to decipher the influence of immortals in antiquity because the Masquerade was not such an all-encompassing law back then. I have only witnessed a few centuries of history myself, but I have seen the power of secrecy increase every year, making it harder than ever for scholars like us to make out the true shape of events.

Still, you now possess one advantage no mortal historian can match. You are one of the deathless, and your actions will be part of the hidden narrative of this world.

Yours,

Hesha Ruhadze



As-Salam-u-Alaikum, Hassan.

I have instructed my servant to convey this message to you verbatim. I do not trust matters of importance to networked devices, but you can take the words my servant says as if they were spoken by me.

As an Archon, you are well placed to convey our wishes to your masters in the Camarilla. As we both know, elders in our respective sects can communicate with each other directly, but sometimes they forget to inform the rest of us of their deliberations. For this reason, I have decided to make our concerns known to the Camarilla on a more official level, through you.

As a sect, we Ashirra represent the totality of the community of Muslim blood drinkers. We are also the oldest of the modern sects, predating the Camarilla and the Sabbat by centuries. The Ashirra were born while the Prophet still walked the Earth.

I admit that conquest and expansion have not been our priorities. Like the conflicts between your clans, our regions have been dominated by struggles between our Ashirra brethren, the various strands of the Children of Haqim, and the self-styled "Ministry"; the foul worshippers of Set.

Thinking of the Ministry and the Children of Haqim brings to the fore a certain regional quality of the Ashirra. Although we are defined by our faith, in reality the infidel progeny of the Ministry in Egypt is more Ashirra than you are, Hassan of Paris.

Unfortunately, the depredations of the Sabbat and the concomitant expansion of the Camarilla into our territories makes our historically peaceful approach to territory untenable. The Ashirra is resurgent in these modern nights, invigorated by new generations of Muslim Kindred unwilling to accept any further European Camarilla meddling in lands already ravaged by western bombings.

For this reason, we accept an alliance with the Camarilla to destroy our common enemy, the Sabbat. We will help each other greatly, I am sure. However, at the end of the night, we follow the law given to us by our Suleiman ibn Abdullah, who learned at the feet of the Prophet himself at the dawn of our era. The Camarilla is welcome in our lands as guests, as long as you remember, that the fate of North Africa and the Middle East will be decided by those of us who live here.

[illegible] in Baghdad, Fi Amaan Allah.

Dear M.

[illegible]

Breidenstein: World War II. Now [illegible] vampire!

Ldescu: I thought we called our[illegible] nowadays.

Breidenstein: I'm older than the [illegible] bloodsucker a bloodsucker.

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Ldescu: Would you have stopped the war and the killing if you had succeeded?

[01:05] <Dee> the stuff you got me was grade A

[01:07] <theaugustslutlord> the stuff? i was too wasted when me left, i dont remember

[01:08] <Dee> the junk

[01:08] <Dee> the good stuff

[01:08] <Dee> you know

[01:08] <Dee> the juice

[01:08] <Dee> from the money people

[01:10] <theaugustslutlord> you mean the ventrue blood you wanted me to get for you?

[01:11] <Dee> nnnngrh why did you have to do that

[01:12] <Dee> best practise is never to use those words

[01:12] <Dee> now we got to log off

[01:12] <Dee> and you know, burn our laptops or whatever

[01:13] <theaugustslutlord> wait wait wait

[01:13] <theaugustslutlord> can i ask you something? please? i haven't been in this for long

[01:14] <Dee> long enough to play that guy for a sucker

[01:15] <theaugustslutlord> come on. the only reason he let me taste. was to fuck with you by giving me something you'd been selling yourself for. he just didn't expect me not to swallow

[01:16] <Dee> i guess. it was smart of you to spit the stuff into that empty can of red bull and give it to me. basically chivalrous too.

[01:17] <Dee> what can i say. i love the stuff.

[01:18] <Dee> so tasty

[01:19] <Dee> anyway, logoff time

[01:19] <theaugustslutlord>wait... is it true that our kind controls history. you know, politicians and shit?

[01:20] <theaugustslutlord> cause that sounded pretty cool

[01:21] <Dee> do you feel like you control jack shit? no, big people in the C control many things. the same as anybody with a ton of money and muscle. and sweet, addictive... juice

[01:22] <Dee> learn, young idiot, you can't use the words online, the real words, they get you noticed by the SI

[01:23] <Dee> you're doomed if i'm your role model, christ

[01:23] <Dee> we're not masters of humanity, we're just parasites. while the humans were doing something important and historical, you can bet there was someone like me there, acting like a total blood junkie

[01:24] <Dee> gonna follow my own advice now

[01:25] <theaugustslutlord> Dee? will i see you again?

abbat had infiltrated Al-Qaeda and similar

They ended up realizing there were no dominated TSA personnel, no Kindred oup of suicidal and highly motivated, ng men. But by then it was too late.

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d against a Kindred hatten by Arch of 14 law enforcement offi- aph Jalan-Aajar, a milk-[illegible]-old in Sunni fundamentalist groups This was just the first strike in Second Inquisition.

Welcome all,

As most of you probably know, my name is Yvea von Eichel. I am the CFO of the Eichel Group, and it is my pleasure to welcome you to the inner circle.

You know that our company operates with different levels of trust. When you come in as a trainee, you work with corporate clients, municipalities, and foundations. You get to see some of the work we do and meet the more common types of clients.

As you work hard and rise in our ranks, you get to meet our more valuable clientele. Heads of state. Members of the European Parliament. Some of the most established, wealthy families in Europe. Yet, as you worked with these people, you always felt that there was something still to come. You hadn't quite ascended to the top yet.

Now you have. Only our most trusted employees are allowed to know the real purpose we serve. We work as a lobbying firm to fulfill the will of extraordinary beings. Of the immortals. I suspect that most of you have already pieced together the puzzle. Indeed, we require it of those who want to advance past a certain point in their careers.

In front of you there's a small cup. **Drink its contents.**

Yes, like that. This is the blood we live on. It will keep you young and healthy forever, as long as we serve the function our company was founded for.

Politics is an immensely complicated and constantly changing system of power, knowledge, and expertise. The immortals are too ancient to understand these concepts fully. We don't live in the age of kings. We live in an age of lobbying, where money, access, and influence determine the shape of the future. We are among the best professionals in this field on a global scale. When we follow the dictates of our clients, they know that although their understanding of modernity might be limited, we can translate their will into something that makes sense in a morning meeting with a member of the European Parliament.

Our primary tools are those of anybody lobbying for the rich: money and connections. Beyond those, our patrons allow us to call on their favor if the cause of important enough. Their Blood gives them more than everlasting youth; it gives them powers you can only imagine.

We are not the only ones employed by the immortals. Wright+Moreau Strategies, the Lifeblood initiative, and other organizations do similar work. You will sometimes be asked to collaborate with them.

Now, the first project you'll be working on is the upcoming renewal of a European Union directive concerning the systematization of the quality standards for establishments dealing with blood. Our clients want a Pan-European register of all blood data generated in the Union. The argument for it is humanitarian: Such a database would make it easier to coordinate international cooperative efforts in the case of major health crises...

I must admit. I am nostalgic for the Victorian era. London at the height of the British Empire, when it seemed like this would be the shape of the world from now on. The crushing repression of the social order delivering a new crop of ignorant aristocratic ingenuity to prey on. The boundless but denied curiosity of a people unafraid of cannibalizing their subordinates for the sake of fast thrills and little pleasures.

In retrospect, you can see that this was the last time the elders of the Camarilla truly understood the world they wield such unrivaled influence over. They're still in their seats, drinking blood as though it was Pernod, overlooking an empire where the sun never rises, but even ignoring how that empire shrinks, the mortal systems of government and social order are becoming so complicated and quick to change, our ancient numbers are losing their ability to keep up.

I dread the day when I must count myself among their number. I have been blessed with a love of mortals and the beautiful things they make, and that has allowed me to stay current. I hope it will for a long time.

In our Queen Victoria's London, it sometimes felt as if the Kindred were just one more secret society where the true movers and shakers of gathered to make decisions that affected the whole world. A mortal Lord might not even realize that the august gathering he regularly attended consisted mostly of the walking dead. After all, our kind was not the only strange thing going on behind the facade of propriety. Personally, I always made a point of including both kine and Kindred in my salon. I hope you will not think me indulgent if I say that this was what made them so successful.

All that is gone now. I wonder if it was because our elders were so drunk on blood and power they failed to prepare their empire for the demands of the new age.

~Victoria

DEATH
IS
NOT
THE
END

CONCEPTS

"Enter freely and of your own free will."

– DRACULA, TO JONATHAN HARKER

A World of Darkness

You're dancing to a relentless techno beat in the press of warm, sweaty bodies. You're in the attic of a squat house, walls covered in graffiti, the bare concrete floor stained with mysterious liquids. You're drunk and high, coming down from the euphoria of becoming part of the writhing crowd.

A woman brushes past you, her hand cold on your shoulder. You watch her as she presses between people and slips behind the DJ's table. She doesn't look that old, dressed like any of the bleary junkies grinding their bodies against you – at least, not until she notices you watching her. She smiles, and in that second, she seems to hold knowledge beyond anything that could be conceived on this dance floor.

Perhaps you have experienced a moment like this in real life. You've noticed a compelling stranger, exchanging a moment of flirtation or terror with someone you've never seen again. They were in your life only for a fleeting moment, yet you still remember them years later.

In the real world, a moment like this is nothing but chance. Who was the woman who brushed past you? Maybe she's the next DJ, going to prepare for her set, her hand cold because she was having a smoke outside. In real life, everything has an explanation.

In the World of Darkness, things aren't always that simple.

On the surface, it looks like our world. The office where you work, the school you attended as a child, and the retirement home where you visit your grandmother are all the same in our world and in the World of Darkness.

Once you go deeper into the frayed, abandoned, and hidden corners, the real nature of the World of Darkness starts to emerge. It's a world with secrets, deep wells of darkness – and you can stumble into them if you follow the clues. Perhaps that's what the cold hand of the woman at the illegal techno party really was: a sign you can follow, leaving your comfortable life behind and entering a secret world of terrors.

The Shadow of the Skyscraper

In the World of Darkness, vampires and stranger beings hide among the endless throng of humanity. They look like us, they strive to act like us, but at the end of the night, they are the predators and we are the prey. The World of Darkness is not some distant, fantastical realm where all the rules are different. The vampire is close to you. Maybe the woman you noticed at the techno party was a vampire. Maybe the DJ was one too. The bouncers you saw at the door. Even the one wearing sunglasses with flames on them. Perhaps they are all vampires, in it together – all of them of the Damned.

The monstrous, hidden horrors of the World of Darkness permeate human society. Strange creatures hunt lonely alleys and prowl in high society soirees with equal ease. As a human, you never even realize what they are until it's too late.

The World of Darkness is a fucked-up place. It's full of corruption, violence, and hypocrisy. In this, it's similar to the real world, but it also has to contend with the supernatural terrors who amplify all the worst tendencies of humanity. Watch the news and consider which events might have been influenced by the subtle touch of the undead: our world, our time; right here, right now.

Vampire is a horror game, and its world is a terrible place. As the Storyteller, you don't have to make the real world any worse than it actually is, although you certainly can. Rather, you can just focus on the elements and themes that support your vision of a dark city. There's enough police corruption, institutional neglect and racism, warmongering, hate, and brutality to make your game world dark indeed, if you choose to highlight these features of reality.

In a **Vampire** game, the skyscraper fulfills the role of the castle in a classic horror story. A tall edifice of glass and steel might look modern and dynamic in the light of the day, but once the sun has set, it reveals its true nature as a needle sticking deep into the flesh of the city, injecting it with the poison of vampiric corruption.

No Heroes

In **Vampire**, you play characters who are vampires. They must subsist on the blood of the living. They have strange powers they can use to force their will on hapless humans. They can give of their undying Blood to people, turning them into servile blood junkies doomed to cater to the whims of the undead in hope of their next fix.

This is not a roleplaying game where you play good guys.

Perhaps your character tries desperately to hold on to vestiges of human morality despite the sordid demands of vampiric existence. Or maybe they have already adjusted their morality to their new condition, telling themselves that they're no worse than other vampires after they accidentally kill someone. Whatever the character's approach to their morality, it's very likely they end up doing things the player finds morally repugnant.

Using this game to explore moral questions and immoral acts can be interesting and emotionally meaningful. After all, the character is not you, and the game is not real. You can use it as a fictional space to explore terrible things,

You will come to realize that the blood is your master. You are being consumed from within. You won't feel it at first, but then, slowly, you will realize that humanity is a distant memory. You will know that you lived as them, but it will fade like a dream. You will only have the memory of a memory, until you are a slipshod effigy of who you were. The Beast within will wear your skin as long as it gets fed.

and perhaps even have a little fun with them.

How long does it take for your neophyte vampire to start getting used to hunting for blood? Do they lie to themselves, insisting that they're a good person, or do they believe their self-flagellation and guilt somehow makes the killing okay? You can explore these questions through a character and seek out parallels to real-life issues in your own life and the world at large.

This is one of the wonderful things about tabletop roleplaying games as an artistic medium in the age of the internet: You are responsible for the well-being of your fellow players, but the events of your game don't have to end up splayed out on the internet. The private nature of the game allows you to explore moral territory that's difficult to approach in the online world where the danger of context collapse is ever-present. You can take risks and play raw.

Stories of redemption are within the scope of this game too, but redemption is hard. How do you stay the moral course if you literally have to force your fangs into the neck of a human every night? Other tales exist, with different choices. If your character is a working mother trapped in a vicious, abusive marriage, being Embraced as a vampire can give her power and options she never had before. For the disenfranchised of the world, becoming a bloodsucker is like making a deal with the Devil – you get a chance to escape the hell you were trapped in, at the cost of your humanity.

These sorts of scenarios point into the labyrinth of morality at the heart of the World of Darkness. Ostensibly good people can commit horrifying acts, and even monsters occasionally commit kindnesses.

INDIVIDUAL LIMITS

In Vampire, you'll be playing with evil. Your characters have to hunt for blood – an evil act in itself. They might slide further on the scale of morality, murdering and killing just to survive. As they go deeper into vampire society, they have to stand by as ancient monsters commit terrible crimes.

When you run a Vampire game, you'll want horrible things to feel horrible, but you also want your game to remain playable and accessible to your players. The limits of which horrors are too much are very individual, and these boundaries are something you want to talk about as a troupe before the game starts.

The best way to approach this collaboration is not to hector your players, instead accepting the individual idiosyncrasies everyone has. Perhaps one of your players has just become a father and doesn't want to see violence inflicted on young children, even in a horror story. Or maybe one of your players has been subjected to harassment online and doesn't want to see those types of things happen in a tabletop game.

Our experience suggests that these individual limits have nothing to do with how severe any given evil act is. A player can be fine after a horrific torture scene, yet find even a suggestion of domestic violence to be too much.

There's no easy trick to make horror always work for your players, but having an open discussion is a good way to start! The beauty of a tabletop roleplaying game is that you can tailor it for the specific individuals sitting around your gaming table.

What's Happening

A delinquent vampire took you in a filthy bathroom at a rave, the music pounding as your young sire panicked after a feeding gone wrong. He gave you some of his Blood, and you

collapsed in the ecstatic agony of the Embrace. You come to an hour later and stagger into the night a vampire, with no idea of what's going on.

How do you connect with the rest of the World of Darkness?

It's not easy. The Masquerade *means that it's hard for vampires to find each other, especially in big cities. You don't know the Traditions, and you broke the Prince's law before you even knew there was a Prince.*

When you finally find your way to Elysium, you discover that ignorance is no excuse in the courts of the immortals. Authorities far beyond the ken of mortals can sentence you to death – to the true death, this time.

But maybe you get to live. What's the shape of the world you enter? What's happening in the world of vampires?

NEW TYRANT GENERATION

Centuries ago, wise elder vampires established the Camarilla, which has kept Kindred across Europe, the Americas, and the world safe while guarding the sacred Traditions of their kind – or so goes the Camarilla propaganda story. Still, despite its recent setbacks, the Camarilla defines vampire life for a lot of Kindred around the world.

Long seen as an immutable, invincible Ivory Tower, the Camarilla finds itself in a state of flux, with many of its oldest members and most established Princes disappearing or becoming hard to reach. A mysterious force known as the Beckoning calls them away, leaving their regnae wide open for Anarch aggression.

The Camarilla has lost some of its most famous domains, such as Berlin and London, to this instability. In many cities, the Camarilla no longer rules with absolute authority, but shares its regnum as an aristocracy of sorts, mingling uneasily with the Anarchs.

It's not all gloom and doom in the Camarilla, however. For a

young and ambitious vampire, the disappearance of so many elders has left space for upward mobility unheard of in the history of the sect. For the first time ever, a neonate can take over a domain if they play the game well enough. What's more, many of the elders have left their estates, fortunes, and resources essentially abandoned, tended by a few confused blood servants. A sharp neonate can hijack a fortune accumulated over the millennia and use it for their own purposes.

Right now, the Camarilla crouches on the defensive, but it never remains that way for long. The energy provided by the young and the ambitious gives the sect new life. For much of Camarilla history, when a gifted or greedy neonate proposed a plan, elders responded predictably: "The time isn't right, take a century or two to think it over and learn how the world works, then perhaps the Prince will grant you a hearing." Innovation equaled grounds for suspicion, not promotion.

Furthermore, the elders atop the Ivory Tower came of age in a time when windmills and telescopes were high technology, kings ruled unquestioningly, and money took the form of favors owed or gifts exchanged. Modern changes confused and irritated them, and they tried simply waiting them out. It didn't work. But now, with younger Kindred increasingly making decisions, the Camarilla is slowly abandoning its traditional strategy of inaction and moving to exert real power in the modern world. It's a time for a young vampire to make their mark. Why not be like the neonates who spearheaded the capture of Mexico City from the Sabbat? The elders and Justicars of the Camarilla long thought such a bold act impossible. What else might be possible, if you can seize the night first?

THE OCCULTATION OF THE SABBAT

Once the Sabbat held cities and territories around the globe in its talons. The new Inquisition has burned them out, the Anarch Revolution has not spared the Black Church, and a wave of ambitious young Kindred desperate for their own domains have braved and battled them everywhere. Some Sabbat packs, left leaderless, masquerade as Anarch gangs. Others of the sect tentatively offer their knowledge and allegiance to the Camarilla, seeking shelter from the storm in any port.

However, at this tipping point, at the moment of its seeming defeat, the Sabbat perhaps becomes more dangerous than it has ever been. As the sect disappears from the map, it re-emerges as a shadowy force seemingly everywhere and nowhere. The real terror comes from experienced Sabbat agents, freed from the necessity of running a big organization. They can now focus on what they do best: striking fast and hard, spreading fear in the service of the Dark Father.

In the modern nights, the Sabbat is the vampire bogeyman: the monster who seeks to destroy everything you ever built for reasons inhuman and unfathomable.

TOTAL REVOLUTION This is a good time to be an Anarch. The Anarch Revolt, held long-dormant by Camarilla oppression and its own infighting, now surges all across the world. Even established Camarilla cities hold Anarch enclaves; the elite retreat into Elysia as the formerly dispossessed claim their own domains.

The fall of Los Angeles and the birth of the Anarch Free States on the American West Coast formed a mere prelude to the fall of Berlin and other cities. Still reeling from the loss of their elders, the rudderless vampires of the Camarilla now find themselves unable to defend their privileges without the power of ancient Blood to enforce their decrees.

There is no single Anarch Movement united by ideology or leadership. The global Anarch Revolution is a spontaneous force, born out of centuries of Camarilla repression, embodying the various ideologies and agendas of whoever happens to be there on the ground, ready to carry the torch.

This is a time of unparalleled opportunity for an Anarch vampire to make their mark, ideally on a Camarilla throat. No matter how humble your origins, you can take

the fight to the so-called Princes and try to topple the Ivory Tower. Their enemies weakened by mortal hunters and the insidious Beckoning, the correlation of forces is finally on the side of the Anarchs.

The revolution is just the start, however. The real challenge for a politically minded neonate comes afterward. Does the revolution collapse into violence and brutality, or is it possible for a charismatic and ambitious lick to build their own utopia of blood?

INDIVIDUAL MONSTERS The immense turbulence of a wounded Camarilla on the verge of resurgence, an Anarch Movement fighting for its future, and a fracturing Sabbat leaves a lot of space for unbound vampires to do their own thing. There's more thin-blooded than ever before: vampires of such a high generation that they exhibit traits normally associated with humans. For these vampires, the conflicts of the Camarilla and the Anarchs, and the vast power struggles between the sects, make nothing but noise. Best to ignore them unless a zealous Archon or Councilor decides to make it their business to harass those who fail to conform.

Endless stories illuminate the margins of the World of Darkness, and in the long run, some of them may prove more significant than any in the major sects realize. Nobody in the World of Darkness knows everything that's going on, and the infinite variety of the world always provides a new mystery, a new puzzle piece that fails to fit any established patterns.

Individual vampires build their own domains and rule with iron fists in the style of the monsters of the Middle Ages. Anarch dissidents flee to small rural communities, war zones, and border areas to carve out their own territories far away from human or undead authorities. Nomadic licks prove that it's possible to live on the road after all, if you know how. An infinite variety of vampire unlifestyles exist for those who seek to escape the stifling ideologies of the sects.

The vast size of a modern metropolis and the existence of the Masquerade even make it possible for a clever lick to hide right under the nose of a Camarilla Prince. Only a fool thinks they can be sure of everything that happens in a city of millions.

THE SECOND INQUISITION Despite unceasing strife between the undead, the worst threat to Kindred might just come from humanity. The Camarilla has long argued that if mortals were to become aware of the existence of vampires, all Kindred would die on a pyre. They believe that the world would see witch-hunts like never before, and that no amount of immortal power would be able to defend the lords of the night from the teeming billions inhabiting the planet.

The Camarilla is being proven right. Intelligence agencies across the world have uncovered the existence of the undead. While these mortal groups struggle to articulate the real nature of the threat, they exchange information with each other and with the hardline holdouts in the Vatican's Society of St. Leopold. The old Inquisitors find their prejudices finally validated and taken seriously – and funded, and provided whole arsenals of weaponry – by some of the most powerful and ruthless organizations in the world.

Right now, the Second Inquisition remains codeword classified and sub rosa, neither understood nor controlled by their collective agencies at large or by their governments. Not every CIA agent and FSB apparatchik knows about vampires, but a sufficient amount of key personnel in very anonymous offices know enough to generate a major threat. The Second Inquisition has killed Princes in London and Las Vegas, and it has crippled a clan in Vienna. Dozens of incautious Anarchs and arrogant Sabbat have lost their lives, unused to mortals who know how to hunt for vampires. And of course, many vampires try to play the Second Inquisition against their rivals by leaking the address of a haven or the details of a murder.

The Second Inquisition fights vampires, but the inquisitors are far from heroes. They come from some of the most morally corrupt organizations on the planet. Assassination, regime change, subversion, global surveillance, destabilization, and disinformation are their day jobs. In this sense, they make a good match for the descendants of Caine.

From the perspective of the player characters, the Second Inquisition forces them to take the

Masquerade seriously. Traveling across international borders, or even across an airport, puts you on a list, even when it doesn't put you in a sunny room. Going online? Why not just send the NSA an email inviting them to hunt for blood and see the Primogen? The Five Eyes have quietly added vampiric keywords to their electronic red flag lists. Text someone to find out where Elysium is tonight, and the Inquisition might invite themselves along.

Despite all the danger, the Inquisition also represents opportunity. It has killed enough vampires to create openings and power vacuums throughout undead society. You might get lucky, or you might get it to kill your enemies. A particularly foolhardy group of Kindred might even try to infiltrate or control the Inquisition or some of its agents, risking a fiery death for the chance to wield a fiery sword.

A CHANGING WORLD The World of Darkness is a world in flux. As you start to make use of the game, it becomes a playground you can use to construct the story you need. Every element, from the Camarilla and the Anarchs to the Second Inquisition, is in a state of imbalance, ready to be tipped one way or another, depending on the actions of the player characters.

You can decide how much of the world you want to use in your game. You can jump right in, making your game into a spy story where the characters do their best to evade Inquisition agents while uncovering deadly Camarilla secrets that change everything the characters believe. Or you can let the world stay in the background while the characters focus on smaller, more human-level stories.

After all, this is your World of Darkness.

Roleplaying and Storytelling

Storytelling began with humanity, as language transformed us from fire-using apes to something else. Those stories, we tell ourselves, began around a fire as warnings of real or imagined dangers and temptations waiting in the darkness outside. Our stories changed from campfire warnings to epic poetry, plays, novels, and operas. They added new dangers and temptations, many of them now waiting inside us.

In the 20th century, stories moved out of human voices and minds into display and spectacle. Movies, comics, television, and the limitless reaches of digital entertainment still kept that flickering light in the middle, even as they carried our stories almost as far as our imagination could go. Almost.

Roleplaying games, as one of the newest storytelling art forms, complete the arc from those first firesides to the modern monitor glow. In roleplaying games, players tell or act out the stories for an audience of themselves, guided by the rules or logic of the game, but limited only by their imagination. If you've never played a roleplaying game, don't worry – it's as easy as playing house or bang-you're-dead was when you were a child, and as endlessly fascinating as the most recondite cable TV series.

The Storyteller

As a player of **Vampire**, you take on the persona and role of a character that you create, and you then pretend to be that character during the course of the story. One of the participants, the *Storyteller*, creates and guides the story. They build the setting and populate it with a supporting cast of *Storyteller-played characters (SPCs)*. The Storyteller describes what happens in the world as a result of what the players say and do. It is the Storyteller who arbitrates the rules and springs horrifying new challenges into the game.

The Storyteller's primary duty is to make sure the other players have a good time. You do that by telling a good story. Unlike novelists or film directors, however, you don't simply tell the story from hook to climax. You create the setting and set the plot in motion – and then let the players live it out in the roles of the primary characters, changing your story and your setting as they go. You must maintain a careful balance between narration and adjudication, between entertainer and umpire, between story and game. Sometimes you set the scene or even describe the action, but mostly you decide what occurs in reaction to the words and actions of the characters, as fairly and impartially as you can.

The Players

Although the Storyteller plays the game, and indeed portrays dozens or hundreds of characters, *the players* refers to those participants at the table who assume the roles of the central characters in the story. As a player in **Vampire**, you create one main character and then roleplay them. You speak for them, you impel them to action; you decide what they desire in the world of the game and how they want to attain or accomplish it. The Storyteller tailors the story to those desires; the players build characters who have a role in that story, and whose actions complete or transcend it.

Often after describing the actions you want to take, the Storyteller tells you to make a dice roll to see if you succeed in doing what you have illustrated with words. Your character's Traits, descriptions of their strengths and weaknesses, dictate how well your character can do certain things. Knowing your character's abilities, both natural and supernatural, gives you the menu you can choose from in order to provide the best chance of succeeding.

Thus, a good player balances acting and strategy, considering their character's personality and desires along with their Traits. You employ your character's strengths and work around their weaknesses to achieve your goals – even as the world remains hostile and dangerous. Your character's actions can shape the world; as a player, you can also add ideas and elements to the story. The Storyteller incorporates them (or chooses not to) in order to foster the most dramatic, interesting, and challenging narrative possible at the table.

With its potential for intensity and intimacy, **Vampire** rewards player focus: on their own character, and on the dramas and desires of their fellow player characters. Much of the game's mystery and flavor is lost when players must compete for the Storyteller's (and each others') attention. The story likewise can become unfocused if it must share the spotlight among a large entourage of "main" characters. We find that **Vampire** plays most enjoyably with one Storyteller and a troupe of only three to five players.

Play Aids

For the most part, we designed **Vampire** to be played at a table. There is no board, but dice, pencil, and paper require a table for proper use. Tables also provide a common focus for player attention. You need photocopies of the character sheets (at the end of the book or downloadable from the White Wolf website) and something – a large piece of paper, a cork board or whiteboard, a tablet screen – to hold the Relationship Map (p. 142). The dice required are 10-sided, available in any game store. You need two colors of dice: one color for regular dice, and another color for Hunger dice. We suggest red. Look for Vampire: The Masquerade 5th Edition special dice wherever roleplaying games are sold ■

V5 EXAMPLE OF PLAY:

"THE HUNT"

Four friends have gathered to play a session of **Vampire: The Masquerade**. Since the group consists both of players familiar with the World of Darkness and some who are not, the troupe has decided to start things simple. The players have already made fledgling characters (see p. 140). The group has decided that they want to set their story in their home city, where many students pass through. They've also decided that they want to explore themes of morality – specifically, the cost and privilege of allowing yourself noble and lofty ideals.

Agreeing that they want a flying start, the Storyteller opens with the hook right after the players have introduced their characters and established a rudimentary Relationship Map (see p 142).

"In a filthy storage room somewhere along the steam tunnels beneath the university, four corpses suddenly twitch as the sun dips beneath the horizon above. Animated by Blood, they rise, unnatural hunger evident in their eyes. Ever since the... incident, they have put off feeding, recoiling from the very thought of drinking human blood. But now, their Hunger is becoming a problem, and some of them fear that things might go very, very bad if they do not get what they need soon....

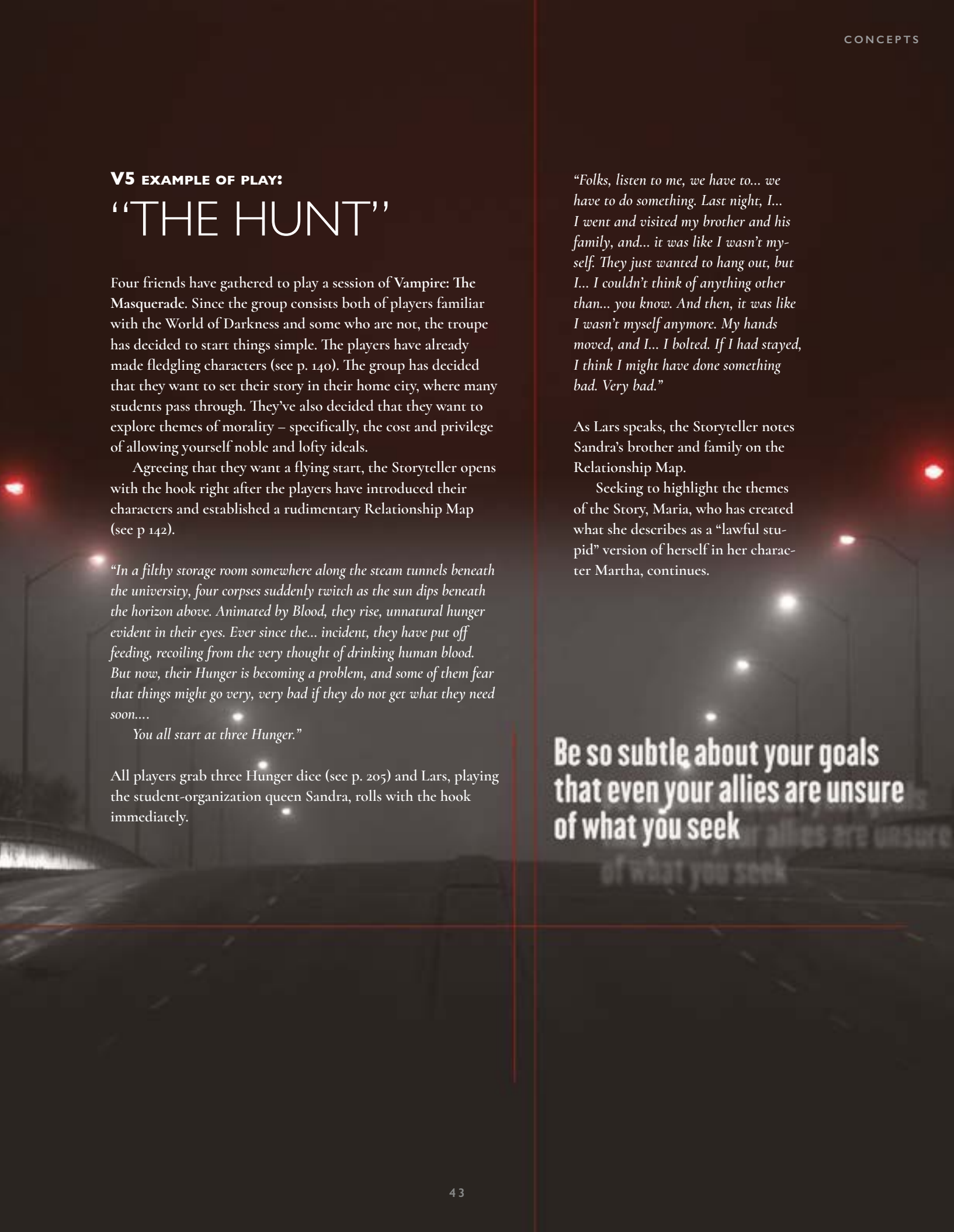
You all start at three Hunger."

All players grab three Hunger dice (see p. 205) and Lars, playing the student-organization queen Sandra, rolls with the hook immediately.

"Folks, listen to me, we have to... we have to do something. Last night, I... I went and visited my brother and his family, and... it was like I wasn't myself. They just wanted to hang out, but I... I couldn't think of anything other than... you know. And then, it was like I wasn't myself anymore. My hands moved, and I... I bolted. If I had stayed, I think I might have done something bad. Very bad."

As Lars speaks, the Storyteller notes Sandra's brother and family on the Relationship Map.

Seeking to highlight the themes of the Story, Maria, who has created what she describes as a "lawful stupid" version of herself in her character Martha, continues.



"Fuck you, Sandra! I don't buy that 'I couldn't help it' crap! We just have to ride it out, it will pass! For sure!"

She then adds, *"As she speaks, Martha scratches her own hand until the skin breaks and she starts sucking the wound."*

The players engage in heated debate for a couple of minutes, but after a while, it becomes less about if and more about how they'll deal with their Hunger, and before long, the coterie-to-be stalks out into the night in search of "a donor." Now, the Storyteller zooms out and asks each player in turn what they want to do during the next couple of hours.

Lars (Sandra): *"I'm going to see if I can find out where/if the university stores blood for testing by asking around among faculty I know; most of them probably work late hours."*

Maria (Martha): *"Eyes slightly glazed over, I head toward the nearby community farm, the one that I picketed earlier for keeping animals, 'just to take a look.'"*

Sam, who plays Marcus, a university dropout thrown into a crowd that is normally not his own, chooses to go with Sandra as backup.

Beginning with Lars (Sandra), the Storyteller asks him to make a Manipulation + Academics test (see p. 117), granting Lars one extra die as a bonus from teamwork (see p. 122). Lars gets only two successes, so Sandra spends a couple of hours calling people with exactly zero to show for it (the Storyteller set the difficulty to four). Sandra and Marcus decide to hook up with the others, to see if they have had better luck.

While initially planning to zoom in on the action at the community farm, the Storyteller instead describes how Martha circles the farm a couple of times, and gives Maria an opportunity to describe both her inner state of mind and what she knows of the communal farm. Maria describes several buildings and animal pens. While this process probably wouldn't really take as long in-game as the other player characters spent on their action, everyone is willing to fudge the time scale a little bit so that all players can be in the next scene.

Storyteller: "*This late at the farm, the animals are asleep in their pens, and through a sole lit window in the*

main house, you can see the night watchperson drink coffee and fiddle with his mobile phone. Security here is actually tighter than it was earlier, likely increased because of the earlier actions of Martha and her friends.

The person with the worst Dexterity + Stealth dice pool should roll it now."

After a few seconds of checking, the player whose character has the lowest Dexterity + Stealth dice pool rolls it, but only achieves a single success. Fearing that discovery this early might be disastrous, the player spends a Willpower point to re-roll some of the failed dice (see p. 122). This roll results in an extra success, and the coterie sneaks into the farm.

Lars (Sandra): "*I check to see if I can get past the lock on the building where they have the horses.*"

Maria (Martha) adopts an eerie, staring look to reflect her character's state: "*What are you doing?*"

Lars (Sandra), with a puzzled look: "*What do you mean? Horses are big, they should be able to… donate without permanent damage!*"

Maria (Martha): "*Martha turns her head to look at the lit window, with the same glazed-over look from earlier. 'The animals here have done nothing wrong, Sandra. Their keepers, on the other hand… they keep the animals in bondage, in slavery, for our amusement. Tonight, one of them pays.' Martha steps in front of the window with an innocent, but slightly predatory, smile.*"

Storyteller: "*The night watchperson is a pudgy fellow in his 30s, and he initially looks puzzled when he spots Martha. He then opens the door, stepping out of the light. He seems to notice only Martha.*

'Is anything the matter? You…'"

Lars (Sandra): "*No problem! We were just passing through! Martha, we are leaving! Now!*"

Storyteller: "*Hey! You're that animal rights bitch! I'm calling security right now!*"

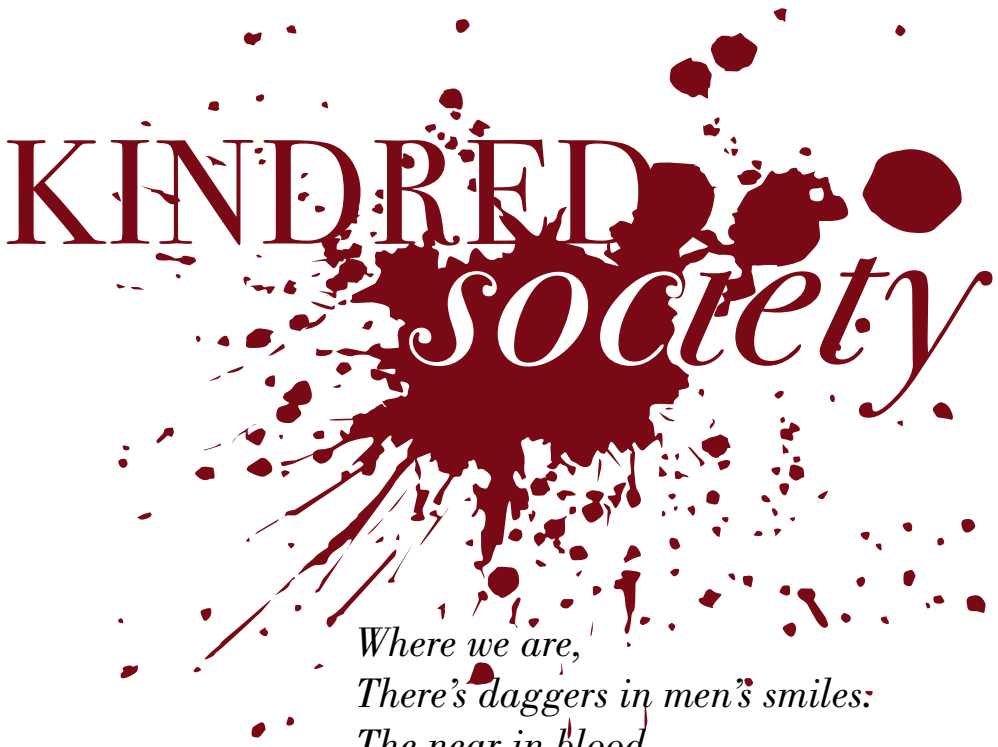
Meanwhile, Sam has gestured to the Storyteller, indicating that Marcus is trying to sneak up on the watchperson. He rolls Dexterity + Stealth. This time, one of the Hunger dice and a regular dice both come up a 0 (10), prompting a messy critical (see p. 207). Given the context, it is not difficult to figure out what happens next, as Marcus silently moves up behind the man, sinking his fangs into the watchperson's neck.

At the sight, the Storyteller has the other players roll to resist frenzy (see p. 219). Maria decides that Martha doesn't resist, and Lars succeeds with the roll for Sandra's test; she's the only one who doesn't feast upon the poor man, simultaneously appalled and drawn to the sight.

Draining the man dry, the two vampires slake their Hunger (see p. 211), but also suffer a Stain (see p. 239) to their Humanity because of their actions, having violated the chronicle Tenet "Do no harm" (see p. 173).

"After a few minutes of heedless carnage, the man lies dead on the ground, and some of you feel better than you have in a long time. But you have little time to revel in the 'success' of your hunt, as a figure suddenly approaches from the darkness. Odd – you could swear there was only a lonely bird there before. It is a lanky individual, dressed in what looks like simple outdoor clothing, and his eyes glint strangely in the light from the window.

'What. The. Fuck. Are. You. Licks. Doing. In. My. Domain?!'" ■



Where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles:
The near in blood,
The nearer bloody.

–WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *MACBETH*

Ancient and Contemporary Outlooks

Caine was a farmer. Abel a herdsman. This is not lost on scientifically-minded Kindred who seek their ancient origins. Most of them place the advent of Homo sanguinis relatively late in the story of mankind, somewhere around 12.000 BC, with the development of agriculture and the rise of civilization – at the fall of the Eden of hunter-gatherer society, if you will.

The farthest reaching theory casts Caine himself as the wanderer who spread the idea of planting and harvesting to at least eleven different sites in the New and Old World, where human scholars claim the practice arose independently and spontaneously. With plowed fields came permanent settlements, cities, and eventually taxation. With taxation came the written word, and with all of this came the first god-kings and emperors. This almost all Kindred academics agree on: these emperors of old were vampires as often as not.

From the Antediluvians, the originators of the blood-cursed clans in Enoch, all the way through the rise of Egypt, Rome, and Great Zimbabwe to the final days of the Dark Ages, vampires ruled the Earth. Divided into low and high clans, they saw themselves as the rightful lords of humanity and fed on those below them. Many of them still do, even if the fires of the Inquisition have forced them to reconsider their methods. So yes, the Kindred are ancient. Still, even the eldest of their kind must exist in the here and now, in the second decade of the 21st century.

During the five hundred years since the first

Inquisition, they have adapted to human culture and learned to hide and wear masks that look like us. Their only chance to follow us into the modern age was convincing us they did not exist, so they aided the rise of rational thought and science, sponsoring the Newtons and Descartes of their respective domains. To the rational mind, their existence was obscured as an impossibility. Capitalism was a boon to them as well, even if neither free trade nor communism was their invention. These systems enabled a smooth transition from dark sovereigns into invisible masters of banking, profiteers of the opium trade, politburo chiefs, and Gulag overseers. They have flourished in systems of power as diverse as the slave trade, the stock exchange, the music and fashion industries, the dot-com boom, and the green energy race. In this way, they are surprisingly adaptable as a species if not always as individuals.

The eldest minds among them are frozen in time, lost in dated ideologies, and unable to fathom how smartphones could be superior to the printing press, yet simultaneously forced to contend with enemies using satellites to track them and smart bombs to destroy them.

The youngest live by encryption on the cutting edge of social media and listen to Trentemøller on Spotify, loathing their own history and the tyranny of their elders. They have to contend with a system of rule that was archaic already 500 years ago and rub shoulders with Mongol warlords and veterans of the Seven Years' War.

It seems, no matter how fast they follow the technological development, the Kindred will always be partly stuck in the past. Unwilling or unable to reconcile their differences, the old fight the young, and this forms the foundational rift in Kindred society – currently expressed in the conflict between the Camarilla and the Anarchs. They call it the War of Ages.

Jyhad

The Kindred like power. They like holding the controlling interests in banking empires, being owed a life debt from a narco-emperor, having a hand in the upbringing of child prodigies, and setting uprisings in motion. Perhaps they seek to influence others because they have so little control over themselves. They are slaves to an addiction that can never be cured. And, regardless how powerful they get, there is always the risk of becoming servants or prey to ancient sires.

The Jyhad is perhaps what happens when the war between the begetter and the begotten never reaches a resolution. An endless struggle between generations of ancients who were neonates millennia ago, and who have let their descendants inherit their strife. Fueled by personal vendettas and utopian dreams, the Jyhad is the spindle weaving the tapestry of Kindred history. It places the young and the idealistic as pawns of the ancients on the board of undead politics. And it often leaves marks, if not scars, on the mortal world.

The count of world-altering battles fought in the Jyhad began with the First City and continues to this night. The destruction of Enoch was likely caused by the fourth and fifth generation of Kindred turning on their Antediluvian progenitors, as the Antediluvians had turned on each other before them. The Punic Wars were a mortal symptom of the bitter strife between Ventrue and Malkavian elders masquerading as patricians of Rome on one side and utopian dreamers led by the African Brujah Troile on the other. There and then, the great rebel vision – to live openly among mortals – was defeated. Not for the first time, nor for the last. It has been crushed by force or by its inherent impossibility again and again through the years. The rise of the Cainite Heresy and the high clans of Île-de-France triggered the horrors of the Albigensian crusade. The Kindred themselves lit the flame of the Inquisition that nearly burned the curse of Caine from the Earth. The fall of Constantinople during the madness of the Fourth Crusade rose like a storm of blood around the diablerie of the "Archangel" Michael and saw the end of the dream of the Byzantine Triumvirate.

The final nights of the Dark Ages and the War of Princes coincided with the formation of the great sects, forged from multiple uprisings and betrayals that killed the old order of high and low clans and set childe against sire once more. The foundation of the death cult of the Sabbat and the diableries of at least two Antediluvians heralded the beginning of a new age. But even after the Kindred of the Camarilla

elected to go into deep hiding to escape the wrath of mortals at the Convention of Thorns, the Jyhad continued unabated. The destruction of any ancien régime is always a convenient cover for the dead, and both the French Revolution and the October Uprising saw the collection of the blood of nobles by Kindred seeking to destroy their elders. Well into these nights of postmodernity, of neon lights and CCTV, methuselahs like Helena and Menele still rage against each other, though Troy is no more than ash and legend.

Every Kindred wants to believe they know their place in the Jyhad, but few do. Schemes the Prince of Cairo hatches to rid his city of faithless Anarchs in the chaos of the Arab Spring are not his own, but feed into the plans of a methuselah in catacombs beneath Turin. Layers upon layers of intricate political games and strategic alliances obscure reality, but as the Sabbat howl about Gehenna, the Anarchs take up arms again, and the elders of the seventh generation and lower are beckoned back to where it all began, it looks like things are heading for the endgame.

The elders who remain in their havens gorge themselves on fledgling vitae to stay sane and resist the call. Instead of governing directly they retreat into paranoid seclusion, leaving underprepared neonates to rule in their stead. The "inheritance coteries" are everywhere now, holding fiefdoms and ganglands, while their masters have left for the East or are screaming at the invisible phantoms of their Blood madness. Many of the stand-in rulers do not plan to give back what they got when the elders return. Why shouldn't one generation's apocalypse be another's beginning?

But yes, vampires live forever, so who is to say their apocalypse will not last for a mortal age? If this is the end at all. The unbound shake their heads, describing the latest incidents in the blood opera of the Jyhad as nothing but schemes and personal vendettas disguised as prophecy and destiny. To them, the ancients are just people with power, grudges, and way too much time on their hands.

The Camarilla

The Camarilla is the most widely influential organization Kindred history has ever known. Its stated purpose is to preserve the Masquerade, an elaborate veil of deception pulled over the eyes of the living to hide the existence of the Kindred. But the Camarilla is so much more. It is a conspiracy to preserve the power of the elders, an undead secret society influencing global business and politics, the closest thing the Kindred have to a system of government, and an international union of cities akin to the United Nations – complete with a central inner circle and a cadre of justicars and archons traveling the world to "keep the peace," answering to nameless masters. The sect maintains a fierce moral stance on preserving humanity in the face of the impulses of the Blood, seeing themselves as the shepherds of the blind human throng – simultaneously morally superior and inferior to their short-lived subjects.

The sheer age, power, and wealth of many Camarilla members, and the recent exclusion of the Anarchs from their ranks, makes the sect distinctly upper class. These are the monsters that hide behind $5000 cocktail dresses, meticulously tended stock portfolios, and havens guarded by blood slaves in private security uniforms. They are the one percent of the one percent and they hunger for more. Their pawns are placed in banking and in Congress, making deals and passing bills. They are masters of disinformation, propaganda, and blackmail, never leaving a loose end untied for long. These nights, there is a lot of tying to do, but the Camarilla does not hesitate to lay ruin to human lives and Kindred unlives to protect the secrets of their influence.

To most members of the Camarilla, Caine is just a myth, a metaphor for their curse, rather than a historical individual. That said, many still cling to their Christian, Jewish, or Muslim faiths like straws in a storm, trying to find meaning and purpose in their un-

lives. The Middle Eastern counterpart to the Camarilla – the Ashirra – is entirely based on using Islam to temper the murderous impulses of the Blood. Still, ancestor worship is a widespread and accepted practice in the Camarilla, with ancient Methuselah like Mithras and the Dracon serving the function of saints. In some clans the Antediluvians have become objects of veneration – imagined as the embodied ideals of their bloodlines.

A Camarilla city is run in the fashion of a feudal court, even if their gatherings may look more like slick boardroom meetings or rough gatherings of criminal cartels. The hierarchy is absolute. At the top we find the Prince, a creature impressive or cunning enough to be acknowledged as the absolute leader of their domain. Below them are the members of the Primogen Council – representatives of the major Camarilla factions in the area. Whether they are clan elders or a gathering of those who hold the largest hunting grounds, they speak directly to the Prince, who will do best by listening to their advice. More than one lord has been ousted by their own council. Some princes choose a seneschal, who acts as personal advisor or replacement when the Prince is unavailable.

When needed, the court gather in secret sanctuaries known as Elysiums, often changing locations to maintain absolute privacy and using a myriad deceptions to hide Kindred affairs from mortal scrutiny. Elysiums accommodate feasts, ceremonies, negotiations, and heated debate, protected and directed by the Keeper and their heralds, also known as harpies. One may be hidden behind the dark rooms of an upscale fetish club, another in an otherwise unused nuclear bunker, a third in the Guggenheim's Brancusi collection at night.

Order in the domain at large is maintained by a sheriff, gendarme, constable or whatever law enforcement term is used locally. They are usually more hitman than cop, and summary justice tends to be the norm as the Camarilla frown on modern ideas like due process. If you get dragged before the Council to plead for mercy instead of chained beneath a sunroof, you've been lucky.

The Six Traditions

The Six Traditions form the core framework for governance among the Kindred. While they are interpreted in wildly different ways and given various attention by individual princes and councils, they are ancient customs that no initiated Camarilla Kindred is unaware of. Even if they were, ignorance is no excuse for breaking them.

THE FIRST TRADITION: THE MASQUERADE

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

The first tradition is the only one universally respected, but also the one that is broken most often. A sloppy feeding with witnesses, a vulgar display of undead might, a confession to a beloved mortal. These things happen, but Kindred are expected to clean up after themselves, or there will be hell to pay. The crime-world code "snitches get stitches" doesn't even begin to describe how seriously both the Camarilla and the Anarchs take the Masquerade. In the age of YouTube dares, clickbait, and fake news, a Masquerade breach is easily overlooked by the masses, but any transgression can end with a black ops team kicking in a haven door. Only the craziest of Cainite superiority fanatics dream of an age where they can rule openly; the rest have faced reality – the undead fare better as parasitic powers behind the throne than as great predators or infernal lords of human dominions.

THE SECOND TRADITION: THE DOMAIN

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

A prince's domain is the whole city, but they may grant rights to those who have served them, allowing others to rule over a district or a city block in their stead. This creates an elaborate hierarchy of liege lords and lieges, reminiscent of the feudalism of the late Middle Ages. Knowing the lay of the land and who has the claim to its use is vital to navigating the urban labyrinths of the night.

THE THIRD TRADITION: THE PROGENY

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

Overpopulation can quickly become a serious threat to the Masquerade, and having to ask the Prince for permission to make a childe is the best way to avoid it anyone has come up with. A companion of one's own Blood is one of the things most desired by Kindred, and a thing they cannot freely have. Thus, it is a coveted gift and a powerful tool in securing alliances.

Vampire populations used to hover around one per 100.000 mortals, but tonight – who can say? Some cities, like London, are almost empty after Second Inquisition crackdowns and others are hives of thin-blood activity.

THE FOURTH TRADITION: THE ACCOUNTING

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

Tonight, release into the Camarilla is more a question of initiation than anything else. If a childe does not have what it takes to join the elite, they are thrown to the Anarchs, to be hunted and stepped on like the rest of the unbound, if not destroyed outright. Childer who are accepted, but escape from oppressive sires are still their responsibility, so the maker better find their wayward progeny fast. And punish them.

THE FIFTH TRADITION: HOSPITALITY

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

In an age of spy games and isolated city domains this tradition is becoming polarized in its enforcement. Keeping track of who is in your city is a daunting task in the era of the refugee and the global citizen, and some princes are actively backing harsh immigration policies, building walls, or infiltrating border controls just to keep up. Princes usually either give up on enforcing this law or do it draconically with mortal assistance.

THE SIXTH TRADITION: DESTRUCTION

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

The Blood Hunt is the ultimate punishment in Vampire society. Normally the destruction of another Kindred is seen as a cardinal sin, but anyone can hunt and kill those that are named the targets of *lex talionis,* the law of retaliation. Even the thin-blooded, the Anarchs, and the independents are invited to the murder party. Anything goes in the Blood Hunt, and if the one who kills the target drinks it dry and claims a part of their power – the terrible crime of diablerie – so be it. Helping a Blood Hunt is a good way into the Camarilla's graces, so joining one is often frowned upon by Anarchs.

Kindred Fashion

Black is still the new black. Feeding is messy and bloodstains are easier to hide on dark fabrics. It is that simple. Toreador tastemakers in the fashion industry return to black each season for this very reason. This means light-colored clothes, especially white, become status symbols. A Brujah in a white tracksuit signals "I'm so skilled I don't spill a drop." But wearing light colors is always a risk, and many Kindred consider the practice as asking for trouble, no matter how tight their blood-drinking game is.

Fashion is a secret language. Just like mortals, Kindred signal affiliation, attitude, and ideology through their dress, both in the street and in Elysium. A rose print dress screams "I'm a diva" to those who know about clan iconography, and attire made from trash and rags marks you as a Nosferatu – or possibly a Malkavian. A subtle Edwardian cut to the jacket or pullover you wear among mortals hints at your age, and the tenderly preserved 1905 dress you wear to court tells neonates to respect their elders.

Kindred dress very differently in the street and in Elysium. In public, the Masquerade is on, and looking like an antiquated royal is usually a very bad idea. Vampires are stealth hunters. They blend in with their prey. Most are masked with a human cover, and all have a pattern of predation. These two factors dictate their street look. A Sandman burglar wears trainers and black Adidas with a hoodie, but a leech with the same modus operandi who feeds from a psych-ward dresses like an orderly. A scene queen stalking the psychobilly scene spends an hour every evening on their pompadour and tattoos, while a minimal techno fiend would never dream of wearing a band T-shirt and has daymares about not getting into Berghain. Only the handful of Kindred who still stalk the goth scene dress like "vampires" in public.

Elysiums and havens are a whole other story. In these no-Masquerade areas the Kindred flaunt their age and monstrous nature. Here the complex neo-feudal codes of their society rule, and the harpies wear Elizabethan dresses or haute couture creations that would make Lady Gaga gasp for breath. It's all part of the status game. Arriving from the street into the lair of an elder is a humbling experience – no less so, if the guest kneels in their black jeans and T-shirt before an ageless monster in a chalk-white dress made from human skin.

Anarchs tend to despise the need for embellishment as a typical Camarilla thing, instead staying true to a single style, gradually changing through the decades: a modern street interpretation of what they are and their personal history, carefully maintaining their human mask. Baggy hip-hop fashion with memento mori bling and woodcut style tattoos recall the 1500s for the Landsknecht. A World War II bomber jacket for the rabble taxi driver with a history. Crust punk rivet armor for the Mongol Gangrel warlord. Most wear perfectly ordinary everynight street clothes with hint at their nature understood only by those who know exactly what to look for.

ICONOGRAPHY

A cracked mirror left at the scene of the crime. A cross-like ankh marking the spine of a book. A warped tragedy mask spray painted on a tarp tent in Skid Row. The broken Anarchy (A), upside down, tattooed on a biker's neck. Or wait, are those swords?

Every subculture and secret society has its own ever-evolving language of signs and symbols, and the Kindred are no exception. The marks of the Antediluvians and their bloodlines have been shaped in angular cuneiform, drawn from the broken imagination of a child from Styria, and sketched on empty plates at the seats of unnamed conclave feasts. From the dawn of time, clan and sect heraldry has evolved into a myriad localized and personalized forms, but the themes and core symbology are as never-dying as the Kindred themselves. The heraldry of noble divas in the late middle ages (not yet named Toreador – the word was coined by Bizet in his 1877 libretto for *Carmen* and promptly appropriated), featured a rose, the Ventrue kings of Britannia have always held scepters, and a mask of some form has been associated with the horrors since before the rise of Greek tragedy.

The new clan and sect symbols presented in this book have not been designed by some undead art director for universal use among the clans. Nor were the symbols that preceded them. The new variants do however reflect some of the changes in undead society. The Ventrue of the 21st century often add a sword to their scepter, marking them as the Clan of Kings at war with the Anarchs and the Second Inquisition; the Tremere symbol has evolved to new complexity after the fall of the Pyramid, and the mirror of the Malkavians is looking back at them. In the reality of the World of Darkness, the clan and sect symbols are seldom used exactly as they are shown in this book.

One Toreador wears a crown of roses, another has fresh petals decorating her dress, a third wears a Victorian style brooch shaped like a long-stemmed rose, a fourth a navelpiercing designed to be a more abstracted rose with a shorter, curled stem. No clan mark is ever invalidated, and the Kindred who got inked in the early 90's wear their old-school colors as proudly as those who branded themselves with a new interpretation of the symbols yesterday. In your game you are well served by abstracting the iconography to its core. If you keep it simple, you will be able to find hints of it on punk album covers and in renaissance paintings and radical street art – blood-red lipstick traces left through art history by our immortal masters.

The Anarch Movement

The revolution against the Camarilla is as old as the sect itself. Originally known as the Anarch Revolt, in recent decades it has grown vastly, as younger Kindred find it hard to understand why they should follow the dictates of elders who seem perfectly happy to throw them to the Second Inquisition if need be.

The unbound are all those vampires who fall outside the Camarilla. The Anarch Movement in its various forms is a subset of the unbound and also their most visible manifestation. Many seek to escape from the Camarilla's control by hiding. But the Anarchs have decided to fight back, attempting to conquer and control domains originally held by those who would claim themselves their masters. And why not? The Camarilla's elders are being called to the Middle East by the Beckoning, and the Second Inquisition has destroyed princes and primogen all over the world.

The number of elders dwindle while there is a new crop of hungry, ambitious Anarch licks every year.

The word on the street is revolution. No more compromises, no more politics, no more trying to make deals with the Camarilla. The Movement has finally escaped the centuries-long lethargy it fell into after the Convention of Thorns and the formation of the Sabbat, but that time is now over. The Anarchs have remembered how to fight, galvanized by the Camarilla's great betrayal in being at fault for the Second Inquisition.

The root causes of Anarch discontent are not hard to find. Many Camarilla princes like to style themselves as enlightened and just rulers who benevolently look after the welfare of all Kindred. The experience of the neonate-turned-Anarch is very different. Once you've been told you can only feed in the warehouse district, your sire has been executed for obscure violations of Camarilla law, and the Sheriff has murdered your mortal mother because she was a "threat to the Masquerade," princely rhetoric starts to ring hollow.

The Movement is different in each city. Sometimes an Anarch city has a ruler called a baron. More commonly, it is led by gangs who each have their own territories. Some cities are currently divided between the Anarchs and the Camarilla – both sides itching to take over.

Where the Camarilla influences human society from the outside, the Anarchs have burrowed deep inside. Many maintain mortal identities, perhaps even families and jobs. This makes them simultaneously more vulnerable and more secure. Vulnerable because they are in contact with their surroundings every night, and sure to make mistakes. Secure because the Anarch is never the vampire lord in a mansion on the hill. They're the DJ in the nightclub, the terrifying cop from internal affairs, the junkie creeping outside your window.

What motivates the Anarch Movement most of all is the scent of victory. For the first time in centuries, it feels as if it might be possible to topple the Princes. If the old order can collapse in Berlin, it can collapse anywhere!

The Autarkis

Even in a city like Paris, dominated by the Camarilla, many Kindred remain unbound and in hiding from their cousins. Their stories are either so old that the sects seem like passing trends to them or so fresh that they are still busy nursing connections to the people and principles that mattered to them in life. They are *autarkis*, outside society.

In Yerevan, Armenia, any attempt by the Camarilla to establish a prince or primogen council ends with a rosewood box of ashes sent to a poste restante address in Tbilisi. In New York, there are about fifty Kindred that simply refuse to align themselves to any cause. Their ambitions lie with protecting their own bloodlines and ethnic communities (something to do with a terrible mistake made on Ellis Island). The Camarilla does not have a patent on order. Their Traditions were custom long before they became law, and even the autarkis who keep their head down and stay out of politics abide by them, or at least variants of them. Just try walking into Little Odessa without making the steam room on Brighton Beach Avenue and kissing the ring of Yurgi your first priority.

So no, not every "prince" is Camarilla or Anarch. One domain is controlled by a clan, another by a group of faceless conspirators, a third by no one at all, a fourth by a revenant playing their master's strings, and so on. For the determined Kindred there is always a way out, and the underground is rife with strong personalities uninterested in pre-determined laws and monthly meetings in Elysium. When all is in flux, you cannot expect every creature to be accounted for or adhering to rules that you know. The autarkis and the unbound are a reminder that the Kindred are unique monsters, not nations, armies, or religions.

Endings and Beginnings

Mere years after the beginning of the War on Terror, the Camarilla finds itself in a desperate situation. Thousands of Kindred have made it onto the NSEERS and other watchlists established by Homeland Security in the United States. In 2007, just after the passing of the "Protect America Act" and joining the still classified "Project PRIS," The Vatican's Secret Service (The Entity), the CIA, and the NSA launch a major offensive. They do so covertly, backed by the mundane might of the largest counter-terrorist agencies on the planet. More than a thousand Kindred are killed in the space of three months.

Very few of the strikes are reported as lethal to the public. Many are labelled "arrests," others are hidden as gang violence, the worst even more odiously as Islamic terror attacks. The Vatican-SOCOM destruction of the Vienna Prime Chantry in 2008 officially remains a "terrorist atrocity" credited to the Islamic Jihad Union. Only the most reclusive autarkis and Inconnu are unaffected. The game is up, the use of surveillance and high technology has blown up in the face of the Camarilla, and they are caught in the worst crisis since the Convention of Thorns and the creation of the sect itself. The Second Inquisition has begun.

In response the Camarilla orders the first step, the Wipe: older Nosferatu hackers dismantle their servers, taking SchreckNET apart to start vacuuming as much Kindred communication as they possibly can from the web.

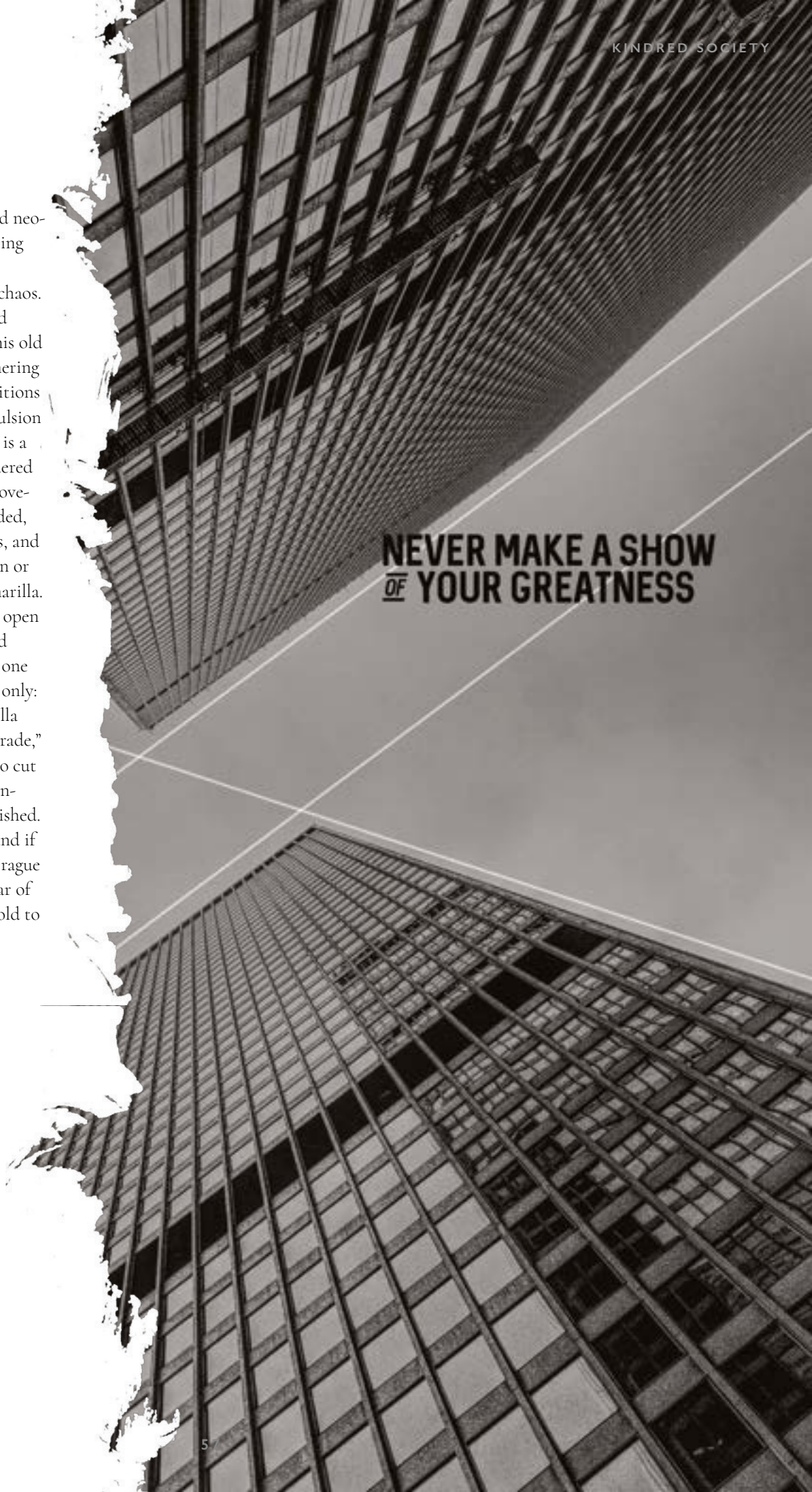
The second step is a Camarilla-wide edict, spread by word of mouth as well as a last coded transmission on Kindred communication channels. Any Kindred caught contacting another online will be removed from the protection of the Camarilla and declared disloyal, with the threat of the Blood Hunt hanging over them if the communication is deemed to compromise the Masquerade.

The third step is the gathering of the first global conclaves held in a century. Because of the difficulties of travel in the wake of the Inquisition, only representatives of primogen and princes are expected to attend. One convention is held in Chicago, the greatest Camarilla city in the US, the other in the neutral city of Prague. The Convention of Prague almost devolves into civil war as the Anarch faction claims that the Camarilla elite and their meddling with federal and national governments are to blame for the Inquisition, while the Camarilla point to the gung-ho

fashion in which Anarchs and neonates in general have been using the internet.

The Convention ends in chaos. Theo Bell, Brujah Archon and Camarilla loyalist, executes his old master before a stunned gathering of peers. The Camarilla Traditions are changed forever. The expulsion of the Anarchs from the sect is a fact. Anarchs are now considered anyone affiliated with the Movement as well as all thin-blooded, caitiff, and autarkis vampires, and no Kindred of 13th generation or lower is welcome in the Camarilla.

For a second it looks like open war will break out. In the end the Anarchs agree to uphold one Tradition and one Tradition only: the Masquerade. The Camarilla establishes a "second masquerade," dictating that members are to cut all ties with non-initiated Kindred. A shaky peace is established. But tensions are mounting, and if recent events in Berlin and Prague are anything to go by, the War of Ages is about to turn from cold to hot ■



LEXICON OF THE DAMNED

ALLEYCAT (VULGAR): a vampire who keeps no permanent haven, but sleeps in a different location each night. This term also refers to a vampire who feeds exclusively from the homeless, vagrants, and other elements of low society. See *footpad*.

THE AMARANTH (ARCHAIC): the act of consuming another Kindred's blood. See *diablerie*.

THE ANARCH MOVEMENT: a vampire sect that opposes the tyranny of elders and has placed itself outside the secret society of the Camarilla.

ANCILLA: a vampire who has proven themselves, ranking between the elders and the neonates. Plural: ancillae.

ANTEDILUVIAN: a member of the dreaded third generation.

AUTARKIS (ARCHAIC): See *unbound*.

BANKING (VULGAR): the practice of "withdrawing" blood from blood banks, hospital reserves, or the dead and dying. This blood has little taste, though it will sustain a vampire. Elder Kindred eschew this base indulgence. A Kindred who engages in this practice is known as a *banker*.

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

THE BEAST: the inchoate drives and urges that threaten to turn a vampire into a mindless, ravening monster.

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

BLISTER (VULGAR): a vampire "Typhoid Mary" who contracts a mortal disease and spreads it to each vessel upon whom they feed.

THE BLOOD: the supernatural, semi-sentient Blood of a vampire, as opposed to mortal or animal blood. Synonymous with *vitae*.

BLOOD BOND: a mystical power relationship between two individual vampires, where one has partaken of the other's Blood thrice; accepting Blood from a vampire is an acknowledgment of their mastery.

BLOOD DOLL (VULGAR): a mortal who freely gives their blood to a vampire. Most blood dolls gain a perverse satisfaction from the Kiss, and actively seek out vampires who will take their blood.

BLOOD HUNT: a punishment sentencing a vampire to final death at the fangs of their peers. See *lex talionis*.

BLOOD LEECH (VULGAR): A vampire who feeds upon the vitae of other Cainites, out of necessity or depravity.

BLOODLINE: a vampire's heritage. See *lineage*.

THE BOOK OF NOD: a collection of Kindred legend and history.

BUTTERFLY (VULGAR): one who mingles among the mortal high society elements and feeds exclusively from the famous and wealthy.

CAINITE (ARCHAIC): a vampire; a member of the race of Caine.

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

THE CAMARILLA: a sect of vampires devoted primarily to maintaining the Traditions, particularly that of the Masquerade.

CANAILLE (ARCHAIC): the bovine masses of humanity, especially the uncultured and unsavory. The canaille are viewed primarily as a source of sustenance. See *kine*.

CASANOVA (VULGAR): a vampire who seduces mortals to take their blood, but does not kill them. See *siren*.

CAUCHEMAR (ARCHAIC): see *Sandman*

THE CHANGE (VULGAR): the moment an individual ceases to be

mortal and becomes one of the Kindred.

CHANTRY: the traditional name for the Tremere headquarters in a city, usually part shelter, part library, and part laboratory.

CHASSE (ARCHAIC): the size and quality of a domain or hunting ground.

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

CLAN: a group of vampires who share common characteristics passed on through the Blood. There are 13 known clans, all of which were reputedly founded by members of the third generation.

CONSANGUINEOUS (ARCHAIC): literally "of the same blood," generally denotes lineage.

COTERIE: a small group of Kindred, united by the need for support and sometimes common interests.

THE DAMNED (VULGAR): the race of Cainites; all vampires.

DIABLERIE: the consumption of another Kindred's Blood, to the point of the victim's final death. Vampires may lower their generation permanently through this abhorrent practice.

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

DOMITOR: a ghoul's master; one who gives of their Blood and issues commands.

DONOR (VULGAR): a sarcastic term for vessel, typically human.

DUSKBORN: see thin-blood.

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

ELYSIUM: a place where vampires may gather without fear of harm. Court functions in Elysium are strictly kept apart from mortals and surrounded by secrecy, but the Elysium building itself could be a public museum, a gallery, or club. Berghain is an anarch Elysium. The Louvre is a Camarilla Elysium.

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

FARMER (VULGAR): a mocking term for a vampire who refuses to feed on human blood, instead taking sustenance from animals.

FINAL DEATH: when a vampire ceases to exist, crossing the line from undeath into true death.

FLEDGLING: a newly created vampire, still under their sire's protection.

FOOTPAD (ARCHAIC): one who feeds by assaulting derelicts and others unwanted by society. See *alleycat*.

GEHENNA: the rumored Armageddon when the Antediluvians will rise from their torpor and devour the race of vampires and the world. The Sabbat believe this time is now and have left their traditional domains, fighting the final Gehenna War in the shadow of Middle Eastern conflicts.

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

GENTRY (ARCHAIC): a Kindred who preys in such places as nightclubs, bars, and the red-light district.

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

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

HAVEN: a vampire's "home" or base; where they find sanctuary from the sun.

HEAD (VULGAR): a Kindred who feeds upon those who have imbibed alcohol or drugs, so as to vicariously experience the same

sensations. Those Kindred who prefer individual drugs have their "poison" prefixed to the term head (e.g. meth head, dope head, smack head). See *lush*.

HEADHUNTER (VULGAR): a vampire who hunts and feeds from other Kindred. See *Blood Leech*.

HUMANITAS (ARCHAIC): the extent to which a Kindred still maintains her humanity.

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

THE INCONNU: a sect of vampires who have removed themselves from Kindred concerns and, largely, the Jyhad. Many methuselahs are rumored to exist among the Inconnu.

JUICEBAG OR JUICE BOX (VULGAR): a contemptuous term for mortals, indicating that their sole use is for sustenance.

THE JYHAD: the secret, self-destructive war waged between the generations. Elder vampires manipulate their lesser kin, using them as pawns in a terrible game the rules of which defy comprehension.

KINDRED: the Camarilla term for vampires as a whole, or a single vampire. According to rumor, this term came about in the 15th or 16th century, after the Anarch Revolt.

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

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

LEX TALIONIS (ARCHAIC): the code of the Kindred and the system for punishing transgression; the law of retaliation which is behind the blood hunt. It suggests Hammurabian or Biblical justice — an eye for an eye and punishment in keeping with the grievance.

LICK (VULGAR): a vampire. See *Kindred* and *Cainite*.

LIEN (ARCHAIC): the compliance of the kine in a domain or hunting ground.

THE LIFE (ARCHAIC): a euphemism for mortal blood. Many indred regard this term as affected and effete.

LINEAGE (ARCHAIC): a vampire's bloodline; the Kindred's sire, sire's sire, etc.

LUPINE: a werewolf, the natural and mortal enemy of the vampire race. Plural: lupines.

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

MASK: the mortal cover identity a Kindred needs to maintain to remain hidden among their prey.

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

METHUSELAH: a vampire who has existed for a millennium or more; an elder who no longer participates in Kindred society. Methuselahs are rumored to hail from the fourth and fifth generations.

NEONATE: a young Kindred, recently Embraced but more than a fledgling.

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

PORTILLON (ARCHAIC): the security and level of protection in a domain or hunting ground.

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

PRINCE: a vampire who has claimed a given expanse of

domain as their own, generally a city, and supports that claim against all others. The term can refer to a Kindred of either sex. In Anarch cities they are sometimes called *Barons*.

PROGENY: all of a given vampire's childer collectively.

THE RACK (VULGAR): the hunting ground of choice, including bars, nightclubs, drug dens, and other bacchanalian locales, where mortals go missing all the time. See *Papillon*.

RAKE (VULGAR): a habitual visitor to the Rack, especially in the interests of feeding.

REGNANT: a Kindred who holds a Blood Bond over another.

RETAINER: a human who serves a vampiric master. Kindred rarely go without at least a few of these mortals, both for convenience and protection.

THE SABBAT: a sect of vampires that rejects humanity, embracing their monstrous nature. They are currently believed to be engaged in the Gehenna War, having left or been driven out of their holdings in the West.

SANDMAN (VULGAR): a vampire who feeds only upon sleeping victims.

THE SECOND INQUISITION: a collective name among vampires for the recent coordinated efforts of intelligence agencies to combat the Kindred as if they were a terrorist threat. Few individual agents understand what they are fighting and the intra agency collaboration codenamed FIRST-LIGHT places enormous import on keeping their operations secret and disguised as ordinary anti-terrorist action.

SECT: a group of vampires arguably united under a common philosophy. The two most widely known Sects currently populating the night are the Camarilla and the Anarch Movement.

SIRE: a vampire's begetter; the Kindred who created them.

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

SLUMMING (VULGAR): the practice of feeding from derelicts, the homeless, and other dregs of society; one who does this regularly is known as a slummer.

TEASE (VULGAR): See *casanova* and *siren*.

THIN-BLOOD: a vampire of the 14th or 15th generation (and possible above) who does not experience the curse of Caine in the same way as other Kindred.

THE THIRD MORTAL (ARCHAIC): Caine, who was cast out and became the first vampire.

THRALL: someone under the effects of a Blood Bond, having drunk another Kindred's Blood thrice.

TURF (VULGAR): a modern affectation used in reference to a domain.

UNBOUND: A vampire who remains outside the larger Kindred society of a given city, either by ignorance or choice. Usually considered an Anarch by members of the Camarilla, though most unbound have nothing to do with the Movement.

VEGAN: a contemptuous term for one who drinks exclusively from animals. See *farmer*.

VESSEL: a source of blood for sustenance or pleasure, primarily mortal.

VITAE (ARCHAIC): the Blood of a vampire.

WHELP (ARCHAIC): a derogatory term for a young Kindred, originally used with exclusive reference to one's own progeny.

WHIG (ARCHAIC): a contemptuous term for a vampire who possesses an interest in mortal trends and fashions.

WIGHT: a vampire lost to the Beast, slave to the will of the Blood.

WITCH-HUNTER (ARCHAIC): a mortal who hunts down and destroys vampires and other supernatural beings.

CLANS

O, could ye know the sequel
From such a deed atrocious,
E'en would thy hate ferocious
Bid me in horror stay.
Monster without an equal,
And canst thou nought but slay?

–GAETANO DONIZETTI, *LUCREZIA BORGIA*

According to Kindred mythology, Caine sired three childer, who in turn sired childer themselves. This third generation came into being before the Great Flood – and some say it was their sins that called it down. The survivors, known as the Antediluvians, became the progenitors of the modem clans. Each Antediluvian's Blood endures in their descendants, feeding the common powers, weaknesses, and perhaps even the behaviors and beliefs of the Kindred who belong to the clan they begat.

Tonight, there are 13 distinct clans along with innumerable minor bloodlines as well as the Caitiff and thin-bloods, who prouder and more powerful lineages reject. Two of the 13 (Lasombra and Tzimisce) have fallen under the shadow of the Sabbat. Two (Giovanni and Ravnos) have been driven nearly extinct outside their ancestral strongholds by enemies mortal and sorcerous. Another two (Banu Haqim and the Setite Ministry) remain in limbo between the Gehenna warzone and the dubious protection of the Camarilla. The final seven continue to maneuver for position and duel for power in the endless night of the Jyhad.

The Learned Clan
Rabble
Punks
Hipsters
Prometheans
Rebels
Philosopher-Kings
Hellenes

Brujah

The dream of the learned clan is a world where all injustice has been eliminated and the living and the undead can coexist in peace. They say it is for love of the mortals that they lead them against their masters. In truth, they may simply rage against a distant or non-existent God they can never fight, against a curse they can never end. Theirs is a dream that poisons everything it touches. As they infiltrate or instigate revolutions, their hunger and passion ensure that blood will flow, innocents die, and peace never be attained.

Who are the Brujah?

Clan Brujah have always Embraced from the ranks of those sympathetic to counterculture and revolution. They seek out allies who question normative ideas, and recognizing the fire of the oppressed, they gravitate toward the underdog.

Common perception place punks, gang-members, maladjusted immigrants rejected by the society that should protect them, and placard-carrying and Molotov-wielding rioters among the Brujah. While the clan definitely includes substantial numbers of vocal and visible outsiders, their desire for rebellion reaches as deep as the fraudster ripping off his own company, the lawyer representing the poor pro bono, the neo-Nazi claiming to be "alt-right," and the basement-dweller downloading thousands of movies illegally for redistribution on streaming sites. Fledglings Embraced to fight and protest are commonly known as rabble.

The Brujah can be passionate fighters but also critical thinkers; the clan activists are often very different from the clan theorists. On many occasions, the latter are Embraced from former gender studies or sociology students, those who have survived near-death experiences, and people who have in other ways suffered and endured great personal loss. The philosophical Brujah, known as Hellenes, believe the best method of dismantling the establishment is to understand the social and cultural systems that allow it to exist in the first place.

Brujah Archetypes

CANCER IN THE SYSTEM

This Kindred exists as a cog in a corrupt system. They may be a night worker for a mortal corporation known for treating its employees like dirt, a staffer in a broken political party, or one of the remaining Brujah in the

Camarilla. They work to bring the system down from within, maybe hoping to replace it with something better, but often having the process of rebuilding as the last of their priorities.

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

The Brujah have always strived for progress in Kindred society. Many of them were progressives in life and follow the same path in undeath. The voice of the people might be a former feminist activist, eco-warrior, or an anti-capitalist protester who channels their passion into speaking out against the Ventrue and Toreador or fomenting political unrest among mortals. Their ambitions may come back to hurt their clan, but sometimes they form the core of revolutionary movements.

BLOOD WORSHIPPER

The Brujah were once considered a High Clan, superior to most and respected by all. Some Brujah still believe their Blood is stronger than that of other clans, and that they have the right to apply their doctrine on others. Brujah who uphold this form of blood idolatry often come from fundamentalist backgrounds, right-wing groups, and the academic elite.

TROLLING PUNK

Clan Brujah includes many vocal and physical activists who follow the zeitgeist uncritically, reveling in their righteousness. The trolling punk cares about the fight, not the cause. They are an aggressor who provokes confrontation with minority groups, a squatter who just wants to party to piss off the police, or a fourth-wave token "feminist" who spent more of their mortal time attacking other feminists and their allies than coordinating responses to oppression. Short-term action yields massive results, but does not always benefit the Brujah.

MONSTER IN DISGUISE

The Brujah claim there is no clan closer bonded to humanity than their own, which is why they exhibit such fiery passions. But some take it further than that, and strive to live like mortals by keeping up to date with modern culture, forming relationships, and building families. The payoff for this behavior is a startling duality of dream and reality. The Beast will not be denied for long, and undead family men and working women must slip away from their fake lives ever so often to avoid seeing red, returning only after they have satiated their dangerous urges.

Disciplines

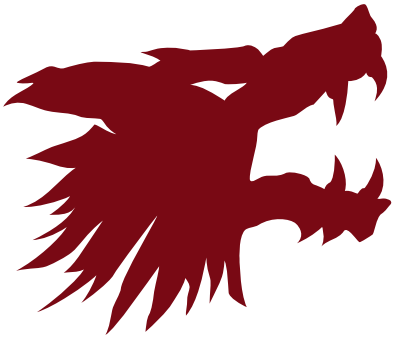
Celerity: Brujah use Celerity to strike fast and escape uprisings they have started. They hunt with it to snatch vessels from the streets, feeding from them savagely, or to rapidly dispose of a mortal before vanishing into the night.

Potence: Brujah use Potence as a devastating weapon, cutting short any confrontation with destructive finality. Though the clan preaches a connection to humanity, its members often take what they want by force, as it is simpler to hold a kine in place or crack their skull open and drink its insides than to negotiate for a mouthful of blood.

Presence: Brujah use Presence to win the hearts of the crowd, turn a threatening mob against itself, or send a dangerous opponent fleeing into the night. Brujah intellectuals prefer feeding with Presence to convince vessels to give up their blood voluntarily. Other clan members use Presence to terrify their prey, as it apparently adds "an exquisite, bold taste" and fuels the less subtle powers of their curse.

Bane

The Blood of the Brujah simmers with barely contained rage, exploding at the slightest provocation. Subtract dice equal to the Bane Severity of the Brujah from any roll to resist fury frenzy. This cannot take the pool below one die ■



GANGREL

The Clan of the Beast
Animals
Ferals
Savages
Barbarians
Outcasts
Wolves
Strays

A hunger older than mankind burns inside the wolves. When other Kindred curse their appetites and choose the gilded cage of the city and the leash of social hierarchy, the wolves accept the Beast as a part of themselves and run free. Crossing borders between species, nations, and domains with the ease of perfect predators, they belong to the wild and the wild belongs to them. To think of them as noble savages is perilous, as the animals have little respect for the arrogance of civilization, and only the strongest survive their bloody hunts and savage initiations. Trading stories of war and the secret histories of their kind around campfires lit with the bones of their oppressors, they have turned their backs on the Camarilla and fight tooth and claw to escape the endless plots of their fellow Kindred.

Yeah, I know what you're thinking. I see your shoulders hunched, your brow furrowed, your hair on end. "Rudi," you're thinking, "have you brought me out to the projects just to dust me?"

No, young blood. We're not meeting in the shittiest part of the city so I can snap your head off or for you to take in

the view. This place is the wilderness we get these nights. In your grandsire's time, you might have been stalking the woods and plains while the Ventrue ran the cities. But that time's gone. They're losing control of their cities, and we are taking control of the ways in and out. This is your territory now, and you won't let it go without the pack's say-so.

You've got to prove your worth in the Clan of the Beast. We're not some exclusive club for snobs and elitists, but we believe in deeds over words and in the strength of the pack and the unity of family. If you defend our haven, take out one of our enemies, bring us the skull of a Ravnos or shapeshifter, or just humiliate the Prince by trashing her favorite car, you'll be good by our standards. It doesn't take more than that. Just remember that lone wolves, as cool as they seem, get picked off first.

We're more than just glorified bikers, but I accept the analogy. We don't put down roots, we take initiation into our group seriously, and we accept no masters. Your grandsire? He or she knelt before some blue blood and learned to take it like a bitch. You? If you kneel, I'll kill you myself.

Who are the Gangrel?

Clan Gangrel are outcasts, wanderers, rogues, and hunters. They make havens in the poorest parts of the city and feel no shame for doing so. They claim few domains as their own but defer to no prince. If a feral enters a city, the prince will either accept it or have to fight the feral to get them to back down.

Gangrel Embrace from the ranks of survivors and fighters: leaders of prison crews and gangs, explorers (urban and otherwise), and any kine who sees the world as something to traverse instead of something to hide from. They care not for looks or title, but for accomplishment and reputation. A childe may be a challenge, but the clan follows rituals and initiations to ensure the fledgling is worth the time. Success means a new, honored member of the clan. Failure means simply a forgettable reject or a pile of ash.

Any mortal capable of projecting their will onto others, leading a group from disaster to success, or fighting impossible odds draws the clan's attention. This fact results in a symptom known as "too many chiefs," when the clan consists of more leaders than followers. Customs encourage fights for dominance, but these rarely last until final death, as Gangrel elders advocate against taking competition for authority personally, instead encouraging a culture of healthy rivalry.

Gangrel Archetypes

UNCAGED JAILBIRD

This Kindred spent most of their mortal life in prison or was once incarcerated for a severe crime. Such a past conveys a reputation and a jaded attitude toward authority leavened with a desperate taste for freedom and opportunity to exercise liberties formerly denied them.

ADVENTURER

The Gangrel are no strangers to the wild, spending much of their time beyond city limits and communing with creatures and clans outside those in the Camarilla. In life and undeath, the adventurer has seen and experienced something few could comprehend. They have walked from place to place, spending their life on the road, living only by wits, a stranger's kindness, and a rich curiosity. This wolf has no fear of the path ahead, wherever it might lead.

FOLK FAVORITE

Clan Gangrel practice the traditions of storytelling around the fire, although they are the furthest from boy scouts. Whether around a burning barrel, tire fire, or at a great convocation, this animal knows the songs and the stories to celebrate the names of fallen heroes and enemies who must never be forgotten. In their mortal lives they might have been singers, entertainers, or independent artists.

DIRECTOR OF THE BOARD

This Gangrel believes in power wielded not merely with physical blows, but through social presence, authority over others, and command of a group of people such as a club or a corporation. The boardroom Gangrel is an alpha who thrives on causing fear and respect, who does not play by the rules, and who is capable of commanding others to perform the most unethical actions with threats of personal and professional losses. They stalk their prey through office corridors at night and in five-star hotels paid by company card.

UNREPENTANT BEAST

The Gangrel relish their animal features and feral natures, and many behave as wild beasts do – leading unlives dominated by immediate physical drives and desires. The unrepentant beast behaved like an animal already before the Embrace. Perhaps they were a predatory criminal or an individual who used legal means to let out their dangerous desires. As a vampire, they are little better.

Disciplines

Animalism: A Gangrel can use Animalism to take on an animal companion, sometimes called a famulus. The animal companion can be used for hunting, spying, and attacking. Some Gangrel will turn pets on their owners, hound vagrants with packs of dogs, or lure strays to them for a quick feeding.

Fortitude: As longtime bodyguards and soldiers for the other clans, the Gangrel have benefited hugely from Fortitude. The Discipline can give them a sense of fearlessness, as it allows them to hunt across harsh terrain and take bullets and knife blades without worry. The Gangrel who emphasize growth in Fortitude likely expects a lot of harm to come their way.

Protean: Gangrel are known for their mastery of Protean, as few other clans possess its gifts. Straddling the line between vampirism and shapeshifting, the Discipline allows a Gangrel to take on the physical properties of another creature, or in other ways change their physical shape. Gangrel who feed as animals often consider this the truest, or at least the best, of kills.

Bane

Gangrel relate to their Beast much as other Kindred relate to the Gangrel: suspicious partnership. In frenzy, Gangrel gain one or more animal features: a physical trait, a smell, or a behavioral tic. These features last for one more night afterward, lingering like a hangover following debauchery. Each feature reduces one Attribute by 1 point – the Storyteller may decide that a forked tongue or bearlike musk reduces Charisma, while batlike ears reduce Resolve ("all those distracting sounds"). If nothing immediately occurs to you, the feature reduces Intelligence or Manipulation.

The number of features a Gangrel manifests equals their Bane Severity. If your character Rides the Wave of their frenzy (see p. 219) you can choose only one feature to manifest, thus taking only one penalty to their Attributes ■

I MUST
THE VOICES

Malkavian

The Clan of the Moon
Lunatics
Madmen
Jesters
Oracles
Dervishes
Visionaries
Children of Malkav

Psychologists would diagnose the children of Malkav with schizophrenia, depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Sometimes all at once. In reality, they have all of these things and none. Like the "wise madmen" of poetry their derangement stems from seeing too much of the world at once, from understanding too deeply, and feeling emotions that are too strong to bear. They self-medicate with blood, but that is just a temporary solution.

"We're not clowns, Jeanette. We're not here to amuse the other Kindred."

"Baloney. We're here to make them laugh, make them cry, make them sticky with delight or embarrassment..."

"You drag our club through the muck. Our clan! Time was, we were the Kindred the others went to for advice, foresight, strategies in times of war."

"Pull that stick outta your ass, Therese. Unless you like it up there. We've always been jesters."

"Jesters in times gone by assessed the court and delivered their findings to the Prince."

"And so do we! God. You see my skirt and makeup, and just think 'slut,' don't you?"

"Of course. Are you not?"

"Yeah, but how many nuggets of gold do you think I pried from the ghoul I was screwing, the repressed warlock I loosened up, or Prince LaCroix when he was bouncing up and down on my love gun? Bang. Bang."

"You… God, you disgust me. I acquire intelligence through visions, through sampling the blood, through debate, business transaction, reading emotions, drawing out uncomfortable truths…"

"You wear the suit, I wear the stockings. We're mentally impaired as a clan, but hell, if it allows us to both lower our inhibitions and get a little dirty to do what must be done, I say bring on the personality disorders. It's like a cocktail in my head."

"There is nothing wrong with me. You're the one with the special needs."

"Oh, you need your daddy just as much as I do."

"Shut up. Shut up. For one night, could you go without mentioning that we're all headcases and instead focus on what we accomplish?"

"Sorry, sis. I guess there's two sides to being a Malkavian. The visionary and the maniac. We're a good team!"

"I hate you."

"You hate us."

"We hate us."

"I love you."

"I love me too."

Who are the Malkavians?

It has long been the misconception that few Kindred families are as disparate as the Clan of the Moon. Other clans see them and reason, "they are each mad, so why should their respective origins matter?" To the Malkavians, origins matter a great deal. Though sires may pick childer from all walks of life, age groups, ethnicities, and genders, every mortal selected for the Embrace possesses something only visible to a Malkavian.

One of the gifts the Malkavians look for in a mortal is what they call "second sight." If a person interprets dreams, can perceive spirits, or unerringly predicts future events, the Malkavians take notice. Such a person acts as a beacon, calling out to every member of the clan that sees them.

Another gift revered by the Malkavians, is that of "insight." A high level of empathy, finely-tuned knowledge of complex subject matter, or just an obsessive drive to pursue the answers to philosophical questions each appeal to the clan. As insight is often tied to profession, the clan benefits from a range of academics and doctors – especially therapists and psychologists.

Finally, the Clan of the Moon are fascinated by the "broken" – individuals who have been changed by traumatic experiences or who were simply born slightly detached from themselves and the rest of society. To the Malkavians, they are but one gentle push away from having access to an altogether different plane of reality. Rather than treating them as burdens, the clan sees them as having great potential.

All Malkavians suffer mental illness following the Embrace – sometimes accentuating an existing condition, other times adding a new dimension to their instability. As if their thoughts and actions were based on otherworldly logic, there seems to be no knowing when their condition will manifest destructively or when it will offer important perspectives where such were previously lacking. As a rule, no other Kindred feels completely comfortable around a known Malkavian, often viewing them as unpredictable maniacs whose flashes of insight are rarely worth the fits of insanity.

Some Malkavians claim there is a common factor to their madness; that they are all psychically linked through a communal wavelength, a shared consciousness of sorts. Those who are aware of its existence refer to it as the cobweb or, more recently, the madness network.

Malkavian Archetypes

INFLUENCING PRESENCE

This visionary is addicted to the thrill of reinventing and presenting themselves in different ways, thriving on the attention they get through the stories they tell. They seek to influence others through words, images, or the use of their Disciplines – whether it be for the purpose of pleasure, to forget their problems, or to comply with the whispers of the cobweb. As a mortal they might have had an extended network of followers on social media or led the destructive life of the mythomaniac.

MEDIUM

The ability to sense and register more than any other Kindred

afflicts the members of Clan Malkavian with its infamous instability but it can also reward them with great insight. Some find ways to use and benefit from their curse openly without breaching the Masquerade, such as the medium who reveals fictitious or existing spirits attached to objects, areas, and individuals – to help the grieving or for personal gain.

BAD ANALYST

Some Malkavians instinctively know how to pick apart and reassemble minds, whatever state they are in. Maybe the analyst was a therapist in life, excelling in helping others through personal crises. Or maybe they use the experiences of their own agonized psyche as a guiding light, prying open the minds of their patients and victims with the purpose of finally healing themselves. The analyst is respected as well as

feared for their ability to travel the labyrinth of the mind – and trap another inside it.

FANATIC

Malkavians are prone to fanaticism fueled by mental instability. Fanatics each have one purpose that consumes most of their existence. This could be anything from a strong religious or political convictions to an immense passion for detective novels or 9/11 conspiracy theories. Devoted to this one passion, it is safe to say the fanatic knows almost all the details and information there is to obtain about it.

PURE BLOOD ADDICT

Defined by bizarre insight and fringe beliefs, many Malkavians feel that certain blood calms their symptoms or derangements. For the blood addict, this has become a constant goal and all they think of. In life, they abused prescription drugs, had hypochondria, or was perhaps a gourmand, and now they cannot help but drink and drink until the gnawing noises quiet down or the anxiety lessens. They know which vessels to pick to obtain the best, most filling blood, and they take every meal seriously.

Disciplines

Auspex: Malkavians use Auspex to enhance their senses, strengthening their sight or hearing to a supernatural level, or to determine a mortal's fears, illusions, and mental weaknesses, so they can play on them horribly as they prepare to feed. Many a Malkavian has persuaded a vessel to "tell them all about it," before draining their weeping victim not ten minutes later.

Dominate: Some Malkavians use Dominate to lift all distractions from a victim's mind, completely enthralling them; others use the Discipline to draw forth or inflict psychoses, through the infamous variant known as Dementation. While some do it mainly for the sake of experimentation, getting into a mortal's head and convincing them that they want to give up their blood greatly assists the clan in surviving night to night.

Obfuscate: The Malkavians do not advertise their use of Obfuscate, conveniently allowing many Kindred to forget they even have access to this Discipline. What they use it for differs vastly. While some Malkavians might want to observe the court from secluded corners or play tricks on their prince, others secrete themselves in the houses, wards, and care homes of the kine, watching the sleeping faces before discreetly feeding.

Bane

Afflicted by their lineage, all Malkavians are cursed with at least one type of mental derangement. Depending on their history and the state of their mind at death, they may experience delusions, visions of terrible clarity, or something entirely different.

When the Malkavian suffers a Bestial Failure or a Compulsion, their curse comes to the fore. Suffer a penalty equal to your character's Bane Severity to one category of dice pools (Physical, Social, or Mental) for the entire scene. This is in addition to any penalties incurred by Compulsions.

You and the Storyteller decide the type of penalty and the exact nature of the character's affliction during character creation ■

Example:

Hector decides that his character, a Malkavian known as Gizzard, sometimes experiences physical sensations as voices rather than feeling them. When this affliction comes to the fore, he suffers a -1 penalty (his Bane Severity is 1) to all Physical pools as the voices become too distracting. Naturally, this is also roleplayed.

Horrors
The Clan of the Hidden
Sewer Rats
Lepers
Hives
Carnies
Scabs
Kapos
Vagrants
Orloks

Nosferatu

For the Nosferatu the Embrace is a journey through abjection, as the Blood of the horror gradually deforms the struggling tissues of the human body into grotesque abominations. Weeks of pain result in deformities similar to terrible birth defects, cancer growths, crippling injuries, and leper-like sores. Those who endure it find themselves as monstrous echoes of Murnau's silver-screen vision. But perhaps pain and humiliation teaches compassion. The Nosferatu, as they jokingly call themselves, are the most humane of the Kindred, wearing their curse on the outside rather than the inside. To blend in, some call on the Blood to wear the borrowed faces of their victims or disappear from sight, while others rely on prosthetics and heavy make-up.

I guess those inquisitorial cunts can be thankful to the good Lord above for the curse we Nosferatu bear. Of all their targets, we're the easiest to identify. It's not like my face is a subtle examination in horror. Yeah, once they learned to look at us without fleeing, they started posing a few problems. Still, what's fucking new? If we weren't hunted by our betters, by mortals, shapeshifters, or our ancestors, we'd come up with something else to run away from.

Does that make us cowards or doomed to final death? No, on both counts. Of all the clans, we're the most likely to survive this new purge. Roaches and nuclear bombs, baby. We screwed it up with SchreckNET being compromised, but guess who took the brunt of that blast? Not us, because we were long gone by then.

We know to go to ground before the panic starts spreading. Why would we go and try to explain our case in a crowded Elysium used as a hideout when we can just as well send a servant and not risk the anger of our more attractive cousins? No, we'll kindly refuse the outreached

Report #197

"Nosferats" and Collateral Damage

The purpose of this report is to highlight the collateral damage that often occurs when attacking the blankbodies calling themselves "Nosferats." It is worth noting that they maintain company despite their appearances. This company often consists of vagrants, the destitute, illegal drug users, the deformed, and in general, the meek. Too many of our operations have led to the premature expiration of the living among these groups.

The company kept by the Nosferats complicates our operations. The living outcasts tend to show compassions towards this particular strain of the blankbody virus, heightening the risk that many of them will become infected in the future. Yet, we are tasked with defending those who cannot defend themselves.

The Nosferats are undoubtedly bottom feeders in the postmortal hierarchy and associate with those of similar status among the living for this reason. It is my recommendation that we, for the time being, reserve our firepower for greater threats not surrounded by defenseless victims. As there are clear signs that the Nosferats provide their living companions with guidance and protection, we should investigate whether they could provide us with information and weapons for use against their oppressors.

Reports show that Nosferat blankbody communities consist hugely of spies, outcasts, deviants, and those who live on the fringes of society. Their information and communication networks are by all standards impressive, and since the failure of their ARPANET rogue station named "SchreckNET" (see Report #45), they seem to have taken to communicating in code, dead languages and through intermediaries, so far defying our attempts to find their largest common hideouts. Be wary of apprehending those they use as communication relays. Often a Nosferat will pay a living vagrant to act as messenger, but not provide the vagrant with any usable information that could reveal them. Many innocents expired under enhanced interrogation before we concluded that they would not be able to add to our intel.

Be warned. The Nosferats are skilled in the arts of deception, and may pose as harmless homeless individuals, but their bite is as deadly serious as that of any other blankbody. They are not to be trusted.

hands of those who would throw us in the path of danger. And as of right now, that doesn't just mean the Brujah, it means everyone outside our clan.

We wait. We put up walls, take stock, and adapt to the new realities. And that's why we're a clan of survivors because we've learned to like it underground, in sewers, catacombs, and deserted subway stations. Personally, I prefer an abandoned rowhouse basement, while my sire occupies an old bunker, but the concept is the same.

We may not be pretty or able to blend in with the kine. We can't pretend to be anything but degenerate monsters. But you know what? That gives us perspectives every one of those other deluded bastards lacks.

Nosferatu Archetypes

INFORMATION HUB
When the Second Inquisition found SchreckNET, many of the Toreador secretly proposed a toast to the collapse of Clan Nosferatu. The clan lost credibility and many members, but those who endured and flourished had mastered the arts of secure archiving, physically and online. They bolstered their existing bonds with contacts and clients, and steadily regained the trust of Kindred who value a central information hub for research and the exchange of secret messages. In an era when contact and movement between domains grow more precarious by each night, Nosferatu like these have become invaluable. If they can guarantee privacy, they can name their price.

DOMAIN GUMSHOE
Nosferatu make superb investigators as long as they stick to the shadows and wear plenty of layers. The gumshoe is comfortable stalking the streets, darting from doorway to doorway in the rain, and shows no qualms about breaking into homes, havens, or vaults for that precious last piece of the puzzle. Sometimes recruited as domain sheriffs, this Nosferatu emphasizes research and investigation, preferring to take the thinker's route to most answers over violent means. The domain gumshoe likely comes from law enforcement, was an amateur sleuth, or has an academic background.

MORE ANIMAL THAN MAN
This Nosferatu identifies more closely with the creatures scurrying beneath the city or flying through the suburbs at night than with the kine wandering the streets. Maybe a former pest controller, vet, or simply an antisocial individual this Kindred speaks to animals, controls them, and likely acts like one. Some Nosferatu do not limit their animalistic urges to behavior but become literal hives for bugs and nests for rats. They reason that their stomach and lower abdominal cavities were being used for little before, and at least the infestation benefits from the vitae.

HUNTER OF MONSTERS
Having for so long been associated with animals and isolation, many forget that the Nosferatu can smash through a wall, break a spine, or rip a door off its hinges with minimal effort. With many of the Brujah and Gangrel gone from the Camarilla, Nosferatu now exercise their capacity for brutality at much higher rates. Often Embraced from criminal or survivalist stock, such Nosferatu suffer little conscience over beating an enemy to ash.

RAT
The comparison of Nosferatu to rats goes further than sewer-dwelling and extended incisors. History reveals repeated instances when horrors turned on their masters for their own preservation, betrayed their own for a little extra, or attempted to play both sides of a conflict. The rat may be involved in corporate espionage or claim to be Anarch but scurry to their Camarilla prince at the first sign of trouble. Some rats do what they do just to stay alive and are not beyond sympathy.

Disciplines

Animalism: The Nosferatu treasure the Discipline of Animalism for its utility in increasing their spy network, gaining familiars, allowing the delivery of messages, and granting the ability to suddenly swarm an opponent with a horde of rats, bugs, or birds. Animalism also assists the Nosferatu who wishes to feed from animals – it is often easier, and arguably more moral, to summon a pigeon and drain it than to stalk a mortal and feed from their neck.

Obfuscate: The Nosferatu have mixed opinions on Obfuscate, as the Discipline enables them to blend in with others, but also masquerades that which defines their clan – some Nosferatu are proud of their unconcealed monstrosity, while others take every effort to hide it. Regardless of the controversies, Obfuscate is an excellent tool for hunting and feeding, as few other methods allow a sewer rat to interact with the kine.

Potence: Nosferatu use Potence to rapidly neutralize foes. The Nosferatu understand the merit of hit and run, incapacitating a vessel before feeding and fleeing, or breaking the Anarch Baron's head before vaulting away from their hangout. Many Sewer Rats hesitate to use Potence before the kine, as its unfiltered might opposes their deceptions.

Bane

Hideous and vile, all Nosferatu count as having the Repulsive Flaw (-2) and can never increase their rating in the Looks Merit. In addition, any attempt to disguise themselves as human incur a penalty to your dice pool equal to your character's Bane Severity (this includes the Obfuscate powers Mask of a Thousand Faces and Impostor's Guise) ■

Divas
The Clan of the Rose
Degenerates
Artists
Harlots
Arikelites
Hedonists
Sensates
Perverts

Toreador

Cursed by their unbridled sensuality, the divas are obsessed by aesthetic perfection. A fashion model overdosing on a bad batch of heroin, a YouTube clip of a perfectly executed beheading, the dazed eyes of a child who has seen too much, or the reflection of the moon in a pool of blood – these are the kinds of things that make a Toreador lose themselves. They say the first diva finally died in front of their looking glass, unable to tear their gaze away from the image of their face touched by the reflected dawn.

But, to dismiss the Toreador as wanton perverts or shallow artists is the last mistake a Kindred will ever make. Beauty is power, and love can make anyone do just about anything. And that is the promise of the Toreador. They can make even the dead feel something raw, something real.

Now you have fed, it is time for introductions. My name is Carmelita Neillson. I am a doctor. I use that word because you probably won't know what an archaeologist is. I serve my clan – your clan – in unearthing sleeping ancients such as yourself and introducing them to the world as it is tonight.

You seem surprised that a member of the Clan of the Rose would dirty her hands with excavation and study. Let me guess: you thought our clan more suited to parlors, admiring mortal singers, dancers, and artists? It is true, the face of our clan is one of superficial beauty, but we have not lost our core. At its heart, Clan Toreador is the clan of creation. The sculptor dirties her hands with chisel and stone. The painter will accumulate all manner of stains. My calling is in bringing the torpid back to us and asking for their stories. It is my art form.

Clan Toreador has not missed a step since you fell into torpor. We still ride high, leading a sect known as the Camarilla alongside our peers among the

Ventrue and Tremere. Do not believe we take second or third place in that triumvirate. We are the voice, the inspiration, and the soul that binds the sect together.

In these nights, the Toreador are the burning hope for all clans. We are proof that Kindred can be more than slaves to their Beast. Others come to us for guidance and seek to emulate our devotion to beauty and innocence. We teach, but none will master the arts as well as we.

For every true artist, innovator, and great mind in our clan, we have a sycophant, amateur, and vapid beauty. It is as it should be. Everything is beautiful, old one, including the duality we represent. While the others mistake us for preening fools, we work our wonders to make all of Kindred society a better place.

Welcome back to Clan Toreador. The night is ours.

Who are the Toreador?

Clan Toreador has ever preached selectiveness in its rituals of the Embrace. The clan elders stress time and again that the clan requires pioneers among the arts and every kind of avant-garde. The clan is at its strongest when comprised of the freshest thinkers and those who desire experimentation and aesthetic discovery. For this reason, many Toreador emerge from the ranks of accomplished artists, both new and faded. But not all artists need wield a brush: To the Toreador, art encompasses all forms of entertainment and stimulation. The clan courts the greatest actors, singers, writers, dancers, and even sex workers, if the degenerates believe such mortals will offer something new to their clan.

Despite the custom of Embracing only the best, the Toreador fixation on beauty and innocence has caused many a diva to make a fledgling in haste. Many a moonlit night, new clan members have emerged as shallow hedonists, one-hit wonders, or just a stunning body with nothing else to offer. The greatest mistakes are erased and forgotten. Still, the clan is diverse, its members considering the ensemble as a kaleidoscope of talent and beauty.

Toreador Archetypes

L'ARTISTE

The Toreador indulge in the beauty of all art forms and strive to be creators themselves. Whether competent on the strings of the violin, weaving notes as lustrous as the subtle glow of the crescent moon, or wielding a spray-can to form harsh prismatic lines on back-alley walls, this Kindred is an artist revered intensely by their clan.

STAGE MANAGER

Without a puppeteer to pull the strings, the puppet would not know how to dance. This diva's finger is constantly on the pulse of the night. They know every happening at every club and bar worth a visit, and likely has great influence over several such places and the people who go there. Deeply connected to a city's social atmosphere, they have the knowledge to help others gain or lose the spotlight as they please.

GADABOUT

With charisma, social intellect, and a cunning smile, the world is yours to conquer. The gadabout hedonist masters the art of manipulation, attraction, and empathy so well that even shy Cainites desire their attention or take pleasure in watching as they effortlessly mingle into every clique and category. This Toreador fits into any profession in which handling customers, patients, or clients is key, and they use every trick in the book to get their targets exactly where they want them.

PATRON OF THE ARTS

The patron is a collector of raw talent and promising beauty that just needs a guiding hand. They shape not clay or glass into intricate forms but people, and they see it as their gift to the world to pick out the best before they wither. The patron may pose as an eccentric heiress whose home is open to struggling poets and painters or they may take on the role of the talent scout or critic, aiding their pupils with funding and guidance in return for their blood.

THESPIAN SPY

The Toreador love a performance, and the one who plays at being a spy knows how to pry valuable chunks of information from a tar-

get, often taking more time than they need to properly enjoy the game. Perhaps over-dramatic, yet rarely suspected due to an affable nature, the thespian spy inserts themselves in multiple domains to entertain, observe, and compile libraries of information to exchange for other pleasures.

Disciplines

Auspex: Toreador are ever on the hunt for exquisite experiences and use Auspex to identify the most susceptible vessels and those who might, through their feelings and temperament, offer new tastes and sensations to the drinker during the feed. Toreador also frequently use the Discipline on other Kindred, catering to their desires or antagonizing them with truths they should not know.

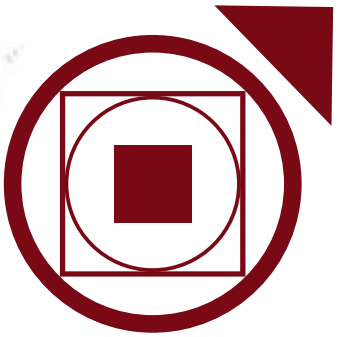
Celerity: The Toreador claim they are not combatants, but few move as swiftly as the degenerate using Celerity to cut an opponent to ribbons before they have even had time to draw their weapon. Toreador often use Celerity to enhance artistic or performative skills. In feeding, they use the Discipline to take what they need from a vessel and vanish before the mortal realizes the truth of what has occurred.

Presence: The Toreador master the Discipline of Presence, often using it in concert with Auspex to manipulate the emotions of Kindred and kine. Presence can guarantee an appreciative audience or cause the failure of another artist. Some Toreador will use the Discipline to indulge in carnal pleasures with an unnaturally enthusiastic partner or to lure a vessel into their arms and under their fangs. The members of the clan adore willing vessels, even if the willingness is a supernaturally induced façade.

Bane

Toreador exemplify the old saying that art in the blood takes strange forms. They desire beauty so intensely that they suffer in its absence. While your character finds itself in less than beautiful surroundings, lose the equivalent of their Bane Severity in dice from dice pools to use Disciplines. The Storyteller decides specifically how the beauty or ugliness of the Toreador's environment (including clothing, blood dolls, etc.) penalizes them, based on the character's aesthetics. That said, even devotees of the Ashcan School never find normal streets perfectly beautiful. This obsession with aesthetics also causes divas to lose themselves in moments of beauty and a bestial failure often results in a rapt trance, as detailed in the Compulsion rules (p. 208) ■

XV
THE DEVIL .



TREMERE

Usurpers
Warlocks
Hemetics
Thaumaturges
Transgressors
The Broken Clan
Blood Witches

A Hermetic mage in eighth century Romania, Tremere was the leader of cabal of magick users rightfully feared for their obsession with knowledge and power. Able to prolong his life unnaturally for centuries, his powers eventually lessened and his grip on youth became shaky. Unable or unwilling to accept his own mortality, Tremere cast his eyes on the hallowed secret of immortality. In his greed, the mage instigated the most terrifying magickal experiments ever conducted, damning himself and his followers to a hell of their own making. Thousands of mortals were murdered and hundreds of Kindred vivisected and drained in ritual circles before Tremere and his cultists thought they had found the elixir of life. How surprised they were to have discovered the curse of Caine. Terrified, they died and woke again to an eternity of unlife and hunger, cut off from their craft.

In a mockery of their former magickal rituals, now only fresh blood allows the Tremere to cast their thaumaturgic spells to twist reality.

"Allow me to call to order this meeting of minds. We must discuss the kinds of mortals who are brought into the fold on this and future nights." Schrekt eyed his two counterparts across a triangular-shaped table. The room in which they sat existed in three places at once.

"Herr Schrekt, I do not believe our practices have changed overmuch. We still Embrace only the most brilliant minds, and those already attuned to the occult. While my house does target subjects with less restrictive morals than yours, I can assure you that we will not be granting immortality to the undeserving." The representative for House Goratrix concluded his statement, leaning back into the shadows.

Schrekt stared across the table at his counterparts. If the choice had been without consequence, both would be snuffed out without hesitation. Unfortunately, they served a purpose. He knew because his Blood told him it was so. He turned to the woman at the other corner. "And House Carna?"

Carna ran her right forefinger over the palm of her left hand as she spoke. "Our house rejects the old ways shaped by men, and seeks pagans, witches, and chaos magicians who look to the future. For the sake of our clan's survival, we must cast our net wider. Now that the old bonds wither, and your house is one of the last keeping with the regimented structure of the Pyramid, I see no reason to cling to tradition."

Schrekt clenched his jaw without realizing it, his fists balling. "You would abandon centuries of tradition on a schismatic whim? How is it that House Tremere finds more in common with House Goratrix these nights?"

Carna shrugged without looking up. "That sounds like a problem, Karl. One you need to address. Note that House Carna is still Camarilla, for the time being at least." Her head facing her hands, her eyeline flicked upward, and her gaze connected briefly with his. "You have heard the same voices we have. Neither of us is wrong. We must be permitted to pursue our paths separately and come together when the time is right."

Schrekt smiled unconvincingly. The representative from House Goratrix vanished. "Just you and I now. Are we really going to fill our clan with amateur tarot readers, women who dawdle with tea leaves, and spiritualists? We were a noble clan."

Carna faded away, her voice softly following. "We were never noble. Our clan consists of mortals who sought power they didn't deserve. Perhaps it's time we Embrace those who love magic for its own sake."

Who are the Tremere?

After the Second Inquisition destroyed the Prime Chantry in Vienna in 2008, the Tremere fell from gray eminences to personae non gratae in many regions. The arrogance of the Pyramid had made the Usurpers few friends. But the need for sorcery has not disappeared; if anything, it grows as the cursed Blood shifts in the veins of the Kindred.

Without the Pyramid ordering them into rank and value, the warlocks find themselves competing with their fellow Kindred and, increasingly, with each other for anything that might allow them to regain some of their former power. A clan-wide chase for artifacts and grimoires belonging to their ashen ancestors rival the social intrigues in ugliness, and the alliance with the Camarilla is an oft-used weapon between the houses of Clan Tremere. Meanwhile, the term "mercenary magus" is becoming increasingly widespread, as warlocks who were formerly Bound by the will of their masters find themselves free to serve for whatever price they choose.

Tremere serve in three ways: the Warlocks serve the other clans with occult expertise, they serve the Camarilla with Blood Sorcery, and they serve themselves with their missions to grasp power. Though more Tremere ascend to praxis these nights than ever before, they still claim fewer thrones worldwide than Clan Nosferatu. In truth, most Warlocks acknowledge that becoming the Prince is only useful if it helps them expand their knowledge. Tremere see true power as knowing the ways of shaping the world, having access to the right blood, and owning the rarest of ancient artifacts.

As the Tremere ally with confused coteries seeking them out, hunt for well-protected relics and artifacts, or closely analyze fragments of lore relating to the Cainite mythos – all the while miserly guarding their secrets from each other – they are all united in their thirst for knowl-

XVI

edge. A Kindred who wishes to understand a piece of their history will do well to approach the Tremere for answers, as long as they are at peace with sharing a few secrets of their own – knowingly or otherwise.

Tremere Archetypes

PYRAMID LOYALIST
Until recently, the Pyramid hierarchy made the Tremere one of the most rigid clans. They still include a number of conservative loyalists, fiercely bound to the clan's original order by will, if not by blood. A Pyramid loyalist might still adhere to the customs of responsibility between sire and childe, uphold the ranks and tutelage of a formal chantry, and seek to rebuild the clan's prestige and notoriety. Some Pyramid loyalists wish to search Vienna for the remains of their clan's information trove, though Tremere elders have declared the domain out-of-bounds.

ETERNAL SCHOLAR
This Tremere was a dedicated researcher before their Embrace, and death does nothing to stop them from their obsessive pursuit of knowledge. Even if the clan has always looked to the arcane, the scholar does not need to be a former occultist, but might as well have been a groundbreaking surgeon, a theologist with a taste for sacrilegious texts, or a collector of rare books. Often this Kindred is preoccupied with understanding their own nature, and it is possible they have become an expert on the history of their kind.

THE TOWER.

PAGAN NONCONFORMIST

Other Kindred often style Tremere followers of Carna as "new agers," failing to understand the depth of magical exploration, feminine worship, and liberty these warlocks practice. Whether actually a former Wiccan or Satanist, a prior member of Clan Tremere who has aligned with Carna's rebellion, or just someone who in life was downtrodden and longed for personal autonomy and authority over those who would hurt them, something about this blood witch goes against the grain of the clan's traditions. They speak of change, and excitedly pursue their dreams of forbidden magick.

AMBITIOUS OUTSIDER

The new willingness to Embrace from outside the traditional ranks of academics and occultists brings forth an array of individuals with ideas for the clan and the practice of Thaumaturgy. The ambitious outsider may be a white witch or a rebel destined for the Anarchs. It is likely such a Tremere would struggle to gain respect in the clan, but with a lot to prove and the nominal support of House Carna, the ambitious outsider could go far.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

The Tremere are more than scholars and librarians. The gifts they possess allow them to identify threats, manipulate minds, and destroy aggressors – even after the dissolution of the Pyramid, many other Kindred still regard the usurpers with mistrust, remembering them as the clan of killers and torturers. The Tremere sheriff or chief of security likely inherited their specialized skills from a former life as an enforcer of some kind.

Disciplines

Auspex: Tremere use Auspex to perceive the auras of others, search for evidence of magical essences and important objects left behind, and to communicate with each other across vast distances without fear of being overheard. When needing to feed, Auspex assists a Tremere looking for a pliable vessel, as they can discern the enthusiastic from the reluctant. Many Tremere use Auspex to determine what a mortal needs in order to be more malleable.

Blood Sorcery: Master thaumaturges, the Tremere's expertise in blood magick makes them a valued, if mistrusted, pillar of the Camarilla. Using Blood Sorcery, they can convey devastating attacks on an opponent's mind and body, defend themselves, and ease their feeding. Some warlocks use Thaumaturgy to sap a mortal's blood from their veins without ever having to touch them.

Dominate: The Tremere will do almost anything for the sake of knowledge and influence, and Dominate is the Discipline that lets them get away with it. Thievery, backstabbing, and the unjust murder of a clan member's ghoul are all made easier by the ability to control a mortal's mind and body. When attempting to feed, a Tremere will show little compunction against using the Discipline to force a mortal into baring their throat.

Bane

Once the clan was defined by a rigid hierarchy of Blood Bonds reaching from the top to the bottom of the Pyramid. But after the fall of Vienna, their Blood has recoiled and aborted all such connections. Tremere vitae can no longer Blood Bond other Kindred, though they themselves can be Bound by Kindred from other clans. A Tremere can still bind mortals and ghouls, though the corrupted vitae must be drunk an additional number of times equal to the vampire's Bane Severity for the bond to form. Some theorize this change is the revenge of the Antediluvian devoured by Tremere, others attribute it to a simple mutation. Regardless, the clan studies their vitae intently to discover if the process can be reversed, and, indeed, determine if they would want to do so ■

The Clan of Kings
Blue Bloods
Tyrants
Warlords
Patricians
Borgias
the Cult of Mithras

VENTRUE

In their own eyes, only the Clan of Kings has the restraint, the wisdom, the control, and the pedigree to lead their kind through the night. Throughout their time as god-kings of ancient Babylon and lords and ladies of the Dark Ages to their contemporary roles as guardians of royal blood, majority shareholders, and campaign fund backers, they have been obsessed with the impulse to rule. They collect their tithes in the form of precious blood, ensuring the growth of their legacy.

While many other clans claim positions of influence in politics and business, no one can rival the Ventrue in the game of pure power and wealth. But lately, their arrogant projections as divinely chosen rulers, better fit to lead than any other clan, have begun to falter. Time is running out. As they feel their privileges slipping through their fingers, the Ventrue tighten their grip and fight fang and claw to remain in control as the masters of their kind.

Who Are the Ventrue?

Clan Ventrue has long been the leaders of the Camarilla, holding more positions of power than any other clan, and they are loath to give that up. Even after losing their most prominent representative to a Brujah assassination, the Ventrue continue to maintain that they are destined to rule all Kindred, no matter the sacrifices involved.

The Ventrue believe in the strength of tradition and lineage. The Embrace is one of the their most important rituals, and the choice of childe affects the way other members of the clan treat the sire. Ventrue therefore aim to Embrace overachievers, politically or financially powerful kine, or those with a talent that sets them apart from the masses.

These nights, the Ventrue are cautious. The talentless fall by the wayside, while the best blend in with humanity as bankers, shadow directors, reclusive

moguls, and chiefs of staff. No longer can a Ventrue openly lead a board or take a prominent position in a mortal community. They resent having to influence their surroundings from the shadows, but know that the risk of a fatal Masquerade breach is too high to risk anything else.

The Ventrue are the establishment. They set and maintain the rules, punishing those who break them, and occasionally rewarding those who follow. Their critics consider them tyrants or the jailers of other Kindred. The uncomfortable truth is that without them, the Masquerade, and the Camarilla with it, would have fallen long ago. The Ventrue are more loyal to their cause these nights than ever before, adversity only making them more determined to succeed and more certain that they have the right to do whatever it takes.

Ventrue Archetypes

COLD-BLOODED CORPORATE DIRECTOR

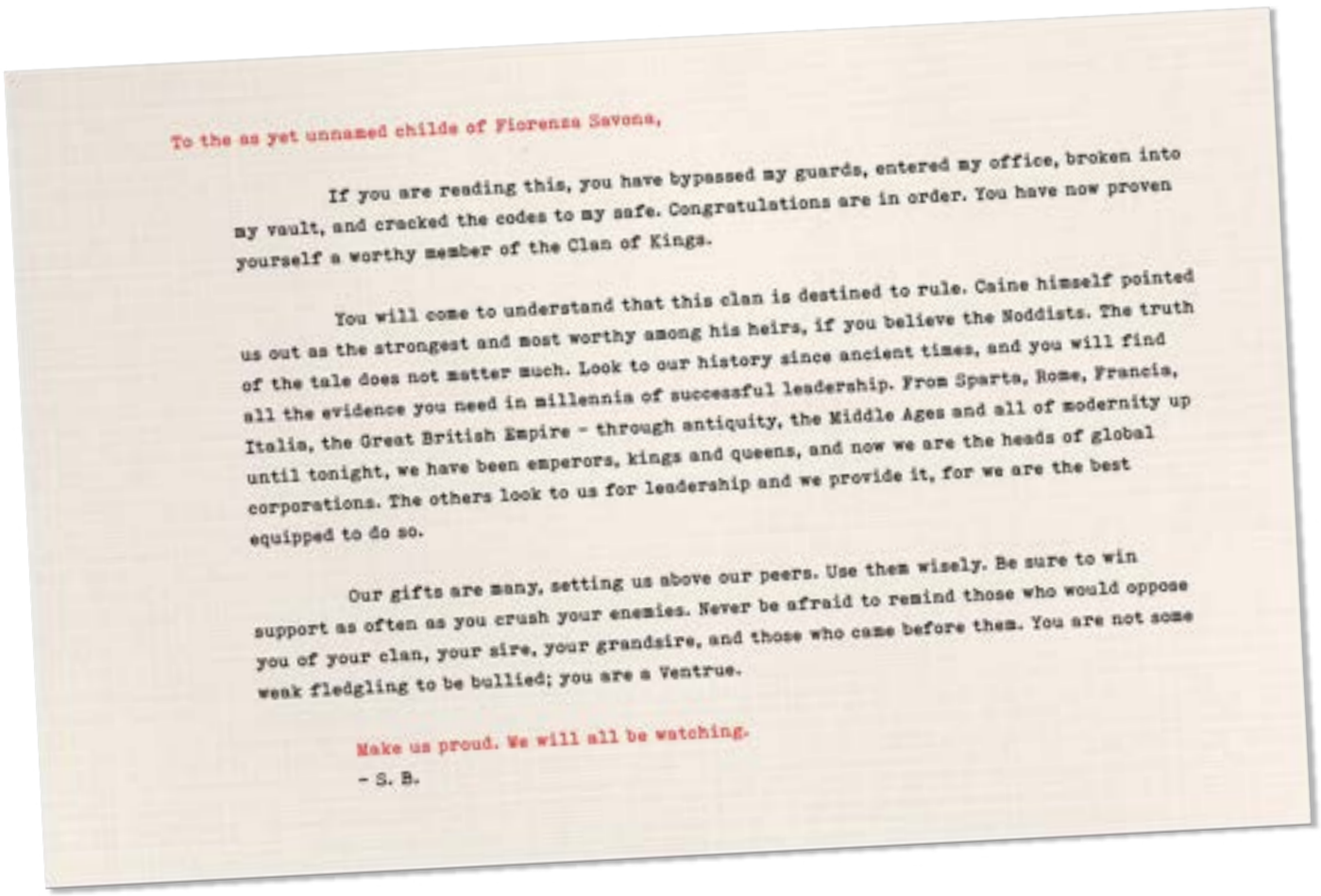
This Ventrue controls a successful corporation, perhaps as the eccentric and reclusive CEO or maybe as an influential silent partner involved in guiding the firm. This Ventrue is always several steps removed from dirtying their hands but will rarely hesitate over ethics if it means getting ahead of the competition.

MEMBER OF THE ORDER

The Clan of Kings are well suited visitors in secret societies such as the Freemasons and Rosicrucians. This Ventrue knows how to spin their words. They act as the reclusive leader or an important member of their society, whether it be an informal gentlemen's club, a ladies' guild, an alumni society for magnates and millionaires, or a gathering of concerned citizens clandestinely seeking to control their neighborhood.

CONSERVATIVE POLITICIAN

The kings have always favored conservatism and maintenance of the status quo. The politically inclined blue blood acts as the untouchable



To the as yet unnamed childe of Fiorenza Savona,

If you are reading this, you have bypassed my guards, entered my office, broken into my vault, and cracked the codes to my safe. Congratulations are in order. You have now proven yourself a worthy member of the Clan of Kings.

You will come to understand that this clan is destined to rule. Caine himself pointed us out as the strongest and most worthy among his heirs, if you believe the Noddists. The truth of the tale does not matter much. Look to our history since ancient times, and you will find all the evidence you need in millennia of successful leadership. From Sparta, Rome, Francia, Italia, the Great British Empire – through antiquity, the Middle Ages and all of modernity up until tonight, we have been emperors, kings and queens, and now we are the heads of global corporations. The others look to us for leadership and we provide it, for we are the best equipped to do so.

Our gifts are many, setting us above our peers. Use them wisely. Be sure to win support as often as you crush your enemies. Never be afraid to remind those who would oppose you of your clan, your sire, your grandsire, and those who came before them. You are not some weak fledgling to be bullied; you are a Ventrue.

Make us proud. We will all be watching.

– S. B.

spin doctor, lurks in the wings of the party, or advises pundits and newsmen on how to dictate the story. Manipulating the media, they suppress Masquerade breaches with ease.

GODFATHER

The so-called godfather wields their power through organized crime, manipulating gangs and the path of cash that runs from the streets to the bankers and politicians. Other Ventrue may turn their noses up at such a shady character, but the godfather knows that to get things done, blood sometimes needs to be spilled.

HIGH PRIEST

The Ventrue have ever venerated their ancestors, both mythical Kindred such as Mithras, Tinia, and Tiamat and historical personages nearly as eminent. This ancestor worship ranges from a historian's thorough study to leading a cult in the ancestor's name. Seeing the touch of their forebears in all that they do, the high priest seeks to repeat history, fulfill the goals of their ancestors, and spread the knowledge of their glory.

Disciplines

Dominate: The Ventrue consider themselves the masters of this Discipline, using it primarily to exert their will on vassals and kine. When feeding, a Ventrue may command a mortal to bare their neck, or use Dominate to erase all memory of a feeding. Ventrue also expertly use this Discipline to protect the Masquerade.

Fortitude: Fortitude enables the Ventrue to keep their thrones even when armies array against them, and to weather every blade, bullet, and bomb. They use the Discipline to feed in adverse situations, physical or otherwise. Where other Kindred might run short on vitae, the Ventrue resist the environment and take their fill.

Presence: The Ventrue seek to tame the court and build the love and devotion of others toward their rule, and Presence is a helpful tool. The Discipline is also used by the Ventrue who wants others to see how easy they acquire vessels. The clan values conservation of time and resources, and Presence allows a hungry blue blood to be efficient when luring their prey.

Bane

The Ventrue are in possession of rarefied palates. When a Ventrue drinks blood from any mortal outside their preference, a profound exertion of will is required or the blood taken surges back up as scarlet vomit. Preferences range greatly, from Ventrue who can only feed from genuine brunettes, individuals of Swiss descent, or homosexuals, to others who can only feed from soldiers, mortals who suffer from PTSD, or methamphetamine users. With a Resolve + Awareness test (Difficulty 4 or more) your character can sense if a mortal possesses the blood they require.

If you want your character to feed from anything but their preferred victim, you must spend Willpower points equal to the character's Bane Severity ■

The Clanless
Panders
Orphans
Trash
Scum
Freestylers

the CAITIFF

Not all Kindred inherit the curse of one of the 13. Some don't care what their lineage is. Certain bloodlines of kindred have always been clanless, and sometimes childer of the clans are just born different. They're often discarded, exiled, or choose to distance themselves from the clans that despise them. Pure vampires, the Caitiff make up for what they lose in respect and pedigree by flexible blood and the absence of a crippling bane. Proud or ashamed of their clanless nature as they may be, these creatures have no family and represents vampirism at its purest and most individualistic.

Who Are the Caitiff?

Many Kindred incorrectly assume all Caitiff are created accidentally, that the clanless target no mortals for the Embrace. This view is outdated and ignorant. These nights, the clanless are increasingly becoming a force to be reckoned with. Though more disparate, individualistic, and chaotic than their cousins, they are all survivors, and they have begun to gather, build alliances, and make childer of their own.

The Caitiff who seek out mortals to perform the Embrace generally target the strong-willed and those used to uncommon hardship. A Caitiff's position in the hierarchy of Kindred is at the bottom, just above the thin-blooded who should not have been born at all, and they are forced to fight for their place or fall and be forgotten. The Caitiff see little point in Embracing mortals unlikely to make it through the night on their own.

While the Caitiff have begun to purposefully increase their numbers, most are still created when a fledgling Embraced into one of the clans does not form an attachment with their ancestral Blood and

00:00:04 Caine was clanless, you know? So were his childer. Technically, I guess their childer were too. It was only the fourth generation of our kind who started grouping into families with mutual banes and abilities.

00:01:12 What's my point? Clanless Cainites have been around longer than the ones who needed clubs to feel relevant or safe from God's ill will. While they've huddled together, we've stood alone - surviving, enduring, growing stronger.

00:01:30 You may think, Lord Blue Blood, that we Caitiff could never ascend to your level. But consider the clanless Prince Mukhtar Bey of Cairo, the legend of the Stoneman, and what that glorious bastard Sarrasine has done with Sydney, and ask yourself, "What've you got that we don't?"

00:01:46 A little boys' club. Crippling weaknesses. Restriction on the use of your abilities. Obligations to uphold meaningless traditions to avoid being punished by your betters.

00:01:60 We Caitiff can be whoever, wherever, whatever we want. We've no ingrained weaknesses and no masters. We spit on your tradition. …I'll be back with the tongs.

00:04:45 Are you comfortable? Where was I? We're the future. You're the past. We'll enjoy drinking your vitae just so we can experience what it's like to be you for a few seconds, but then we'll return to being free. Have you ever wondered what it is to be free?

00:05:27 Like your tongue is free from your mouth right now. Heh.

does not exhibit the tell-tale signs of their clan's curse. When other Kindred talk of the Caitiff, they tell tales of Nosferatu abandoned for weeks on end without ever developing any hideousness, painfully sane Malkavians, and young Ventrue able to feed from whomever they want. Unwilling to accept such a childe as one of their own, the clan abandon them. Or the childe senses in their Blood that they do not belong, despite their sire's protests. The creation of a Caitiff is not an exact science, and many abandoned childer still manifest some of the characteristics of their parent clan despite the absence of their bane.

Caitiff Archetypes

RAISED ON THE STREETS

This Caitiff is was brought up in the worst part of their city by parents who either did not care or were not able to protect them – if they had parents at all. It is likely they never had hope for a meaningful, prosperous life. For them, the Embrace was an escape, and their sire performed it out of respect for their perseverance against the odds.

ABUSE SURVIVOR

Caitiff habitually target abuse victims for the Embrace. The survivor

caught the attention of their sire by attending a support group, appearing in the papers as the prosecuting victim in an aggravated assault case, or perhaps by writing a particularly striking blog post on the subject of their experiences. As the street kid, the survivor was "rewarded" with immortality and a chance to fight back against their abusers. Having been through terrible experiences already, they are judged to make a fine member of the clanless.

HELPLESSLY OVERESTIMATED

This Caitiff was Embraced by the clanless for all the wrong reasons. Perhaps they threw off a cruel boss' yoke once, or dumped an abusive partner, but this behavior was an exception in their life. They were chosen for their perceived strength, and now they are hopelessly lost and overwhelmed by their existence as one of the Kindred.

SECRET CAITIFF

This Kindred awoke as a Caitiff, but they managed to hide it from their sire. They are now a full member of their ancestral clan, attending the rituals and obeying the traditions of their kin in return for the protection of their elders. They have no desire to go through eternity alone, and they will do whatever it takes to keep their secret hidden.

UNWANTED CHILDE

The unwanted childe was Embraced into one of the clans, but cannot remember their sire and never bonded to the Blood. As the curse of their ancestors never manifested in their body, they avoided the bane of their clan. Without this marker, the Blood of their brothers and sisters rejects them – and they, it.

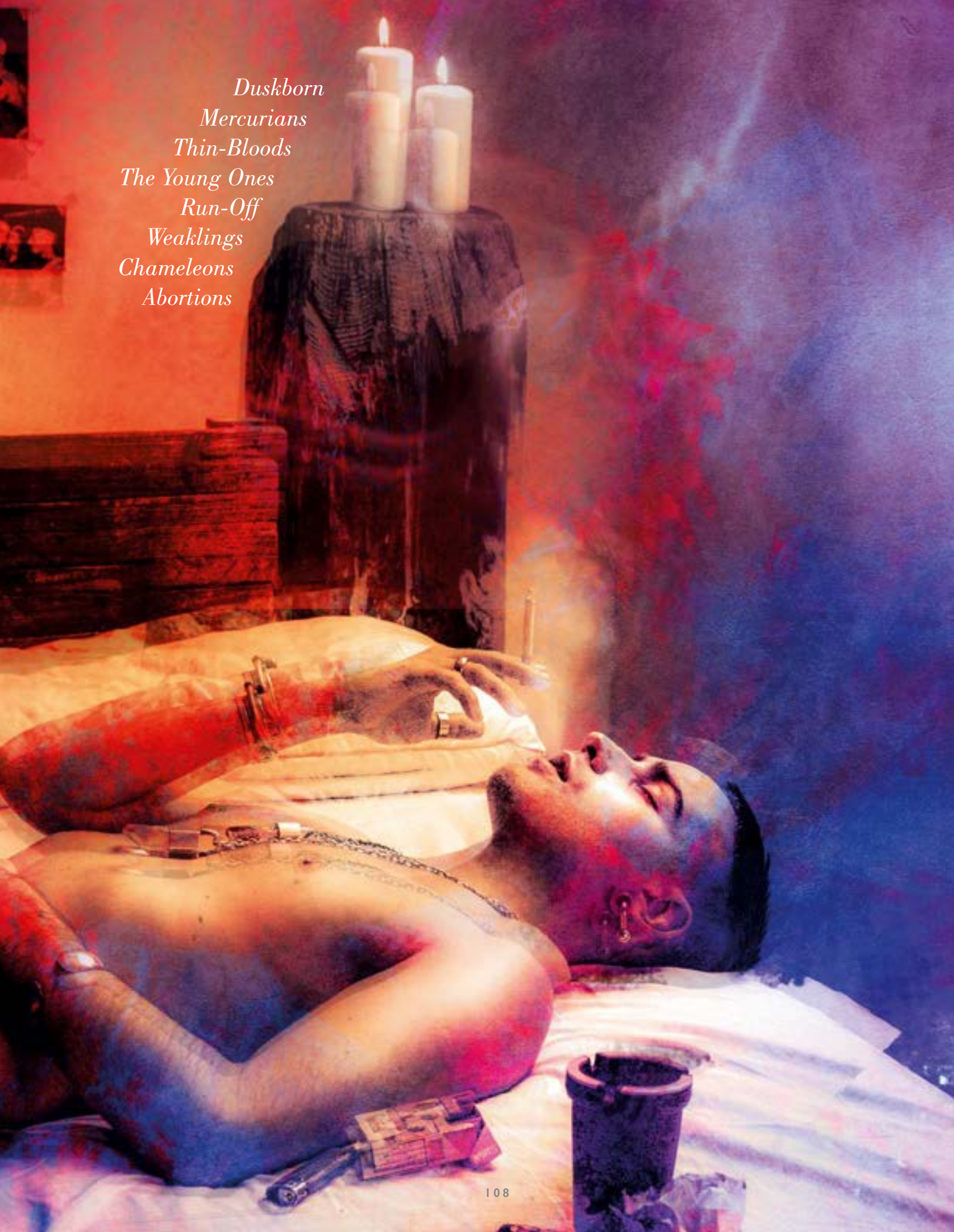
Disciplines

Caitiff characters have access to three Disciplines of your choice following the Embrace. These are not considered in-clan for the purposes of Experience cost and the Caitiff can learn any Discipline at the same price assuming they taste the Blood of a wielder at least once and fulfill the standard conditions for that Discipline.

Bane

Untouched by the Antediluvians, the Caitiff share no common bane. Caitiff characters begin with the Suspect (•) Flaw and you may not purchase positive Status for them during character creation. The Storyteller may always impose a one or two dice penalty on Social tests against fellow Kindred who know they are Caitiff, regardless of their eventual Status.

Further, to improve one of the Disciplines of a Caitiff costs six times the level purchased in experience points ■


Duskborn
Mercurians
Thin-Bloods
The Young Ones
Run-Off
Weaklings
Chameleons
Abortions

the THIN-BLOODED

A deteriorated breed, a portent of the end times, or a vampire for a brave new world? Balancing at the midpoint between life and death, the ever-changing nature of the Duskborn evokes pity, jealousy, and fear in equal measure. Survivors of the last decades of pogroms, prejudice, and ostracization, the thin-blooded are here to stay. Their messy street-alchemy and ability to pass as human makes them uniquely suited to thrive outside Kindred society and make their own fate in the post-modern nights.

Who Are the Thin-Blooded?

Sires tell their childer of the 13th and 14th generation never to attempt the Embrace as their Blood is too far removed from Caine. They say it will bring nothing but death and sorrow. But, be it by mistake or design, this edict is not always followed.

A 14th generation Kindred, who only by miracle avoided the flaw of thin blood themselves, drain a mortal in a fit of frenzy and guiltily feed them a mouthful of vitae, hoping against hope that it might reanimate the broken body.

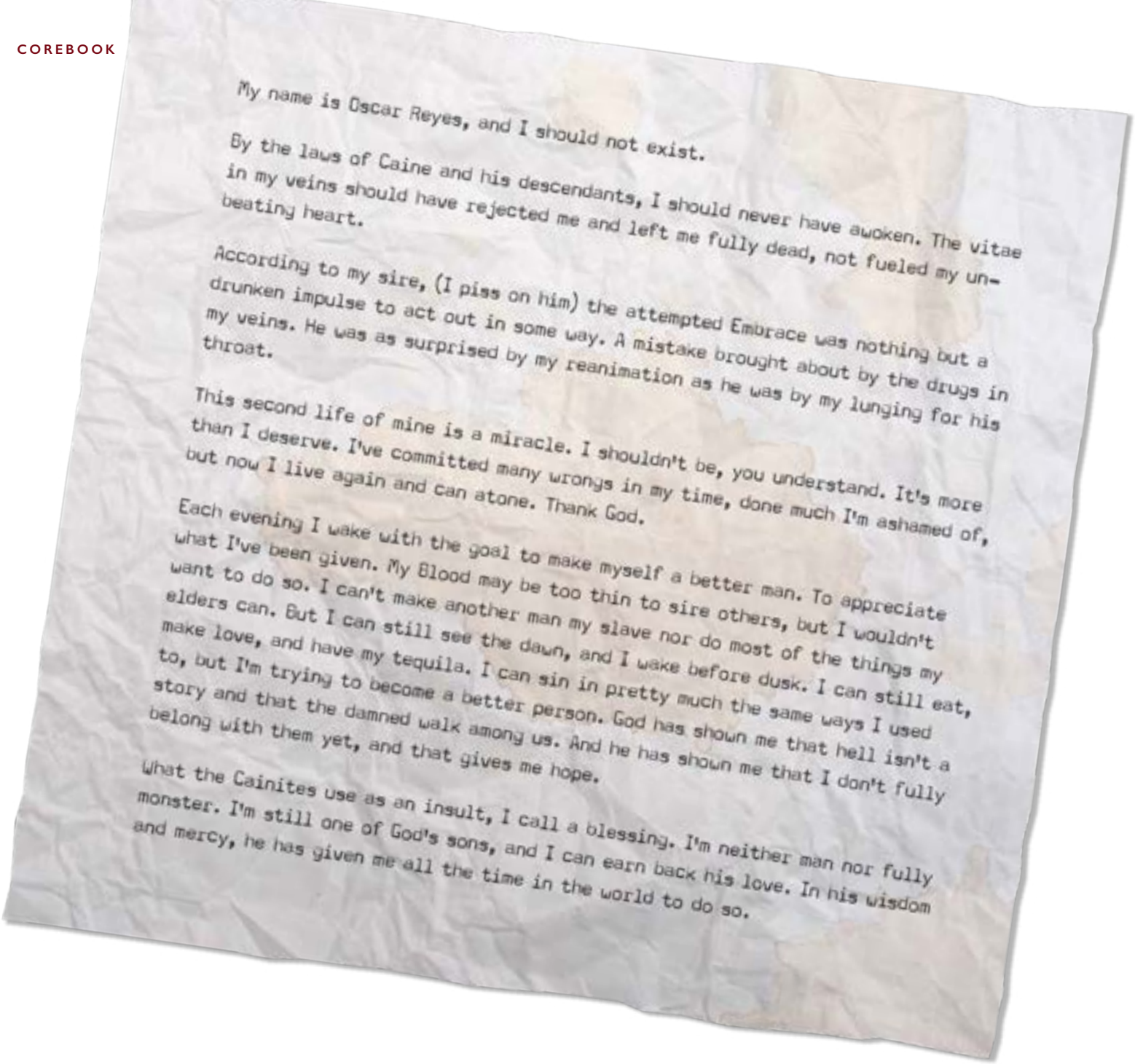
A Ventrue from a long line of liars thinks herself closer to her progenitor than she really is, and believes she is creating a worthy member for her clan.

A prince's great-grandchilde attempts to force their diluted vitae into the mouth of their ancestor's executed, treacherous ghoul just to get back at the old tyrant.

A Tremere, often overlooked by his clan for his weakness of Blood and spirit, experiments with the Embrace to prove himself as good as them.

In all these cases, a dusk-born may awaken, if the Blood wills it.

Kindred who intend to sire thin-bloods often target individuals they already have a pre-existing relationship with, such as a trusted ghoul or a human family member they cannot forget, or they seek out vessels who dem-


My name is Oscar Reyes, and I should not exist.

By the laws of Caine and his descendants, I should never have awoken. The vitae in my veins should have rejected me and left me fully dead, not fueled my unbeating heart.

According to my sire, (I piss on him) the attempted Embrace was nothing but a drunken impulse to act out in some way. A mistake brought about by the drugs in my veins. He was as surprised by my reanimation as he was by my lunging for his throat.

This second life of mine is a miracle. I shouldn't be, you understand. It's more than I deserve. I've committed many wrongs in my time, done much I'm ashamed of, but now I live again and can atone. Thank God.

Each evening I wake with the goal to make myself a better man. To appreciate what I've been given. My Blood may be too thin to sire others, but I wouldn't want to do so. I can't make another man my slave nor do most of the things my elders can. But I can still see the dawn, and I wake before dusk. I can still eat, make love, and have my tequila. I can sin in pretty much the same ways I used to, but I'm trying to become a better person. God has shown me that hell isn't a story and that the damned walk among us. And he has shown me that I don't fully belong with them yet, and that gives me hope.

What the Cainites use as an insult, I call a blessing. I'm neither man nor fully monster. I'm still one of God's sons, and I can earn back his love. In his wisdom and mercy, he has given me all the time in the world to do so.

onstrate specific traits or rare talents that make them better equipped to survive as the weakest of predators. Many Kindred view the thin-bloods as a threat to the Masquerade and will destroy them, if given the chance.

The thin-blooded can be of any mortal origin and are not affected by their parent clan's curse nor by their preferences in the same degree as their sire. If they are allowed to rise, they will likely be turned away, gaining the luxury of freedom and the danger of solitude.

In 2009 the Inner Circle of the Camarilla issued an edict that all thin-blooded must be branded or tattooed with the "mark of the crescent moon". Inked by a Tremere tattoo artist or scorched with a beam of sunlight, the brand is irreversible. Even Anarchs and unbound think twice before associating with a marked Mercurian.

Thin-Blood Archetypes

LIVE ONE

This thin-blood is deeply connected to the mortal

world, perhaps more so than the Kindred one. They still maintain a family and attempt to hold a job; paying the bills is more important than the whim of some baron they have never met. Ironically, to maintain their human façade, they likely have to lean heavily on the powers in their Blood.

WEAPON OF CONVENIENCE

A former occultist, ghoul, or blood doll, they were close to the Kindred before joining their ranks and knew some of their secrets. This thin-blood was Embraced out of their sire's desperation when backed into a corner, and they were meant to take part in some war or pursue a vengeful dream. Whether they choose to do so or not is up to them. The Embrace released them from their former slavery, and now there is nothing forcing them to do their sire's bidding.

GUILTY EMBRACE

This thin-blood was not Embraced as part of some elaborate plan. A party-goer, a late-night worker walking home alone, or just someone in the wrong place at the wrong time – a vampire fed from them and drank a little too much. Perhaps the Embrace was performed by the drinker as an act of desperate guilt, or perhaps their sire was an onlooker who couldn't bear to watch them die.

NATURAL VAMPIRE

This thin-blood was destined to become one of the Kindred. As a mortal hunter or a member of Arcanum, they studied the lore of the clans and the myth of Caine and became too fascinated for their own good. Meaning to kill, question, or request the Embrace, they tracked down one of the Kindred. But their sire was a not what was expected by the childe, who is now bitter at the weakness in their veins.

REDEMPTION SEEKER

This thin-blood was turned against their will and refuses to accept a place in a world of streetlights and blood. They are recently turned and desperately look for a way to cure their "condition," seeking out rumors of others who have done it as well as weird legends of Golconda and blood transfusions. There is indeed a way, but before they figure it out this thin-blood will try anything and is easy to manipulate by callous Kindred.

Thin-Blood Characteristics

A thin-blood is created when a 13th or higher generation vampire Embraces a mortal. While formally belonging to the 14th, 15th, or even 16th generation, these classifications mean nothing to the thin-bloods, as they exhibit a wide variety of traits with no connection to their supposed generation. A 14th generation thin-blood may be too weak to even Blood Bond with a mortal, while a 15th might still retain the ability to Embrace, and vice versa. Among the dusk-born, the lines are blurred.

Despite this, your thin-blood character is still fundamentally a vampire, and unless otherwise stated follows the same rules as other vampires in this book.

Blood

Thin-bloods cannot create Blood Bonds or perform the Embrace with any certainty. A Rouse Check worth of thin-blood vitae imbues a mortal with ghoul-like powers, but only for a single night.

Thin-bloods always have Blood Potency 0 (see p. 215).

Clan

A thin-blood is always considered clanless and never suffers any specific clan bane or compulsion.

Damage

Most thin-bloods sustain damage like mortals but mend like vampires. In game terms, they take Aggravated damage not only from fire, but also from slashing and piercing weapons. Impalement with a stake does not paralyze them but instead causes massive physical trauma, likely sending them into torpor. Once damaged, thin-bloods heal according to the rules for other vampires.

Disciplines

Thin-bloods pioneered and practice the art of thin-blood alchemy. This potentially allows them to taste the Disciplines of other Kindred ... and to get more than a taste if they can find the vitae to fuel those workings.

Additionally, whenever a thin-blood feeds they gain one dot in one Discipline associated with the Resonance of the blood consumed, together with one level one power in that discipline. If the Resonance is Intense or stronger, they gain an additional dot together with a second power. No additional powers can be gained in this way nor can the rating increase with experience. This Discipline lasts until Hunger reaches 5 or the next feeding.

Hunger and Frenzy

A thin-blood suffers hunger just as any vampire. However, the Beast is far less overt, and a thin-blood never frenzies unless provoked by supernatural means (such as Animalism, p. 244).

Life-Like

A thin-blood always counts as having used Blush of Life (se p. 218), the exact effects dependant on their Humanity rating.

Sunlight

Thin-bloods take only one level of Superficial damage per turn in direct sunlight. Less direct sunlight causes damage with less frequency. For example, under heavy clouds or if masked and protected by clothing or thick sunscreen, the thin-blood might only sustain damage every third turn or once per minute.

Thin-Blood Merits

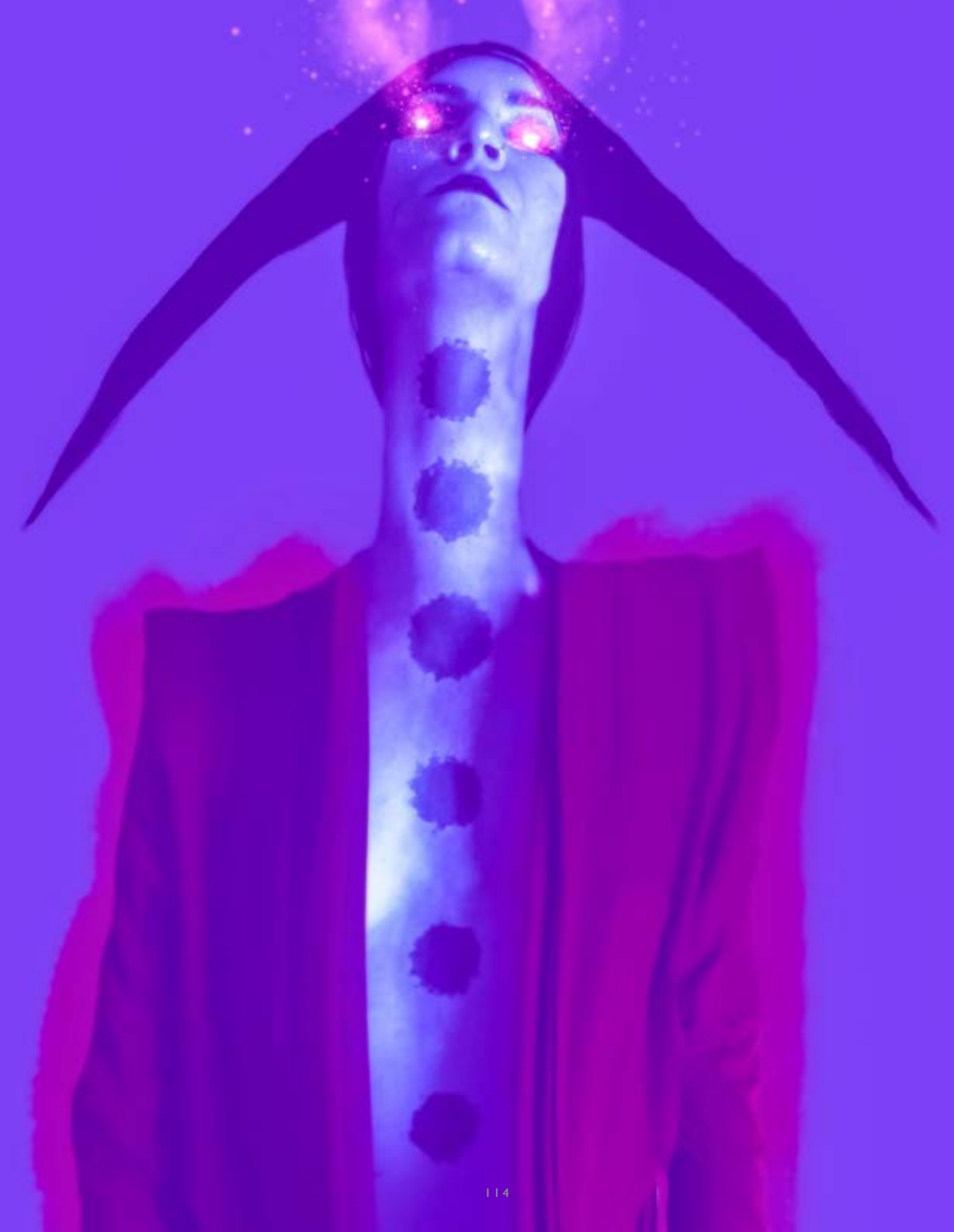
Thin-bloods often display additional variations. See Thin-Blood Merits and Flaws (p. 183) for details.

Ways Out

Straddling the line between mortality and vampirism, thin-bloods have a choice. While they do not age, and can thus stay thin-bloods indefinitely, most of their kind sooner or later chooses the day or the night. A thin-blood who manages to commit diablerie on a "true" Kindred absorbs not only their power and spirit but also their lineage, turning them into a 13th generation Kindred of their victim's clan. The Camarilla occasionally dangles this prize in front of dusk-born who show themselves capable of running the dirtiest of errands and surviving, offering up a Cainite sentenced to a Blood Hunt as sacrifice.

Conversely, every thin-blood knows someone who knows someone who returned to the daylight. The story usually goes that they became mortal again by clinging to their humanity until they could hunt down and end their sire, thus ending their curse.

Of course, any mortal who knows about the Kindred is a threat to the Masquerade ■



"What would life be without arithmetic, but a scene of horrors?"

– SYDNEY SMITH

Vampire: The Masquerade uses mechanical game rules to provide a reliable framework to the world. Neither the players nor the Storyteller want the Storyteller to make up everything as they go along, after all, or even follow a completely pre-planned plot; this is a game, not a novel or movie.

The most basic of these rules, and thus the fastest and cleanest to use in play, appear here. They are the core of the *Storyteller System*.

You can run the whole game using nothing but these rules, the character rules, and the rules and powers in Vampires and Disciplines. For games with only human characters, you may not even need those last two sections!

More advanced modular rules appear in Advanced Systems. Use them or ignore them as you choose.

But here beats the heart of the matter, from rolling dice to throwing down to telling time.

Time

Time passes in the World of Darkness just as it does in our normal world, even if more of it seems to happen at night. That's because you don't need to play out every minute, or even every day, of the time that passes in your chronicle. One game session might last four hours of real time and cover a decade of game time in Memoriam (see p. 311) – or one 15-minute gunfight just before dawn, although hopefully you'll use the Three Turns and Out system (p. 130) rather than put yourself through that.

Vampire uses five basic units to describe game time:

Turn: The amount of time needed to take a fairly simple action, such as attacking a cop, searching a backpack, or buying someone a drink. Turns remain abstract; they take as long as the action takes. Turns generally get shorter during action scenes and longer

DROPPING THE DICE

Story, not rules, governs a game of Vampire. Proper pacing can build a narrative to unimaginable heights of tension; slack pacing kills even the deadliest horror. For this reason, Storytellers can change the mode of the game to suit their sense of pacing. Many scenes play just as well – and much faster – without rolling dice at all, as players and Storyteller riff on each others' contribution, dialogue, and actions.

For some types of scenes, dice definitely help build drama, like scary music on a film soundtrack. But you can't fill a whole movie with screeching violins or ominous bass – roll the dice sparingly. Don't think you need to roll them throughout an entire a scene, either – you can roll them once and then play the scene toward the outcome you "predicted" with the dice at the beginning. ("Okay, looks like you got spotted by the trenchcoat guy. How will he do that?") This practice works especially well for dialogue scenes; roll at the beginning to see who wins the debate or if the Prince will be persuaded – then both players and Storyteller can shape their speeches toward the known result. Even combat scenes can work this way once players get used to it.

In short, you can play any scene with lots of dice rolls, with one roll at the beginning or the end, or with no dice at all.

For more on this topic, see Scenes and Modes on p. 290 of the Systems chapter.

in social scenes. It takes longer to buy someone a drink than to fire a gun – in some bars, a lot longer.

Scene: Generally, a compact series of actions and interactions that take place in a single location or between a single set of characters. A coterie of vampires fleeing across the rooftops from a Second Inquisition hit squad might consist of one scene, as might a series of phone conversations between a vampire and their contacts in four different cities. You know how scenes work from plays, movies, and television. A scene contains as many turns as pacing requires; a scene containing pure dialogue or interaction might have no turns per se in it at all.

Session: One game session, sometimes called a chapter. **Vampire** doesn't rely on this division of time as much as some games do, but it can provide regularity and balance to some rules effects. It also has the

advantage of being unambiguous; it's always pretty clear when you've stopped playing for the night.

Story: A full tale, complete with introduction, rising action, and climax. Some stories can take several sessions to complete; others can be finished in one. Some short stories are effectively vignettes that are nothing more than a single scene.

Chronicle: A series of stories connected by the characters themselves and their ongoing narrative. Some chronicles possess a unifying theme or overarching plot; others are a picaresque series of "one damned thing after another." Most chronicles maintain a common tone, be it gothic horror, street lethality, operatic tragedy, or cinematic action. But individual stories or chapters can shift tones for variety's sake or to underline changes in the setting. For example, scenes in the past explored in Memoriam might play lighter compared to the darkness of the modern nights, or vice versa.

Simple Tests

Most of the things characters do during a game happen without any rules governing them – they start cars, check out appetizing or dangerous strangers, search via Google, load weapons, cross streets, sniff the air, and do a thousand other things as automatically and easily as anyone in the real world. Even a normal activity, however, might require a dice roll if performed under stress, in a hurry, or against obstacles. And activities that invite stress, haste, and obstacles require dice rolls more often than not.

To begin, tell the Storyteller what your character wants to do. The Storyteller may just tell you that you succeed automatically: it's something trivial like parking a car, it shouldn't challenge a vampire like smelling blood, or the Storyteller may decide the proposed action just suits the ongoing drama. Sometimes skipping a roll just speeds up play, especially for an easy or average feat, or something your character really excels at (see Automatic Wins on p. 120).

But let's say you're not quite that good, or that you want to do something harder than usual, like scaling a sheer cliff, reading Sumerian, or picking the lock on a door.

For those other actions, you make a *simple test*. Simple tests go like this:

- Describe what your character is trying to achieve and how.
- The Storyteller tells you which of your character's Traits to use to assemble a dice pool.
- The Storyteller sets a *Difficulty*. This number may be kept secret, depending on circumstances and playstyle.

- Unless the test is an *automatic win* (see p. 120), you roll the dice pool and count your successes. Every die that shows 6 or higher is a success. A 0 on the die means a result of 10: a success.
- If the number of successes you get equals or exceeds the Difficulty, you win the test and accomplish that action.

EXAMPLE:

Juan's character is canvassing the neighbourhood for information on movement in the area. The Storyteller decides this is a simple Resolve + Investigation test with a Difficulty of 2: straightforward. Juan's character has 3 dots in Resolve and 3 dots in Investigation and so he rolls 6 dice, getting three successes – more than enough for a win. The Storyteller gives Juan the info he sought: a clue he might be able to use.

Traits

Traits define characters, from their physical potential; to their learned skills; to their various natural, secret, and supernatural advantages and hindrances. The Storyteller System demarcates Traits in dots, usually ranging from zero to five. For example, a person with one dot in Strength is feeble or puny; a person with five dots in Strength could potentially win Olympic weightlifting medals.

We call the Traits that define a character's innate and potential abilities *Attributes*, while *Skills* define the ways characters most reliably or successfully apply that potential. Both Attributes and Skills fall into *Mental*, *Physical*, and *Social* categories. All of these, including other Traits, such as *Backgrounds*, appear in the Character chapter (pp. 133-199).

Pools

The Storyteller tells you which combination of Traits creates your *dice pool*, the number of ten-sided dice you will roll, for any action.

Although most actions use a *Skill pool* (Attribute + Skill or Attribute + Discipline), a few only use Attributes to build the pool. Often an *Attribute pool* represents a straightforward test of the given Attribute: Strength + Strength to lift a heavy beam off a coffin lid, for example. Sometimes, two Attributes combine to make a pool, such as Resolve + Composure tests to resist many Disciplines (p. 243). A character who lacks a Skill rolls only the pool's Attribute, with no additional penalties.

EXAMPLE:

John's character wishes to research an occult topic in an arcane library. He has three dots of Intelligence and two dots of Occult, and thus possesses a pool of five dice.

Take a number of ten-sided dice (*d10s*) equal to the number of dots in those Traits and roll them. Traits usually have ratings between 0 and 5, so pools generally range from one die (the minimum pool size, if you can roll at all) to ten dice or more.

Especially when dealing with social actions, such as seduction or diplomacy, don't force the dice into the path of the roleplaying. If a player has their character say something particularly inspired (or painfully wrong), open with a truly tempting (or utterly insulting) gambit, or offer a cunning (or transparently false) explanation, the Storyteller should feel free to modify the Difficulty or even let the character succeed (or fail) without involving dice and Traits.

The Storyteller should perhaps warn a character with a high Trait away from a disastrous approach – "as one gifted in Etiquette, you know better than to slap the Prince on the back." But even a one-dot Skill can shine if the player applies the right polish.

Vampires always replace normal dice with their current Hunger dice in every pool. See p. 205 for more details.

SPECIALTIES Characters may possess greater aptitude or expertise in one particular aspect of a Skill. If a character attempts an action that falls within one or more of their *specialties* for the skill used, they gain one extra die for their dice pool.

For more on Specialties, see p. 159.

TRACKERS AND POOLS Three of the Attributes directly relate to two special pools called *trackers*:

- *Health* equals Stamina + 3.
- *Willpower* equals Composure + Resolve.

Tracker pools go up and down as characters spend from them or take damage to them. Tracker pools cannot exceed their starting value, noted above.

If the Storyteller calls for a roll using a tracker, the dice pool equals the current undamaged pool of that Trait, not the tracker's full rating. No dice pool can fall below 1, so a roll for an empty pool still yields one die.

EXAMPLE:

Bhavna has a Willpower of 7 but has spent 3 points this session, so she would roll four dice, not seven, for a Willpower roll.

Difficulties

The Storyteller determines the Difficulty of the action you're attempting, expressed in terms of how many successes you need to win, i.e. to accomplish that action.

Unlike in earlier editions of **Vampire**, note that the Difficulty means the number of successful dice required to accomplish a task, *not* the target number for the individual dice, which is always 6 or higher.

EQUIPMENT Some tasks use specialized equipment, such as picking a lock, performing surgery, or engaging in gunplay. If the Storyteller considers equipment a core component of an activity, they may apply a +1 Difficulty modifier for improvised, unreliable, or poor-quality equipment. Without any equipment, the task is impossible.

OPPOSITION Characters sometimes attempt actions that a Storyteller-played character (SPC) opposes, e.g., hacking a bank's monitored computer system, sneaking past a guard, or seducing a victim.

The Storyteller can choose to define those actions as *contests* (p. 123), but for speed of play they might prefer to represent the opposition with a static Difficulty number. They can determine that Difficulty several ways, using whichever one is fastest:

- Decide on a Difficulty according to the table below.
- Divide the SPC's corresponding dice pool in half, rounding down (see Taking Half, p. 123).
- Decide the target SPC's Skill and use that as the opposing Difficulty. Even if the foe's nominal Skill is zero, the Difficulty is 1. Skill (and Attribute) ratings of 2 or 3 are the most common; most mortals

DIFFICULTY OF ACTION	DIFFICULTY NUMBER
Routine (striking a stationary target, convincing a loyal friend to help you)	1 success
Straightforward (seducing someone who's already in the mood, intimidating a weakling)	2 successes
Moderate (replacing a car's sound system, walking a tightrope)	3 successes
Challenging (locating the source of a whisper, creating a memorable piece of art)	4 successes
Hard (convincing a cop that this isn't your cocaine, rebuilding a wrecked engine block)	5 successes
Very Hard (running across a tightrope while under fire, calming a hostile and violent mob)	6 successes
Nearly Impossible (finding one specific homeless person in Los Angeles in one night, flawlessly reciting a long text in a language you don't speak)	7 or more successes

pose little challenge to vampires, or even to very capable fellow mortals.

MODIFIERS The Storyteller might decide to add or subtract a *modifier* to any dice pool. **Vampire** has two basic types of modifiers:

- **Change the size of the dice pool.** This modifier reflects a change or circumstance for the *character*: they are drugged, they use a specialty, they appear terrifying, etc.
- **Alter the Difficulty.** This modifier reflects a change or circumstance for the *action*: rainy weather, badly maintained equipment, performed under gunfire, on unfriendly turf, etc.

In general, shifting the dice pool up or down by two dice has the same statistical effect as decreasing or increasing the Difficulty by 1.

Storytellers should use common sense when stacking modifiers. At some point, no amount of gilding the lily helps accomplish a task; likewise, characters' basic gifts can carry them through seemingly dire circumstances. Consider capping modifiers at plus or minus 2 to the Difficulty, or at three dice added or removed from the character's pool. This guideline applies to ad hoc Storyteller modifiers, not to modifiers from specialties or other specific rules.

Penalties can never cause a pool to drop below one die.

AUTOMATIC WINS If a character's dice pool is twice the task's Difficulty, the Storyteller may opt to rule that the character wins automatically without a dice roll. Automatic wins streamline play and reduce distracting rules interludes. Apply them vigorously, especially outside of combat or for tests where character failure is boring: information-gathering tests, conversation-openers, or gambits that open up the scene or let it move forward dramatically.

Automatic wins seldom apply in combat or other stressful situations. A Storyteller willing to speed up opening rounds or to blow through a location they didn't intend to be challenging, might allow automatic wins against mooks and nameless obstacle humans: rent-a-cops in the office lobby, not real cops in the streets.

Dice Pool Results

When you roll a dice pool, every individual die result of 6 or higher is a *success*, including a result of 10 (represented as 0 on most d10s). If you roll a number of successes equal to or exceeding the Difficulty number, the rules call that a *win*.

CRITICALS A result of 10 on two regular dice (00) is a *critical success*. A critical success counts as two additional successes above the two 10s (four total successes), as you perform your task much faster, more stylishly, or more thoroughly than normal. A winning roll containing at least one critical success is called a *critical win*, or sometimes just a *critical*.

USING THE VAMPIRE DICE: REGULAR DICE

● = (1-5) Failure
☥ = (6-9) Success
☥★ = (10) Success, potential critical win (each pair of ☥★ is worth 4 successes)

EXAMPLES OF ROLLS USING REGULAR DICE:

Martin (dice pool of 6) rolls ● ● ● ☥ ☥★ ☥★ = 5 successes. 4 for the critical success (☥★+☥★), 1 for the regular success (☥).

Freja (dice pool of 5) rolls ● ● ☥★ ☥★ ☥★ = 5 successes. 4 for the critical success (☥★+☥★) and 1 for the single ☥★. Freja might want to use Willpower (see p. 122) to reroll the two failures, hoping for a fourth ☥★, that would bring her result to a whopping 8 successes – 4 for each pair of ☥★'s (10's).

See chapter 7: Vampires for a guide on how to read and use the symbols on the red Hunger Dice.

Each pair of 10s count as their own critical success, so three 10s (000) would add up to five successes, whereas four 10s (0000) would count as eight.

In some tests, a critical win yields additional effects apart from the one stated above, and the Storyteller can even award complete wins regardless of Difficulty when a situation merits it. Vampires can also achieve *messy criticals* (see p. 207).

MARGIN The number of successes exceeding the Difficulty of the roll is called the *margin*. If the Difficulty was 4 and you rolled seven successes, your margin is three. Damage, many power effects, and some other rules use margin to calculate the degree of effect.

Even outside those circumstances, the Storyteller can narrate a degree of success depending on the size of the margin rolled: the larger the margin, the greater the success.

In an *Automatic Win,* the margin is always zero.

WIN AT A COST If your roll includes any successes, but fails, the Storyteller may offer you to *win at a cost.* You achieve your goal, but something happens to make things worse for you anyway: you take damage, attract unfriendly (and powerful) notice, lose something you value, etc. Any player (including you) or the Storyteller can suggest the cost; generally it should scale with the number of missing successes. If it's too high, you can always opt to fail instead.

CRITICALS IN PLAY

The Storyteller should get used to critical successes showing up in play. With larger dice pools, they become more and more common: a ten-dice pool has a slightly higher than 25% chance of rolling a critical success. Of course, a ten-dice pool represents someone at the absolute pitch of human perfection – or someone who has worked the odds carefully enough, or drawn on enough dark power, to resemble perfection.

Be aware of this when adding extra dice to players' pools – if a critical seems like it might break suspense or harm the narrative, just lower the Difficulty instead. Mathematically, lowering the Difficulty by 1 equals adding two dice to a character's pool.

But that said, our advice is to embrace criticals. They allow players to show off their characters, and even when the opposition gets them, they produce rapid, dramatic effects – kind of ideal, we think, for stories of tempestuous predators in conflict.

EXAMPLE:

In the beginning of a chronicle, the coterie tests to escape a burning building. Since failing the roll would mean character death, which would derail the story before it begins, the Storyteller instead has the player characters receive damage as a cost for each missing success on their tests.

TRY, TRY AGAIN If a character fails an action, they can sometimes try again. After all, failing to pick a lock does not mean the character can never insert a lockpick into that door again. To justify such an attempt, circumstances need to merit it – the character obtains a better set of lockpicks, for example, or their skill has improved since last time.

Characters can repeat most actions in combat, chases, or other conflicts. Conflict is inherently stressful, and failure often carries its own cost in such circumstances.

TOTAL FAILURE If your roll includes no successes at all, your character has totally failed. *Total failure* sometimes means only that your character didn't achieve the desired result; sometimes it means dire consequences occur. The Storyteller defines what total failure means according to each situation and circumstances, and decides whether you can try again after a total failure.

EXAMPLE:

Sam rolls no successes when attempting a dangerous jump between two rooftops. Her character promptly falls to a meeting with the only thing that is always there for you when you fall – the cold, hard ground.

TEAMWORK If two or more characters can effectively work together on a task, such as investigating a crime scene or tag-teaming a mark in a confidence game, roll the largest pool among the participants, adding one additional die for each character assisting that has at least one dot in the Skill involved. If no Skill is involved, anyone can assist.

WILLPOWER Characters may spend 1 point of Willpower to re-roll up to three regular dice on any one Skill or Attribute roll, including a roll involving vampiric Disciplines. Characters may not spend Willpower to re-roll Hunger

dice or a tracker roll, such as Willpower or Humanity. A spent point of Willpower counts as having sustained a level of Superficial damage to Willpower (see p. 126) and is marked as such.

For more on Willpower, see pp. 157-158.

CHECKS Unlike rolls, checks normally use a single die. The player makes a check by rolling one die, attempting to achieve a target number of 6 or higher.

Vampire primarily uses checks to determine Hunger gain (see Hunger, feeding, and Rouse Checks, p. 211).

Characters may not use Willpower to re-roll checks. Automatic wins and taking half never apply to checks.

Contests

Storytellers use contests to model direct opposition: e.g., hacking a monitored system, sneaking past a guard searching for you, or seducing an undercover vice cop.

In a contest, the acting character and their opponent each build a dice pool. This process does not have to use the same pool; the Storyteller might tell the sneaking character to use Dexterity + Stealth, but roll Wits + Awareness for the searching guard.

Basic contests go like this:

- Describe what you want your character to do and how.
- The Storyteller decides someone opposes your effort and tells you which of your character's Traits to use to assemble a dice pool.
- The Storyteller chooses which of the opponent's Traits to use to assemble a dice pool.
- Each contestant rolls their dice pool and counts their successes.
- If the acting character rolled equal to or more than the number of successes rolled by the opposing character, the test is a win.

Player characters can definitely engage in contests against each other! The Storyteller still determines which character assembles which dice pool.

TAKING HALF To reduce the number of dice rolls in a session, Storytellers should feel free to *take half* for SPC rolls during basic contests.

To take half, count the number of dice in the opposition pool, divide it in half, rounding down, and that's the number of successes they got.

DESCRIBING THE TEST

After a test is resolved, describe what happens in vivid detail, according to the circumstances. This is now the reality of what has happened, for better or worse. Let your words be guided by the result of the dice, the mood you're going for, the personality of the character acting, and the specific circumstances of the situation. The player and the Storyteller are encouraged to help each other out in descriptions, but ultimately the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what the result of any given test is.

Conflicts

Situations involving basic contests that result in damage – physical or mental – are called *conflicts*. The basic conflict rules value simplicity and speed of play, and they apply to any hostile interaction, from street fighting to particularly vicious courtly debate. Storytellers and players should invest these basic conflicts with as much narrative detail as they like, clothing the bare dice results in narrative flesh and gore.

For more advanced conflict systems, see pp. 295-305.

The Conflict Turn

Conflict happens in a flurry of blows, rhetorical or physical. When each participant in the conflict has acted once (or declined to act), that defines a *turn*. Turns take as much time as the narrative indicates they should – two gunshots might happen in less than a second and end a fight, while a three-hour series of innuendos and courtesies might compose the first turn of an all-night seduction attempt. Thus, one roll does not necessarily represent one swing of a baseball bat, unless the Storyteller says it does.

At the start of every turn of the conflict, each player declares their intent – what they are trying to achieve. This can be anything from trying to tackle the driver of an escaping motorcycle, to assisting in the seduction of a ghoul by distracting his domitor, to simply taking cover.

EXAMPLE:

Fabian, Tracy and Leah have been ambushed in an old church, and are now fighting for their lives. Going left to right across the table, the Storyteller asks them to describe their intended actions. Fabian wants to dive for cover, Tracy hoses bullets downrange, and Leah desperately tries to fend off a crazed hook-wielding attacker.

Once all players have decided on their course of action, the Storyteller makes the same decisions for all SPCs and then tells the troupe which dice pools to build. The players then roll to attempt it.

EXAMPLE:

No one attacks Fabian, Tracy is charged by her target, and Leah's attacker keeps attacking.

Conflict Pools

The dice pool each participant uses in a conflict turn is called their conflict pool. In a fight, the conflict pool might be Strength + Brawl or Composure + Firearms; in a debate, it might be Charisma + Persuasion or Manipulation + Etiquette. Characters might change pools during a conflict, for example, if they pick up a tire iron or change debate tactics from flattery to bullying.

EXAMPLE:

Tracy rolls Composure + Firearms against Difficulty 2 (her target is in the open, coming right at her) while Leah engages in a Strength + Brawl vs Dexterity + Melee contest with the hook-wielder. The Storyteller tells Fabian that he finds cover without needing to roll, since he was not attacked this turn.

Both the attacker and defender roll their pools simultaneously in a basic conflict. As with other basic contests, the side that scores the most successes wins their turn of that conflict. The winner subtracts the loser's successes from their total and

applies the remainder as damage to one of the loser's trackers: Willpower or Health (see Damage, p. 126).

If the conflict is one-sided, such as when the defender is trying to avoid getting shot, only the attacker can inflict damage. If both participants are able to cause harm to their opponent, the conflict is two-sided, with both sides counting as attackers. In this case, the actions of both parties are merged into a single conflict roll. A tie results in both parties inflicting damage on the other with a win margin of one.

RANGED WEAPONS Ranged combat is resolved as a contest, usually vs the defender's Dexterity + Athletics. In cases where two combattants are attacking each other at range, you can resolve it as a two-sided Firearms conflict as above. This assumes that the subject has access to limited cover, such as a car or the corner of a building. A character with no available cover subtracts 2 from their defense pool, whereas superior cover (sandbags, concrete fortifications and similar bullet-proof obstacles) merits a bonus of 1-2.

DODGING When engaged in a Brawl or Melee conflict, the defender can always opt to use their Dexterity + Athletics instead of a combat skill to defend. If they do, they inflict no damage on the opponent, no matter the margin, if they win.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS In a conflict where teaming up makes sense, a character facing multiple opponents loses one die from their pool when they defend against each successive opponent that targets them. To attack multiple foes, a character must split their dice pool.

EXAMPLE:

Katarina is fighting three security guards. With Dexterity 3 and Brawl 4, her defense pool is 7 against the first guard's attack, six dice against the second guard, and only five dice against the third. If she wants to attack two guards during the turn, she must split her seven dice into two pools: four dice and three dice, for example.

WHO GOES FIRST?

This question mostly arises during physical combat – in debates, having the last word may be more valuable than dropping the first allegation.

Unless one side has surprise – usually resulting from a success on an earlier test, perhaps of tactics or sneaking to set up an ambush – characters act in descending order of action. Close combat between already engaged parties goes first, followed by ranged combat, followed by newly initiated physical combat, followed by everything else. If necessary, break ties by comparing Dexterity + Wits, or if equal, by dots of the Skill used.

EXAMPLE:

In the conflict above, Leah fights simultaneously with her attacker, since they are mutually engaged in close combat. Tracy resolves before her attacker, since ranged goes before initiated close combat. Whether Tracy goes before Leah or not is moot. Nobody cares when Fabian resolves his action, since no one is interacting with him.

For troupes desiring a more traditional initiative system, see p.300.

Damage

The Storyteller decides which tracker the conflict damages. In a physical conflict, this is normally Health; a social conflict normally damages Willpower.

The winner of each contest applies their success margin to the loser's relevant tracker as damage. A character using ranged weapons likewise applies their margin from their attack test.

Sometimes, circumstances mandate extra damage after the contest:

- If the winner used a weapon, they add the relevant weapon's damage rating to the total damage (see p. 304).
- In a social conflict, add damage depending on the audience (see p. 305). The Storyteller may also add damage if the loser particularly values the audience's opinion.

EXAMPLE:

Firing her shotgun at a police officer, Clara achieves a margin of two successes. Adding the shotgun's weapon rating of +4, the officer suffers 6 points of damage.

TYPES OF DAMAGE In the Storyteller System, damage comes in two types:

- **Superficial damage:** causes bruising, sprains, and the like but not immediate life-threatening injury. Fists, kicks, and non-lethal weapons, such as tasers, do *Superficial damage* to humans. Standard weapons do Superficial damage to vampires. Superficial damage in social conflict means embarrassment or a bruised ego and has no lasting effect on the target's image of others or themselves.
- **Aggravated damage:** causes broken bones, wounds, and life-threatening injuries. Sharp and piercing weapons do *Aggravated* damage to humans. Normally, only fire, sunlight, and the claws and teeth of some supernatural creatures do Aggravated damage to vampires. Attacks that reveal secret knowledge about the target or attacks from close friends and trusted figures do Aggravated damage to Willpower.

When a point is voluntarily spent from a tracker, such as when using Willpower to reroll dice, mark it as Superficial damage, a "/". If all points are already Superficially damaged, turn one into Aggravated damage instead, as per the usual Impairment rules. Superficial damage sustained through spends is not halved.

TRACKING DAMAGE Characters apply their damage to the relevant track: Health or Willpower.

Unless otherwise stated, divide Superficial damage in half (rounded up) before applying it to the tracker.

Mark each level of Superficial damage on the character sheet by making a "/" on one box on the track.

Mark Aggravated damage on the character sheet by making an "X" on the tracker.

IMPAIRMENT Once the character sustains enough damage (of either type, or a mix) to fill their tracker, they are *Impaired*. Impaired characters lose two dice from all relevant dice pools: Physical pools from Impaired Health, Social, and Mental pools from Impaired Willpower, and any other pools the Storyteller believe to be similarly weakened.

At the Storyteller's discretion, mortal SPCs are incapacitated at this stage.

For every level of damage of either kind, Superficial or Aggravated, that a character takes while Impaired, convert one previously sustained Superficial damage to Aggravated damage on a one-for-one basis. Turn the "/" to a "X" on the track.

Remember to halve Superficial damage as usual before converting it.

THE END OF THE TRACKER A character with their tracker completely filled with Aggravated damage is out of the conflict, possibly permanently.

In a physical combat, they are comatose or dead (if mortal), or fall into torpor (if a vampire; see p. 223).

EXAMPLE:

The officer from the example above suffers 6 levels of Aggravated damage (shotgun versus mortal), but he has only 5 health levels. He promptly expires.

Filling the Willpower tracker with Aggravated damage outside of a social conflict has no immediate effects other than Impairment. If it happens within a social conflict, the defeated character completely break down and loses face. They may be exiled from court, lose dots in Status or other Merits, or suffer any other consequence the Storyteller decides. (Note that one such consequence may very well be the death of the character.)

EXAMPLE:

After having drawn significant heat on the vampire community by shotgunning a police officer, the coterie is chewed out by their elders in Elysium. Those that lose all their Willpower in the ensuing social conflict are unable to defend or deflect their blame, and come morning, they get to see the sun for the first time since the day of their Embrace.

Healing

SUPERFICIAL HEALTH DAMAGE At the beginning of a session, mortals can remove a number of Superficial damage levels up to their Stamina rating from their Health tracker.

Vampires can remove a number of Superficial damage levels from their Health tracker by Rousing the Blood each turn (see Mending Damage, p. 218).

SUPERFICIAL WILLPOWER DAMAGE At the beginning of a session, vampires and mortals alike can remove a number of Superficial damage levels up to their Composure or Resolve rating (use highest) from their Willpower track.

EXAMPLE:

Terence has Resolve 3 and Composure 4. He suffered 6 levels of Superficial damage to his Willpower tracker during a gang face-off. He can erase 4 levels of Superficial damage at the beginning of the next session.

AGGRAVATED HEALTH DAMAGE For mortals, a character with Medicine can convert Aggravated damage on the Health tracker to Superficial damage. They must succeed at a simple test of Intelligence + Medicine; the Difficulty equals the total Aggravated damage sustained by the patient. Attempts to heal oneself add +1 to the Difficulty.

The maximum points of Aggravated damage that a character can convert is half that character's Medicine rating, rounded up.

This healing happens over the course of the night. The Storyteller decides if any remaining injuries require only another day of similar treatment, or hospitalization.

Hospitalization avoids the need for more dice rolls, but injuries take the patient's total Aggravated damage in weeks to heal fully. The Storyteller can lessen this amount to fit the story better or allow the character to walk around injured – wearing a cast, for example.

Vampires can normally mend 1 level of Aggravated Health damage each night by Rousing the Blood (see Mending Damage, p. 21).

AGGRAVATED WILLPOWER DAMAGE At the start of the next session, a character who has acted in accordance to their Ambition can heal 1 level of Aggravated Willpower damage.

However, the other consequences of losing a social or mental conflict – a bad reputation, lost Status, susceptibility to mental control or social dominance – may continue as long as the Storyteller decides.

Examples of Rolls

We designed this rules system with flexibility in mind. For example, the current range of Attributes and Skills yields about 270 combinations for dice pools. This potential doesn't even include the effects of specialties, or of any other Skills you might add if you feel the need. The Storyteller has a huge variety of rolls to model actions – choose whatever you think works to further drama or narrative or to simulate a real-world effect.

The following examples of rolls can give you some idea of the possibilities that might come up in a game:

- You want to conduct yourself flawlessly at the governor's formal dinner (and you can't actually eat anything). Roll Dexterity + Etiquette (Difficulty 4).
- You're miles from your haven, and the sun will be up soon. Roll Wits + Survival (Difficulty 4) to find shelter for the day. You will eventually find shelter regardless of the roll, but you will sustain a level of Aggravated Health damage for each success you failed by.
- You try to distract the bodyguard with your left hand while surreptitiously slipping your knife back into your belt with your right. Roll Dexterity + Subterfuge (Difficulty equals half the bodyguard's Wits + Awareness).
- You lock gazes with the gang leader, trying to cow him into submission before his gang – of course, he wants to do the same to you. Basic contest of Charisma + Intimidation between the two of you.
- You need to board up the door to your haven in record speed – and it needs to be durable, too. Roll Wits + Craft (Difficulty 3). Each additional success in the margin adds 1 to the Difficulty of breaking in.
- It's not the message of the song, it's how good you look singing it. Roll Charisma + Performance (Difficulty 3) to have your choice of groupies.
- How long can you remain motionless in the bushes while the guards chat about baseball? Roll Stamina + Stealth. Each success allows you to hold still for one hour.
- It would be foolish to threaten your rival openly while in the confines of Elysium. Roll Manipulation + Intimidation (Difficulty 4) to properly veil your threat without leaving them in doubt as to your intentions.
- Suddenly, a man pushes a crate out of the van you've been chasing! Roll Wits + Drive (Difficulty 5) to swerve out of the way in time.
- Can you distract the guard dogs while you slip in? Roll Manipulation + Animal Ken (Difficulty 3 + your Bane Severity).
- Did they just threaten you? Roll Wits + Intimidation

(Difficulty equals whichever is greater of their Manipulation or Etiquette) to figure out what that lick meant by that comment.

- You try to get the mob's attention by driving your knife through the mook's hand and into the oak bar. Roll Strength + Melee (Difficulty 3).
- You try to pull alongside the fleeing Mercedes so your friends can leap aboard. Roll your Wits + Drive resisted by the Mercedes driver's Wits + Drive. If you win, you pull alongside in pole position; if not, the Mercedes escapes.
- The new gang in town has been awfully good at picking out Kindred-run operations to take over. Roll Charisma + Streetwise to see what people know about them. The more successes you get, the more information you receive, but the legwork takes an entire night regardless.
- What sort of alarm system does this place have? Roll Intelligence + Larceny. The more successes you get, the more information you receive.
- Whose story will the Prince believe: yours or your enemy's? This calls for a basic contest of Manipulation + Persuasion.
- You try convincing the clerk of the court that you're an IRS auditor and that you need to see the court records. Roll Manipulation + Finance (Difficulty 5).
- Can you read the German version of The Book of Nod without losing something in the transition? Roll Intelligence + Occult (Difficulty 6 minus your dots in the Linguistics Merit).
- You have to keep running if you're going to outdistance your pursuers. Contest of Stamina + Athletics to outlast them.
- You need to convince the station chief to release you before the sun rises. Roll Charisma + Academics (Law) (Difficulty 4) to make a plea eloquent enough – or Manipulation + Politics (Difficulty 5) to have your agents pull strings behind the scenes.

Three Turns and Out

We strongly recommend ending conflicts after roughly three turns, unless everyone is still having fun. Too much dice rolling slows down the drama and becomes harder and harder to describe creatively. If the Storyteller and players want the old-school feeling of fighting down to the last Health box, they're welcome to do so, of course. But for the rest of us, here's a few ways to decide who won if you've gone three rounds and both sides are still standing.

- Allow the players to break the conflict off if they want. The Storyteller may require a basic contest to do so (for example, Strength or Dexterity + Athletics to flee or Composure + Etiquette to divert the discussion), or their foes may simply let them leave.
- If the players' foes have taken more losses – or even an unexpected amount of damage – the Storyteller can simply decide that they break off the conflict, as above.
- Simply award victory to the side that won the most contests or to the side with the fewest points of Aggravated damage. The Storyteller narrates the end of the conflict based on the results of the previous contests. Ideally, if the player characters lost, they have a chance to flee or at least to surrender with some dignity.
- Change the situation. Perhaps some new, third force enters the scene, such as the police, or the Prince. Perhaps the conflict simply changes venue from the alley to a nearby warehouse or from the court to a concert. The change should present new options to both sides.
- Use *One Roll Conflict*, see p. 296.

Experience and Improvement

Characters who survive the dangers of the night improve their chances of surviving the next one. We represent this Darwinian process of learning and improvement with experience points.

The Storyteller awards each player 1 experience point per session played, plus 1 point at the end of each story. In shorter chronicles and others where more rapid improvement adds to the drama, the Storyteller may choose to award 2 points per character at the end of each session. Players spend their points to improve their characters' Traits or acquire specialties (p. 159) according to the Trait Cost chart in the Characters chapter on p. 151.

EXAMPLE:

Evan wants to increase his Resolve from 2 to 3. He must spend 15 experience points to do so (5 x 3).

Storytellers may insist that players have their characters take action in the course of the game to make any improvements, not just Merits, plausible.

The Golden Rule

This is the most important rule of all, and the only real rule worth following: There are no rules. This game should be whatever you want it to be, whether that's a nearly dice-less chronicle of in-character socialization or a long-running tactical campaign with each player controlling a small coterie of vampires. If the rules in this book interfere with your enjoyment of the game, change them. The world is far too big – no set of inflexible rules can possibly reflect it. Think of this book as a collection of guidelines: suggested but not mandatory ways of capturing the World of Darkness in the format of a game. You decide what works best in your game. And you may freely use, alter, abuse, or ignore these rules at your whim ■

CHARACTERS

All the world's a stage
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts.

– WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *AS YOU LIKE IT*

Playing a storytelling game is an opportunity to walk a mile in someone else's shoes. Grab it and milk it for all it's worth. Think of your chronicle as a co-created prestige HBO television series in which you portray a vivid character, probably very different from yourself, who finds themselves in terrifying and heart-wrenching situations that change and grow them in dramatic ways. They are your in-game viewpoint and personality, so ask yourself: "Who do I want to pretend to be?" Your character defines your in-game voice, appearance, and body language as well as the faith, political values, and ethics that define who they are and the Abilities, Skills and Disciplines that determine what they can do. You define your character's core concept, Abilities, and Skills during an immersive prelude session or simply by choosing a Predator type and a clan and following the instructions given to create a quick player character. Throughout, you flesh out the world of your chronicle by drawing your characters and the people they know, mortal and Kindred, onto the Relationship Map.

Character Fundamentals

Your character is a powerful way to shape stories. They define what kind of **Vampire: The Masquerade** stories you will tell together. Playing a junkie priest struggling with their lost faith sends a very different message to your fellow players and the Storyteller than creating a professional killer working for an Armenian drug lord. Other player characters, Storyteller-played characters (SPCs), and coterie characters treat these people very differently, and the Storyteller creates stories and reactions that suit them. Your choices from the beginning, including concept, coterie, and clan, clearly signal the style of play you prefer.

You are not your character. In a Storytelling game you

are liberated from the constraints actors have when taking on roles for TV and movies. Your character can literally be anyone of any gender, ethnicity, or background with any religion, politics, or world-view. You don't have to agree with your character's opinions or respect their values. In fact, it's probably a more thrilling experience if you don't. **Vampire** is a game about playing a fascinating monster: an anti-hero, an addict, a parasite with a soul about to plunge into darkness or rise towards the light. Playing with clichés and tropes is fine and harmless – indeed it's sometimes inevitable that you resort to tropes in an improvisational game, where lines are made up at the drop of a hat – but clichés can be boring or ignorant if that's all you bring. Consider reading up a bit on the culture and social environment that shaped your character. Watch videos made by people like them, make the effort to understand and respect the person whose cold, dead flesh you inhabit, and your portrayal gains heft and power to you and others. Reality always leaves fiction behind when it comes to the unexpected and the complex.

Your character is not an island. More than anything else, a character is defined by their relationships. **Vampire** is a game where who you know is often more important than how far you can throw someone through a wall. In **Vampire**, we use a *Relationship Map* to keep track of relationships in the game. You should add characters, relationship arrows, and descriptions to this sheet throughout character generation, including anything important: clan, Backgrounds, and even Skills if need be. Your coterie can thus map out your close social network, sires, and surviving mortal Touchstones.

Last but not least, your character is a vampire. You're here to play the monster. A humane monster perhaps, but never forget you are portraying an undead predator dressed in the skin of their victims. You look like a mortal (okay, maybe a dead or disfigured mortal), you sound like a person, but thinking that you are human is only a mistake your victims make. Inside, the Beast in the Blood howls, constantly reminding you of your monstrous hunger. In **Vampire**, you portray a wide variety of bloodsuckers inspired by more than three centuries of gothic suspense and horror fiction. Whatever image the word "vampire" brings to mind, you can find a type of leech that fits your wants and expectations while simultaneously subverting them. The World of Darkness hosts a multitude of breeds, clans, religions, philosophies, and sects of the undead ■

Character Creation

This chapter describes how to create a unique character, beginning with a general concept and translating this concept into the numbers used in the game. It provides some guidelines to keep players on a level field while still allowing customization and individual flavor. Players can easily figure out this simple iterative system for themselves, but the Storyteller remains part of the process. They should not only answer technical questions or provide rulings, but also guide the players to create characters who both fit into the chronicle as initially conceived and drive it in new and exciting directions.

Characters begin and end with a story. Ask yourself who you want to play: a street-hardened punk or a sleek shark of the boardroom? Did you learn occult secrets in a tree-shaded quadrangle or your own strength in the dust and heat of Afghanistan? Did you live for others or for yourself, or like most people, for some combination of the two? Where did you draw the line? And after monsters redraw that line for you, what now?

Build the character in your mind's eye with the dots and numbers of the Storyteller System as the skeleton, not as the soul. Don't try to create the "best possible" character – not only does that defeat the purpose of drama, it's also impossible to have more dots than a whole city full of predators, much less a whole World of Darkness. The game is about survival, terror, and tragedy – make a character who plays that game: a character who truly lives despite being dead.

The Role of the Storyteller

As the Storyteller, you guide the players through the character generation process. After your players arrive for the game session, introduce them to the basic premise of the game and describe the rules system. Make things as easy for the players as possible. For beginning players, keep things as simple as you can; help them build the character they want, but let them discover the intricacies of the system on their own.

Setting your game

There are several different possible approaches to setting your game, each with their own advantages and disadvantages depending on the nature and experience of your group, personal taste, and available time:

SHOW, DON'T TELL In "Show, don't tell," players initially spend a minimum amount of time creating their characters, instead saving all details to come up during play. Only offer the most basic description of your character to the other players and a hint of what the relationship between the characters are like. All the rest will emerge during play, and when it does, note it down on the Relationship Map. Players may even decide to leave some things undecided, such as the exact nature of Contacts and Allies.

This method is advantageous for players with limited time and/or patience for the other methods, who either have vast experience with the setting, or none.

SESSION ZERO With this method, take your time and spend an entire game session creating characters. This

THE FLIER

Some Storytellers find it useful to give players some guidelines regarding the chronicle they want to run ahead of time. The Storyteller often distributes this document, the flier, on social media, in email, or over a file-sharing site rather than printing it. The flier should include the chronicle's cool, evocative name and all the essential setting details and rule modifications, along with well-chosen graphics, (anti-) inspirational quotes, lyrics, or even embedded videos or art.

The look, feel, and text of the flier influences Session Zero and can simultaneously create excitement, set expectations, organize timing, and establish a dramatic framework for the chronicle. Sell your chronicle concept and talk about the dark themes you want to explore together in your stories.

Character Creation summary

CORE CONCEPT

What was your character's name in life? What did they do? Where and when were they Embraced? What is their name now? Where are they now? Write your character's name on the Relationship Map.

CLAN AND SIRE

Pick your clan. Write your character's sire on the Relationship Map along with relevant sect SPCs.

ATTRIBUTES

Take one Attribute at 4; three Attributes at 3; four Attributes at 2; one Attribute at 1.

Health = Stamina + 3; Willpower = Composure + Resolve.

SKILLS

Pick one Skill distribution.

- **JACK OF ALL TRADES:** One Skill at 3; eight Skills at 2; ten Skills at 1
- **BALANCED:** Three Skills at 3; five Skills at 2; seven Skills at 1
- **SPECIALIST:** One Skill at 4; three Skills at 3; three Skills at 2; three Skills at 1

Add free specialties to Academics, Craft, Performance, and Science Skills.

Take one more free specialty.

DISCIPLINES

Choose two of your clan Disciplines. Put two dots in one and one dot in the other.

For Caitiff characters, choose any two Disciplines. Put two dots in one and one dot in the other.

Thin-blood characters have no intrinsic Disciplines.

PREDATOR

Pick your Predator type (p. 175) and apply it:

- Add one of the listed specialties.
- Add one dot to a listed Discipline.
- Apply any associated Advantages or Flaws.

ADVANTAGES

Spend 7 points on Advantages, and take 2 points of Flaws in addition to the ones gained from your Preda-

tor type. Thin-blood characters must take between one and three Thin-Blood Merits and the same number of Thin-Blood Flaws.

Add any new supporting cast from Advantages and Flaws to the Relationship Map.

CONVICTIONS AND TOUCHSTONES

Select one to three Convictions. (p. 172)

Create an equal number of Touchstones (p. 173), each connected to one Conviction and add them to the Relationship Map.

Set your Humanity to 7.

SEA OF TIME

Together with the Storyteller and other players, decide if your coterie are:

- **CHILDER:** Embraced within the last 15 years
  - ☐ 14th, 15th, or 16th Generation (thin-bloods): Blood Potency 0
  - ☐ 12th or 13th Generation: Blood Potency 1
- **NEONATES:** Embraced between 1940 and a decade ago
  - ☐ 12th or 13th Generation: Blood Potency 1
  - ☐ Each player spends 15 experience points
- **ANCILLAE:** Embraced between 1780 and 1940
  - ☐ 10th or 11th Generation: Blood Potency 2
  - ☐ Each player adds 2 points of Advantages
  - ☐ Each player adds 2 points of Flaws
  - ☐ Each player subtracts 1 Humanity
  - ☐ Each player spends 35 experience points.

TRAIT COSTS: EXPERIENCE

TRAIT	EXPERIENCE POINTS
Increase Attribute	New level x 5
Increase Skill	New level x 3
New Specialty	3
Clan Discipline	New level x 5
Other Discipline	New level x 7
Caitiff Discipline	New level x 6
Blood Sorcery Ritual	Ritual level x 3
Thin-blood Formula	Formula level x 3
Advantage	3 per dot
Blood Potency	New level x 10

Veteran

process ensures that the players don't feel rushed and that they take the time to make complete, flesh-and-blood characters.

At the beginning of this introductory session, or "Session Zero," the player group and the Storyteller gather at the table, armed with blank character sheets, a copy of this rulebook, pencils, several ten-sided dice, a big blank sheet for the Relationship Map, and some scratch paper for notes. You might also want to have colored pens available, and copies of any Loresheets you plan to use in the chronicle, so that players can read them at the same time.

Players are encouraged to offer each other suggestions to help them build characters whose stories interweave and whose abilities complement each other, building an intricate web of relationships, dependencies, and intrigue as a basis for their upcoming chronicle.

THE PRELUDE In a *prelude*, you rapidly paint an impressionistic picture of the character's human life – and play out the terror and cruelty of their Embrace. Other players take roles as supporting cast and might portray relatives, friends, the character's sire, and the like. The prelude introduces the player to their character and to the chronicle, so make it memorable!

WHAT DO I DO IN THIS GAME?

- **Hunt for blood**
- **Struggle with the Beast**
- **Build and break relationships**
- **Hide from, or fight, the Second Inquisition**
- **Rule the streets**
- **Protect the Touchstones of your Humanity**
- **Rise to power**
- **Plot against other Kindred**
- **Unearth terrible secrets**
- **Face the consequences of being a monster**
- **Fight radical, primitivist werewolves**

Character, Coterie, Chronicle

Storytellers and players shape their stories together in play, but they begin that process during character creation. Players build their vampire characters as part of a coterie, a term for a small group of associated Kindred – specifically, the group comprising the player characters. As that definition reminds us, the coterie starts out as part of a setting, one built by the Storyteller using the World of Darkness as its backdrop.

The story of the player characters, the coterie they form, and the ways that coterie explores (or battles against) the setting and the World of Darkness, becomes the chronicle. Thus all three elements – characters, coterie, and chronicle – influence each other from the beginning and throughout the game. That's why the Storyteller and the troupe should design the foundations of those three elements together from the get-go.

The first session should be exciting for players and Storyteller alike, as the shape of the chronicle emerges. Here the preparations and plans of the Storyteller meet the characters the troupe creates and their own expectations for the game. Usually the Storyteller started designing their setting before the first session, so we'll talk about that process first – but in reality, around the table, all three elements blend simultaneously.

City

The default game of **Vampire** happens in a city. Vampires need lots of food, and people cluster in cities. In the nights haunted by Second Inquisition kill squads and airport watch lists, vampires retreat to their feudal fastnesses. Where do you want to set your chronicle?

Your Storyteller may have an idea of what city they want to set their story in, or they may throw it open to discussion, or a better idea might emerge during the first sessions. Consider the following options and consult the Cities chapter (pp. 317-335) for a wealth of further detail.

YOUR OWN CITY Playing in your hometown or a nearby city you know well can be a good choice. Everyone at the table knows what the city looks and feels like, what people you can expect to meet, and what's happening at night. The Storyteller may already have an idea of which clans and sects rule the night in their chronicle and can easily slot them into your own city.

SOMEWHERE BY NIGHT You can use a published setting book to define your setting. Whether you use a new **Vampire 5th Edition** book or a book from an earlier edition of **Vampire** and update it to the modern setting matters little. The books in the **By Night** series offer an almost endless supply of characters, story hooks, and deep-dives into local Kindred history.

Age and Generation

How old are the vampires you portray? Vampires from different centuries, or even from different decades, may hold very different values and beliefs from fledglings Embraced a week ago.

Your sire is one generation lower than you; an 11th Generation Kindred sires a 12th Generation lick. For game-balance reasons, all the characters should be of the same generation. If equal power among player characters doesn't concern you, feel free to play a sire and their childe, or any other combination of Kindred that intrigues you.

Together with the Storyteller and other players, decide if your coterie are:

OTHER ERAS

By default, Vampire is set tonight, right now.

However, nothing stops you from running a chronicle that starts its clock in 1991, 1968, 1888, 1204 or in ancient Rome 120 AD. While this book doesn't have full rules or setting support for historical chronicles – and obviously no edition could ever cover all of Kindred history – older editions and versions have plenty, most notably Victorian Age Vampire and Vampire: The Dark Ages.

Childer or Fledglings: Embraced within the last 15 years, down to as recently as last week or last night for an all-fledgling chronicle. The more recent the Embrace, the more likely the characters are to be thin-bloods of the 14th, 15th, or 16th Generation. However, new childer of the 12th and 13th Generation remain plausible even tonight.

Neonates: Embraced within a human lifetime, roughly between World War II and the present. Neonates are most likely of the 12th or 13th Generation. Thin-bloods were vanishingly rare before recent decades, mostly because older Kindred persecuted them mercilessly as signs of Gehenna.

Ancillae: Embraced between the American Revolution and World War II, under 250 years old. An ancilla came of age during the modern era or at least in an era when the divine right of princes were becoming an eccentric joke instead of the foundation of society. It was the contrast between their relative modernity and the medieval mindset of the Camarilla that led to the rise of the Anarch Movement. Even hard-line Camarilla ancillae believe the system should loosen up – which other Kindred interpret to mean "give us more power." Ancilla characters can be as low as 10th or 11th Generation.

Elders: Older than 250 years old, Ninth Generation or lower. The Beckoning slowly calls the elders to the Gehenna War, and they are not available as player characters in this book.

Sect

Of the many undead societies, which one claims your characters? Each sect has its own distinct flavor, described elsewhere in this book and in detail in the **Anarch** and **Camarilla** sect books. Each sect below has only a brief descriptor, along with the default clans and most likely coterie types (p. 197) for players to consider.

THE CAMARILLA During the early Renaissance, the vampire lords of the high clans created the so-called Ivory Tower to hide the Kindred from the mortal Inquisition. It has become one of the most powerful secret societies in history, subverting and infiltrating governments, corporations, organized crime, and mass media. Organized along feudal lines, with Princes ruling over the vampires of a city like dark lords of a bygone age, the Camarilla combines civilized order and ruthless cruelty. Camarilla chronicles concern the uses of power, the dead hand of the past, and the questions of safety and duty versus honor and freedom.

> **Typical Clans:** Ventrue, Toreador, Nosferatu, Malkavian, Tremere, and dissidents from the Brujah and Gangrel clans
> **Typical Coterie Types:** Cerberus, Commando, Day Watch, Hunting Party, Maréchal, Plumaires, Questari, Regency, Sbirri, Vehme, and Watchmen

THE ANARCHS The Anarch Movement asks every vampire the question: "Why do you obey?" As old as the Camarilla, the Movement has finally been thrown out of the Tower as an unacceptable threat in dangerous times. The result: war in the streets, new blood feeding new collectives and baronies, and inevitable purges. As many Anarchs march under black banners as red, and as many again just want to keep their heads down and figure out who their next meal is coming from. Anarch chronicles concern changing society, life under surveillance, the difference between ideology and actuality, and the price of revolution.

> **Typical Clans:** Brujah, Gangrel, dissidents from the Camarilla clans, some Caitiff
> **Typical Coterie Types:** Blood Cult, Champions, Commando, Fang Gang, Nomads, Questari, Sbirri, Watchmen

THIN-BLOOD You wake up with a hangover and a new addiction. All the flavors of blood call out to you, tempting you to extract strange alchemies and trips from the people you used to call your friends. Your nights have few rules, many questions, and endless horrors. Are you alive or dead? What are these ancient things moving through the night like sharks in deep waters? Will you try to become human again or drain a Cainite to embrace the night and live forever as one of the Damned?

In a thin-blood chronicle, you

Investigator

discover the world of the Damned from a personal perspective, one night at a time, and players need no prior knowledge of the setting to start playing. The thin-blood experience can seamlessly merge into a Camarilla or Anarch chronicle.

Typical Clans: Thin-blood only
Typical Coterie Types: Champions, Day Watch, Fang Gang, Hunting Party, Nomads, Plumaires

Core Character Concept

While you decide where your chronicle happens and whose claws you have fallen into, your core character concept emerges. Think of it like a pitch, a vague but hooky notion: "vampire hit man" or "really weird club kid prophet" or "Jessica Jones, except she drinks blood instead of whiskey." If you know the Vampire setting, you might also have a clan concept in mind: "sweet old grandma, but a raging Brujah" or "Nosferatu cosmetic surgeon."

As you figure out more about the story and setting, your core concept might shift or just come into better focus. Ask your fellow players and the Storyteller for ideas and suggestions if you're stuck. Think about the coterie taking shape, and the sect you'll be running with. Come up with concepts that play interestingly off other player characters; Maddie builds an arms dealer with a political conscience, so you build a Big Pharma doctor with military contracts.

It is your responsibility to create a character who works with the coterie or at least doesn't sabotage the group or the game. Unlife as a vampire is far too dangerous to open yourself up to hostility from within; survival requires cooperation.

Decide why your vampire joined up with their Kindred companions, and why they stay together. Do they have a mission in common or an enemy? Are they mystically or politically connected? "The Prince made us" works perfectly well as an answer to the first question; you can aim your roleplay to answer the second question.

Choose Your Clan

If you haven't yet, choose your character's clan. (See Clans, p. 63, for details and more archetype ideas.) Their clan describes your character's essential lineage; they drank their sire's vitae, so their sire's clan – their Blood – determines your character's own. The seven clans in this book represent the majority of vampires in the lands of the Camarilla and the Anarch Movement. Other clans exist on the outskirts of the Jyhad, for now.

Perhaps you are not part of a recognized clan at all – that's perfectly reasonable. However, those vampires don't take well to outsiders. They call you *Caitiff*, and they would spit on you, were it not a waste of bloody saliva. Alternately, your Blood may be so thin that you have no clan – if you're beginning a thin-blood chronicle, the decision is already made.

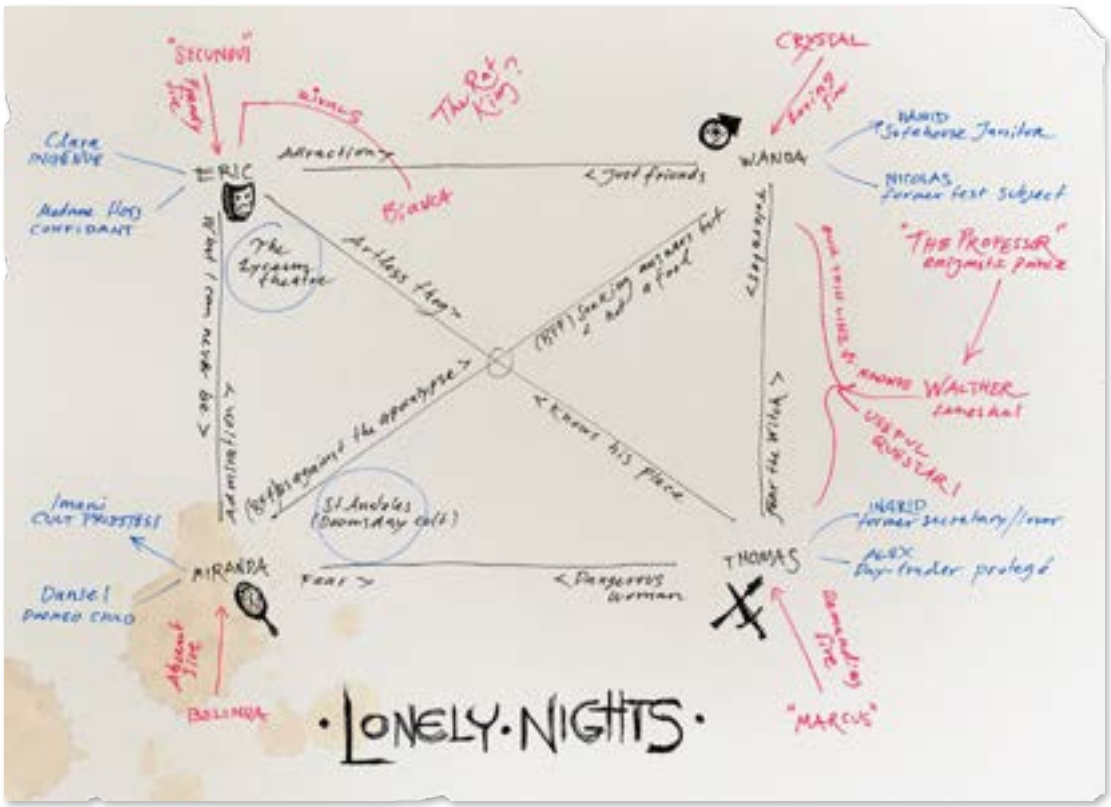
CREATING A THIN-BLOOD CHARACTER Thin-blood characters have some rules differences during character creation. Thin-bloods pick no clan and gain no dots in Disciplines. Instead, they gain temporary Disciplines depending on the Resonance of the blood they consume and can also learn Thin-Blood Alchemy through a Merit or experience.

You must also choose between one to three Thin-Blood Merits and an equal number of Thin-Blood Flaws before choosing regular Advantages (p. 182).

The Relationship Map

Vampire depicts dramatic action. Drama occurs between people, some of whom may be vampires. When two people interact, they create, reinforce, or change a relationship. By drawing a Relationship Map, you can bring drama visually to the forefront, keep track of supporting characters you've neglected, and provide both Storyteller and players with emotional meat for those interpersonal scenes.

You begin the game with your player characters, each of whom has a sire and Touchstones. Then perhaps you add vampiric mentors,



human lovers, or a shady journalist who always knows the latest supernatural rumors. You almost certainly add the Prince of the city or the leading Anarch Baron or Councilors. As you draw lines and describe connections between your characters and these new SPC figures, the Relationship Map of your chronicle takes shape, and your game takes on life and possibility.

As more supporting characters appear and as relationships change, you scribble in new names and cross out old truths. Make note of that hidden haven or the really great hunting ground that the Gangrel found. Update the map as allies become adversaries following a failed negotiation in Elysium, or as an unknown vampire Embraces a dangerous recurring inquisitor. Soon enough, the map becomes a mess of scribbled notes about the characters, Post-its with pictures, memorable quotes, wine stains, and sketches.

Your Relationship Map becomes your mad conspiracy wall or your pictures-and-string investigation board straight out of *The Wire*. Use it not just to drive drama, but also to keep track of the tangled web of local Kindred deception. Keep it near the table where everyone can read it. Its form is up to you: a big sheet of butcher paper, a digital mind map, a presentation deck, a printout of the map of your city with domain boundaries drawn in.

You can use whatever colors you have in a drawer or on the computer, but the Relationship Map illustration in this chapter use these:

- Black denotes player character names, locations, and notes.
- Red denotes fellow Kindred and their havens and interests.
- Blue marks mortals and their activities and bases.

Arrows and Descriptors

You can go as deep into the graphical woods as you care to. For example, every line between two characters can be an arrow, pointing from the dominant party to the weaker party. The line between your sire and your character points at you, not them, for instance. If the sides have actual equality, then the line has no arrow ends. Draw one in when you figure out who really called the shots all along.

The other thing a relationship line needs is a label: a description of what the relationship means. Relationships always go both ways and are very seldom equal or the same in both directions. Vampires are masters of wearing masks and hiding their true feelings, so an attitude arrow in one direction can be "hate" and "love" in the other. Other possible descriptors include: "overprotective sire," "psychotic jealousy," "ghoul," or "Blood Bond."

Write one party's descriptor of the relationship on one side to the arrow, close to their name. Write the second party's descriptor on the other side, close to their name. Relationships you set at the beginning of the game and between coterie members might well be both true and mutual, but connections the players and Storyteller add as the chronicle progresses only show what the players believe in the moment. Update the chart as true motives emerge, or as passions change.

Starting the Map

During Session Zero, you begin the Relationship Map, possibly working in pencil at first. At this first core concept stage, draw in the player characters, along with several relationships and supporting cast members.

COTERIE RELATIONSHIPS Write down the names of the characters in big letters. Then draw lines (or arrows) between your character and two of the other characters in the coterie. Write a positive relationship on one of the arrows and a negative one on the other. Positive coterie relationships might include: "fascinated," "old friend," "confides in," "owes big time," and "fellow gun-lover." Negative descriptors could read: "mistrust," "competes over X's affections," "needs to upstage," "wants his blood doll," or "replace as Sheriff."

Remember, you can change these relationships for the better or worse during character creation if you think of something better, something that fits into the characters' story more elegantly, or in response to the events of the chronicle.

SIRES Write the name, and perhaps details like clan, year of Embrace, and known sect position of your character's sire in a box some distance away from your character. Then draw an arrow pointing at your character and describing – initially – the Embrace. Descriptors might include "accidental Embrace," "groomed for power," "my mistake," "torturous Embrace," and "hates."

SECT SUPPORTING CHARACTERS Every vampire, except for the merest childe, has connections in their sect. Ask the Storyteller for two local vampires or take a connection from another character's sire or supporting cast. Write any newly named SPCs in boxes just like you did your character's sire: name, clan, year of Embrace, and known sect position. From your character box, now draw an arrow to or from each one and add descriptors. One relationship can be positive: "my liege," "respects her candor," "in awe of," "bled together against the Prince," "fellow roof-dweller," or "weirdly attracted to." The other is negative: "owes me money," "backstabber," "coward," "Anarch tendencies" (or the opposite), or "creepily into me." None of these relationships (yet) equal full Advantages or Flaws, although you can always put dots into them later.

Your Human Life

All vampires begin as human beings. Player characters began that way, too.

You may create a character of any age, from any culture, and from any nation, subject to the Storyteller's approval. The core coterie and chronicle concepts can help you narrow things down from seven billion choices.

If you haven't done so yet, decide your character's name.

Choose Your Traits

In **Vampire**, you build your character – you decide what they can do in the game – by buying different levels of Traits. Later on in the game, you can improve those levels with experience points gained through play. Neonates and ancillae get experience points to spend on more Traits and Advantages at the end of character creation, but the Storyteller should let even childer move points around after the prelude to custom-fit the numbers to your character. Don't get too hung up on all your choices.

The game measures Traits in dots, sometimes called "levels" or "ratings." Traits range from one to five dots, with five being the best humanly possible. A character with a five-dot Dexterity and a five-dot Athletics is an Olympic-level athlete, for example: one in a million, perhaps.

SET YOUR ATTRIBUTES Look at the Attributes at the top of your character sheet. Which one is your character best at? Color in four dots next to that Attribute. Which one are they worst at? Color in one dot next to that Attribute. Then pick four Attributes at three dots, and three Attributes at two dots.

BEST ATTRIBUTE:	4 dots
THREE ATTRIBUTES:	3 dots each
FOUR ATTRIBUTES:	2 dots each
WORST ATTRIBUTE:	1 dot

Now derive two more Traits from your Attributes as follows:

- Add three to your Stamina to derive your Health.
- Add your Resolve to your Composure to derive your Willpower.

EXAMPLE:

Christopher is assigning dots to his character, and decides that above all, his character is composed in the face of adversity, thus placing four dots into Composure. However, he also sees his character as having a weak constitution, thus assigning one dot to Stamina. Resolve, Charisma, and Wits get three dots each, and the remaining attributes get two dots.

CHOOSE YOUR SKILLS Skills tell the story of your character's life. What did they do all day, when

they could do things by day? You can either use the Quick Skills Assignment method in the box on p. 147 or go into a little more detail using the below method.

Think a little bit about what each Skill means in the context of your character's life story. Did they get those three dots in Brawl after a shitty year as a bouncer in Pattaya, during a career in the merchant marine, or by going to a really good dojo in Gainesville during college?

Professional Skills

You probably did best at what you had to do to earn a paycheck. You certainly got the most practice at it.

Your profession gives you two Skills at three dots (•••) and two Skills at two dots (••).

The words in parentheses represent specialties, which give a bonus to tests of that Skill in that specific area. Whenever you acquire your first dot in Academics, Science, Craft, or Performance, take a specialty in that Skill.

Choose a professional specialty in one of your professional skills.

Life Event Skills

What major life events shaped you? Did you serve a tour in Iraq, go through an abusive relationship, win the lottery, or have kids? Did you get mugged and take up taekwondo? Whatever it was, it taught you something.

Specifically, one event taught you a Skill at three dots (•••) and another one taught you a Skill at two dots (••).

Leisure Skills

What did your profession pay for or your events interrupt? Did you run a triathlon or go to EDM festivals every weekend? What you do for kicks also teaches you things.

Take three leisure Skills at one dot (•) based on hobbies or other pastimes:

Extra Skills

Now go ahead and take those Skills you've had your eye on this whole time. Pick one of the options below:

SAMPLE PROFESSION PACKAGES:

- **ARTIST:** Craft (Art) or Performance ••• Insight ••• Academics •• Awareness or Occult ••
- **CODER:** Technology ••• Academics or Craft ••• Finance •• Persuasion ••
- **EXECUTIVE:** Finance ••• Intimidation or Persuasion ••• Insight •• Subterfuge ••
- **INVESTIGATOR:** Investigation ••• Insight ••• Awareness •• Brawl or Firearms ••
- **JUNKIE:** Streetwise ••• Animal Ken or Brawl ••• Insight or Larceny •• Subterfuge ••
- **MAFIOSO:** Brawl or Subterfuge ••• Streetwise ••• Intimidation or Larceny •• Melee or Firearms ••
- **SCHOLAR:** Academics or Science ••• one other Mental Skill ••• Craft (Writing) •• Persuasion ••
- **SOCIALITE:** Performance or Technology ••• Finance ••• Insight •• Etiquette or Subterfuge ••
- **VETERAN:** Athletics or Awareness ••• Firearms ••• Stealth •• Survival or Leadership ••

Specialist: Take one more Skill at four dots (••••). If you like, you can change your professional specialty to a specialty of this Skill. You cannot move a free Specialty from Academics, Craft, Performance, or Science to a different Skill, however.

Generalist: Take two more Skills at two dots (••) and four more Skills at one dot (•).

Ideally, come up with a plausible reason for why you have these new Skills, but don't bog down or kill yourself trying to figure it out.

SET YOUR BELIEFS What were your character's moral and ethical values? Were they a believer, a communist, a vegan? Who were the most important people in their life? These things are the Convictions and Touchstones of a character's Humanity, their moral integrity and protection against the alien Beast inside every vampire.

Convictions

Convictions are a person's core values: a set of moral principles that fortifies their actions against the degeneration of the Beast.

Create one to three Convictions central to your character in life. Convictions often begin with "never" or "always;" these are strong beliefs concerning something likely to come up in play. Killing, love, loyalty, core ideals, political principles, and religious codes: these make good Conviction fodder. The Storyteller must always approve your Convictions; in some troupes, all the players must agree on your Convictions.

Think about where and how these Convictions became important to you. Did your family instill them? Did you adopt them at Sorbonne or from a lover? Perhaps your major life event from the Skills selection step produced one of them.

SAMPLE EVENTS

(pick or roll):

1. **SERVED IN COMBAT: Awareness or Firearms**
2. **BAD BREAKUP: Manipulation or Subterfuge**
3. **HOMELESS: Streetwise or Survival**
4. **COLLEGE: Academics or Science**
5. **POLITICAL CAMPAIGN: Politics or Subterfuge**
6. **CRIME VICTIM: Brawl or Larceny**
7. **SEVERE ILLNESS: Medicine or Insight**
8. **GOT RICH: Finance or Etiquette**
9. **HAD KIDS: Insight or Persuasion**
0. **JOINED A CULT: Occult or Intimidation**

SAMPLE HOBBIES AND PASTIMES

(pick or roll):

1. **MARATHON RUNNER: Athletics**
2. **GAMER: Technology**
3. **MAKER: Craft**
4. **ACTIVIST: Politics or Leadership**
5. **NATIONAL GUARD: Firearms**
6. **HUNTER: Survival**
7. **ACTOR OR MUSICIAN: Performance**
8. **CHEATER ON YOUR SPOUSE: Subterfuge**
9. **NIGHT SCHOOL: Academics**
10. **STREET RACER: Drive**

EXAMPLE:

The character Thomas has been created for a chronicle exploring how bad people meet bad ends, and Thomas has Convictions that reflect this. "I only care about me and mine," "Others should not rise above their station," and "Greed ensures the transfer of power from the weak to the strong" are completely at odds with the chronicle Tenets (see p. 172), but this is exactly the effect Thomas' player wants to achieve.

Touchstones

Now think about those around you and about whom of those you most love. If becoming a monster pushed them away, who would you risk everything to see again? Whose memory keeps you from tearing out a helpless throat?

Those people are your *Touchstones*. Pick as many mortals as you have Convictions. These people literally define the best in humanity for you and serve as examples of these Convictions. They might

ALTERNATIVE QUICK SKILLS ASSIGNMENT

Pick one Skill distribution:

- **JACK OF ALL TRADES: One Skill at 3; eight Skills at 2; ten Skills at 1**
- **BALANCED: Three Skills at 3; five Skills at 2; seven Skills at 1**
- **SPECIALIST: One Skill at 4; three Skills at 3; three Skills at 2; three Skills at 1**

Add free Specialties to Academics, Craft, Performance, and Science.

Take one more free Specialty.

be your wife and child, your best friend and your old sergeant, or your bartender and a beautiful girl you've watched from a distance but never approached. See the Touchstones section on p. 173 for more possibilities.

EXAMPLE:

For Thomas' first Conviction, "I only care about me and mine", his player chooses Thomas' mortal descendant, whom he cares about a great deal. It is also decided that her beliefs are completely different from Thomas'. The second, "Others should not rise above their station," is linked to an up-and-coming businessman that Thomas is convinced that he despises, but who still remains very important to him. The third, "Greed ensures the transfer of power from the weak to the strong," is linked to Thomas' ghoul, whom he grooms for a later Embrace.

Write down the names of your Touchstones on the Relationship Map next to your own character.

Socialite

Ambition
What was your greatest aspiration as a human? This goal may change after you enter the night, but at the moment of death, what was your life's purpose? This question often just informs your prelude, since death and Embrace tend to change your priorities. That said, many centuries-old bloodsuckers still strive to complete their mortal Ambition, sometimes in a warped and debased form.

See the Ambition section on p. 173 for more ideas and guidance.

And then, some monster kills you.

Embrace and After

Two kinds of people make the best licks. The first have lived grey routine lives they stick to religiously. For them, the Embrace is a new job, a new disease in the family, a new life-planning challenge to overcome. The other kind think that the worst has already happened and things can only get better from rock bottom. They're wrong of course, but the mindset helps.

ENTR'ACTE AND PRELUDE If you are playing a thin-blood chronicle, especially a fledgling childer story, you can play out the Embrace right now and complete the rest of the mechanical creation for your character once you've played it through. You can do the same if you want to improvise your vampire experience based on how your Embrace plays out.

If you've already picked your thicker-blooded clan or know the lore of Vampire well and have a strong idea of the kind of Kindred you want to create, or you just want to have character creation done first, finish the Embrace and After stage. The Storyteller can weave your choices into your first session as foreshadowing or as a more overt story hook. You may know what kind of vampire you will become, but you don't know how until you play it out.

WHO ARE YOU NOW? If you died recently and secretly enough that your ATM card still works, you don't need a new name. But if you're legally dead, or you died in another century or on another continent, you need to choose the name of your Mask. You use your Mask name when pretending to be human; if you died long enough ago or had a common name like "Susan Johnson," you might still use your mortal name.

You might also have a Kindred name you only use in Elysium or among your own kind. This moniker could be anything from your life name to a Latin name indicating adoption into a powerful lineage to a gang handle you use when terrifying rival Anarchs. A word to the wise: Harpies make great sport of dumb mortal ideas about cool vampire names, so step carefully.

Who are You at Night?
You cannot go out in the sunlight or eat. If you maintain a Mask, much less hold down a job, you need to explain why none of your mortal acquaintances ever see you during the day. A few nocturnal career ideas:

- Security guard
- Cover band drummer
- Sanitation worker
- Coder or stock trader who works from home when India or Japan are awake
- Night shift reporter, cop, nurse, therapist, or EMT
- Donut shop or convenience store worker
- Citizens Watch group member ("Crime never sleeps, so neither do I.")
- Bartender
- Taxi or Uber driver
- Bike messenger
- Tabletop game designer

Perhaps you just never hang out with boring day people at all. You don't really have a job, but nobody you meet ever asks. You might pose as (or be) a:

- Scenester or swinger
- Gambling addict
- Criminal
- Sex worker
- Homeless person
- Paperless immigrant or refugee ("I can't go out when La Migra might see me.")

Blood Potency
The closer a vampire is to Caine, the higher the potential of their Blood, and the more powerful the arts they work with it. Beginning characters' Blood Potency depends on their generation, as determined earlier:

- **14th, 15th, or 16th generation:** zero (thin-bloods)
- **12th or 13th generation:** one
- **10th or 11th generation:** two

Write this number down on your character sheet.

Record Your Humanity

Humanity defines how far your character has degenerated into monstrosity. A character with zero Humanity has completely succumbed to the Beast and can no longer be used as a player character.

Your Humanity begins at 7. The Storyteller may allow characters in an all-fledgling chronicle to begin with Humanity 8.

See more Humanity rules on pp. 236-241.

How Do You Hunt?

Every serial killer has a pattern. Every predator has instincts. Yours depend on your Disciplines and on your Predator type.

CHOOSE YOUR DISCIPLINES After characters first become vampires, they gain various Disciplines, granted by the Blood. See pp. 243-287 for descriptions of the Disciplines and their associated powers.

Pick two of the Disciplines associated with your clan (see the Clans chapter, pp. 63-113), and take two dots in one and one dot in the other.

If you are Caitiff, thus having no clan, pick any two Disciplines you like and take two dots in one and one dot in the other.

EXAMPLE:

Carmen is picking Disciplines for her Nosferatu character. She places two dots into Obfuscate and one dot into Animalism.

Remember to also pick a power for each dot. (See p. 244.)

EXAMPLE:

For Obfuscate, Carmen picks "Cloak of Shadows" and "Unseen Passage." For Animalism, she selects "Bond Famulus."

Thin-bloods and Disciplines

Thin-bloods cannot reliably use the Disciplines associated with thicker Blood. To compensate for this, they have developed their own art: Thin-Blood Alchemy. They also gain more from the Resonances of their victims (see p. 226).

Since thin-bloods likely retain more connections to the mortal world, consider selecting Contacts, Influence, and other Mortal Advantages, or an additional Touchstone. Write any new figures from these Advantages on the Relationship Map.

No thin-blood can buy Bonding, Mawla, Retainers, or Status during character creation. (A mixed coterie can buy them as a shared Background.)

CHOOSE YOUR PREDATOR TYPE You, your sire, or your Blood determines how you hunt. Pick one of the Predator types on pp. 175-178.

Each Predator type template adds a number of traits to your character, such as Disciplines, Advantages, Flaws, and other specifics to model or make easier your chosen method of taking prey.

If a Predator type adds a specialty for which you lack the matching Skill, gain a dot in that Skill instead.

Fresh bloodsuckers, like thin-bloods and many fledglings, do not select a Predator type as they are still figuring out this aspect of their nocturnal existence.

What Is Your Story?

In this stage of character creation, you finish the character's inner life, and connect them to the outer world of the chronicle and to the larger World of Darkness.

BELIEFS BY NIGHT Now that you know how you kill, figure out why.

If your character's mortal Ambition remains intact, write it (or its distorted Cainite version) on your character sheet. If you've learned enough about the setting to want to change it, consider writing down a Kindred-style Ambition instead.

ADVANTAGES We all have advantages and flaws that are hard to describe in terms of simple skills or abilities. It can be extreme social privilege or political pull, wealth, beauty, friends in low places, or the lack of those things. Advantages help define your character's life further and come in handy even after death.

Executive

Choose up to seven dots worth of Advantages from the Merits section (pp. 179-182) and the Backgrounds section (p. 184). You should keep a couple of things in mind during this step:

First, these Advantages need to be relevant to your existence as a vampire since you're paying to use them during the chronicle. If you pick your parish priest as an Ally, you're either going to have to hide your true nature from them or come up with some reason they remain your friend even when you become a monster.

Depending on the nature of your chronicle, the Storyteller may restrict your Advantages.

The Storyteller may also decide that some Backgrounds should be mandatory or that the coterie needs to buy a haven together and reserve some points for that. If so, they might provide you with an extra dot or two. Really think about which Advantages produce the best story for your character.

You must take at least two points of Flaws by the end of character creation. Add any new supporting cast from your Advantages to the Relationship Map.

EXAMPLE:

Looking to firmly ground his character in the mortal world, Klaus picks a two-dot Mask, two dots of Resources and two dots of

Allies, representing friends and acquaintances that are still alive. His last dot goes to a Contact – a poor, overworked publisher. But nightlife is not without peril, and Klaus' character has become shunned by the local Anarchs because of earlier indiscretions – a two-point Flaw.

Choose a Loresheet

Loresheets are a special type of Advantage that connects your character straight into the rich metaplot(s) of Vampire. Each player may choose a Loresheet and select dots in it just like any other Advantage. Beware, however, that these Advantages are often very different in nature and may not be appropriate for all chronicles. The Loresheets appear in the back of this book; other Loresheets appear in the Anarch and Camarilla books, and more will appear in future publications. The Storyteller always has the final word on which Loresheets are available for player characters.

Remember to add any supporting characters mentioned in or created by your Loresheet Advantages to the Relationship Map.

Thin-Blood Merits and Flaws

No two thin-bloods are the same. The Camarilla hounds them partly for this very reason; not even their nature (or supernature) adheres to any rules. When creating a thin-blood character, choose one to three Thin-Blood Merits (p. 183) and an equal number of Thin-Blood Flaws (p. 182). This Advantage represents the peculiarities of your specific character and the unique way in which the curse manifests in them.

BUILD YOUR COTERIE Every player now gets one Coterie dot. (In small troupes, the Storyteller may give each player two Coterie dots.) Working together, the players spend these dots and any leftover Advantage dots from previous stages building their coterie. Building the coterie together sparks story ideas, gives the players a sense of ownership over the chronicle, and helps keep everyone on the same page – at least at the beginning of the story.

Use your Coterie dots to determine your hunting grounds: your Domain in the city (p. 195).

Use leftover Advantage and Coterie dots to buy shared Coterie Backgrounds (p. 196).

Record any new supporting cast members emerging from these steps on the Relationship Map.

SEA OF TIME This step depends on your coterie's age, as determined earlier.

Fledglings or childer: If you're this young, you're done! Run your preludes, take a quick look in the mirror (page 154), and start playing.

Neonates: Each player character gets 15 experience points to spend, representing their slow, subtle growth throughout the decades.

Ancillae: Each ancilla adds one dot in Blood Potency, gains two dots of Advantages, two dots of Flaws, and subtracts one dot from Humanity. They also get 35 experience points to spend.

TRAIT COSTS: EXPERIENCE

TRAIT	EXPERIENCE POINTS
Increase Attribute	New level x 5
Increase Skill	New level x 3
New Specialty	3
Clan Discipline	New level x 5
Other Discipline	New level x 7
Caitiff Discipline	New level x 6
Blood Sorcery Ritual	Ritual level x 3
Thin-Blood Formula	Formula level x 3
Advantage	3 per dot
Blood Potency	New level x 10

The cost of a dot varies depending on what type of dot it is and how many dots you already have in that Trait. The Trait Costs table provides these costs. "New level" on that table means the level of Trait you want to buy. For example, if you want to go from two dots of Composure (••) to three dots of Composure (•••), you need to pay 15 experience points, because Composure 3 x 5 = 15.

You cannot skip ahead and buy four dots of Composure (••••) for 20 points if you currently only have two dots of Composure (••). You need to first buy the third dot of Composure (•••) for 15 experience points, then buy four dots of Composure (••••) for 20.

VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE

Summary Sheet

ATTRIBUTES

- **CHARISMA:** Charm, magnetism, strength of personality (Social)
- **MANIPULATION:** Getting others to do what you want (Social)
- **COMPOSURE:** Self-control, cool, calm head (Social)
- **STRENGTH:** Exertion of force by the muscles (Physical)
- **DEXTERITY:** Agility, grace, eye-hand coordination (Physical)
- **STAMINA:** Toughness, resilience, endurance (Physical)
- **INTELLIGENCE:** Memory, reasoning, intellect (Mental)
- **WITS:** Cleverness, intuition, spur-of-the-moment decision-making (Mental)
- **RESOLVE:** Focus, concentration, attention (Mental)

SKILLS

- **ACADEMICS:** Humanities and liberal arts, book-learning (Mental)
- **ANIMAL KEN:** Animal handling and communication (Social)
- **ATHLETICS:** Running, jumping, climbing (Physical)
- **AWARENESS:** Senses, being aware of your surroundings, spotting threats (Mental)
- **BRAWL:** Unarmed combat of all types (Physical)
- **CRAFT:** Crafting, building, shaping (Physical)
- **DRIVE:** Operating vehicles (Physical)
- **ETIQUETTE:** Politeness in social settings (Social)
- **FINANCE:** Handling, moving, and making money (Mental)
- **FIREARMS:** Using ranged weapons, such as guns and bows (Physical)
- **INSIGHT:** Determining states of mind and motives (Social)
- **INTIMIDATION:** Getting another person to back down (Social)
- **INVESTIGATION:** Following clues, solving mysteries (Mental)
- **LARCENY:** Breaking and entering, guarding against that (Physical)
- **LEADERSHIP:** Directing and inspiring others (Social)
- **MEDICINE:** Healing injuries, diagnosing disease (Mental)
- **MELEE:** Armed hand-to-hand combat (Physical)
- **OCCULT:** Secret lore, both real and unreal (Mental)
- **PERFORMANCE:** Expressing art in person to an audience (Social)
- **PERSUASION:** Convincing others (Social)
- **POLITICS:** Handling, moving, and making government (Mental)
- **SCIENCE:** Knowledge and theory of the physical world (Mental)
- **STEALTH:** Not being seen, heard, or recognized (Physical)
- **STREETWISE:** Understanding the ins and outs of criminal and urban society (Social)
- **SUBTERFUGE:** Tricking others into doing your will (Social)
- **SURVIVAL:** Remaining alive in adverse surroundings (Physical)
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Understanding and using modern technology, computers, and online activity (Mental)

CLANS

Each clan has three clan Disciplines, listed after the brief description.

- **BRUJAH:** The Rabble rebel against power and rage against tyranny. (Celerity, Potence, Presence)
- **GANGREL:** The feral Outlanders blend vampire and beast. (Animalism, Fortitude, Protean)
- **MALKAVIAN:** The madness of the Lunatics conceals and reveals truths. (Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate)
- **NOSFERATU:** The hideous Sewer Rats hide their disfigured forms in the darkness, from whence they gather secrets. (Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence)
- **TOREADOR:** The Degenerates seek thrills of art, romance, and cruelty amidst stagnant undeath. (Auspex, Celerity, Presence)
- **TREMERE:** Broken by a new Inquisition, the once-mighty Warlocks seek to restore their monopoly on sorcerous power. (Auspex, Dominate, Blood Sorcery)
- **VENTRUE:** The aristocratic Blue Bloods enforce the Traditions and the Masquerade on the lesser breeds. (Dominate, Fortitude, Presence)

- **CAITIFF:** The clanless show no common traits, except to find themselves outcast by vampires of distinct lineage. (None)
- **THIN-BLOODED:** Born too far from Caine to fully share his curse, the Mercurian thin-bloods must claw their way into the dark world – or find a way out. (Thin-Blood Alchemy)

DISCIPLINES

- **ANIMALISM:** Supernatural affinity with and control of animals
- **AUSPEX:** Extrasensory perception, awareness, and premonitions
- **BLOOD SORCERY:** The use of the Blood to perform magic
- **CELERITY:** Supernatural quickness and reflexes
- **DOMINATE:** Mind control practiced through one's piercing gaze
- **FORTITUDE:** Unearthly toughness, even to the point of resisting fire and sunlight
- **OBFUSCATE:** The ability to remain obscure and unseen, even in crowds
- **POTENCE:** The Discipline of physical vigor and strength
- **PRESENCE:** The ability to attract, sway, and control emotions
- **PROTEAN:** Shape-changing, from growing claws to melding with the earth
- **THIN-BLOOD ALCHEMY:** Mixing blood, emotion, and other ingredients to create powerful effects

PREDATOR STYLES

- **ALLEYCAT:** You take blood by force or threat.
- **BAGGER:** You acquire preserved or dead blood, rather than hunt the living.
- **BLOOD LEECH:** You feed from other vampires.
- **CLEAVER:** You take blood covertly from your mortal family or friends.
- **CONSENSUALIST:** You take blood with consent.
- **FARMER:** You feed from animals.
- **OSIRIS:** As an object of devotion, you feed from your cult, church, or fans.
- **SANDMAN:** You feed from sleeping victims, often breaking into homes.
- **SCENE QUEEN:** You feed from a subculture or exclusive group in which you enjoy high status.
- **SIREN:** You feed by seduction, under the guise of sex.

BACKGROUNDS

- **ALLIES:** Mortal associates, usually family or friends
- **CONTACTS:** The information sources you possess
- **FAME:** How well-known you are among mortals
- **HAVEN:** A place to sleep safely by day
- **HERD:** The vessels to which you have free and safe access
- **INFLUENCE:** Your political power within mortal society
- **LORESHEET:** Your connection with the larger history and legendry of the World of Darkness
- **MASK:** A false identity, complete with documentation
- **MAWLA:** A Kindred who advises and supports you: a mentor, patron, or confederate
- **RESOURCES:** Wealth, belongings, and income
- **RETAINERS:** Followers, guards, and servants
- **STATUS:** Your standing in undead society

For other Advantages and Flaws, see pp. 179-184.

COTERIE TYPES

- **BLOOD CULT:** Controls a human cult and feeds from them
- **CERBERUS:** Protects or guards an important location
- **CHAMPIONS:** Fights for a good cause
- **COMMANDO:** Fights for a master
- **DAY WATCH:** Guards the undead sleepers from mortals
- **FANG GANG:** Criminal crew, gang, or the like
- **HUNTING PARTY:** Captures humans with particular blood Resonances for others
- **MARÉCHAL:** Serves and guards the lord of the city
- **NOMADS:** Travels from place to place
- **PLUMAIRES:** Social coterie that flocks together
- **QUESTARI:** Seeks to accomplish a great enterprise or objective
- **REGENCY:** Just running things until the elder gets back
- **SBIRRI:** Disguised and covertly inserted by a rival lord
- **VEHME:** Enforces the Masquerade
- **WATCHMEN:** Protects the city from supernatural intruders

LOOK IN THE MIRROR You can detail other aspects of a character in addition to the above. You do not necessarily need to write these things down, but you should certainly think about them – not only now, but throughout the career of your character.

Appearance
Your character's appearance makes their Traits visible to the other characters. Turn the relevant Traits of your character – such as Social Attributes, levels of the Looks Merit, and even Resources – into aspects of their appearance. High Intelligence can become a clear, piercing gaze. High levels of Finance might imply a bespoke Savile Row suit. Does your Strength manifest as being muscle-bound or sinewy and corded? Let your Traits bleed into the game, even when you're not rolling dice.

Equipment
By default, characters in Vampire are assumed to have access to whatever equipment that lies within their Resources and perhaps what is available through their Contacts. Don't spend more time than you'd like detailing this; Vampire is not a game about accounting, even if you do have five dots of Finance.

As the Storyteller, let those who have the time or interest do as much shopping as they want, but don't punish those who don't – just have them make an Intelligence + Resources or Manipulation + Streetwise test during play to see if they have access to various possessions.

Quirks
By giving your character quirks (interesting personal details and anecdotes) you can add depth and interest to them. Make some notes to yourself about the strange and possibly interesting things that define your character. A quirk could be a twisted sense of humor, a gentleness to animals, or a habit of snarling when distracted or annoyed ■

Core Traits

When a vampire wants to fast-talk their way out of an inquisitorial interrogation, subdue the pack of hounds sent after them by a hostile Sheriff, or dig their way through an abandoned Tremere library, they use both their natural Attributes and learned Skills in an attempt to succeed. Even when lacking any special training, a vampire can use their innate Physical, Social, or Mental traits to attempt the task at hand.

Attribute and Skill ratings range from 1 (poor) through 2 (average) to 5 (peak ability), although ratings of 0 are possible. In an Attribute, 0 indicates actual debility; in a Skill, 0 merely signifies no specific training or experience. A Skill of 3 might indicate significant experience, a Skill of 4 means an expert level; someone with Skill 5 is likely the best in the city or even in the nation. Most people get by perfectly well with 2 in their main Skill.

Physical Attributes

Physical Attributes measure a character's general strength, agility, and stamina. Due to the vagaries of the Blood, strong, quick, or tough vampires need not look muscle-bound, graceful, or meaty. Some of the most lethal Kindred appear most deceptively weak and slow.

Strength

Strength governs how big a mortal you can lift, how hard you can hit them, and how much force you can push your dead body to exert.

(The rough amount you can deadlift without an Attribute test appears in parentheses below.)

- • You can easily crush a beer can. (20 kg: a Christmas tree, a stop sign)
- •• You are physically average. (45 kg: a toilet)
- ••• You might be able to break open a wooden door. (115 kg: a large human, an empty coffin, a refrigerator)
- •••• You are a prime physical specimen, likely with very visible musculature. (180 kg: a full coffin, an empty dumpster)
- ••••• You are a true powerhouse and can likely break open a metal fire door, tear open a chain-link fence, or snap open a chained gate. (250 kg: a motorcycle, a piano)

Dexterity

Dexterity governs your agility and grace, how swiftly you dodge that stake to your heart, and how much fine motor control you possess when up against the clock.

- • You can run, but balance and dodging are a challenge.
- •• Your sprint is solid, and sometimes you appear graceful.
- ••• Your agility is impressive, and your coordination is as good as any trained amateur.
- •••• You could excel at acrobatics and move in a way few humans can.
- ••••• Your movements are liquid and hypnotic – almost superhuman.

Stamina

Your physical resistance: Stamina absorbs physical harm, such as a speeding bullet or a hunter's blade, and lets you persevere through hazards and arduous effort.

Your Stamina + 3 equals your Health.

- • Even lesser exertions make you winded.
- •• You can take a beating, but consider suing for peace.
- ••• Several days of hard hiking with a backpack is no problem for you.
- •••• You could win a marathon or take copious amounts of pain, at least physically.
- ••••• Even if you were a mortal, you'd never break a sweat.

Social Attributes

As manipulative creatures, Kindred use humans as building blocks in their power structure, in addition to using them as food and

fuel. Social Attributes determine first impressions; the character's ability to charm, inspire, and motivate people; and the nature of their interactions with others.

Charisma

Charisma measures your natural charm, grace, and sex appeal. If you have it, it draws people to you, making feeding a hell of a lot easier. Charisma doesn't depend on good looks, which are their own Merit (See Looks, p. 179).

- • You can speak clearly, though few people tend to listen.
- •• Generally likeable despite your undead nature, you may even have friends.
- ••• People trust you implicitly, and you easily make friends.
- •••• You possess significant personal magnetism and draw followers like flies.
- ••••• You could lead a city in rebellion, if you so choose.

Manipulation

Manipulation is your ability to twist others to your point of view, lie convincingly, and walk away after duping a mark without anyone being any the wiser.

- • As long as you stay honest, you can convince people to do what you want.
- •• Your ability to deceive surpasses the will of the weak-willed and simple-minded.
- ••• You never have to pay full price for anything.
- •••• You could be a cult leader – or a politician.
- ••••• You could convince the Prince to invest in desert property, or maybe even to call off the Blood Hunt on your head.

Composure

Composure allows you to remain calm, to command your emotions, and to put others at ease despite anxiety. It is also represents your ability to stay cool in everything from firefights to intimate encounters.

Your Composure + Resolve equals your Willpower (p. 157).

- • The slightest insult or confrontation could drive you to frenzy.
- •• You can subdue your predatory instincts in most non-hostile situations.
- ••• Others look to you for guidance when the blood spatter hits the fan.
- •••• You can effortlessly bluff at cards and can manage your Beast to some extent.
- ••••• The Beast is your pet.

Mental Attributes

Mental Attributes represent the capacity for learning, intuition, and focus. High Mental Attributes might indicate native genius, superb education, or strong will. Low Mental Attributes might derive from naiveté, ignorance, or just incapacity at thinking. But that was in life; the Blood can awaken brains and nerve clusters just as it can fortify sinews or heighten cheekbones.

Intelligence

Intelligence measures your ability to reason, research, and apply logic. You can recall and analyze information from books or from your senses. No puzzle or mystery can elude the truly intelligent.

- • You can read and write competently, though some terms confound you.
- •• You are smart enough to realize your limitations.
- ••• You are enlightened, able to piece together clues without difficulty.
- •••• You're likely consulted by members of Clan Tremere for your wisdom.
- ••••• Genius does not cover the depths and range of your intellect.

Wits

Wits are for thinking quickly and reacting correctly on little information. "You hear a sound" is Wits; "You hear two guards coming" is Intelligence. Wits let you smell an ambush or answer the Harpy back at court right away, instead of thinking of the best response the next night.

- • You get the point eventually, but it takes explaining.
- •• You can bet the odds in poker or apply the emergency brakes in time. Usually.
- ••• You can analyze a situation and quickly work out the best escape route.

•••• You are never caught on the back foot and always come up with a smart riposte.

••••• You think and respond more quickly than most people can comprehend.

Resolve

Resolve provides focus and determination, and measures concentration and mental fortitude. Resolve powers all-night watches and blocks out distractions.

Your Composure + Resolve equals your Willpower.

• You have minimal attention for all but the most pressing things.

•• You can settle in for the long haul, as long as it's not too long.

••• Distracting you takes more effort than most other people want to spend.

•••• You can brute-force your way to a deduction past any obstacles.

••••• You can think in a gunfight or watch the door in a blood orgy and then clean up every shell casing or spilled droplet.

Willpower

Willpower measures a character's confidence, mental stability, and competence at overcoming unfavorable odds. Like Health, Willpower is a tracker, with both a maximum rating and a temporary pool of points.

A character's maximum Willpower rating equals their Composure + Resolve. You cannot buy extra dots of Willpower either during character creation or with experience points, but you can get more through increased Composure and/or Resolve.

A character's Willpower pool likely fluctuates a great deal during the course of a story or chronicle. It is spent every time a player uses a Willpower point to enable their character to do something extraordinary or to resist unwanted impulses. Social conflict can also drain Willpower. When spending

a point of Willpower, mark it as Superficial damage on the tracker (see p. 126).

A character with no Willpower points left (through either type of damage or a combination) is Impaired, receiving a -2 dice penalty to Social and Mental tests. They still get to roll one die if required to roll their pool, as per the usual rules.

Spending Willpower

A player may spend a point of Willpower for several different purposes:

- To re-roll up to three regular dice, (not Hunger dice) in any dice pool except when the rules specifically exclude Willpower re-rolls: rolling tracker pools, engaging in a One-Roll Conflict (p. 296), etc.
- To take control of your character for one turn during frenzy or when under the influence of supernatural coercion, such as Dominate or Presence (see p. 255).
- To perform minute movements (twitch a finger, open your eyes) while impaled with a wooden stake through the heart.
- To ignore Health damage penalties, including Impairment, for one turn.

Recovering Willpower

Characters can recover Superficial damage to Willpower in the following ways:

- At the beginning of a session, a character can remove an amount of Superficial damage up to their Composure or Resolve (use highest) from their Willpower track. Exception: a session that ends on a cliffhanger in which dwindling Willpower levels provide tension. In such cases, the characters retain whatever Willpower they were left with after last session.
- At the Storyteller's discretion, once per session, a character who definitively acts to further their Desire (p. 174) may immediately recover 1 point of Superficial Willpower damage.
- At the Storyteller's discretion, a character who plays out a messy critical (p. 207), a bestial failure

TWISTING THE DIAL

Manipulating the Willpower regeneration rate is a perfect way to set the level of personal horror in your chronicle. If you want characters to be able to live with their bestial nature for longer without consequence, or you simply run a very dice-heavy chronicle, increase Willpower regeneration: Let characters recover all Superficial Willpower damage at the start of a session, instead of the using a limit of the highest of Resolve or Composure.

Conversely, if you want characters to be even more enslaved to their Hunger, or you rarely roll dice at all, reduce the amount of Willpower regained: Limit Willpower recovery to the lowest of Resolve and Composure, or even to just a single point per session.

(p. 207), a frenzy (p. 219), or a Compulsion (p. 208) in a sufficiently dramatic way can recover one or more Superficial Willpower damage as they briefly satiate the Beast.

Characters can recover Aggravated damage to Willpower in the following ways:

- At the Storyteller's discretion, a character can recover one or more points of Aggravated Willpower damage when acting to significantly benefit a Touchstone or uphold a Conviction against their own best interest.
- At the end of a session in which the character has actively worked toward their Ambition, they recover one point of Aggravated Willpower damage.

Physical Skills

Physical Skills depend entirely, or at least in large part, on physical control, aptitude, or effort.

Athletics

Athletics allows you to outpace someone in pursuit, leap out of the way of an oncoming car, and climb and swim like a healthy, robust living person.

A character can use Athletics in place of any Physical combat Skill in a conflict roll, but in that case, they never inflict any hits on their opponent, no matter how many successes they roll.

SKILL SPECIALTIES

A specialty represents a particular expertise in one aspect of a Skill. This is a field where a character may be especially practiced, have a special aptitude, or be engaged in deeper study. If the Storyteller decides a character is attempting a task that falls under their specialty, the player gains one extra die for their dice pool. A character may only apply one of their specialties to a single roll.

Each Skill includes sample specialties, but this list is not exhaustive. Players can consult the Storyteller to develop other specialties that more precisely model their characters. For most Skills, you can only have as many specialties as you have dots in the Skill.

You should not allow specialties that are so broad that they always, or even mostly, apply to the uses of a Skill. Characters cannot take specific martial arts styles, for example, as specialties to Brawl. Since any use of Brawl could be a Muay Thai strike, taking Muay Thai as a specialty would effectively equal a free extra die in every Brawl test.

Four Skills come with one automatic specialty when acquired: Craft, Academics, Science, and Performance.

Characters receive one free specialty during character creation to apply to any Skill, and one more free specialty determined by their Predator type.

You can buy further specialties at a cost of three experience points each.

- You were always attentive in gym class and you still have a spring in your step.
- •• Despite being dead, you are still as fit as a mortal doing regular exercise.
- ••• You are fit as a fiddle and could play professional sports. Night games, at least.
- •••• With your parkour abilities, why would you need to turn into a bat?
- ••••• Olympic records await you; only a very few peak humans can achieve what you can. Vampires mistake your skill for Physical Disciplines.

Specialties: Acrobatics, Archery, Climbing, Endurance, Jumping, Parkour, Swimming, Throwing

Brawl

Brawl enables characters to hit their target when they swing with fist, boot, or claw. As long as you have no weapon in hand, the attack constitutes a brawl, from elegant aikijutsu to dirty street fighting.

- You had a tough upbringing and had to fight to justify your place. You still have some moves.
- •• You received some training in hitting someone hard and accurately.
- ••• You more than hold your own in a scrap.
- •••• You either received Spetsnaz-quality training, or you have spent decades of afterlife in fights.
- ••••• You could win MMA championships even without the use of your vampiric powers.

Specialties: Animals, Armed Mortals, Bar Fights, Grappling, Kindred, Sporting Combat, Unarmed Mortals, Werewolves, While in Protean Beast Form

Craft

Craft broadly encompasses artistry, creation of items and utilities from the beautiful to the functional, and arts and crafts from throwing pottery all the way to building and reinforcing your own haven.

When you take this Skill, you get a free specialty. Unlike most Skills, you can have more specialties in Craft than you have dots.

- You are an amateur, but you know what you are doing.
- •• Your craftsmanship is admired for its functionality.
- ••• Your creations can be beautiful or horrifying, but their intent always clear.
- •••• Your skill is highly respected among the kine and Kindred aware of it.
- ••••• You are often chosen to create the focal point for parties at Elysium.

Specializations: Carpentry, Carving, Design, Painting, Sculpting, Sewing, Weaponsmithing

Drive

Anyone (except perhaps 500-year-old vampires) can learn to drive a car. The Drive Skill connotes ability to drive fast and safely under adverse conditions or in stressful situations: to drive off-road, speed away from ambushes, win street races, and get out of chases with the Second Inquisition.

- You are a cautious driver, unlikely to make any mistakes.
- •• You can put your foot down without much fear of an accident, providing visibility is good.
- ••• You have won car chases, earning a cool reputation among the Anarchs.
- •••• You could be a stunt driver or the personal chauffeur of a Prince or Baron.
- ••••• You know cars inside and out. Few can match your skill and knowledge.

Specialties: All-Terrain Vehicles, Evasion, Motorcycles, Street Racing, Stunts, Tailing, Trucks, Vintage Models

Firearms

Leaving a victim with holes in their throat: full-on Second Inquisition investigation. Leaving a victim with holes in their head: just another Saturday night in Baltimore. Cainites use Firearms not only for the human reasons (efficiency and thrill) but to preserve the Masquerade. This Skill comprises familiarity with small arms from holdout pistols to assault rifles. It also includes other trigger-operated weapons, such as crossbows and shoulder-fired rocket-propelled grenades. Finally, it includes cleaning, unjamming, and rapidly reloading such weapons.

I am born of death,
Fierce with the pyre of desperation,
Armed only with sand and bile.
Lacking only hope and grace.
You will not annul me.
Not tonight.

- You've fired a gun a few times, at the range or in less-formal circumstances.
- •• You know (and know how) to keep your weapon clean, take it apart, and reassemble it.
- ••• You've been in the shit ("seen the elephant" if you're older than a century) and come out the other side.
- •••• You can handle trick shots, called shots, running shots – really anything ending in a gunshot.
- ••••• You've been practicing since the debut of the Winchester.

Specialties: Crossbows, Gun Dealing, Gunsmithing, Handloading Ammunition, Quick-Draw, Sniper, Trick Shooting

ADDING NEW SKILLS

If you want to add a new Skill, go ahead and do so! However, do a little thinking about it first. New Skills take up space, not just on the character sheet, but in the players' brains.

Is the new Skill actually a better fit as a specialty of an existing Skill? Is the new Skill common enough in play to be worth segregating out? Maybe firing field-expedient, Hezbollah-style, steel-pipe-and-concrete mortars doesn't seem very much like Technology to you. Modern mortars all depend on computerized targeting and fire control, though, so – how much pre-1990 artillery firing happens in your game? Are the characters going to fly a lot of different aircraft in the chronicle, or does Helicopter Pilot play just as well as a specialty of Drive, or Jet Pilot as a specialty of Technology?

Even if the chronicle might include a decent amount of a given activity, are the actions themselves that different? Remember, Skills encompass many different specialties. If one parachute jump looks a lot like the next in play, do you need to separate out HALO jumping from Parasailing, rather than just increasing Difficulty for a given jump? Even if the chronicle centers on an airborne vampire special forces team, Parachuting still probably works better as a specialty of Athletics.

So let's say you've got a chronicle set in Los Angeles, Mumbai, Lagos, or Seoul, and you really think at least one player character will be a director and hiding vampiric messages in movies will be a big part of the story. Is Filmmaking a big enough subject to be its own Skill? Maybe your best move here is to cobble together a Skill called Art, borrow some specialties from Academics, Performance, and Craft, and then make Filmmaking a specialty of Art.

Whether your new Skill turns out to be Pilot or Art, decide whether it's primarily Physical, Mental, or Social. Then, go look at the existing subsystems of the game to see where your new Skill slots in.

Wealth comes to those most comfortable with evil.

Storytellers should discourage obvious crocks such as suggested specialties in "Combat Shooting," "Pistols," or even "Glock 17s." A specialty in Your Personal Signature Weapon You've Carried For Decades might be allowable, because if you take your personally engraved Colt balanced to your personal grip to every gunfight, you're much more likely to drop it, have it stolen, or have its ballistic fingerprint connect you to a series of murders.

Larceny

This Skill entails familiarity with the tools and techniques for picking locks, planting bugs, deactivating standard burglar and car alarms, manual forgery, hot-wiring automobiles, or even safecracking, as well as countless forms of breaking and entering. Characters also use it for setting up "unbeatable" security systems or deducing how and where systems failed in a break-in. Ventrue probably call the skill "Security."

These days, most high-end security systems feature computer controls, video surveillance, or electronic alarms, so they might also involve the Technology Skill to defeat.

- • You can pick a simple lock or a careless pocket.
- •• You can hotwire a car or shoplift with ease.
- ••• You can identify the locations of security cameras and alarms so to best bypass them.
- •••• You can defeat a keypad, re-tool an ID card, or crack a safe.
- ••••• You can get into – or out of – the vault of a multinational bank.

Specialties: Alarms, Forgery, Grand Theft Auto, Housebreaking, Lockpicking, Pickpocket, Safecracking, Security Analysis

Melee

Use Melee to wield handheld weapons such as knives, chains, and baseball bats with prowess. A stake is a melee weapon, often found in the hands of would-be hunters.

- You can swing a bat or blade and mostly hit the people you intend to.
- •• Your clear competence with a weapon in hand should give attackers pause.
- ••• Your skill with a melee weapon is known throughout the domain.
- •••• The fools brought a gun to your knife fight.
- ••••• You are the domain's weaponmaster, sought out by Kindred far and wide for your skill.

Specialties: Axes, Chains, Clubs, Fencing, Disarming Blows, Garrotes, Improvised Weapons, Knives, Stakes, Swords

Stealth

Stealth allows a character to shadow a target, making vampires with this ability superlative hunters. They benefit from the ability to spy, sneak, and blend in with crowds when needed.

- Spotting you under the cover of darkness or in camouflage proves difficult.
- •• You can sneak by casual observers and stalk unknowing victims without raising any hackles.
- ••• You evade patrolling guards, moving softly and hiding easily.
- •••• Your subtle, silent passage could make you a worthy ninja – or a worthy foe for ninja.
- ••••• The Children of Haqim come to you for advice on stalking and hiding, if they can find you.

Specialties: Ambushes, Crowds, Disguise, Hiding, Shadowing, Silent Movement, Urban, Wilderness

Survival

Survival conveys the ability to exist in the wild and other adverse conditions, and to return to civilization again: navigate by the stars, establish a makeshift haven, and notice werewolf signs before it's too late. Some of its related functions apply in parks, brownfields, and other wastelands of the urban jungle.

- You know the trails and wilderness around your domain.
- •• You spend more time outdoors than inside, and you can track anyone who doesn't possess woodcraft.
- ••• You can subsist outside the city, setting traps for mortals and a shelter for yourself.
- •••• You can thrive outside the city like the true predator you are.
- ••••• Gangrel run in packs with you – if they can keep up.

Specialties: Desert, Hunting, Jungle, Tracking, Traps, Shelters, Urban Exploration, Woodlands

Social Skills

Social Skills operate in the space between people or between Kindred. Although they depend on your ability and your personality, the other party's response contributes something to the effort. Without skill on your part, that response tends to be negative.

Animal Ken

Animal Ken allows you to cow, pacify, and even befriend animals. This Skill allows you to predict how an animal might react in a given situation, train a domesticated creature, or even try to calm or enrage animals. Without this Skill, most creatures pointedly avoid or grow aggressive around vampires.

- Animals shy away from you but will not bolt or snap.
- •• Animals are docile around you, acting as if you aren't there, unless you build a rapport with them.
- ••• Animals treat you as if you were a warm, friendly owner, unless provoked to do otherwise.
- •••• You draw animals into your orbit. Few attacking creatures maintain their aggression.
- ••••• You can sense an animal's feelings and thoughts, and they can feel and act on yours.

Specialties: Attack Training, Cats, Dogs, Falconry, Horses, Pacification, Rats, Snakes, Stunt Training, Wolves

Etiquette

Etiquette is the ability to identify and respond to the social conventions in the current scene, set new protocols, and please everyone around with your good graces. Use this Skill in both Kindred and mortal high society.

- You know how to address your local ruler without causing a faux pas.
- •• You know the rules of eti-

quette in each of the domain's popular nightspots.

- ••• You impress others with your command of politeness, deference, and grace.
- •••• Your behavior sets trends, especially if you do something to buck the norm of etiquette.
- ••••• The Keeper of Elysium and the Harpies look to you to establish domain protocol.

Specialties: Anarch, Camarilla, Celebrities, Corporate, Elysium, Feudal, One-Percenter, Secret Society

Insight

Insight grants you the ability to interpret body language, note subtle cues in expression and tone, and determine truth from lies. It also allows you to perceive and understand the motives behind another's actions.

- You can see straight through hollow boasts.
- •• You pick up on the hidden emotion between humans and even sometimes between Kindred.
- ••• You can provide psychotherapy even more effectively than someone who doesn't want to eat their patient.
- •••• You are an undead lie detector. Only the best con artists can slip one by you.
- ••••• People may be books of blood, but they are printed in very large type – easy to read.

Specialties: Ambitions, Desires, Detect Lies, Emotions, Empathy, Interrogation, Motives, Phobias, Vices

Intimidation

Intimidation is the power to bully, coerce, threaten, and strongarm your way to a social victory. Vampires who rely on Intimidation do not hesitate to crush the wills – and occasionally the finger bones – of their foes.

- You can cut a scathing insult effectively.
- •• You can push your way around most humans without difficulty.
- ••• Your swagger and your cruel behavior have earned you your reputation.
- •••• You're far past mere physical threats.
- ••••• Even fellow Kindred may step back if you step up.

Specialties: Extortion, Insults, Interrogation, Physical Coercion, Staredowns, Veiled Threats

Leadership

Leadership grants you the ability to lead a crowd, command a

detachment, boost the morale of your supporters, or subdue a riot. A strong Prince or Baron must possess Leadership or risk losing their throne.

- You have led informal clubs before and can organize Kindred of like mind.
- •• Your voice makes itself heard in council, and even your superiors sometimes listen.
- ••• You can command on the battlefield and lead your soldiers into death.
- •••• You can inspire the injured and dying to action, so long as you are there to lead them.
- ••••• Your words fill a vampire's heart with enough strength to make it feel alive and beating.

Specialties: Command, Inspiration, Oratory, Praxis, Team Dynamics, War Pack

Performance

Performance covers a range of arts, from dance to poetry and comedy to storytelling. You may be an inspired performer in your own right or simply an enthusiastic student of the arts.

When you take this Skill, you get a free specialty.

- You are the life of the party, but you wouldn't take your act on stage.
- •• You have performed for others, to mixed reviews. Some love you, others hate you.
- ••• You are an expert student of your chosen performing art.
- •••• You perform your practiced art form stunningly, winning over even Toreador far and wide.
- ••••• Improvisation holds no terrors for you: every night a different audience, every night a different show.

Specialties: Comedy, Dance, Drama, Drums, Guitar, Keyboards, Poetry, Public Speaking, Rap, Singing, Violin, Wind Instruments

In theory, the Storyteller could break these specialties down endlessly – can even a five-dot pop star also perform as a coloratura soprano and a country crooner? But in practice, unless the whole chronicle happens in a musical or theatrical milieu, allow broader specialties.

Persuasion

Use Persuasion when trying to convince others that you know what's best for them, and that one bite won't hurt at all. Skilled persuaders can play on victims' emotions and appeal to peers' reason. Persuasion applies in law courts and princely courts, in boardrooms, barrooms, and bedrooms.

- You can sell to a motivated buyer.
- •• You can always swing a discount or get on the inside track of the latest gossip.
- ••• You can always figure out a compromise in a given conflict.
- •••• The other side starts looking for a settlement when they see you in court, human or Kindred.
- ••••• You may be the original silver-tongued devil.

Specialties: Bargaining, Fast Talk, Interrogation, Legal Argument, Negotiation, Rhetoric

Streetwise

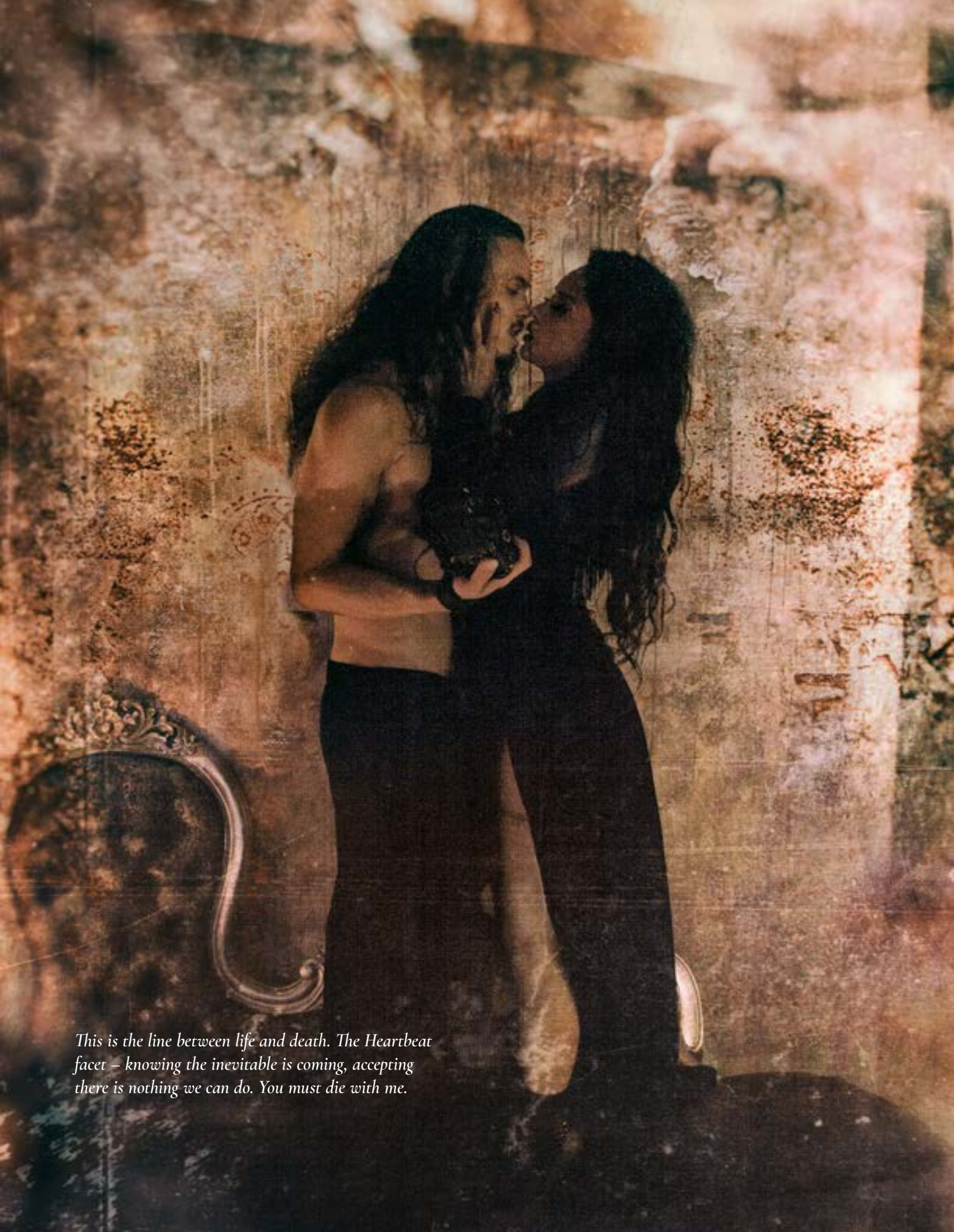
Streetwise enables characters to talk the language and negotiate the societies of the streets and the underworld. You can understand code words and slang, interpret graffiti tags, and emulate gang signs.

- You know where to score drugs and sex in your domain.
- •• You know which gangs operate in the area, including their colors and rivalries. You may have your own graffiti tag.
- ••• You can tell the good shit from bad, score guns, and blend in seamlessly with street people or gangbangers.
- •••• When gangsters say "I know a guy," you're who they know.
- ••••• You can hire, orchestrate, or arrange almost any criminal activity anywhere in your city.

Specialties: Arms Dealing, Black Market, Bribery, Drugs, Fence Stolen Goods, Gangs, Graffiti, Personal Rep, Sex Trade, Urban Survival

Subterfuge

Subterfuge is the art of lying convincingly, spinning a yarn, and making good excuses for bad actions. This Skill defines your talent for intrigue, secrets, and double-dealing. Subterfuge can also used



This is the line between life and death. The Heartbeat facet – knowing the inevitable is coming, accepting there is nothing we can do. You must die with me.

for seduction and imitating mortal behavior.

- You can tell believable, simple lies.
- •• You can hustle naive people, old and young, into giving you their things.
- ••• You can operate on multiple levels, telling lies intended to be uncovered to bolster other lies.
- •••• You can operate endlessly in deep cover: a perfect double agent. Perhaps you are!
- ••••• Nobody believes you have even a single dot in Subterfuge.

Specialties: Bluff, Feign Mortality, Impeccable Lies, Innocence, The Long Con, Seduction

Mental Skills

Mental Skills depend almost entirely on specialized knowledge, as well as on the character's core intellectual gifts.

Academics

Academics reflects understanding, higher education, and ability to research fields within the humanities and the liberal arts. Historical study, for instance, is hardly "just academic" if your immortal enemies lived – and left traces – in that period.

When you take this Skill, you get a free specialty. For foreign languages, use the Linguistics Merit (p. 179).

- Basic primary and secondary education; a night class at community college
- •• Basic university education or tutelage from a mediocre mentor; a four-year degree
- ••• Advanced university education or dedicated personal tuition; an excellent four-year degree, a doctorate
- •••• Advanced specialized study beyond university, learning into subjects few understand
- ••••• Refined and advanced scholarship, likely to be sought out for advice and tutelage

Specialties: Architecture, English Literature, History of Art, History (specific Field or Period), Journalism, Philosophy, Research, Teaching, Theology

Awareness

Awareness handles your perceptions. You may spot a Child of Haqim before a strike occurs, spy a key dropped in the trash, or sense a lingering perfume.

- You have a history of knowing when something is out of place.
- •• You can spot erratic or pattern behavior in an individual.
- ••• You can see through most disguises and sense concealed dangers or hidden clues.
- •••• Even when you are distracted, few things are beyond your notice.
- ••••• Your senses are those of a wild animal.

Specialties: Ambushes, Camouflage, Concealed Objects, Hearing, Instincts, Smell, Sight, Traps, Wilderness

Finance

Finance allows you to identify trends in the market, invest well, manipulate stock, and know when a fall is coming. It also allows you to assess – and trace – the wealth of others and broker financial deals. You can generally appraise art, property, or any other non-criminal good. Ventrue value this Skill more than some Disciplines.

- You can run a business and keep books.
- •• You can manage a corporate division or bank branch; you file impeccably plausible tax returns.
- ••• Thanks to international trad-

ing, you make a fine broker on foreign stock exchanges.

•••• Investment banks follow your financial lead. You have no trouble concealing fraud.

••••• You can make money do anything, including stick to your pockets – or crash countries.

Specialties: Appraisal, Banking, Black Markets, Corporate Finance, Currency Manipulation, Fine Art, Forensic Accounting, Money Laundering, Stock Market

Investigation

Investigation allows you to unravel cases of mundane and mysterious means, spot clues, interpret them, and trace missing persons. Vampires find this Skill especially useful when a vessel escapes.

• You love a good mystery novel and fancy yourself an amateur sleuth.

•• You have a firm knowledge of criminology and the signature acts of local rogues.

••• You are, or could be, a detective by trade. Nothing in a crime scene escapes you.

•••• The Sheriff comes to you when unknown parties sabotage the domain's safety.

••••• You set riddles for others and live an enigmatic existence few can penetrate.

Specialties: Criminology, Deduction, Forensics, Missing Persons, Murder, Paranormal Mysteries, Traffic Analysis

Medicine

Medicine allows you to fix people who are broken and diagnose causes of death or sickness in a victim. It also allows you to use medical equipment, prescribe drugs, and stanch (or encourage) rapid blood flow.

Characters use Medicine to heal Aggravated Health damage in mortals (see p. 127).

- You know basic anatomy and the difference in blood flow from a vein and an artery. You can perform CPR and other first aid. You may have been a medical student in life.
- •• You can comfortably treat minor traumas and illnesses and narrow down a diagnosis. You may have been a nurse or EMT in life.
- ••• Your training allows you to perform major operations and treat serious injuries. You may have been an internist, pediatrician, or general practitioner in life.
- •••• You can diagnose and treat all but the rarest of illnesses. You may have been a surgeon or specialist in life.
- ••••• You are a noted medical expert, sought out by mortals and immortals alike.

Specialties: First Aid, Haematology, Pathology, Pharmacy, Phlebotomy, Surgery, Trauma Care, Veterinary

Occult

Occult represents knowledge of the mystical world, extending from the rites and practices of Freemasons and Rosicrucians, all the way to Noddist scholars and real mages. You can recognize occult sigils and folk-magic practices, effective or not.

- You know the legends of Caine and the Antediluvians, and you may have read the Book of Nod.
- •• You can sift the truth from pop occult nonsense.
- ••• You have firsthand experience of something inexplicable, even by Kindred standards.
- •••• You could name most of the Antediluvians and even comprehend a Tremere ritual.
- ••••• Tremere and Children of Haqim consult with you on obscure lore.

Specializations: Alchemy, Blood Magic, Faeries, Ghosts, Grimoires, Infernalism, Magi, Necromancy, Noddism, Parapsychology, Voudun, Werewolves

Politics

Politics covers diplomacy and bureaucracy: both human and Kindred. You can work with, and possibly put pressure on, city government and perhaps higher levels. Among Kindred, you know the inside scoop on which sects are dominant where, who is at war with whom, and where the bodies are buried. Literally.

- You follow mortal political affairs in your regnum, and you know at least what the elders reveal about Kindred politics.
- •• You can apply influence at a local level, or you know who can.
- ••• You could run political campaigns or political machines, or make waves in your sect as an up-and-comer.
- •••• You know the true personali-

ties of the real movers and shakers, live and undead, in your area.

••••• You could guess at the unknown members of the Camarilla's Inner Circle.

Specialties: Anarchs, Camarilla, City Government, Clan (specific), Diplomacy, Media, National Politics, State/Provincial Politics

Science

Science is a broad church, covering everything from basic principles of life to the understanding of universal entropy. The laws of science govern the mortal world, and vampires who wish to rule that world study them.

Levels of the Science Skill roughly match those in Academics, from "some college" to "world-famous scholar." Also like Academics, characters with a rating in Science get a free specialty.

• You dabble in the sciences and understand the principles behind the building blocks of life.

•• You can accurately explain the competing scientific theories of the Embrace to another vampire.

••• You make an excellent scientific manager; you can run a laboratory, interpret scientific findings, and get up to speed on scientific research in most fields. You can repair scientific equipment.

•••• You are an expert in your field and in those allied to it.

••••• Few peers match your understanding, and others come to you for guidance.

Specialties: Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Demolitions, Engineering, Genetics, Geology, Mathematics, Physics

Technology

As a Skill, Technology acts as something of a moving target; it governs the operation and understanding of "technical developments most vampires find mystifying." In 1870, it might have governed steam engines and electricity; these nights, it governs computers and computer systems. Of course, now computers govern almost everything – including steam turbines in power plants and electrical systems in office buildings.

• You know how to upgrade a home PC and keep it protected from viruses.

•• You can conceal your IP, operate drones, and fake a digital photograph.

••• You can create and unleash your own viruses without fear of detection.

•••• The Prince might call you personally to manage cybersecurity for their domain.

••••• On the internet, nobody knows you're a vampire – or that you're there at all.

Specializations: Artillery, Coding, Computer Building, Data Mining, Hacking, Networks, Phones, Surveillance Systems ■

Beliefs

Not precisely Traits, as they have no numerical rating, a character's core beliefs nevertheless drive their story. For that reason, they have mechanical effects in the game, which exist to depict and play out exactly that drama.

Convictions

Each character begins with one to three *Convictions*: human values they attempt to uphold even after death.

The specifics of these Convictions are up to the player. They might reflect a religious code, a personal ethical core, a vampiric path, or just things the character does or balks at doing without ever really considering their philosophical weight. The Storyteller should feel free to reject suggested Convictions on the grounds of taste or of suitability for the type of story they intend.

Some example Convictions might include:

- Thou shalt not kill
- Kill only the unworthy/unbelievers/in fair combat/in self-defense
- Never expose children to violence
- Love thy neighbor as thyself
- Disobedience is dishonor
- Protect the innocent from harm
- Courage is the highest virtue
- Always keep your sworn word
- The truth is sacred; thou shalt not lie
- Slavery is evil
- Obey authority
- My country, right or wrong
- None may control me
- Never do drugs (or drink alcohol)
- Thou shalt not torture
- The guilty must be punished
- From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs
- Rob from the rich, give to the poor
- Reject wealth, for it corrupts
- Never act against another (insert own group/faith/sect)
- Always aid women in need
- Stand up for the disenfranchised
- Respect (insert religion here) as sacred and obey its moral laws

Incurring Stains in the service of your Convictions mitigate some of the Stains, see p 239.

Violating a Conviction may also, at the Storyteller's discretion, incur one or more Stains as well.

Chronicle Tenets

The troupe should assemble a set of chronicle Tenets, based on anything from genre emulation, dramatic irony, to personal taste or real-life player concerns. Remember that Tenets only impose moral sanction and degeneration on the characters when violated – if a player might genuinely risk trauma by playing a story featuring a given violation, the Storyteller should either avoid that subject or invite the player to join a different troupe to explore a different chronicle entirely.

Chronicle Tenets apply to all player characters in a chronicle, even if the character doesn't hold this belief personally. The struggle between a character's individual moral code and that of their society forms one of the core stories in human literature, after all. The chronicle Tenets comprise a kind of ethical ground floor, so that when and if the characters do become nihilistic serial killers, it carries a cost.

Also make sure to talk through the chosen Tenets in your group, so that all players understand what they mean and what kind of actions would consist violations of these Tenets.

Some sample chronicle Tenet sets follow:

HUMANIST

- Thou shalt not kill, save in self-defense
- Thou shalt not rape or torture
- Thou shalt not harm the innocent

CREED OF JUSTICE

- Never kill the innocent
- Be your own, never submit
- Without a cause, you are nothing

GOTHIC/ROMANTIC

- Never deny true love
- The guilty should suffer
- Uphold the norms of decent society

STREET CODE

- Never snitch
- Respect others, and demand respect
- Don't kill outsiders

EXAMPLE:

*Kareem and friends are setting up a Chronicle, and have agreed to aim for what they call "Nordic Gothic" - very true to life, and placing degeneration and morality in focus. They have agreed on "**Do no harm**," "**Act like a person, not a Beast**," and "**Never gaze into the abyss**." Having spent some time on coming up with these, they have agreed that "Do no harm" includes killing and maiming, but also gross violations of others integrity, such as turning them into slaves or bending them to your will through unnatural means. "Act like a person, not a Beast" includes doing clearly inhuman things, such as surviving horrible physical trauma and other things that remind characters of their undead nature. The last, "Never stare into the abyss," was added because of the player's love for cult horror literature, where knowing things man was not meant to know degenerates a person horribly. It will give the player characters Stains as they learn the horrible truths lurking behind the veneer of the World of Darkness.*

Touchstones

Each vampire begins with as many Touchstones as Convictions: humans who represent what you used to value in life, someone who represents or seems to incarnate one of your Convictions. If lost, the Conviction is lost as well.

A Touchstone must be a living human being; connecting to Humanity through the inhuman is, at the very least, going the long way around.

A Touchstone might be:

- Your surviving human spouse, lover, or parent
- Your human child, or (for older vampires) a descendant of your family line
- A human who looks exactly like someone you loved in life
- A human you admired in life or their descendant
- A human related to someone you killed very early in your unlife: someone you swore you didn't have to kill because you aren't a monster, not really
- Someone you have come to recognize as a rare decent person even in your eyes: a volunteer at the animal shelter, a priest, a nurse, a social worker, a nice old lady in the neighborhood
- Someone who represents something you once held dear in life and still cling to: a soldier, a baseball player, a musician or artist, clergy from your faith
- Someone who guards, symbolizes, or protects a thing you value: the doorman of the building you used to live in, the cop on your old beat, a crusading reporter, the single mom living in your childhood home, the caretaker who sweeps your gravesite

Touchstones provide links to and mechanical support for your Humanity; see p. 239 for detailed rules.

EXAMPLE:

Torfi creates two Touchstones for his character: one young man, who has recently taken up xenophobic beliefs and fallen in with the wrong crowd, and his character's father, who still lives and believes his son died many years ago.

Ambition and Desire

Ambition and Desire are related, but not identical. Think of Ambition as a long-term goal: an aspiration (if you still breathed), a life's dream (if you still dreamed, or had life). By contrast, Desires are more immediate: short-term wishes for revenge, satisfaction, or satisfaction through revenge.

Ambition

A character's Ambition keeps them acting and moving both night by night and in the chronicle. It provides motivation for the player and story hooks for the Storyteller.

An Ambition must be measur-

able in game terms ("My Ambition is to achieve Humanity 10") or a concrete achievement in the world of the chronicle ("My Ambition is to liberate Chicago from the Camarilla"). An Ambition is not something vague like "end racism" or "achieve world peace," but instead focuses on something specific, like "bring True Death to (insert notably racist elder from your chronicle here)" or "end the Gehenna War in the Ukraine." If an Ambition is unlikely to happen or would end the chronicle if achieved, it can still provide rich story juice – it only needs to be theoretically achievable.

If a character achieves their Ambition and the chronicle continues, the player should decide on a new Ambition, ideally one that has emerged during play or one that follows on the realization that their first Ambition left something undone or incomplete.

At the end of a session in which the character has actively worked toward their Ambition, they recover one point of Aggravated Willpower damage.

Desire

Desire reflects less than lifelong Ambition, but more than momentary wants. Each session, a character can select a Desire or keep their unfulfilled Desire from the previous session. Once per session, when the character definitively acts to further or accomplish their Desire, they may immediately recover one point of Superficial Willpower damage. Since Desires change so rapidly, you don't need to write them on your character sheet. Just write your current Desire on an index card or Post-it Note where both you and the Storyteller can see and remember it.

This mechanic intentionally provides players with an incentive for character action rather than passively waiting for the plot or

turtling up defensively. Thus, a good Desire connects in some way to the outside world. One rule of thumb: if it doesn't involve someone or something named on the Relationship Map, it's not worth considering as a Desire. By that metric, "I want to drive a cherry Maserati" or "I want to eat a brunette" fail as Desires, but "I want to drive Cytherea's cherry Maserati" or "I want to eat Lord Harkness' brunette" make excellent Desires. The Storyteller should judge whether Desires involving fellow player characters fall under the spirit of encouraging meaty interaction or of just lazily trying to sponge free Willpower.

Predator Types

Not even predators remain immune to the need for adaptation. Perhaps because of their narrow ecological niche, predators and their hunting styles adapt together. Your hunting preferences feed your Blood, and your Blood shapes what Skills and even Disciplines you develop as a vampire.

This *modus predationis* is how you usually hunt. Your *Predator type* shows your reflex or habit; it doesn't mandate your behavior in the game. You can hunt in other fashions during a game session, since you may need to cooperate with other Predator types and take advantage of feeding opportunities that appear during the story.

Alleycat

A combative assault-feeder, you stalk, overpower, and drink from whomever you can, when you can. You may or may not attempt to threaten or Dominate victims into silence or mask the feeding as a robbery. Think about how you

arrived at this direct approach to feeding and what makes you comfortable with an unlife of stalking, attacking, feeding, and escaping. You could have been homeless, an SAS soldier, a cartel hit-man, or a big-game hunter.

- Add a specialty: Intimidation (Stickups) or Brawl (Grappling)
- Gain one dot of Celerity or Potence
- Lose one dot of Humanity
- Gain three dots of criminal Contacts

Bagger

You steal, buy, or otherwise procure cold blood rather than hunt, relying on the black market or your skills as a burglar or ambulance chaser. Perhaps you still work the night shift at the hospital. Ventrue may not pick this Predator type.

- Add a specialty: Larceny (Lockpicking) or Streetwise (Black Market)
- Gain one dot of Blood Sorcery (Tremere only) or Obfuscate
- Gain the Feeding Merit: Iron Gullet (•••)
- Gain the Enemy Flaw: (••)Either someone believes you owe them, or there's another reason you keep off the streets.

Blood Leech

You drink from other vampires, either by hunting, coercion or by taking Blood as payment - the only truly moral way of feeding you can think of. Unfortunately, this practice is usually forbidden in Kindred society. It is either risky as all fuck or requires a position of enviable power.

- Add a specialty: Brawl (Kindred) or Stealth (against Kindred)
- Gain one dot of Celerity or Protean
- Lose one dot of Humanity
- Increase Blood Potency by one
- Gain the Dark Secret Flaw: (••) Diablerist, or the Shunned Flaw: (••)
- Gain the Feeding Flaw: (••) Prey Exclusion (mortals)

Cleaver

You feed covertly from your (or someone's) mortal family and friends with whom you still maintain ties. The most extreme cleavers adopt children, marry a human, and try to maintain a family life for as long as they can. Add your family to the Relationship Map.

Cleavers often go to great lengths to keep the truth of their condition from their family, but some also maintain unwholesome relationships with their own kin. The Camarilla forbids taking a human family in this fashion, and

it frowns on cleavers as Masquerade breaches waiting to happen. Wiser Kindred may massacre your family for your own good if they find out your secret and care what happens to you.

- Add a specialty: Persuasion (Gaslighting) or Subterfuge (Coverups)
- Gain one dot of Dominate or Animalism
- Gain the Dark Secret Flaw: (•)Cleaver
- Gain the Herd Advantage (••)

Consensualist

You never feed against your victim's free will. You masquerade as a representative of a charity blood drive, as a blood-drinking kink-lord in the "real vampire community," or by actually telling your victims what you are and getting their permission to feed. The Camarilla call that last method a Masquerade breach, but many Anarch philosophers consider it an acceptable risk. You could have been anything in life, but a sex-worker, a political organizer, or a lawyer could all be wary of feeding without consent.

- Add a specialty: Medicine (Phlebotomy) or Persuasion (Victims)
- Gain one dot of Auspex or Fortitude
- Gain one dot of Humanity
- Gain the Dark Secret Flaw: (•) Masquerade Breacher
- Gain the Feeding Flaw: (•) Prey Exclusion (nonconsenting)

Farmer

You only feed from animals. Your Hunger constantly gnaws at you, but you have not killed a single human being so far (except perhaps that one time), and you intend to keep it that way. You could have been anyone in life, but your choice speaks to someone obsessed by morality. Perhaps you were an activist, priest, aid-worker, or vegan in life, but the choice never to risk a human life is one anyone could arrive at and struggle to maintain. Ventrue may not pick this Predator type.

You cannot pick this Predator type if your Blood Potency is 3 or higher.

- Add a specialty: Animal Ken (Specific Animal) or Survival (Hunting)
- Gain one dot of Animalism or Protean
- Gain one dot of Humanity
- Gain the Feeding Flaw: (••) Vegan

Osiris

You are a celebrity among mortals or else you run a cult, a church, or something similar. You feed from your fans or worshippers, who treat you as a deity. You always have access to easy blood, but followers breed problems with the authorities, organized religion, and indeed the Camarilla. In life, you might have been a DJ, a writer, a cultist, a preacher, or a LARP organizer.

- Add a specialty: Occult (specific tradition) or Performance (specific entertainment field)
- Gain one dot of Blood Sorcery (Tremere only) or Presence
- Spend three dots between the Fame and Herd Backgrounds
- Spend two dots between the Enemies and Mythic Flaws

Sandman

You rely on your stealth or Disciplines to feed from sleeping victims. If they never wake during the feeding, they won't know you exist. Perhaps you were very anti-social in life; you don't feel cut out for the intense interpersonal nightlife or physical violence of more extroverted hunters.

- Add a specialty: Medicine (Anesthetics) or Stealth (Break-in)
- Gain one dot of Auspex or Obfuscate
- Gain one dot of Resources

Scene Queen

You rely on your familiarity with a certain subculture and a well-crafted pose, feeding on an exclusive subculture that believes you to be one of them. Your victims adore you for your status in the scene, and the ones who understand what you are disbelieved. You may belong to the street or be literal upper-class, abusing the weak with false hope and promises of taking them to the next level. In life, you almost certainly belonged to a scene similar to the one you stalk now.

- Add a specialty: Etiquette (specific scene), Leadership (specific scene), or Streetwise (specific scene)
- Gain one dot of Dominate or Potence
- Gain the Fame Advantage: (•)
- Gain the Contact Advantage: (•)
- Gain either the Influence Flaw: (•) Disliked (outside your subculture) or the Feeding Flaw: (•) Prey Exclusion (a different subculture from yours)

Siren

You feed almost exclusively during or while feigning sex, and you rely on your Disciplines, seduction skills, or the unquenchable appetites of others to conceal your carnivorous nature. You have mastered the art of the one-night stand or move through the sex-club scene like a dark star. You think of yourself as a sexy beast, but in your darkest moments, you fear that you're at best a problematic lover, at worst a habitual rapist. A former lover who escaped destruction might be your Touchstone or your stalker. (If so, add them to the Relationship Map.) Maybe in life you were a pick-up artist, movie producer, author, a glorious slutty kinkster – or a virgin who intends to make up for lost time post-mortem.

- Add a specialty: Persuasion (Seduction) or Subterfuge (Seduction)
- Gain one dot of Fortitude or Presence
- Gain the Looks Merit: (••) Beautiful
- Gain the Enemy Flaw: (•) A spurned lover or jealous partner ■

Advantages

In addition to vampiric powers and human skills, characters have many possible *Advantages* when they start play, from a "bump for languages" to a squad of loyal ghouls. Like everything else, we demarcate Advantages with dots, usually ranging from one to five. There is no penalty for having zero dots in an Advantage – that's just normal. Few rolls directly involve Advantages, although the Storyteller might call for Intelligence + Linguistics to decipher a papyrus, or Subterfuge + Contacts to plant a rumor about a rival.

Advantages are divided into *Merits, Backgrounds,* and *Loresheets*. The flip side of Advantages, *Flaws* cause ongoing problems for the character.

Merits

Merits describe advantages and gifts inherent to the character: Physical, Mental, and Social. Although something could happen in the course of play to change them – especially once weird inexplicable magic gets unleashed – characters' Merits remain fairly constant over the course of the story.

LINGUISTICS Every player character has perfect fluency in their birth language and (except perhaps for a charming Hungarian accent) in the dominant language of the chronicle setting. For example, a Lebanese vampire in a Mexico City-set chronicle can speak and read Arabic (or Aramaic, if they are a very old Lebanese vampire) and Spanish. Kindly Storytellers might allow vampires whose birth tongue matches that of the setting to take a second language anyway.

Each dot in Linguistics allows the character to fluently speak, write, and read one additional language besides those two default languages.

Don't get hung up on the changes in language over the centuries; assume that English remains English from Anglo-Saxon times to now, for instance, for the purposes of this rule, although reading centuries-old documents or chanting in a strange dialect may impose additional Difficulty to Academics or Occult tests.

- **Flaw: (••) Illiterate.** You cannot read or write. Your Academics and Science Skills are capped at 1, and you can have no specialty in them incorporating modern knowledge.

LOOKS Not all vampires look like actors on the CW network. Some of them look even better. And some, of course, look far worse.

These modifiers only apply when you can be seen. The Storyteller rules whether these modifiers apply during Social combats on a conflict-by-conflict (or even pool-by-pool) basis.

- **Flaw: (••) Repulsive.** You lose two dice from all relevant Social dice pools.
- **Flaw: (•) Ugly.** You lose one die from all relevant Social dice pools.

•• **Beautiful:** You add one extra die to all appropriate Social dice pools.

•••• **Stunning:** You add two extra dice to all appropriate Social dice pools, as above.

SUBSTANCE USE You have an addiction to a substance besides blood. Kindred with this Merit or Flaw seek blood containing that substance, drinking from users. Addiction to a specific sort of blood or refusing to drink blood containing a given substance both count as Prey Exclusion (p. 181). See p. 310 for effects of specific substances in consumed blood; these remain in effect regardless of the specific Merit or Flaw taken.

Remember to specify the substance you use.

- **Flaw: (••) Hopeless Addiction.** Lose two dice from all pools when the last person you fed from was not on your drug, except pools for actions that will immediately obtain your drug.

- **Flaw: (•) Addiction.** Lose one dice from all pools when the last person you fed from was not on your drug, except pools for actions that will immediately obtain your drug.

- **High-Functioning Addict:** You add one die to any one category of pool (specify when you choose which substance you use) when the last person you fed from was on your drug.

ARCHAIC Only ancillae or older vampires may take either of these Flaws.

- **Flaw: (••) Archaic.** You haven't been able to adapt to the present, or you have been long in torpor. You cannot use computers or cell phones, and your Technology rating is permanently 0. The Storyteller may penalize other dice pools involving very modern technology by one die.
- **Flaw: (•) Living in the Past.** You haven't grasped the modern mindset, or you just don't want to. You have one or more seriously outdated Convictions, e.g. "The Pope's word is law," "Women are delicate flowers," "Lower classes exist only to serve," or "Burn your enemies' baggage." These archaic moralities maintain your Humanity but are odious to many; you lose one die from Social test dice pools involving such archaic beliefs except with vampires your age and older, who may admire your steadfast virtue.

BONDING Not all vampires respond to the Blood Bond equally. Some fall under the sway of a regnant with rapturous ease; others resist with every fiber of their being. You can combine these Merits and Flaws; a character might be a two-dot Bond Junkie with Short Bond, for example. For more on Blood Bonds, see p. 233.

- **Flaw: (••) Bondslave.** You bond instantly with the taste of another's vitae; only one drink of blood binds you, not three. Either you begin as your sire's thrall, or consult with the Storyteller to come up with a reason that first bond has broken. Possibly your sire has been staked or in another city for more than six months?

GAINING AND LOSING ADVANTAGES

Events during the chronicle can change a character's Advantage and Flaws, especially Backgrounds. A Haven can burn down, an Ally can turn on you if you betray them, or the cops can gun down a Retainer for no reason at all. Conversely, by desperate quest or clever machination you can acquire an Advantage; the dots fluctuate along with your character's fortunes.

The basic rule is this: a character should be able to get back, or at least replace, lost Advantages that have been gained by spending experience points or during character creation. If something is gained without the equivalent expenditure of experience points, it should be temporary at best.

Example: Katya has brought a number of gullible mortals under her heel, roughly the equivalent of a couple of dots of Allies. As long as she doesn't solidify her acquisition with experience points, these allies will likely only be available this story.

- **Flaw: (•) Bond Junkie.** The Bond feels sweeter to you once it happens. Subtract one die from your dice pools to act against a Blood Bond.
- **Flaw: (•) Long Bond.** Blood Bonds on you lose their Bond strength more slowly than normal, decreasing by one for each three months without being reinforced.

• **Bond Resistance:** Your Blood rebels against control. Add one die to your dice pools to resist a Blood Bond per level you take of this Merit (maximum three).

•• **Short Bond:** Blood Bonds on you lose their Bond strength more rapidly than normal, decreasing at both the full moon and new moon (i.e., by two each month) if not reinforced.

••••• **Unbondable:** You cannot be Blood Bound. If you're ever short of cash, you can probably sell your vitae to alchemists, too.

FEEDING Several different Merits and Flaws fall under the general remit of Feeding. A character with one does not necessarily have any of the others.

- **Flaw: (••) Vegan.** You feed only on animal blood. You must spend two points of Willpower to drink human blood. Ventrue may not take this Flaw.
- **Flaw: (••) Organovore.** You can slake Hunger only by eating human flesh and organs, especially those rich in blood such as the heart, liver, lungs, placenta, and spleen. (Most organovore Kindred these nights make smoothies from the organs first.) Only the heart provides Resonance, if any.
- **Flaw: (•) Methuselah's Thirst.** Your Hunger can only be fully slaked by the blood of supernatural creatures. (Alchemists may be able to thicken the Blood of thin-bloods enough to sate you.) Otherwise, it constantly remains at a minimum of 1. (Or higher, depending on Blood Potency (see p. 215).
- **Flaw: (•) Prey Exclusion.** You refuse to hunt a certain class of prey: drug users, women, children, policemen, innocents, a given minority or ethnic group, etc. If you feed on such prey, you gain Stains

as though you had violated a chronicle Tenet. Witnessing other Kindred feeding on the object of your exclusion without interfering might also give Stains, at the Storyteller's discretion. Ventrue with this Flaw gain an additional restriction, making their choice of vessels extremely narrow.

- **Bloodhound:** You can smell the Resonance of a human's blood without tasting it. You still need to be within olfactory range of the person. Make a Resolve + Awareness test at Difficulty 3. Increase Difficulty for perfume or distance; lower it for more intimate contact.
- ••• **Iron Gullet**: You can feed from cold blood, rancid blood, and fractionated plasma. None of these provide Resonances. Ventrue may not take this Merit.

MYTHIC MERITS AND FLAWS Every Kindred bloodline carries peculiarities, curses, and soul scars. Fragments of ancestors long-since dust germinate within the seed of vitae that spreads the curse from sire to childe. Other vampires develop weaknesses in the moment: psychosomatic disorders intensified by the Embrace or invisible tides and eddies in the millennia-long flow of the Blood.

- **Flaw: (••) Stake Bait.** You meet Final Death when staked through the heart, rather than entering torpor.
- **Flaw: (•) Folkloric Bane.** You take Aggravated damage from a folkloric bane. Folkloric banes include:
  - □ Ultraviolet light (damage as direct sunlight)
  - □ Silver or silver-plated weapons (damage as weapon damage: simply touching a silver coin or silverware does one point of Aggravated damage)
  - □ Holy water (damage as fire)
- **Flaw: (•) Folkloric Block.** When faced with a folkloric block, you must shrink away from it or spend a Willpower point to push through it.

  Each folkloric block you take counts as a separate one-point Flaw. Folkloric blocks include:
  - □ Holy symbols presented by any believer (even without True Faith)
  - □ Crossing visible running water (not recommended in certain cities, such as Amsterdam, Stockholm, or Venice)
  - □ Crossing a threshold to a home uninvited by the owner
  - □ White animal
  - □ Garlic
  - □ Wild roses
  - □ Spilled seeds you haven't counted
- **Flaw: (•) Stigmata.** You begin to bleed from open wounds on your hands, feet, and forehead when you reach Hunger 4. This attracts attention, leaves traces, and may penalize some dice pools at the Storyteller's discretion.

•• **Eat food:** You can consume food without effort and might even enjoy it, though it gives no nourishment and must be expelled before resting for the day.

Thin-Blood Merits and Flaws

These Merits and Flaws only apply to thin-blood characters. They have no dot value; each Flaw balances a Merit, and vice versa. They thus do not count against the maximum dots in Advantages and Flaws allowed to be selected during character creation or purchased through experience.

THIN-BLOOD FLAWS

- **Baby Teeth:** You never developed fangs, or the ones you've got are useless for feeding. You either need to cut your victims open, or you extract their blood with a syringe.
- **Bestial Temper:** You are afflicted with the Beast equal to a full vampire. You need to test for frenzy as per the normal vampire rules.
- **Branded by the Camarilla:** In some cities, the rulers simply hunt down and destroy thin-bloods. In other cities, the merciful Sheriff merely brands them, forcibly and painfully, to remind them of their place. (Many are then hunted down and destroyed, often on perceived slights or simple whims.) You have such an unhealing brand, and the Camarilla makes sure to keep

its eyes peeled for the moment you step out of line. You can take Camarilla Contact with this Flaw; the Camarilla thrives on double-dealing of this sort.

- **Clan Curse:** Remnants of your sire's Blood still flows through your veins, carrying traces of their ancient curse. You must pick a Clan Bane to suffer from, counting your Bane Severity as 1 for this purpose. You can only pick the Brujah or Gangrel Bane if you possess the Bestial Temper Flaw, and the Tremere Bane only if you have the Catenating Blood Merit.
- **Dead Flesh:** Your Blood is not strong enough to completely sustain you, and as an effect, your flesh is in a constant state of putrefaction, with a greenish tint and faint stench of rot. Any medical inspection will immediately identify you as deceased, and you receive a one-die penalty to any face-to-face Social test with a mortal. You cannot take Lifelike if you take this Flaw.
- **Mortal Frailty:** You cannot Rouse the Blood to mend, instead healing as a mortal (p. 126). You cannot take Vampiric Resilience if you take this Flaw.
- **Shunned by the Anarchs:** You broke an unwritten rule or thought yourself equal among equals, where some turned out more equal than others. In whichever case, the Anarchs of the regnum know of you and shun you. They'd rather throw you to the Camarilla than listen to your pleas. You cannot take Anarch Comrades if you take this Flaw.

- **Vitae Dependency:** Your Blood is unable to sustain vampiric powers by itself. Unless you drink enough vampire Blood to slake one Hunger each week you lose your ability to gain and use any Disciplines (including Thin-Blood Alchemy). You regain your powers as soon as you slake at least one Hunger with vampire Blood.

THIN-BLOOD MERITS

- **Anarch Comrades:** You have befriended the members of an Anarch coterie who tolerate your presence or even affectionately treat you as their pet. They cumulatively act as a one-dot Anarch Mawla, as long as you don't deviate from the party line. Write them on the Relationship Map.
- **Camarilla Contact:** You have caught the eye of a Camarilla recruiter who has promised you admittance and a chance at becoming a real vampire. All you need to do is keep your eyes and ears open, report on your and your coterie's activities, and be prepared to perform any task asked of you. You have the equivalent of a one-dot Camarilla Mawla who treats you badly. Write them on the Relationship Map.
- **Catenating Blood:** You can create Blood Bonds and perform the Embrace as a regular vampire. Any vampire you create this way will be a thin-blood.
- **Day Drinker:** Sunlight halves your Health tracker (rounded up), but otherwise simply removes your vampiric abilities, including all Disciplines and Health benefits, and does no other damage. You still suffer from Hunger, however, and sooner or later you'll need to sleep. If your health drops below your currently sustained damage levels as a result of

this, you suffer the effects of Impairment or torpor (depending on type of damage) until you are clear of sunlight.

- **Discipline Affinity:** You have an affinity for a certain Discipline, picked at character creation. You gain a dot in this Discipline and can learn and retain additional dots in it through experience expenditures, as if you were a normal vampire. (The experience point cost is the same as an out-of-clan Discipline.) Drinking blood with matching Resonance does not reward you with any extra dots in this Discipline, temporary or not.
- **Lifelike:** You have a heartbeat, can eat food, and enjoy sexual activities like a mortal. All but the most advanced medical inspections reveal nothing out of the ordinary, assuming they happen at night.
- **Thin-blood Alchemist:** The Duskborn change as they feed. Thin-Blood Alchemy is the mastery of this process. Whether it is spontaneous or a skill learned by comparing notes with other blood-cookers, you have gained one dot and one formula (p. 282) in Thin-blood Alchemy. You can purchase additional dots and formulae through experience as usual.
- **Vampiric Resilience:** You suffer damage as a regular vampire, treating regular puncture and slashing wounds as Superficial damage.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds describe advantages of relationship, circumstance, and opportunity: material possessions, social networks, and the like. Backgrounds are external, not internal, Traits, and the player should always rationalize how the character came to possess them, as well as what they represent. Who are your Contacts? Why do your Allies support you? Where did you meet your Retainers? What investments do you possess that yield your four dots in Resources? You don't have to do all of that at first – but be ready with an answer when the Storyteller asks during play, or be ready to suggest an answer that ties into the ongoing storyline.

Backgrounds are discrete, not progressive, Traits. The same Background can be acquired multiple times.

EXAMPLE:

Martin purchases the Allies Background twice, once at one dot (his neighbor lookout) and once at three dots (his trusted star lawyer), representing two different Allies.

Characters can share some Backgrounds with the rest of their coterie. See Coterie Backgrounds on p. 196.

Allies

Allies are mortals who support and help you: family, friends, or even a mortal organization that owes you some loyalty. Although Allies usually aid you willingly, without coaxing or coercion, they are not always available to offer assistance; they have their own concerns and can do only so much for the sake of your relationship. Usually, Allies appear about once per story.

Allies can be almost anyone in your home city, depending on what your Storyteller will allow. You may have friends in the precinct morgue, at a tabloid newspaper or gossip blog, among high society, or at the railroad yard. Allies are generally trustworthy (though they probably don't know that you're a vampire, or even that vampires exist). However, nothing comes for free. If you wind up drawing favors from your friend in the Russian Mafia, he'll probably ask you to do him a favor in kind in the future.

Enemies are the opposite of Allies and are taken as Flaws.

You can use the Mortal Template rules to create Allies or Enemies when you buy them or first call on them, and you can write them down on the Relationship Map, though many groups leave this process up to the Storyteller.

Build Allies or Enemies from a budget of points based on their Effectiveness and on their Reliability. The maximum points in one Ally is six. Ally or Enemy groups appear in numbers equal to the number of player characters.

All Enemies are rated two fewer dots than their Effectiveness; a Gifted mortal Ally costs three dots as an Ally, but only provides one dot as a Flaw. Enemies all have

the same Reliability: whenever the Storyteller thinks they should show up, but probably at least once per story.

EFFECTIVENESS

- • Weak mortal, likely useless in a violent or potentially violent situation.
- •• Average mortal or a tight-knit group of Weak mortals (neighborhood kids who solve mysteries, church group, NGO chapter)
- ••• Gifted mortal or a dangerous group of Average mortals (a street gang, a celebrity entourage, a blue-collar union local)
- •••• Deadly mortal, a Gifted mortal with magic or other supernatural powers, or a well-armed group of Gifted mortals (a private security squad , a lawyer contingent, a Russian Mafia bratva)

RELIABILITY

- • When you call on them, they appear half the time.
- •• When you call on them, they appear within 1-10 hours (roll a die).
- ••• When you call on them, they appear as soon as possible.

Contacts

You know people – human people – from many different walks of life. Contacts primarily provide you with information in their areas of expertise, and they may want to exchange favors of various kinds. For different kinds of help,

MORTALS TEMPLATES

Use these templates to build Storyteller-played characters when even Quick Character Generation takes too much time. If desired, use Advantage points to buy more Skills.

WEAK MORTAL

- **Attributes: Two at 2, the rest at 1**
- **Skills: Three at 2, five at 1**
- **Advantages: None**

AVERAGE MORTAL

- **Attributes: Two at 3, three at 2, the rest at 1**
- **Skills: Three at 3, four at 2, five at 1**
- **Advantages: up to 3 points (2 points maximum Flaws)**

GIFTED MORTAL

- **Attributes: One at 4, two at 3, two at 2, the rest at 1**
- **Skills: Two at 4 (one with a Specialty), four at 3, four at 2, four at 1**
- **Advantages: up to 10 points (4 points maximum Flaws)**

DEADLY MORTAL

- **Attributes: Two at 5, two at 4, two at 3, the rest at 2**
- **Skills: One at 5, three at 4, five at 3, six at 2; three Specialties**
- **Advantages: up to 15 points (no Flaws)**

use your Influence (p. 187) in the mortal world, or call on your Allies (p. 184) or Mawla (p. 192).

A Contact is someone in an excellent position to get information. They might be a police dispatcher, rather than a homicide lieutenant, or a congressional staffer, rather than a senator. Information brokers, gossip columnists, underworld fixers, and reporters make excellent Contacts. You can define your Contacts when you buy this Background or as you need to introduce them in play. Whenever you create them, make sure to add them to the Relationship Map.

- One Contact who can do or get something cheap or common for you (Resources 1). Examples: a weed dealer, a car salesman.
- •• One Contact who can do or get something useful for you (Resources 2). Examples: small-time gun dealer, veterinarian.
- ••• One Contact who can do or get something expensive or hard for you (Resources 4). Examples: security systems expert; police lieutenant in homicide, narcotics, or other useful field.

Fame

Mortals know your name and eagerly seek out news of your activities. You might be a movie star, rock star, or other celebrity. Fame grants pull in mass and social media; you have more ways than most to manipulate the thoughts of the populace. You likely have ways to mask the fact that you're never seen during the day, such as a body double.

In some circumstances, the Storyteller may allow you to use Fame in a Social test dice pool instead of another Trait, especially to get into an otherwise exclusive venue or event. "Do you know who I am?" doesn't work everywhere, but it does work. Each level of Fame subtracts one from the Difficulty of Social tests against your fans and from many hunting tests, depending on your predation strategy – you have less trouble attracting prey.

Fame has its downside, of course – it's harder for you to tail someone unobtrusively, for example, and who wants groupies hanging around the door to their haven all day tagging its location on Instagram? You should look into taking Disguise as a specialty.

By default, Fame applies among mortals, but you can also buy Fame that applies among Kindred for the same cost. Some vampires, such as Dracula or Elizabeth Bathory, might have both! Vampires may admire, or at least be more interested in, a Kindred who was famous or infamous in life: Arthur Rimbaud, Crispus Attucks, Billy the Kid, and the like.

INFAMY You are famous for something horrible. At the very least, the Difficulty of most reaction tests increases by the amount of the Flaw; at worst, the authorities attempt to kill or capture you whenever you appear.

DARK SECRET You can also take Dark Secret, a milder version of Infamy. The Dark Secret Flaw provides one fewer point than the equivalent Infamy, as your black deeds remain unknown to all but you and perhaps one or two very motivated enemies. The one-dot version of Infamy also provides one point as a Dark Secret, because it's easier to uncover than a truly life-threatening secret.

- **Flaw: (••)** You are a Cleaver or serial breacher of the Masquerade, have been Blood Hunted out of another city, or have grievously offended this domain's ruler.
- **Flaw: (•)** You owe a big debt to bad people or have made yourself generally odious. Alternately, your spouse, lover, or close family member has Infamy ••.

- • A select subculture knows who you are and admires you.
- •• You are a local celebrity, recognized by a plurality of the city.
- ••• Most people in the country know your name, at least.
- •••• Everybody who even vaguely cares about social trends or your field knows something about you.
- ••••• Your Fame reaches mass national or even global audiences. You are a major movie star, stadium-filling rock act, or former president.

Influence

You have pull in the mortal community, whether through wealth, prestige, political office, blackmail, or supernatural manipulation. Kindred with high Influence can sway, and in rare cases even control, the politics and society of their city, especially the police and city bureaucracy.

By default, Influence applies most within one group or region of your city. Groups can be large, even diffuse: organized crime, media, religion, the police, city government, etc. Regions should be larger than neighborhoods or all but the largest individual domains: Brooklyn, the Rive Gauche, the South Side, the Ginza, etc. Your Influence applies to the city as a whole at one dot less than it does within your group or region. Using local Influence in another city in the same area, state, or province might be possible at an additional one-dot penalty, and so on. So, a vampire might be Powerful (••••) in Hollywood, Entrenched (•••) everywhere in Los Angeles, merely Influential (••) in San Diego or San Francisco, and just Well-Connected (•) in Chicago or New York.

The Storyteller may require you to use Influence in place of a Trait in some dice pools, particularly Social tests attempting to sway minor bureaucrats or the equivalent in your group. This Background helps you have an "abandoned" building demolished (or preserved), not start global wars.

If the Storyteller wants to run a game of globe-spanning masterminds, they may recalibrate Influence to potentially apply nationally (••••) or even globally (•••••).

- **Flaw: (••) Despised.** One group or region of the city lives only to thwart you and your faction. Subtract two dice from dice pools attempting to convince a neutral actor to support you politically or do you a favor. The Storyteller should take any opportunity to involve your haters in the story.
- **Flaw: (•) Disliked.** Subtract one

die from Social test dice pools involving any group in the city except your Contacts and Allies or other explicitly loyal supporters.

- • **Well-connected:** You're guaranteed a respectful hearing.
- •• **Influential:** People want to do you favors.
- ••• **Entrenched:** Mortal power-brokers and factions hesitate to oppose you.
- •••• **Powerful:** Without a good reason to do otherwise, functionaries and foot soldiers obey.
- ••••• **Dominant:** Lesser figures try to figure out what you want and do it first.

Haven

Like all Backgrounds, the Haven Background is entirely optional. A vampire with no dots in Haven has a suicide's grave, a room in an abandoned motel, a rented office, or an apartment with windows blacked out with plastic bags. They can still remain safe and hidden by day in this relatively small and insecure haven by default. The Storyteller may allow a player character to default a somewhat better haven from another Background such as Resources, Status, or Influence. Of course, if those Backgrounds go away, so does the character's nice haven.

A character with none of those other Backgrounds, however, can still have a perfectly reasonable haven as long as they have this Background. For instance, a character might not have enough money to afford a 20-room Victorian mansion in today's economy, but if their great-grandmother left them one that had been fully paid for, there's no reason they can't remain in residence as it slowly dilapidates.

Base ratings in Haven abstract the haven's size, security, and privacy. All of those factors affect the chance of spotting, penetrating, and surveilling the vampire's actual resting place. Add +1 to the Difficulty of, or one die to dice pools resisting, such efforts for each dot of base Haven rating.

Kindred know their havens intimately. For each dot of base Haven rating, add one per dot to dice pools to notice danger (including awakening rolls, p. 219) while in your haven.

BASE HAVEN

- ■ **Flaw: (•) No Haven.** You must go to some effort (at least a basic test) to find a new resting place every morning.

- • Small haven, but more secure and private than the default. Examples: basement apartment, crypt, locked storeroom in a warehouse.
- •• Good size, security, or privacy. Examples: a single-family home or row house, wolf enclosure at the zoo, branch sewer tunnel.
- ••• Very large, secure, or private. Examples: a compound outside town, a bank building, a decommissioned subway station.

HAVEN MERITS AND FLAWS

You can add Merits and Flaws to your Haven if you wish. They stack with the base Haven rating to produce the total dots in this Background for projects and other uses.

Remember, you can make Haven a shared Background among your coterie – easily the best way to afford a Haven with lots of features.

- ■ **Flaw: (••) Compromised.** Your haven has been raided once before, perhaps before it was yours. It probably appears on someone's watchlist. Invaders or spies can add two dice to their pool to penetrate or surveil your haven. If you ever do get on the Inquisition's radar, you should think about moving out.
- ■ **Flaw: (•) Creepy.** Your haven looks like the den of a serial killer, which in fairness is probably exactly what it is. Unknowing neighbors might phone in a tip to the cops or just talk about the creepy place they saw. Your dice pools on Social tests to seduce or otherwise put human guests at ease are at a two-dice penalty.
- ■ **Flaw: (•) Haunted.** Your haven has a supernatural manifestation in it that you do not control or really even understand. It might just have a ghost, but a Haunted haven could hold a dimensional portal, a cursed meteorite, or anything else you can't get rid of. Obviously, someone who does understand the manifestation could use it to breach your haven's security. The Storyteller defines any other effect of the haunting, imposing at least a one-die penalty

to affected pools used in the haven per dot of Haunted taken as a Flaw.

- **Hidden Armory:** Each dot in this Merit adds a stand of arms to your haven's supply: one pistol and one long firearm, with ammunition. They are as secure from discovery as your resting place.
- **Cell:** Your haven has a dedicated, locked place to store two prisoners, with a base Difficulty to escape of 5. Each extra dot either allows you to store twice as many prisoners (up to a maximum of 32, only in very large havens) or adds +1 to the escape Difficulty. This Merit is not available in small havens.
- **Watchmen:** You have either private security or criminal thugs guarding your haven. Each dot of this Merit supplies four Average guards and one Gifted boss (see Mortal Templates, p. 185). If guards would be conspicuous here, buy this Merit cautiously.
- **Laboratory:** Your haven has an equipped laboratory with a dedicated industrial sink, gas jet, reinforced floor, etc. Each dot of this Merit adds one to the dice pool for rolls related to one Science or Technology specialty or to Alchemy dice pools for thin-bloods using the Fixatio method (p. 284). This Merit is not available in small havens.
- **Library:** Your Haven has a dedicated library on the occult, Cainite legends, city history, vampire lore, or the like. Each dot of this Merit adds one to the dice pool for research rolls for one Academics, Investigation, or Occult specialty. Small havens limit this Merit to a maximum of one dot.
- **Location:** Your haven nestles in one of the most fashionable or otherwise exclusive areas of the city, in the Rack, on a small island, or otherwise in a prime spot. Add two dice (or +2 to foes' Difficulty) to bonuses on the relevant die rolls from either Chasse (p. 195) or from your base Haven rating (pick one). If neither modifier precisely maps to what you have in mind, work out with your Storyteller when you can expect a two-dice bonus to occur. For example, a Haven close to Elysium might grant a two-dice bonus to Etiquette tests in Elysium and on tests to pick up on court gossip.
- **Luxury:** High-definition flat screens, designer furniture, objets d'art, or other expensive details give you a two-dice bonus to Social tests dealing with mortal guests in your haven. If you don't have at least three dots of Resources (•••), your décor was gained illegally.
- **Postern:** Your Haven has a rear exit, secret tunnel, grating in the cellar leading into the sewers, or other unobtrusive way out. For each dot of this Merit, add one die to your dice pools to evade or escape surveillance near your haven.
- **Security System:** Your haven has a better-than-average security system. For each dot of this Merit, add one die to your dice pool to resist (or alert you to) unauthorized entry into your haven.
- **Surgery:** Your haven has one room equipped as a field surgery or better. Add two dice to relevant dice pools, generally Medicine, for tests performed in your haven. This Merit is not available in small havens.
- **Warding:** Your haven possesses some kind of magical ward barring supernatural forces. You may not be able to deactivate it, but it allows you to pass. Discuss the limits of your ward with the Storyteller. Each dot of this Merit adds one to the dice pool to resist supernatural scrying, as well as whatever other entry the Storyteller allows it to prevent. The Storyteller may require you to possess Occult 3 or better, or Blood Sorcery, to buy this Merit.

Herd

You have cultivated a group of vessels from whom you can feed without concern. You can use them to perform basic services, although they are neither as tightly controlled nor as loyal as Retainers. (If needed, build your Herd as a combination of Weak and Average mortals; see Mortal Templates, p. 185.) You can slake your Herd rating in Hunger each week without a roll. (This benefit can be shared among more than one vampire.) Overfeeding endangers your Herd, potentially dropping the rating as members die or flee.

■ **Flaw: (••) Obvious Predator.** You exude a predatory demeanor, and humans instinctively fear and mistrust you. Lose two dice from any dice pool for hunting except purely Physical expressions of stalking, chasing,

and killing. Lose one die from any dice pool for any Social test intended to put humans at ease. You cannot maintain a Herd.

- One to three vessels with random Resonance and no Dyscrasias: You can change one victim's Resonance once a month with a successful Manipulation + Insight test (Difficulty 4). Examples: graduate students, musical pupils, cleaver family
- •• Four to seven vessels, half of whom share one Resonance that you pick when you buy this Advantage. Examples: Aging devotees of the city's fading goth or bhangra scene, fellow club scenesters, large cleaver family
- ••• Seven to 15 vessels, with two different Resonances that you pick each week when you feed on different Herd members. Examples: rugby team, swinger scene, dance or night school class, night shift employees
- •••• 16 to 30 vessels: Pick two Resonances every week. Herd maintenance, cover ups, and recruitment take occasional roles in your chronicle. Examples: cult, large brothel, sweatshop
- ••••• 31 to 60 vessels: Pick three Resonances every week. Herd maintenance and recruitment begins to brush up against the Masquerade. Examples: Large cult, large sweatshop

Loresheet

Buy an Advantage from a Loresheet and integrate the story of that lore into your character's lineage and connections. Some Loresheets (especially the "Descendant of ...") require the character be of a specific clan.

Remember, that just like other Advantages, each level of a Loresheet is self-contained and must be bought separately. It does not automatically convey the "lower" levels of that Loresheet.

See Loresheets on p. 382 for more.

Mask

As stealth predators, vampires have few weapons more potent than their pretense of humanity. The lies the Kindred live constantly shadow your stories, and no description of a lick should omit how they navigate mortal society – what they wear as a Mask. A good Mask explains the character's nocturnal existence and offers plenty of opportunities to be alone with mortals.

Some vampires switch back and forth between Masks, risking deep identity confusion and slip-ups, while others forge single plausible identities and strictly adhere to them for a human lifetime before they switch, adding makeup as they "age," and faking every aspect of life to look perfectly normal on paper. Others, almost always Nosferatu or unbound vampires, forswear safety for freedom off the grid or on the streets.

By default (at no dots) a vampire either has no need of a Mask, such as those recently Embraced and still able to pass as the human they were, or has a single Mask and fake ID that can stand up to a traffic stop or similar surface scrutiny. A zero-dot mask does not pass a background check, much less a proper investigation by the authorities.

- **Flaw: (••) Known Blankbody.** Your biometrics, name, history, known associates, and aliases appear in several intelligence agency databases, flagged as a potential terrorist. Any inquisitor can read between the lines and recognize you as a vampire.
- **Flaw: (•) Known Corpse.** People know you died recently and react with shock and horror if you appear among them. This Flaw also applies to any database lookups on your identity.

- You have a good fake identity, including a credit card, bank account, credit history, birth certificate, etc., all in your Mask's name. You can pass a state or provincial-level background check.
- •• Your Mask can pass a background check with the national police: FBI, Scotland Yard, or the equivalent. If you had a military or intelligence record in life, it has been classified.

If you have a two-dot Mask, you can also buy the following Advantages for one dot each:

"You know the saddest thing," she said. "The saddest thing is that we're you."
I said nothing.

"In your fantasies," she said, "my people are just like you. Only better. We don't die or age or suffer from pain or cold or thirst. We're snappier dressers. We possess the wisdom of the ages. And if we crave blood, well, it is no more than the way you people crave food or affection or sunlight—and besides, it gets us out of the house. Crypt. Coffin. Whatever."

"And the truth is?" I asked her.

"We're you," she said. "We're you, with all your fuckups and all the things that make you human—all your fears and lonelinesses and confusions...none of that gets better.

"It's like getting famous, or getting rich. You're the same person you were when you were unknown or poor. Only worse. All the bad things are magnified, and you don't remember where the good things are anymore.

"It's all that. But it's more. We're colder than you are. Deader. I miss daylight and food and knowing how it feels to touch someone and care. I remember life, and meeting people as people and not just as things to feed on or control, and I remember what it was to feel something, anything, happy or sad or anything..." And then she stopped.

"Are you crying?" I asked.

"We don't cry," she told me.

Like I said, the woman was a liar.

- **Zeroed:** Someone in high places has purged your real records. You officially don't exist.
- **Cobbler:** You can make or source Masks. Making a Mask takes three days per dot and possibly exposes you online; sourcing Masks takes one day per dot, but costs something in return. How much depends on your leverage, margin on the Social test, or whatever else the Storyteller decides.

Mawla

This Trait represents one or a group of Kindred who looks out for you, offering guidance, information, or aid once in a while. The word comes from medieval Arabic, meaning different things from "a trusted one" to "uncle" to "source of neighborly protection" to "non-Muslim whose oath still binds them." Western vampires brought the term back from the Crusades, and as the Ashirra and Camarilla find themselves increasingly allied in the Gehenna War, the word enjoys a resurgence in vampire society.

A Mawla may act as your mentor. Such a role commonly falls to your sire, if they don't treat you as property or ignore you.

Your Mawla might trade information to mutual benefit, or even come to your aid if you have respected the relationship. A Mawla may be powerful, but their power need not be direct. Depending on the number of dots in this Background, your Mawla might be nothing more than an ancilla with a remarkable information network, or they might be a centuries-old creature with tremendous influence and supernatural power. They may offer advice, speak to the Prince or Baron on your behalf, steer other elders clear of you, or give warning when you're walking into situations you don't understand. Your Mawla, of course, expects reciprocity.

A Mawla rating could even represent a group of like-minded vampires, such as the elders of the city's Tremere chantry or a Trotskyite clique amongst the Anarchs in town. (The plural of Mawla is Mawali.) As a general rule, a Mawla group costs one dot more than a single Kindred of that level: a coven of elder Mawali would be a three-dot Mawla group, for example.

Whoever they are, write them on your Relationship Map when you buy them.

As a general rule, Mawali provide a helpful word and occasional political pushes or cover, but they don't fight your battles or call in valuable favors. If they must do so for their own sake to aid you, you

probably lose a dot or more of this Background, after arousing their ire.

Characters can also acquire one-off Minor Boons (p. 315) from other Kindred, only during character generation. These boons cost half the points (rounded up) of the equivalent Mawla.

ADVERSARY A fellow Cainite who generally wishes you (or more likely your sire, lineage, or mentor) ill, an Adversary is the reverse Flaw of the Mawla Background. Adversaries range from one-dot elders to three-dot Princes or powerful cabals. The Storyteller uses either the Adversary's Status or some specific other Trait when building dice pools with which to oppose the player characters, not the dots in Adversary.

- • Neonate
- •• Ancilla
- ••• Elder
- •••• Primogen or Anarch Revolutionary Council member
- ••••• Prince or Baron

Resources

This Background describes your Resources. These benefits are not necessarily financial in nature and are rarely completely liquid, but you can often sell them to gain money. It could take weeks or even months to do so, depending on how much needs to be sold. Especially as the Second Inquisition closes down Kindred bank accounts, vampires increasingly return to holding their Resources in cash – or in gold, art, narcotics, guns, and slaves.

Dots of Resources provide an income for you to maintain your standard of unliving, but you must detail the source of your income and the form this Background takes. After all, it might dry up, get stolen, or otherwise vanish during the chronicle.

■ **Flaw: (•) Destitute.** You have no money and no home.

- • **Portfolio Proletariat:** You live paycheck to paycheck: apartment, car, camping equipment.
- •• **Middle Class:** Nice apartment or small house, several cars, high-end equipment
- ••• **Rich:** Great condo or nice house, luxury items, high-end equipment for several people
- •••• **Wealthy:** Mansion, helicopter or private jet, very specialized high-end equipment
- ••••• **Ultra Rich:** Many mansions, "anything money can buy"

Retainers

You have one or more loyal and steadfast servants or assistants. Retainers may be ghouls who are blood bound to you, individuals you have so Dominated over the years that they are incapable of independent action, or individuals you have so overwhelmed with your Presence that they would do anything for you.

You must always control retainers in some fashion: a salary, vitae donation, or direct mesmerism. Though typically loyal, retainers may betray you if the reward outweighs the risk or if you have treated them badly. The Storyteller can always call for a scene between you and a retainer.

Retainers should act as characters, not puppets. Even ghoul retainers aren't supermen; the most skilled servants don't always show the highest loyalty. Everything in Vampire is a tradeoff. Storytellers can use Retainers to add flavor to the chronicle; don't let them or their misuse damage the story.

■ **Flaw: (•) Stalkers.** You have a tendency to attract people who become a tad too smitten with you for your own good. A former retainer retains their memory of you and a desire to reconnect. They may be hungry, love-maddened, desperate, opportunistic, or any combination or variation. Should you get rid of them, another soon appears.

- • Underwhelming retainer: A child, criminal lowlife, or horror nerd follows you around and does your bidding without a Blood Bond. Build them as a Weak mortal.
- •• A ghoul, a family servant, a human lover, or a dominated thrall: give them a backstory. Build them as an Average mortal or as a ghoul with no Advantages. For more on Ghouls, see p. 234.
- ••• A retainer competent enough to act independently and make lesser problems go away. They are likely a ghoul with traits equivalent to Gifted mortals, on top of their supernatural abilities.

Status

You have something of a reputation and standing (earned or unearned) within a specified local community of Kindred, probably Camarilla or Anarch. Status among Camarilla society derives as often from your sire's status and the respect due your particular bloodline as it does from personal achievement. High Status among Anarchs theoretically depends on the character's contributions, but more often to their degree of connection (by Blood or coterie) to the current Baron or other ruler.

Status in one sect does not transfer to the other. By and large, Status held in another city effectively reduces by one dot; an Influential (•••) vampire in Cartagena is only Respected (••) in Buenos Aires.

The Storyteller may occasionally call on you to add your Status to a dice pool along with a Social Trait, especially for first meetings and court happenings. In other cases, the Storyteller may allow you to substitute your Status for a Social Trait – but other vampires may notice that you're skating by on Status, instead of properly using the Etiquette Skill, for example.

Caitiff characters begin with the Suspect Flaw and may not purchase positive Status during character creation.

■ **Flaw: (••) Shunned.** You're completely loathed by this sect. You betrayed them, crossed a local leader, or fought them in the past. Members of this group will actively work against you if they can.

■ **Flaw: (•) Suspect.** You're not good with this sect at all. You weaseled out of a boon, broke an oath, or did something similar. You can try to stay out of sight and out of mind, but unless you somehow make amends, you suffer a two-dice penalty to all Social tests involving the offended faction.

- • **Known:** A properly introduced, welcomed neonate, seen as an up-and-comer.
- •• **Respected:** You have responsibilities now, an average ancilla.
- ••• **Influential:** You hold authority over part of the group, an average elder.
- •••• **Powerful:** You hold office in the group, such as Sheriff, Harpy, or Scourge.
- ••••• **Luminary:** You sit at the table of power in the group, a respected member of the Primogen ■

Coterie Creation

Players might build their characters individually, but they build their coterie together. Collaborative coterie creation creates shared buy-in to the chronicle, and it allows players to indicate which aspects of the World of the Darkness they have the most interest in exploring.

The coterie pool begins with one free dot per player character. (The Storyteller may allow player groups with three or fewer players to begin with a coterie pool of two free dots per character.) Players may also contribute their own characters' Advantage dots to the coterie pool.

Players spend the coterie pool collectively, although in some groups, each player controls their own contribution. The coterie can also purchase coterie Flaws to get more dots for the coterie during coterie creation. Every player must agree in order for the coterie to take a Flaw.

EXAMPLE:

The players have made a Marechal (see below) coterie, and as such they argue that they have no Domain of their own, and instead place their four dots into Contacts for ease of travel and a floating cabin cruiser Haven. They also take two dots of Adversary (a mysterious figure that stalks the Coterie) for two additional coterie dots that they place in Camarilla Status.

Domain

The core aspect of a coterie, Domain represents a physical area of the city in which the coterie can hunt.

To the Camarilla, each domain resembles a feudal fief, held by grant from the Prince or another noble Kindred; Anarch coteries more likely refer to their domain as "turf." Either way, the principle remains the same.

Like other elements of the World of Darkness, Domains have Traits. Each dot of a Domain Trait costs one dot from the coterie pool. Domain Traits cover a lot of ground, so to speak: use them as abstractions, not as constraints.

Chasse

This Trait describes how well-stocked, vulnerable, and rich the

domain is as a hunting ground. One dot in Chasse provides the coterie with a default hunting Difficulty of 6 inside their domain. Each additional dot reduces that Difficulty by one.

Chasse also refers abstractly to the physical size of the domain. This quality varies radically, depending on the specific city's geography, but as a very general rule use the following table.

CHASSE	GEOGRAPHICAL EQUIVALENT
•	One city block, one suburban gated community
••	Two to four blocks, one park and its entrances, one small site (tourist landmark, hospital, mall)
•••	Eight blocks on both sides of a major street, one medium site (airport, major employer, casino, college)
••••	One neighborhood or defined district, a square kilometer, everything along one highway or major street, one major site (large university, amusement park)
•••••	Three neighborhoods, a large group of features ("all parks on the South Side," "all hospitals in Queens," "all highways south of the river")

Dots need not always translate to size. Obviously a smaller domain in a rich hunting area, such as the Rack, still has a higher Chasse than a large domain in a desolate or empty part of the city.

Lien

This Trait describes how well-integrated the coterie is into their domain. Each dot in Lien adds one die to a coterie member's pool on attempts to, e.g., interact peacefully with a native mortal; find something, someone, or somewhere specific within the domain; find out the "word on the street," or otherwise investigate something within the domain.

Lien never modifies coterie member hunting rolls.

Portillon

This Trait describes how secure the domain is against intrusion or disruption: other vampires, mortal police or predators, the Second Inquisition, etc. Each dot of Portillon subtracts one die from a foe's pool when they attempt to, for example, enter, investigate, or surveil the domain without the coterie's knowledge.

Portillon seldom adds to character pools; it primarily acts as a resistance Trait. A critical success by an intruder might lower the Portillon of the Domain against that specific intruder – unless the coterie deals with them before the next incursion.

Portillon does not apply to Havens, in or out of the Domain.

Coteries Without Domains

A coterie without a Domain either poaches its dinner (at grave risk from the angry holder of the domain they enter to do so) or holds a letter of passage from their own Prince or another high official. If the local authorities recognize such credentials, they generally grant the coterie a temporary right to hunt somewhere.

The Storyteller can use the values on p. 308 to determine the default Difficulty of the coterie's hunts.

Coterie Backgrounds

Coteries can hold certain Backgrounds and Flaws in common: Adversary, Ally, Contacts, Enemy, Haven, Herd, Influence, Mask, Mawla, Resources, Retainers, and Status. Buy coterie Backgrounds with coterie pool dots, just like you would buy an individual character's Background.

Remember to record major figures on the Relationship Map, just as with individual Backgrounds.

Each member of the coterie can use these coterie Backgrounds as their own, using the rules on pp. 179-194. However, the Background belongs to the coterie, not to the individual character. If the coterie splits up, or if a character gets ejected from their coterie (banished by the Prince, for example), then they cannot take the Background with them.

The Background does not multiply itself – a two-dot coterie Herd still only has the same number of kine and provides only one Resonance, the same that an individual vampire with two dots of Herd (••) commands.

Like all Backgrounds, coterie Backgrounds remain vulnerable to in-game events. If a mob of torch-wielding Baptists burns out a coterie Haven, those dots are gone, just as if they had burned out one player's Haven – except, in the case of a coterie Haven, when it goes, nobody has a place to sleep today. Putting all of one's eggs in the same basket has its downside.

Types of Coteries

The Kindred like to propagate the myth that they are solitary creatures. This statement is partially true; like all addicts, they put themselves and their need for blood ahead of any personal loyalties. A vampire with close friends is a vampire with great weakness. As the centuries turn love into hate and familiarity breeds contempt, betrayal is almost inevitable, later if not sooner. What the Damned seldom let on is that they crave meaning and companionship as deeply as we do, perhaps more deeply. Theirs is an existence on the edge of a bottomless pit of despair. A lone Kindred falls victim to the Compulsions of the Beast or is drawn to the flame of self-annihilating depression very easily.

Besides existentialism then, what's the reason for your crew's existence? In practice, vampires associate into as many types of coteries as humans do into their own types of social groups.

Choose a coterie type or invent your own. See the Anarch and Camarilla books for many more inspirations.

If your coterie matches a given type, subtract the listed costs from the coterie pool. If your pool isn't large enough to pay for that coterie type, start collecting dot contributions from the characters.

You can increase any listed value with your remaining coterie pool dots, if any. Consider the possible extras as more places to put spare dots.

Blood Cult

Formally condemned as violations of the Masquerade, blood cults have nevertheless resurged with the coming of Gehenna. This coterie entices mortal worshippers, feeding them vitae or just enslaving them. Many blood cults reveal enough supernatural truth (though not always vampiric lore) to alert the Second Inquisition, adding yet more implacable foes.

- **Domain:** Lien (•) and Portillon (••)
- **Herd:** (•••)
- **Status Flaw:** (•) Suspect

Possible extras: Enemies (••), Haven (cult church or compound), Mask Flaw (••) (on the Second Inquisition radar), Retainers

Cerberus

The coterie exists to protect or guard a certain spot or important location, such as a grave, a portal, or the vault of a priceless relic. Cerberus coteries often become "legacy coteries", with membership passed down to generations of new vampires.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•) and Portillon (•••)
- **Haven:** (••)

Possible extras: Adversary, Haunted flaw in Haven, Status (for legacies)

Champions

The coterie exists to fight for a cause, possibly even one that mortals might recognize as worthy: clean up the neighborhood by devouring drug dealers, for example. Thin-bloods often begin their unlives as champions. Thicker-blooded champions likely consider themselves Anarchs or at least Anarch sympathizers, although a clever Prince of the Camarilla can put even the highest-minded vampires to good use. In the end, even champions have to make the hard choice between their human charges and their vampiric urges.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•) and Lien (•••)
- **Allies:** (•)
- **Enemies:** (••)

Possible extras: Adversary, Contacts

Commando

The coterie exists to fight its master's enemies: the vampiric equivalent of a SWAT or special operations team. You may even disguise yourself as a squad of the city's tactical police, as long as you don't try to pass as officers in front of a real one.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•) and Portillon (••)
- **Mawla:** (•••) (whoever tasks you for your missions)
- **Status:** (•)
- **Enemies:** (••)

Possible extras: Adversary, Haven (base of operations), Mask

Day Watch

The coterie guards the undead city from mortals, especially during the day when most Kindred sleep. Each member must be a thin-blood with the Day Drinker Merit, or the Storyteller needs to provide them another means of remaining active by day.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•) and Portillon (••)
- **Influence:** (••)
- **Enemies:** (•••)

Possible extras: Allies, Contacts, Haven, Mawla, a shared relic or ritual allowing activity by day

Fang Gang

The coterie operates as a criminal gang, or possibly as a crew of burglars or con artists. The fang gang may disguise itself as part of the city's organized crime syndicate, or act as the Prince or Baron's liaison with them.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•), Lien (•), and Portillon (•)
- **Contacts:** (•) (fence or other criminal middleman)
- **Enemies:** (••)

Possible extras: Haven (clubhouse), Herd (human members/victims of your gang), Influence (organized crime), Retainers, Status (likely with Anarchs)

Hunting Party

The coterie specializes in hunting and capturing humans with particular qualities of the blood. With knowledge of, and tastes for, humors and Resonances spreading among thin-blood cookers and Toreador gourmands alike, coteries on the make often choose to become coteries on the prowl for others.

- **Domain:** Chasse (•••)
- **Ally:** (•)or Mawla: (•) (blood broker)

Possible extras: Herd, Influence (organized crime)

Maréchal

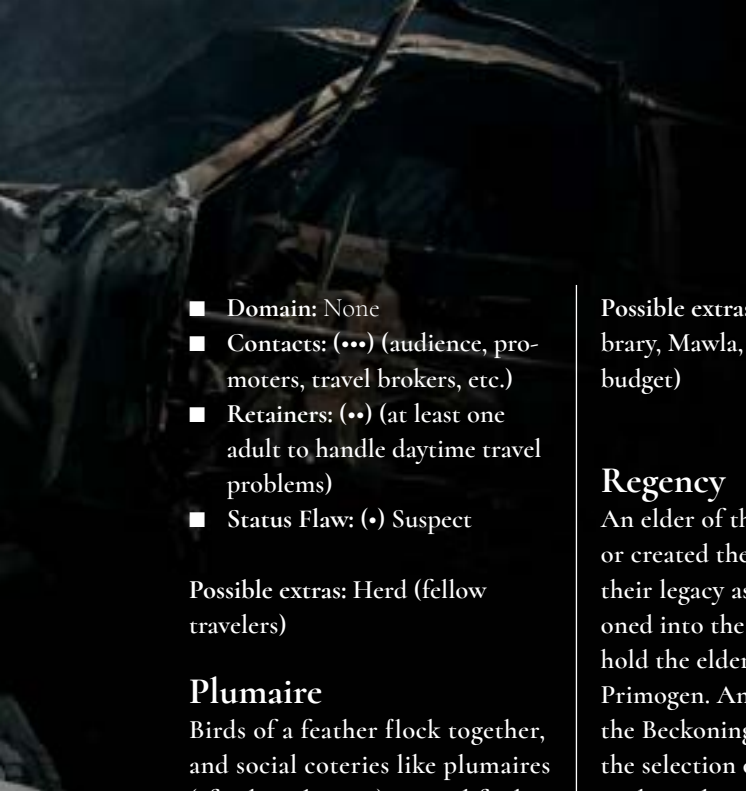
This coterie serves and guards the Prince or Baron, doing their bidding as attendants and hatchet-men. Their direct access to the ruler means that influential elders attempt to insert their childer into the coterie – indeed, every member of the coterie may be Primogen get. Elders left out use every means at their disposal to turn (or break) the coterie to their advantage.

- **Domain:** Chasse (••) and Portillon (••)
- **Status:** (•••)

Possible extras: Adversaries, Influence, Mawla (Prince/Baron), Retainers

Nomads

The coterie travels from place to place. It might pose as (or actually be) a band, theater troupe, or other itinerant artists. Indeed, this coterie might perform exclusively for Kindred audiences at Princely courts, not just second-tier rock clubs in the old factory district. Alternatively, nomad coteries might be refugees from the Gehenna War or just "kings of the road."



- **Domain:** None
- **Contacts: (•••)** (audience, promoters, travel brokers, etc.)
- **Retainers: (••)** (at least one adult to handle daytime travel problems)
- **Status Flaw: (•)** Suspect

Possible extras: Herd (fellow travelers)

Plumaire

Birds of a feather flock together, and social coteries like plumaires ("feathered ones") exemplify this adage. United by ties of social prominence or simple common enthusiasms, social coteries appear in Camarilla courts and Anarch alleys alike. Some plumaires unite under gothic, club, or other countercultures, sharing similar tastes in music and fashion.

- **Domain:** Chasse **(••)** and Lien **(••)**
- **Contacts: (•••)** (fellow members of your subculture)

Possible extras: Adversary or Enemy (rival fashionista), Status (for high society Plumaires)

Questari

The coterie exists to accomplish a great enterprise or objective. Questari coteries often form of their own volition, pursuing their purpose out of desire rather than by edict. They may chase a target, hunt a relic, or solve a mystery. They may often need to leave the city.

- **Domain:** Chasse **(•)** and Lien **(•••)**
- **Contacts: (••)**

Possible extras: Haven with Library, Mawla, Resources (research budget)

Regency

An elder of the Camarilla chose or created the coterie to guard their legacy as they were Beckoned into the Middle East. They hold the elder's vote among the Primogen. Anarch elders who feel the Beckoning likewise facilitate the selection of a steering coterie in their place, or just appoint one to a watching brief on the Council.

- **Domain:** Chasse **(••)** and Portillon **(•••)**
- **Mawla: (••)** (major-domo or zampolit)
- **Status: (••••)** (or **•••** for Anarch Regencies)
- **Advantages:** Select up to 10 dots shared among Haven, Herd, Influence, Resources, and/or Retainers
- **Flaws:** Select the same amount of dots worth of Flaws as Advantages, above

Sbirri

This coterie disguises itself as one type of coterie, while secretly serving another Prince or Baron than they feign allegiance to. Their patron hand-picks a group of Kindred, and then dispatches them to another city or sometimes to a separate faction within the same metropolis.

- **Mawla: (••)** (handler or messenger)
- **Mask: (•)**

Possible extras: Adversaries on target city's Primogen, other Advantages from the coterie's supposed cover type

Vehme

Named for (and possibly descended from) the vigilante secret society in medieval Germany, Primogen task this coterie to protect the Masquerade at all costs. The Vehme has the authority to arrest and subdue violators, if need be, to bring them before the Prince and Primogen.

- **Domain:** Chasse **(•)**
- **Influence: (•••)** (especially in police and media)
- **Status: (•••)**

Possible extras: Adversaries, Mawla (on Primogen or Anarch Councils)

Watchmen

The coterie patrols the city and protects it from intruders, especially Anarchs and werewolves. Camarilla coteries established in border cities to repel Sabbat influence or to colonize newly won territory also count as Watchmen. Anarch cities call their Watchmen (who also guard against reactionaries and Camarilla infiltrators) the Committee of Public Safety, the Cheka, or the Eyes of the People.

- **Domain:** Chasse **(•)**, Lien **(••)** and Portillon **(•)**
- **Status: (••)** (Camarilla)

Possible extras: Contacts, Retainers ■

VAMPIRES

Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood. For it is the life of all flesh; the blood is the life thereof.

– LEVITICUS 17:12 (KJV)

The blood-drinkers who stalk the World of Darkness mostly call themselves Kindred, licks, or Cainites. The term "vampire" seems déclassé to the habitués of Elysium and the theorists of Anarch utopia, reminiscent of cheesy Hammer sequels and tourist-friendly reactionary folklore. However, those Embraced in recent decades increasingly use the term among themselves, ("taking the v-word back") establishing their claim to this status, despite the thinness of their Blood. When challenged, they respond: "Who has a better right to the name? Those of us actually out in the night, or the mythical monsters from movies?"

Vampires cannot afford too many illusions; as predators, their existence depends on fooling their prey, not themselves. Whether they call themselves Kindred, licks, or vampires, they face certain immutable truths. To be a vampire is to be driven by an insensate Hunger for human blood and by the immortal legacy of your vampire Blood. Hunger drives you to murderous frenzy, impels you to slake your thirst in mortal veins. The human blood you drink alchemizes and resonates, granting not just ecstasy but also immortality; not just strange powers, but also slavery. More than most of us, vampires are what they eat. More than most of us, vampires must retain their Humanity if they want to be more than that.

Truth and Lies

The differences between pop-culture vampires, or even legendary Balkan vampires, and the Kindred trip up would-be slayers and even some new-fledged Cainites. However, the similarities argue that myth-makers both modern and medieval occasionally tasted the truth. Even the seemingly timeless truths of the vampires admit some exceptions, or shift as the Blood changes its tides. For centuries, the Kindred believed there was no generation after the 13th, and some modern vampires retain a psychosomatic fear of the cross or garlic.

VAMPIRES ARE IMMORTAL: true. Vampires can die from decapitation or burning by fire or sunlight, but they do not age or die of natural causes. They require no food save blood, and they never need to breathe. Enough trauma can reduce a vampire to a deep, trancelike sleep called torpor – but they can revive again with sufficient time and blood.

VAMPIRES ARE THE LIVING DEAD: true. A vampire's body has no heartbeat or pulse, holds no heat, and generates no sweat or hormones. A vampire's body does not age or rot. It regrows lost flesh and even whole limbs, given time enough. And yet it thinks, walks, plans, and speaks – and hunts, and kills.

VAMPIRES DRINK THE BLOOD OF THE LIVING: true. Vampires crave human blood, and they can only slake their thirst and power their inhuman abilities with the life's blood of their victims. Some penitent vampires eke out an existence from animal blood, and some ancient vampires must hunt and kill others of their kind to nourish themselves, but most vampires indeed consume the blood of their former species.

VAMPIRES LEAVE THE MARKS OF THEIR FANGS IN THEIR VICTIM'S BODY: mostly false. When first Embraced as a vampire, the undead grow extendable fangs for feeding. However, vampire saliva can close the wounds made by their fangs, thus concealing the evidence of the feeding.

THOSE WHO DIE FROM A VAMPIRE'S BITE RISE TO BECOME A VAMPIRE: false. When vampires do kill their prey, the victim simply perishes. Otherwise, vampires would overrun the world. To Embrace a human, allowing them to return as undead, the vampire must feed the drained victim their own undying Blood, called vitae by older vampires.

SUNLIGHT BURNS VAMPIRES: true. Although some thin-blooded vampires can bear the sun briefly and some vampiric powers allow a few minutes' survival, sunlight fatally burns a Kindred's undead flesh if exposed long enough. Vampires are nocturnal creatures, and most find it extremely difficult to remain awake during the day, even within sheltered areas.

GARLIC OR RUNNING WATER REPELS VAMPIRES: mostly false. Mortals desperate to find any protection from the undead invented these comforting fables. A few vampires still labor under these shackles, but they are rare.

VAMPIRES FLEE FROM CROSSES: generally false. This myth is another comforting pious fabrication from the medieval era. However, some wielders of holy symbols (not just crucifixes) drive vampires back or damage them with the power of their True Faith.

A STAKE THROUGH THE HEART KILLS VAMPIRES: false. However, a wooden stake – or arrow, crossbow bolt, etc. – through the heart paralyzes the monster into a state of torpor until removed.

VAMPIRES HAVE THE STRENGTH OF 10 MEN; THEY COMMAND WOLVES AND BATS; THEY CAN HYPNOTIZE THE LIVING; ETC.: true and false. Vampire Blood grants Kindred supernatural powers called Disciplines, which encompass all these abilities and more. Vampires increase their power as they age, from newly created vampires little more powerful than humans to mighty elders who can rival fiction's Lestat or Dracula. The methuselahs and Antediluvians, who have stalked the night for millennia, often possess literally godlike power.

VAMPIRES ARE MONSTERS – DEMONIC SPIRITS EMBODIED IN CORPSES: false – and true. If anything, the tragedy of vampires outweighs that of demons. Instead of one fall and a clear eternity of evil, vampires feel an inexorable pull toward damnation, often for centuries. Vampires seldom begin as sadistic monsters, unless they began that way as humans. However, overpowering hunger for human blood and an existence dependent on regular feeding drive vampires toward sociopathy and predation. The vampire's psychology changes as their solitary, predatory existence corrodes attitudes learned as a communal omnivore.

Circumstance or need eventually forces even the most reluctant vampire to kill – and the joy and ease of murder turns such force to

inclination, and finally to desire. Realizing their betrayal, vampires cease to trust. Realizing their differences, vampires isolate themselves from the mortal world. Realizing their existence depends on secrecy and control, vampires become secretive and manipulative.

As the years turn to decades and then to centuries, and the vampire kills over and over – or refrains from killing and watches their loved ones die anyway – such feelings ossify. Human life, always brief, becomes cheap, and then valueless compared to immortality. The mortal herd means nothing, only the vampire's house of cruelty, shadows, and lies holds significance. Jaded, unfeeling, paranoid – in a word, monstrous – vampire elders may not in fact be demons, but at that point, who can tell the difference?

If the Hunger complication seems too dangerous in the moment, the player can (and should) opt to re-roll by spending Willpower (p. 122), either to get rid of regular 0's to defuse a messy critical or to turn a failed roll into a success in the case of a bestial failure. Several points of spent Willpower are regained each session (see p. 158), so there is no reason to hoard it in extremis, and most vampires are assumed to exercise their will for this purpose on a nightly basis. Of course, low Willpower increases the risk of frenzy (p. 219), but as the saying goes, "A Beast I am, lest a Beast I become."

Hunger

Part appetite, part lust, and part addiction, Hunger gives voice to the Blood and claws to the Beast. It calls to vampires constantly, whispering and screaming of needs, urges, and desires. Every vampire awakens to Hunger and must kill to silence it. The Kindred pay for their immortality and their powers in Hunger, and the bill is always coming due.

In **Vampire: The Masquerade**, all vampires have a unique trait, Hunger, measured in levels ranging from 0 to 5. A vampire with a Hunger of 0 is sated and satisfied, whereas a vampire with a Hunger of 5 is ravenous and can barely think of anything except their next drink.

Hunger Dice

For each level of Hunger affecting a vampire character, they gain one Hunger die. Hunger dice are ten-sided, just like regular dice, but should be a different color than regular dice, so players can easily spot them in a pool. (We suggest red.) When a player builds a dice pool for a vampire character, they exchange regular dice from that pool for Hunger dice on a one-for-one basis.

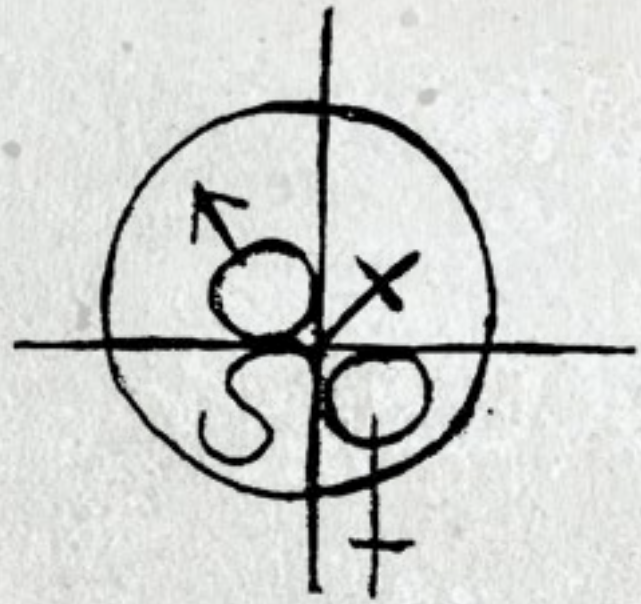
If the dice pool for the roll is lower than the character's Hunger, simply roll a number of Hunger dice equal to the dice pool.

EXAMPLE:

Erica wants to check a crime scene for clues. The Storyteller tells her to build a pool of Intelligence + Investigation. She has 3 in both Traits, so her dice pool is six (Intelligence 3 + Investigation 3). Erica has Hunger 2, so she removes two dice from her pool and adds two Hunger dice to it. Her dice pool is still six dice, but two of the dice in the pool are Hunger dice.

The exception: Characters never include Hunger dice in Checks, Willpower, or Humanity dice pools.

Hunger dice function as regular dice in tests and contests, scoring successes on a 6 or higher. Hunger dice can not be re-rolled by using Willpower, however, as the Hunger makes a mockery of the rational mind's attempt to tame it. In addition, rolling a 0 (10) or 1 on a Hunger die carries additional consequences: messy criticals and bestial failures.



USING THE VAMPIRE DICE: HUNGER DICE

= Failure, bestial failure if the test fails (1)
● = Failure (2-5)
= Success (6-9)
= Success, messy critical if part of a critical win (10)

Hunger dice can never be rerolled using Willpower

EXAMPLES OF ROLLS USING HUNGER DICE:

Mary (dice pool 4, Hunger 2) rolls ● against a Difficulty of 3. With only one success the roll is a bestial failure. Mary can't reroll the Hunger dice and rerolling the two regular dice could never get her to the three successes she needs. Mary prepares to play out her Toreador clan compulsion for the rest of the scene.

Freja (dice pool 7, 3 Hunger) rolls ● ● ● in a brawling test against an opponent's 6 successes. The critical success nets 4 successes but it's still not enough to win the test, so she is facing a bestial failure. Freja uses Willpower to reroll the regular failures, hoping to score the two successes she needs to bring the result to 6 and a (messy) critical win, but alas the dice come up with ● ● - only one more success. Not enough to save her from the bestial failure. Freja narrates how her character jumps her opponent and heedlessly grapples him, intending to snap his head in a sudden rage. She fails to spot his gun and he gets a shot off in her face, causing her to suffer a point of aggravated damage (burnt by muzzle flash), and throwing her to the ground.

Martins character (dice pool 6, Hunger 2) tries to seduce a sceptical mortal (Difficulty 5). He rolls ● ● ●. 5 successes – 4 for the critical success (+) and 1 for the additional success ( ). However, the presence of the turns the critical win into a messy critical! Martin has a hard choice to make. Does he really want to take the mortal home at the price of dealing with the mess of a Masquerade breach or a Stain caused by a pickup gone bad? He can't reroll the Hunger dice with Willpower. However, he can use Willpower to push down his urges and reroll up to 3 regular dice. He does, rerolling the and two of the ●'s - hoping he doesn't get another and perhaps, that he is still successful in his pickup. The rerolled dice come up with ●, and . 2 successes! This makes his whole roll ● ● . 4 successes and no critical, messy or otherwise. The Storyteller asks if he wants to win at a cost (p. 121). He describes how he pushes his predatory nature back, spending a long night carefully seeking mutual consent, baring his human side. Finally the guy follows him home, but Martins character has missed the chance to do anything else for the night. He wins at a cost of time, but at least he has not stained his soul or endangered the Masquerade.

Messy Critical

A critical win in which one or more 10s appears on a Hunger die is a messy critical. The character succeeds as in a regular critical – but like an animal would, not a being capable of foresight or self-control. The Beast scored the critical, perhaps, not you.

EXAMPLE:

Your Hunger has driven you to greater than normal performance – at the cost of control. You killed the bouncer, but you clearly snapped his spine or tore out his throat. You opened the door by pulling it off its hinges. You found the right book and tore the rest of the bookcase down in your exultation. You eluded the guards by biting out the throat of the one who saw you before he could cry out, leaving a very informative corpse in your path.

The Storyteller and the player work together to decide on the level of success and the level of mess: by and large, they scale upward together. The following are results from a good, meaty mess:

- The character gains one or more Stains (p. 239) from their monstrous action.
- The character breaches the Masquerade, as they visibly demonstrate supernatural strength or speed, or leave gaping bite wounds in a body.
- The character loses one dot from an Advantage. For example, you might have totaled your Bugatti (squandering Resources), crippled a Retainer, offended an Ally, or just lost Status in court following your outburst. Although the character still needs to spend time (in a later scene or in the background) to take action to repair the dot, the Storyteller can allow the loss to recover more quickly than other vanished dots.
- If none of the above conditions fit the narrative, such as on stealth or awareness tests, the messy critical turns into a simple mess, and the test fails as the Beast clouds the senses or otherwise makes a quiet solution unattainable

EXAMPLE:

Wanda scores a messy critical when using the Precognition power (see p. 249). As she gains the information she looks for with startling clarity, the vision is cut short by a glimpse of herself indulging her most bestial urges, and she receives one Stain.

You do not roll Hunger dice on a Willpower roll or on a Humanity roll, so you cannot get a messy critical on these rolls.

Bestial Failure

A failed roll (not enough successes to reach the Difficulty or to beat an opposing contestant's number of successes) in which one or more Hunger dice come up a 1 is a bestial failure. Either the character failed because their Beast manifested inopportunely or excessively, or the character's failure angered their Beast into manifesting inopportunely or excessively. The following are good results from a bestial failure:

- The character must act out a Compulsion, as the Blood starts to subtly dictate their actions. (see below)

For players new to the game or troupes that want their characters less prone to acting on urges, choose one of the options below instead:

- The character loses a dot in an Advantage as on a messy critical.
- The character suffers one or more points of Aggravated Health damage. This result works well for bestial failures on resistance rolls, as the character breaks out in bloody sweat from the stress.
- If no-one in the troupe can come up with a good idea, the Hunger increases by one. If this result would take their Hunger above 5, the character immediately rolls to resist hunger frenzy (p. 220) at Difficulty 4.

Remember: if your roll succeeds anyway, you can't get a bestial failure, no matter how many Hunger dice come up 1s.

Compulsions

Compulsions occur on a bestial failure as the Hunger subtly urges a vampire into actions dictated by their Blood, sometimes even instilling traits hailing from their clan's founder. When a character must take a Compulsion, the Storyteller chooses one or randomly determines one by rolling on the table below. (Try to vary the Compulsions rather than leaning on the clan Compulsion each time, unless you enjoy stereotype overgrowth.) Once chosen, the player decides how best to act it out. Reward players who go above and beyond to play into their Compulsion by allowing them to restore a Willpower point. Note that, unlike frenzy, players cannot spend Willpower to ignore the effects of a Compulsion. These insidious urges compel behavior that feels utterly natural; the vampire may never realize they were influenced.

Sample Compulsions

These basic Compulsions form the core of the vampire personality. Storytellers should feel free to create custom Compulsions based on their own notions of vampiric dysfunction or on the specific failure modes of their player character base.

RANDOM COMPULSIONS

1-3: Hunger
4-5: Dominance
6-7: Harm
8-9: Paranoia
0: Clan Compulsion*
* Re-roll for Caitiff or thin-blood

Hunger

The archetypal Compulsion: with Hunger, the vampire's thoughts inexorably stray toward the rush of sinking their fangs in prey and hot blood washing over the tongue.

The vampire will do anything to slake their Hunger, whether that means violence, subterfuge, or outright begging. They perform any action not immediately conducive to feeding at a two-dice penalty to their pools. This Compulsion ends when the vampire slakes at least 1 Hunger level.

EXAMPLES:

IN A SOCIAL SETTING: Instead of questioning the mortal witness, the vampire moves the situation toward a seduction.

IN A VIOLENT SETTING: The vampire discards their weapon, throwing themselves headfirst into a grapple, determined to feed.

IN A SOLITARY SETTING: The vampire decides they need a break and just happens to end up at a sweaty nightclub.

Dominance

The Blood urges its host to come out on top, to own, and to establish dominance. This Compulsion drives the vampire not only to excel but to revel in it, taunting the weak and challenging the strong.

The vampire makes their next interaction into a competition, using all means at their disposal to end up victorious and to rub the nose of the loser in their defeat. The vampire cannot use teamwork and performs any action that

avoids establishing dominance or challenging authority at a two-dice penalty to their pools. This Compulsion ends when the vampire has "won" and gloated over it.

EXAMPLES:

IN A SOCIAL SETTING: The vampire turns a civil conversation into a one-upmanship exercise, alienating the person whose trust they sought to gain.

IN A VIOLENT SETTING: The vampire pauses to toy with a mortal opponent, basking in their superiority, instead of focusing on the objective.

IN A SOLITARY SETTING: The vampire becomes obsessed with accomplishing their objective in a novel way, proving their superiority to themselves and the world.

Harm

Things turn ugly: the Hunger compels the vampire to hurt and destroy – not to feed or to win, but for the sole sake of causing harm, reveling in the pain of others. This Compulsion often, but not always, means physical harm. It can also involve subtler types of damage such as social or emotional.

The vampire performs all actions not immediately resulting in someone or something getting harmed at a two-dice penalty to their pool. This Compulsion ends when the vampire incapacitates, destroys, or drives away a target. If the vampire turns on an object, it must hold serious value to someone the vampire ordinarily values, such as themselves.

EXAMPLES:

IN A SOCIAL SETTING: A smooth introduction goes sour as the vampire starts to harass and psychologically torture the subject.

IN A VIOLENT SETTING: Instead of leaving an incapacitated adversary, the vampire gleefully starts tearing into the unconscious opponent.

IN A SOLITARY SETTING: Annoyed at a minor inconvenience, the vampire takes a baseball bat to their expensive computer rig.

Paranoia

Hunter and hunted, a vampire always needs to keep their eyes and ears peeled for trouble. With this Compulsion, that need flares in to fullblown paranoia as the Hunger reminds the Blood of its vulnerability.

The vampire tries to disengage from any perceived threat, suspecting anyone and anything. Any action not taken toward that immediate end incurs a two-dice penalty. The Compulsion ends when the vampire has spent roughly an hour in a safe spot: e.g., a rooftop with good visibility, their haven, or buried deep underground.

EXAMPLES:

IN A SOCIAL SETTING: The vampire treats everyone with suspicion, trying to get out of any and all engagements.

IN A VIOLENT SETTING: The vampire tries to end or escape the danger by any means, whether running or begging for their unlife.

IN A SOLITARY SETTING: The vampire sees threats where none exist, lashing out and fleeing, fixating on random occult symbols or weird coincidences.

Clan Compulsions

The specific forms of the Blood flowing down from the Antediluvians warp their inheritors to suit a millennia-old pattern. Whether this Compulsion represents inherited defects, necessary release valves, or part of some ancient Working, it can prove inconvenient in the moment.

Brujah: *Rebellion*

The vampire takes a stand against whatever or whomever they see as the status quo in the situation, whether that's their leader, a viewpoint expressed by a potential vessel, or just the task they were supposed to do at the moment.

Until they've gone against their orders or expectations, perceived or real, the vampire receives a two-dice penalty to all rolls. This Compulsion ends once they've managed to either make someone change their minds (by force if necessary) or done the opposite of what was expected of them.

Gangrel: *Feral Impulses*

Returning to an animalistic state, the vampire regresses to a point where speech is hard, clothes are uncomfortable, and arguments are best settled with teeth and claws.

For one scene, the vampire gains a three-dice penalty to all rolls involving Manipulation and Intelligence. They can only speak in one-word sentences during this time.

Malkavian: *Delusion*

Their extrasensory gifts running wild, the vampire experiences what might be truths or portents, but what others call figments of imagination, dredged up by Hunger.

While still functional, the vampire's mind and perceptions are skewed. They receive a two-dice penalty to rolls involving Dexterity, Manipulation, Composure, and Wits as well as on rolls to resist terror frenzy, for one scene.

Nosferatu: *Cryptophilia*

The need to know permeates the vampire. They become consumed with a hunger for secrets, to know that which few or no one knows, almost as strong as that for blood. They also refuse to share secrets with others, except in strict trade for greater ones.

All actions not spent working toward learning a secret, no matter how big or small, receive a two-dice penalty. The Compulsion ends when the vampire learns a secret big enough to be considered useful. Sharing this secret is optional.

Toreador: *Obsession*

Enraptured by beauty, the vampire becomes temporarily obsessed with a singular gorgeous thing, able to think of nothing else.

Pick one feature, such as a person, a song, an artwork, blood spatter, or even a sunrise. Enraptured, the vampire can hardly take their attention from it, and if spoken to, they only talk about that subject. Any other actions receive a two-dice penalty. This Compulsion lasts until they can no longer perceive the beloved object, or the scene ends.

Tremere: *Perfectionism*

Nothing but the best satisfies the vampire. Anything less than exceptional performance instills a profound sense of failure, and they often repeat tasks obsessively to get them "just right."

Until the vampire scores a critical win on a Skill roll or the scene ends, the vampire labors under a two-dice penalty to all dice pools. Reduce the penalty to one die for a repeated action, and remove it entirely on a second repeat.

Ventrue: *Arrogance*

The need to rule rears its head in the vampire. They stop at nothing to assume command of a situation.

Someone must obey an order from the vampire. Any action not directly associated with leadership receives a two-dice penalty. This Compulsion lasts until an order has been obeyed, though the order must not be supernaturally enforced, such as through Dominate.

Rousing the Blood

Every time a vampire rises each sunset, calls upon vampiric powers, or stirs their Blood some other way, they risk rousing their Hunger. When a vampire surges Blood into their Attributes, takes on the Blush of Life, or mends their damaged body (pp. 218-219), the rules call for a *Rouse Check*. Activating most Discipline powers also comes with the price of at least one Rouse Check (see Disciplines, pp. 243-287).

To make a Rouse Check, the player rolls a single die. As always, a result of 6 or higher succeeds. On a success, the vampire's Hunger remains unchanged. On a failure, the vampire gains 1 more point of Hunger, and thus gains one more Hunger die.

Any Hunger gained is added *after* the desired effect resolves, so it is perfectly fine to make the Rouse Check at the same time or even after any other dice test involved, as long as the Rouse die is clearly distinguishable and won't be mistaken for part of the pool.

EXAMPLE:

Erica employs the Blush of Life. She then rolls a Rouse Check. Her result is 4: a failure. She still takes on the Blush of Life for the duration of the night, but her Hunger increases by 1.

Some conditions, such as increased Blood Potency, allow the player to roll two dice on some Rouse Checks and pick the highest.One success (6+) on either die prevents Hunger from increasing. (This is equivalent to re-rolling the Check.)

At Hunger 5, the vampire's body is too starved of blood to provide increased supernatural power. A vampire can never intentionally Rouse the Blood while at Hunger 5. If some outside factor forces a Rouse Check on the vampire, the player must make an immediate hunger frenzy test at Difficulty 4 (see p. 220). As always, failing a Rouse Check at Hunger 5 still activates the effect that caused the check, if any.

Slaking Hunger

Drinking blood reduces a vampire's Hunger level by a fixed amount. Only draining a human of blood, thereby killing them, can reduce Hunger to 0.

Younger vampires can reduce Hunger to 1 without killing a human victim. As a vampire's Blood Potency increases, so does their resting Hunger level. Above BloodPotency 7, for example, vampires cannot reduce their Hunger below 3 without killing a human victim.

It takes time to drink blood and care to do it properly. The bite of a vampire can seem downright euphoric to the victim; vampire fangs produce a supernatural intoxicating effect while opening up a blood vessel. Assuming the vampire takes the time to hit a vein or artery correctly and licks the wound closed afterward, the victim may only remember the encounter as a drug trip, an interlude of weird rough sex, or just a delirious fog

SOURCE	HUNGER SLAKED	TIME	NOTES
Multiple small animals (three to four cats, a dozen or more rats)	1	One scene	Slakes no Hunger for vampires above Blood Potency 2
Medium-sized animal (raccoon, dog, coyote)	1	One turn	Animal Resonance; No Dyscrasia
Large animal (horse)	2	One scene	
Blood bag	1	One turn	Slakes no Hunger for vampires above Blood Potency 2 No Resonance or Dyscrasia
Sip from human	1	Three turns	Includes licking wound closed
Maximum non-harmful drink from human	2	One scene	
Harmful drink from human that risks death unless treated	1-4	One turn per Hunger slaked	Aggravated damage equals Hunger slaked; Human rolls Strength + Stamina against a Difficulty equal to Hunger slaked to survive blood loss
Human drained and killed	5	5 turns	Only way to reach Hunger 0 (zero)

of drunken intimacy. Even a closed wound and happy hallucination for the victim might still leave behind an air embolism, to say nothing of long-term anemia.

As a general rule, attempting to preserve the victim's life, health, or blissed-out screen memory (all of which of course also preserve the Masquerade) takes longer than simply ripping open an artery and slurping down the red stuff. On the other hand, a victim who fights back slows things down and endangers the Masquerade. A vampire can drain and kill a helpless or otherwise unresisting human in roughly five turns.

Feeding from Animals

With very few exceptions, mostly animals larger than human mass, feeding from an animal kills it. A very careful vampire who takes a whole scene to feed could perhaps slake one point of Hunger without killing a large dog, if for some reason they valued the dog's life. Even then, the dog would likely wind up crippled or badly injured.

Large animals can hold a great deal of blood – a cow contains almost 40 liters of blood and a horse more than 50, compared to five in most humans – but animal blood simply doesn't nourish vampires' true appetites. Animal blood never harbors Dyscrasias, for example (p. 227), and even Gangrel find drinking exclusively animal blood more bland than ecstatic. For vampires above Blood Potency 2, no amount of animal blood can slake even a single point of Hunger (p. 216).

Feeding from Bagged Blood

What about just buying and feeding from medical blood bags? Unfortunately for the vampire community, most medical supply blood is fractionated: centrifuged to separate the plasma from the blood cells and then stored as plasma, packed red blood cells, or other blood products. Even whole blood comes stored with anticoagulant preservatives such as CPDA-1. All of these alterations makes bagged blood unpleasant (at best) to drink, and almost useless to Kindred.

Without the Iron Gullet Merit (p. 182), vampires gain no sustenance from processed blood. *Unprocessed* bagged blood, as with animal blood, cannot slake any Hunger for drinkers with Blood Potency above 2.

Bagged blood, like all blood more than about 15 minutes out of a body, has no Resonances or other empowering effects to the drinker, although Tremere and thin-blood alchemists can some-

times still use bagged blood and blood products in their Rituals and Formulae. The act of Blood Sorcery Ritual or distillation awakens its latent Resonance, but consumes it in the same instant.

Feeding from Other Vampires

A vampire who feeds on another vampire slakes 1 point of their Hunger for each point of increased Hunger they inflict on the donor, willing or unwilling. Feeding from a vampire of at least two levels of Blood Potency higher than the drinker slakes 2 points of Hunger for each point of Hunger gained by the donor. Conversely, feeding from a vampire of at least two levels of Blood Potency less than the drinker slakes only 1 point of Hunger for each 2 points of Hunger inflicted on the donor.

Feeding directly from another vampire also risks a Blood Bond (p. 233).

Bite Attacks

Vampires can use their fangs as weapons during a Brawl-based attack. To attempt a bite attack, the player must declare their intention to bite before rolling their dice and remove two dice from their pool – bite attacks are easier to defend against and harder to target on exposed flesh.

Regardless of the number of successes rolled, vampire fangs do two points of damage with a win on the Brawl roll. Fangs deal Aggravated Health damage to mortals and vampires.

On turns following a successful bite attack, the vampire can feed from the target. At this point, the vampire suffers no penalty to their Brawl pool – a successful bite is hard to dislodge. Feeding does one point of Aggravated Health damage to mortals per turn as well as slake 1 Hunger for the feeder. Against a vampire target, a feeding attack increases the target's Hunger by 1 per turn, instead of dealing additional damage. (See Feeding from Other Vampires, above.) ■

The Blood is a debt that grows larger by the night. You do not want to be around when the bill comes due.

GENERATION	MINIMUM BLOOD POTENCY	MAXIMUM BLOOD POTENCY
4th	5	10
5th	4	9
6th	3	8
7th	3	7
8th	2	6
9th	2	5
10th-11th	1	4
12th-13th	1	3
14th-16th	0	0

THE BLOOD

The Blood seethes at the core of every vampire. Not quite sentient, but far from mindless, it prods and cajoles its host into actions unthinkable to mortals. It can yield immense power, but sooner or later, someone always pays a price.

Generation

All vampires gain their unholy prowess from the Blood, but not all Blood is equal. The closer a vampire is to their mythic progenitor Caine, the greater the potential of their vitae. Vampires talk of *generation*, with Caine (and perhaps Lilith) as the mythic progenitor of the First Generation. Following a vampire's Embrace, they rise from death one generation higher – one generation weaker – than their sire. Thus the Antediluvians, childer of childer of Caine, comprise the Third Generation, their childer becoming the Fourth Generation. A vampire's Embrace sets their generation. Only through the forbidden act of *diablerie*, by consuming the Blood and very spirit of another vampire, can it be changed.

A vampire's generation does not necessarily indicate their age. An elder might have sired a vampire of the 10th Generation when Columbus sailed; a methuselah could have begotten a vampire of the Sixth Generation last year.

Caine and the Second Generation: Myths

The first vampires remain almost entirely the province of legend and theological speculation. Perhaps most vampires who believe in this myth identify Caine with the Cain of the Bible, but anything might have happened under the cover of the first nights.

Third Generation: Antediluvians

The founders of the 13 vampire clans, the Antediluvians, somehow brought about the biblical flood – or were its target. Their bloodlines continue to shape the Kindred to this night, even as the plots they set into motion millennia ago still drive the endless Jyhad of vampire-kind. For the last thousand years, many Kindred assumed the Antediluvians were asleep; only a few believed they continued their struggle in subterfuge, conspiracy, and guile deep behind the scenes even of secret history. The Camarilla insisted the Antediluvians were long-dead, or even mythical, until the Sabbat forced their hand.

The Sabbat at least seeks to end the Jyhad. The Sword of Caine declared war on the Antediluvians in the name of the first vampire, unleashing Gehenna and slowly rousing the Third Generation from their torpid retreat in primordial labyrinths and passage-tombs. The Antediluvians now call their descendants to their defense, sounding a clamor in the Blood that younger vampires term the Beckoning.

Fourth and Fifth Generations: Methuselahs

Nearly as powerful as the Antediluvians, the methuselahs withdrew from the Jyhad in its earliest millennia – their power made them favored tools and chosen targets. Many methuselahs remain asleep beneath older human cities, tended by devoted cults or forgotten entirely. Others become Inconnu, withdrawing completely from vampire society and from the Jyhad.

Sixth through Ninth Generations: Elders

Mostly Embraced before the modern age, vampires of these generations long-held the ruling places in both the Camarilla and the Anarch Movement, continuing squabbles old when the Renaissance began. The Beckoning calls them from their towers and nests, toward the front lines of the Gehenna War. A few elders hold out or claim not to hear the call of their Blood, gripping their cities ever-tighter. Ironically, after centuries of condescension, the Ninth Generation finds itself accounted true elders: they, too, hear the Beckoning.

10th and 11th Generations: Ancillae

Typically, older ancillae eventually convince the hierarchy to include them, or they anger the hierarchy into eliminating them. Between this winnowing effect and the boom in global population, most vampires of these generations can mark less than 250 years of age. Long-excluded from elder status, thus acting as intermediaries between court and street, ancillae have nevertheless cut their teeth (so to speak) in the World of Darkness.

The lowest-generation player characters in this game book come from the ranks of the ancillae.

12th and 13th Generations: Neonates

Even more than the generations just below them, the 12th and 13th Generations dwindled slowly for centuries before exploding in modern nights. Most members of these generations have relatively little experience of the curse of vampirism, but slightly more understanding of technological and social change. Stodgy Camarilla elders blame the renewed Anarch Revolt on the influx of these generation.

14th through 16th Generations: Thin-bloods

Many Kindred scholars look with fear on the flood of these generations, so far from Caine that both curse and gifts weaken into nothingness. *The Book of Nod* speaks of the "Time of Thin Blood" as precursor to Gehenna, the rising of the Antediluvians, and the end of vampire-kind.

Blood Potency

Even within a generation, the potency of the Blood varies. As the years pass by, the Blood thickens and matures within the limits of a vampire's generation. Being Embraced by a powerful sire or braving the foul *amaranth* provide shortcuts to this power. But with increased potency comes also a price – you require more blood to sustain you, and the curse of your lineage also becomes more evident.

Blood Potency increases as a vampire ages. As a general rule, a vampire gains a dot of Blood Potency every 100 years while active, but especially intense experiences or exposure to extremely potent Blood can speed the process. A vampire in torpor loses Blood Potency at the rate of one level per 50 years. The Blood Potency of a vampire can never fall below the minimum for their generation, nor be increased above the maximum. Thin-bloods can never increase their Blood Potency unless they diablerize their way to 13th Generation or above.

Blood Potency yields the following effects at each level. For a complete breakdown of the effects of Blood Potency, see the table on p. 216. The bullet points below each level here describe only the effects that change along with your character's Blood Potency.

Blood Potency 0 (zero): Thin-blood

You are a thin-blood, scorned and dismissed by true vampires.

- You take damage like mortals. When Mending Damage (p. 218) you can remove one point of Superficial damage per Rouse Check. Your Bane Severity is 0 since you lack a clan, and thus also lack a clan bane.
- You cannot create Blood Bonds (p. 233), perform the Embrace with certainty, or create ghouls (p. 234).
- Only supernatural means can drive you to frenzy (p. 219).
- You take only one point of Superficial damage per turn in direct sunlight.

For more details on the restrictions on and abilities of thin-bloods, see p. 109.

BLOOD POTENCY	BLOOD SURGE	DAMAGE MENDED (PER ROUSE CHECK)	DISCIPLINE POWER BONUS	DISCIPLINE ROUSE CHECK RE-ROLL	BANE SEVERITY	FEEDING PENALTY
0	None	1 point of Superficial damage	None	None	0	No effect
1	Add 1 die	1 point of Superficial damage	None	Level 1	1	No effect
2	Add 1 die	2 point of Superficial damage	Add 1 die	Level 1	1	Animal and bagged blood slakes half Hunger
3	Add 2 dice	2 point of Superficial damage	Add 1 die	Level 2 and below	2	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
4	Add 2 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 2 dice	Level 2 and below	2	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 1 less Hunger per human
5	Add 3 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 2 dice	Level 3 and below	3	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 1 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 2
6	Add 3 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 3 dice	Level 3 and below	3	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
7	Add 4 dice	3 point of Superficial damage	Add 3 dice	Level 4 and below	4	Slake 2 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 2
8	Add 4 dice	4 point of Superficial damage	Add 4 dice	Level 4 and below	4	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger
9	Add 5 dice	4 point of Superficial damage	Add 4 dice	Level 5 and below	5	Slake 2 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 3
10	Add 5 dice	5 point of Superficial damage	Add 5 dice	Level 5 and below	5	Animal and bagged blood slakes no Hunger Slake 3 less Hunger per human Must drain and kill a human to reduce Hunger below 3

Blood Potency 1

You are a true vampire, though only barely so according to some elders. Still, your vampiric Blood can accomplish some spectacular things when roused.

- Add one Attribute die to your dice pool when performing a Blood Surge (p. 218).
- When Mending Damage, you can remove 1 point of Superficial damage per Rouse Check.
- Roll two dice and pick the highest when rolling a Rouse Check for level 1 discipline powers. (Or re-roll the Rouse Check)
- You have a Bane Severity of 1.

Blood Potency 2

A cut above lesser licks, your Blood sustains your vampiric existence better than theirs. However, blood not fresh from a human vessel starts to lose its power, as it has long since lost its savor.

- When Mending Damage, you can remove two points of Superficial damage per Rouse Check.
- Add one die to your dice pools when using or resisting discipline powers.
- You must drink twice as much animal or bagged blood to slake 1 Hunger level.

Blood Potency 3

For more conservative elder vampires, your Blood has thickened enough to render you no mere lick, but a true Cainite, worthy of consideration and notice. However, even as your Blood bestows great gifts, it nourishes your clan weakness.

- Add two Attribute dice to your dice pool when performing a Blood Surge.
- Roll two dice and pick the highest when rolling a Rouse Check for discipline powers of level 2 and below.
- Animal and bagged blood no longer slake any of your Hunger.
- You have a Bane Severity of 2.

Blood Potency 4

So close, and still so far, you occupy an unenviable position, both exercising lordship over the low and remaining a runt to the high. You require ever-more human gore to slake your Hunger, and you feel your Humanity slipping from your red-stained fingers.

- When Mending Damage, you can remove three points of Superficial damage per Rouse Check.
- Add two dice to your dice pools when using or resisting discipline powers.
- When you feed from humans, slake 1 less Hunger per human.

Blood Potency 5

On the cusp of elderhood, you remain but one tempting step from what many would consider godhood.

- Add three Attribute dice to your dice pool when performing a Blood Surge.
- Roll two dice and pick the highest when rolling a Rouse Check for discipline powers of level 3 and below.
- Only by draining and killing a mortal can you drive your Hunger below 2.
- You have a Bane Severity of 3.

Blood Potency 6 and Greater

As the Beckoning strips the world of its elders, these levels of Blood Potency become increasingly rare. The reclusive, strained remaining ones surround themselves with myth and legend, as well as more puissant guardians. With Blood more potent than it is human, these vampires turn quite alien, both in mind and body. Vampires at this level are not intended as player characters, and they are included in the Blood Potency table for Storyteller purposes only.

Gifts of the Blood

A vampire gains more than unlife from the blood they consume. Vampiric Blood grants a number of abilities, all of which cost one or more Rouse Checks. A vampire must be cautious when employing these gifts, lest they be consumed by their Hunger.

Remember, failing a Rouse Check does not mean that the ability fails, only that the vampire's Hunger increases by 1.

Blush of Life

Unless intentionally brought to a semblance of life, the body of a vampire is functionally dead. Undeath signifies its presence in pale or ashy skin, cold flesh, and lack of breath (except to speak) or a heartbeat. By sending their Blood through the dead capillaries of their skin and into their shriveled heart, a vampire can appear completely human for a night, including but not limited to a heartbeat, body temperature, and breath. The vampire can even pass a cursory medical examination, though they still fail more intrusive screenings for minute tells such as the absence of intestinal flora.

Non thin-blooded vampires must use *Blush of Life* to use touch screens – such as those on smart phones – unaided, which don't work without the skin moisture and conductivity of the living.

Blush of Life generally allows a vampire to consume food and drink without vomiting for up to an hour. Without it, vampires must make an immediate Composure + Stamina test (Difficulty 3) to be able to get outside or to a bathroom in time.

Depending on their Humanity, vampires can fake or sometimes even enjoy sexual intercourse while Blush of Life is active (see p. 236.)

At Humanity 9 or higher, vampires appear ill or "heroin chic" rather than dead; their heartbeat, pulse, and breath seem thready but detectable. They do not need to use Blush of Life for other than cosmetic purposes.

Bringing on the Blush of Life requires a Rouse Check.

Blood Surge

Any vampire can call upon their Blood to temporarily augment their Attributes, whether Physical, Social, or Mental. When the character wills a *Blood Surge*, the player can add a number of dice to a dice pool incorporating an Attribute. The number of dice a Blood Surge adds depends on the character's Blood Potency; characters can only use Blood Surge once per roll.

A Blood Surge requires a Rouse Check.

Blood Surge applies only to a single roll of the dice. (Dice added in a Blood Surge remain throughout any Willpower re-rolls.) Characters cannot use a Blood Surge for Willpower or Humanity rolls, for rolls that apply to more than one scene, in One-Roll Combat (p. 296), or whenever else the Storyteller disallows them. Do not apply automatic wins (p. 120) or "Take Half" to rolls augmented by a Blood Surge.

Vampiric Mending

Being dead, vampires do not heal naturally. Their unliving frames can still knit themselves together, given enough effort.

MENDING SUPERFICIAL HEALTH DAMAGE Depending on their Blood Potency, a vampire can mend one or more points of Superficial Health damage with a single Rouse Check. Vampires can make one Rouse Check per turn to mend Superficial Health damage.

MENDING AGGRAVATED HEALTH DAMAGE To mend Aggravated Damage, a vampire must wait until the next nightfall and make three

Rouse Checks, in addition to the regular Rouse Check made when rising.

This process removes one point of Aggravated damage as well as one Crippling Injury or similar impairment. A vampire can only mend one point of Aggravated damage per night.

As with awakening, if these Rouse Checks raise the vampire's Hunger above Hunger 5, they fall into torpor rather than testing for hunger frenzy.

Disciplines

The raw power of the Blood fuels all but the most basic Discipline powers, many of which require multiple Rouse Checks. Every turn, a vampire can activate one Discipline power, regardless of that power's duration.

There is no limit to the number of Discipline powers a vampire can have active simultaneously.

At higher levels of Blood Potency, the player rolls two dice for each Rouse Check to activate some Discipline powers, keeping the higher die result. As noted in the table (p. 216), the greater the vampire's Blood Potency, the higher the levels of power they can activate this way.

In a single turn, a vampire could activate one power of a discipline, take on the Blush of Life, increase an Attribute pool with a Blood Surge, *and* mend Superficial damage. This process would, however, require at least three Rouse Checks in addition to the cost of the discipline power.

Prices of the Blood

Despite all of the gifts bestowed by their condition, the Blood extracts a heavy toll. A number of terrible curses afflict a vampire, each one an enemy waiting just beneath the skin.

Awakening

Every night a vampire rises from day-sleep they must make a Rouse Check. If failing this Rouse Check would raise the vampire's Hunger above 5, a failure sends the vampire into torpor instead of forcing a test for hunger frenzy.

During the day, vampire Blood becomes quiescent, even gelid. Awakening during the day requires a Humanity roll at a Difficulty depending on the level of crisis. A fire or other life-threatening situation is Difficulty 3; an urgent message or decision is Difficulty 4; an inconvenience to deal with is Difficulty 5 or higher.

Once awakened from day-sleep, a vampire can only act for a single scene. At the end of that period, to remain awake longer, they must make a Humanity roll at Difficulty 3; a win permits an additional scene. A critical win lets them stay awake for as long as needed. If a Kindred acts during daylight hours, the maximum dice pool they can roll equals their Humanity rating.

Frenzy

Frenzy waits for every vampire: a constant threat to their fragile peace. Outside circumstances usually provoke a frenzy, snapping the thin leash of the snarling Beast within. The ultimate expression of the basest drives of the Blood, a frenzy looses the Beast without thought or remorse: the predator in full abandon.

A vampire in frenzy loses all capacity for rational thought, driven solely by rage, starvation, or panic. They do whatever it takes to rip their provocation to pieces, slake their Hunger, or escape the perceived threat, usually violently and with plenty of collateral damage. Unlike many other impulses of the Blood, a frenzy is never subtle.

To resist frenzy, the vampire rolls Willpower against a Difficulty set by the Storyteller based on the level of provocation. Vampires add dice equal to one-third of their Humanity (rounded down) to their Willpower pool when resisting frenzy.

A vampire resists frenzy on a normal win but must spend a turn to suppress the impulse. On a critical win, they resist the frenzy without losing a turn.

RIDING THE WAVE A vampire can also choose to *Ride the Wave*, intentionally succumbing to the frenzy without making a test. This act follows the usual frenzy rules, though the Storyteller should let the player play out the frenzy themselves, such as choosing who they feed on first, rather than having the Story-

teller take complete control of the character.

If not Riding the Wave, a vampire in frenzy becomes the property of the Storyteller for the duration.

EFFECTS OF FRENZY While in frenzy, vampires remain immune to any Health-based penalties short of mutilation. They can only use physical Disciplines (such as Celerity, Fortitude, and Potence), but they resist mental disciplines (e.g., Dominate, Presence) with three extra dice added to their resistance pools. (If the Discipline has no resistance pool, the user adds +2 to their Difficulty.)

The player can spend a Willpower point to assume control of their character for a single turn while in frenzy, but may not use Willpower to re-roll dice.

The frenzied vampire cannot be provoked into frenzy by another stimulus, nor can they gain Compulsions. They try to achieve their goal at any cost (see Types of Frenzy, below), and their frenzy remains until they do so or until the scene ends.

TYPES OF FRENZY Different stimuli provoke different types of frenzy, roughly classified in three categories: fury, hunger, and terror. Each type of frenzy expresses itself in a different way, albeit through the actions of a maniacal Beast.

FURY FRENZY Provocation causes *fury frenzy*; insults, humiliation, or aggression risk unleashing bestial violence. A vampire in fury frenzy stops at nothing to tear the cause of the provocation to pieces, often together with anyone nearby: friend or foe. After destroying the subject of their ire, the vampire can make a Willpower test at Difficulty 3 (or 5 if other enemies remain standing). Success ends the frenzy, while failing drives them deeper into the rage; they keep slaying anyone in the vicinity unless subdued.

Sample fury frenzy triggers:

PROVOCATION	DIFFICULTY
Friend killed	2
Lover or Touchstone hurt	3
Lover or Touchstone killed	4
Physical provocation or harassment	2
Insulted by inferior	2
Public humiliation	2

HUNGER FRENZY Temptation causes *hunger frenzy*; the Beast always craves more blood. Every time a vampire fails a Rouse Check while at Hunger 5, they must make a hunger frenzy test.

Depending on the chronicle, the Storyteller can enforce hunger frenzy tests more or less strictly, but they should always remain a possibility. During a hunger frenzy, the vampire seeks fresh human blood from the closest source. (If the closest source is their Touchstone, one hopes the player still has some Willpower to spend to take control of the vampire and send them after a different target.) The hunger frenzy ends when the vampire reaches Hunger 1 or below.

Sample hunger frenzy triggers:

PROVOCATION	DIFFICULTY
Sight of open wound or overpowering smell of blood while at Hunger 4 or higher	2
Taste of blood while at Hunger 4 or higher	3
Fail Rouse Check while at Hunger 5	4

TERROR FRENZY Danger causes *terror frenzy;* the Beast must preserve itself against all threats. Also known as *Rötschreck*, a terror frenzy manifests when a threat like sunlight or open flames confront the vampire. Grave damage to the body of the vampire can also elicit this response. While in terror frenzy, the vampire flees from the source of danger, without regard to anyone or anything in their way. The terror frenzy ends when the vampire can no longer perceive any danger or when the scene ends.

Sample terror frenzy triggers:

PROVOCATION	DIFFICULTY
Bonfire	2
Inside a burning building	3
Being burned	2
Obscured sunlight (through window, etc.)	3
Fully exposed to direct sunlight	4

Dangers to the Blood

Bullets merely bruise Kindred; swords crease their flesh. Even should they contract a disease from infected human blood, they pass it on to the kine they feed upon, while the germs die in their own system. However, a few means yet remain that inflict genuine harm upon a vampire.

Sunlight

Sunlight burns the undead, incinerating their unholy Blood and flesh under the eye of heaven. A vampire exposed to direct sunlight suffers Aggravated Health damage at the rate of their Bane Severity in points per turn.

EXAMPLE:

Klaus has a Bane Severity of 2. Direct sunlight therefore deals 2 points of Aggravated damage to Klaus per turn.

Obscured sunlight, as through curtains or on a heavily overcast day, or protective clothing such as a heavy coat, gloves, mask, wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and boots, reduces the rate of damage to every other turn or less.

THIN-BLOODS AND SUNLIGHT

Thin-bloods take only one point of Superficial damage per turn in direct sunlight. Thin-bloods can wear high-SPF sunscreen and swaddle themselves in less clothing (floppy hat, long sleeves) than full Kindred must in order to reduce their rate of damage to every other turn.

Fire

Unless used as a weapon (such as in the case of a burning torch, incendiary rounds, or a flamethrower), fire deals Aggravated Health damage to a vampire based on the amount of their body exposed, as dictated by the Storyteller. Having one's hand shoved into an open flame might deal one point of damage, while being engulfed in a roaring inferno would deal three or more per turn. Although vampires burn no faster than mortals, fire remains a very real and omnipresent threat to the undead.

Extreme Cold

Though vampires cannot die from cold, they can suffer the effects of frostbite and even become entirely frozen in severe temperatures. Cold presents a special danger to vampires, because they have no bodily warmth save for a few minutes immediately following a feeding, and thus cannot easily detect dangerous drops in temperature.

After an hour of extreme cold (-30°C or below), vampires must roll Stamina + Resolve (Difficulty 2) to keep moving. They test again each hour, increasing the Difficulty by 1 for each roll. On a failure, they stop moving and can only exercise mental disciplines. An hour after that, their flesh freezes solid and they enter torpor.

Water conducts heat more efficiently than air; vampires in icy water test every half hour. A frozen vampire sinks, as they have no air in their lungs to provide buoyancy.

Decapitation

Successfully decapitating a vampire destroys them instantly. Beheading a vampire in close combat requires a called shot with a -2 penalty (see p. 302) using an edged beheading weapon (axe, scimitar, broadsword, etc.) that causes 10 or more Health damage of either type (before halving, in the case of Superficial damage).

Stakes

To stake a vampire through the heart, a hunter needs to either hammer the stake into the vampire while they lie sleeping or strike them through the heart during combat. For a combat staking, the hunter must make a called shot at a -2 penalty and inflict 5 points or more of damage of either type (before halving). This damage can stem from a ranged weapons test using a grenade launcher or a crossbow firing sharpened wooden bolts (or some similar stake-firing weapon), or it can stem from close combat with a Strength + Melee attack, using the stake as weapon. A stake always has a damage modifier of +0, regardless of how it is applied.

Being staked through the heart with a wooden stake paralyzes a vampire, though it initially remains conscious. By spending a point of Willpower, the vampire can per-

TRUE FAITH

Many, perhaps most, mortals believe in a higher being or a greater reality, but only a few possess the Trait of True Faith. True Faith might reveal itself in evangelical zeal and fanaticism, calm conviction and profound sobriety, selfless love and warm generosity, or only appear in a true crisis. It does not seem to manifest more or less often among clergy than amongst lay mortals; the Order of St. Leopold attempts to recruit for it, but even they find it hard to predict or determine.

Western vampire legends describe the Damned recoiling from crucifixes, but True Faith manifests in all religions. A devout Jew wielding a Star of David, a pious Muslim holding up the Holy Qur'an, a faithful Hindu with an Aum symbol on their t-shirt: all might repel vampires by True Faith. Even in the hands of a bishop a cross might be powerless if the holder does not possess this burning ardor.

The True Faith Trait appears in a rating from 1 to 5, like most Traits. It cannot be bought with experience points, although horrifying experience may cause it to rise or erode. Each level of True Faith offers more protection against Kindred, as noted below. The ways of faith pose mysteries to mortals and to vampires; only the Storyteller knows precisely what happens in their game.

• The character can attempt to ward off vampires by brandishing a holy symbol or uttering prayers. They roll Resolve + True Faith in a contest against the vampire's Willpower pool. If the vampire wins, it can advance unhindered. Each success by the faithful mortal forces the vampire to back up a step and avert their eyes; if the faithful touches the vampire with their symbol this scene, the vampire also takes one point of Aggravated damage per success, as the symbol sears their flesh. A critical success forces the vampire to flee and triggers a test for terror frenzy against a Difficulty equal to the character's True Faith.

•• A mortal with a True Faith rating of 2 or more may resist Dominate and similar vampiric mind-control powers by spending Willpower (1 point protects for a number of turns equal to their True Faith rating).

••• At this level or more, a faithful person can sense the presence of a vampire. The mechanics, if any, depend on the Storyteller and on the mortal; a Nyanza witch-smeller or Bulgarian sabotnik might have uncanny Awareness, while a pious housewife on the way home from a mosque responds to her keen subconscious Insight. The ability works by dramatic necessity and doesn't provide "vampire radar" – the mortal merely knows something unclean and evil lurks nearby.

•••• The mortal cannot be turned into a ghoul and never succumbs to any mind-altering disciplines such as Dominate, Presence, or Obfuscate.

••••• By brandishing a holy symbol or praying loudly, the mortal forces a vampire to make a Remorse test. Even if they win, the vampire collapses in helpless self-loathing and disgust, unable to act in anything but their own defense for a number of turns equal to their current Stains (to a minimum of one). Afterwards they remove all Stains. With no successes, the vampire permanently loses 1 point of Resolve, loses no Stains, and immediately flees in terror frenzy. A vampire who cannot flee suffers damage as though the symbol were direct sunlight, and they must move as far from the symbol as they can.

form minute movements, such as twitching a finger or opening their eyes, but that is the extent of their mobility. The vampire can still use mental Disciplines, such as Auspex, Presence, and Dominate, but they cannot issue commands unless they can communicate telepathically.

While staked, a vampire still rolls a Rouse Check every sunset to awaken. Sooner or later their waking Hunger drives them into torpor, as noted on p. 219.

Torpor

Kindred dwell in a halfway state between life and death. Between vampiric unlife and Final Death lies an undead hibernation known as *torpor*. While in torpor, the vampire lies completely dead to their surroundings, reduced to the appearance of a shriveled corpse. They cannot use any disciplines or react in any way to ordinary stimuli.

Vampires remain in torpor for a length of time dictated by their Humanity (see Humanity Table, p. 241). If staked, the vampire remains in torpor past that time until someone or something removes the stake. Removing a stake after their period of torpor expires awakens the vampire immediately, or that night. Vampires awaken from torpor at Hunger 5.

Once their period of torpor expires, vampires in torpor who are not staked can make a Resolve + Awareness test (Difficulty 2) every time a potential victim enters their vicinity. If successful, they can awaken long enough to feed, likely entering a hunger frenzy during the process. Once their Hunger drops to 4 or below, they rise fully recovered from the effects of torpor.

Vampires enter torpor in three ways: from Hunger, from damage, and voluntarily.

- If a vampire attempts to rise for the night with a Hunger level of 5 and fails their Rouse Check, they enter torpor.
- If a vampire takes enough Aggravated damage to fill their Health tracker completely, they automatically enter torpor. They then unconsciously attempt to mend damage, trying to heal one Health point per night. If they fully restore themselves (heal all Health damage, and mend or recover from all impediments or critical hits), they can rise again. If failed Rouse Checks to mend damage drive them above Hunger 5, they enter torpor as above.
- A vampire who entered torpor voluntarily still increases their Hunger every night, until they enter torpor as above. The same rules then apply.

To cut short a period of torpor, one can feed a slumbering vampire enough vampire Blood of higher Blood Potency than theirs to slake one Hunger.

Final Death

Though no longer mortal, vampires still face the possibility of Final Death. A vampire who dies once again may not be brought back to unlife and is said to have suffered the Final Death. In addition to fire, sunlight, and decapitation, acid that completely dissolves a vampire's body kills them, as does explosive overpressure that dismembers it (though equally fatal fire accompanies most explosions), or deep-sea pressure that pulps it. The Storyteller may also know of certain vampiric diseases that bring Final Death from within.

Many vampires suffer Final Death in combat with werewolves, their own kind, or increasingly against human inquisitors. Even vampire flesh cannot withstand endless traumatic force; enough bullets can drive them into torpor. Once in torpor, the vampire becomes a helpless target for their foes.

The Society of St. Leopold prescribes burning to ashes for torpid vampires. Other Final Deaths revert the vampire to a dead body of the same age. A vampire less than a year old becomes a rotting corpse; older vampires become skeletons or even dust.

Mechanically, when a vampire's entire Health tracker is filled with Aggravated damage, the vampire enters torpor. Any additional Aggravated damage from fire or sunlight sustained in this state causes Final Death, as does decapitation or total destruction of their body.

You are what You eat

The juice fuels every activity in your unliving body. All Kindred, even an Anarch pissblood like Case here, needs it to keep awake, keep moving. These are the basics, like sleeping or eating when you were alive. Blood gets you through the night. That's how we like to talk about it. But that's not really how we roll, is it? Pure hunger doesn't explain all this baggage, all the things done to score good juice and get away clean. It doesn't account for the wild chances we take to get a taste of that special boy: the callous manipulations we use to groom, scare, or seduce him.

Remember Latisha, the zero-fucks-given construction worker we had locked up in the bathroom of the Rainbow? Behind the buzz of booze, there was this sickly sweet, musky warmth, right? That's because she was turned on by you. You were already a quart into her when my mask slipped, so you must have noticed how the juice changed. Bitter wormwood and sandalwood ashes. Goes so much better with who you are, no? Feeds the raw power in your dead muscles. That was fear. And yes, I let the mask down on purpose.

It's not just a hunger; it's an addiction: a complex urge to gorge ourselves on the infinitely varied essence of man. Where a human body digests amino acids and proteins to grow, us Kindred digest emotion, history, trauma, and obsession to cook the blood and feel alive. We eat what it is to be human, and over time we become what we eat: condensed shadows of their fears and fantasies. It's always been this way. Blue Bloods fixate on a specific fix – the blood of mortal relatives, blondes in heat, fitness-freaks, or consumption victims. It gives them all they need and reveals this unspoken truth – not all blood is the same. The rest of us are mixed-substance abusers, looking for the kick that will take us where we want to go.

I go for angry, violent, or frightened: choleric blood. So, I'm a terror when I feed, and they always see me coming. Makes it easier for me to sleep at day. My prey knows exactly what's going on and feels the jungle deep inside – I'm all about the pure fight or flight. More honest that way, yeah? But at the end of the night it's the kick I'm after, not the moral justification. I live off raw strength, and I swear I could have cleared Hollywood Boulevard, rooftop to rooftop, if I had Latisha's blood pumping in me now. It's not a subject for polite company, and you'll want to keep your particular taste a secret from your enemies, but knowing what you like and how to get it is key to fast, raw power for our kind.

It's not neat and it's not right, but you better learn to soothe or scare, isolate or groom love in your victims. Always be prepared to strike; you never know when the perfect victim will come along. You fade from sight, right? Could be that guy with the laptop is all alone in the world, writing a last desperate letter to a Midwestern mother who was never right with his life choices. That's loneliness: melancholic blood. No one sees the lonely, the socially inept, and the isolated, and so you will be hidden, your insides wrapped up in his cold, smoky plasma. Go find out. Just don't make him feel a real connection with you, or you'll spoil the sad-juice. Happy... eh, unhappy hunting I should say.

The Blood is the Life

Human blood powers a vampire's body. Without fresh juice, a Kindred lies still, torpid, and powerless. Its dead heart beats only when fueled by the stolen essence of life. Its eyes only work when the corona and the viscous body flows with Blood. All vampires know vital fluids consist of far more than plasma, blood cells, and platelets. Some unknowable link to a kine's soul gives every person's red rum its particular kick and effect. Perhaps it's just hormones and the traces of the incessant bio-electrical current of mind, but a victims feelings profoundly affects the Kindred system.

Drink deep enough, and the *Resonance* of a victim rises to the surface: first as a sharp taste in the blood, then as images, whispers, and feelings; clots of unresolved trauma or clusters of rising hopes. Crisp memories, a ghostlike presence, or visions of heart-rending moments can occur just as blood loss nears the fatal amount. A kill always gives the strongest, most lasting rush, so the temptation is always there.

The rush of blood is not just a high, it's a state where the blood changes a vampire's own Resonance a bit. Plain melancholic blood is a good buzz to be on when Obfuscating, but *that uniquely subservient dog-walker with deep mommy-issues* owns a special breed of submission that makes Dominate possible without eye contact. That's what Kindred call a Dyscrasia, licks call a clot, and players call a "must-drink" SPC.

Resonance

Blood type is expressed as Resonance. Unless looking only for survival or fuel, a drinker should care what prey they feed from and how. Vampires drink blood. Mortals eat food. Resonance flavors the blood, turning drinking into dining. It's not about genetics, even if family often does carry a tendency toward a certain Resonance. It's more about a combination of the vessel's temperament and the victim's state of mind in the moment of feeding.

Kindred employ dozens of different frameworks to describe Resonance, from Japanese adolescent blood-type astrology to American business-school Myers-Briggs phrenology. Indian licks talk about ayurvedic gunas, decadent Toreador fans of Gurdjieff map their meals on the Enneagram; a Sewer Rat in Geneva claims to use Jung's original notebooks to construct a "unified theory of Blutfunktion." But the most common method, used by Tremere thaumaturges and Duskborn street cookers alike, relies on the four humors of classical medicine and medieval alchemy.

The *Crucible of Alchemy,* say the Warlocks, limns a metaphor for the vampiric body. The salts and metals in the crucible represent the elements of the blood, refined by the fire of the emotion in the moment. According to these Tremere, alchemy is all about scaring or inflaming kine in just the right way and drinking at just the right moment. It may be medieval mystification, but as the Mercurians can confirm, it does reliably get you high. To vampires whose Blood does in fact hold magical ingredients and shape personalities, these latter-day alchemists make a compelling argument.

THE FOUR HUMORS The four humors go back to ancient Egyptian and Babylonian medicine, but Hippocrates codified them for the West around 400 B.C. He described them as Choler or Xanthecholia (yellow bile), Melancholia (black bile), white Phlegm (not just modern phlegm, but also saliva, lymph, and the liquids of lungs and brain), and red Hema (blood). Thus, as the various humors predominate in the human system, people turn *Choleric, Melancholy, Phlegmatic,* and *Sanguine*. Modern alchemists point out that a blood sedimentation test demonstrates the existence of all four humors in the

HUMOR	ELEMENT	JUNGIAN FUNCTION	HORMONE	EMOTIONS AND CONDITIONS
Choleric	Fire	Feeling	Adrenaline	Angry, violent, bullying, passionate, envious
Melancholy	Earth	Thinking	Thyroid	Sad, scared, intellectual, depressed, grounded
Phlegmatic	Water	Intuition	Pituitary	Lazy, apathetic, calm, controlling, sentimental
Sanguine	Air	Sensation	Testosterone/ estrogen	Horny, happy, addicted, active, flighty, enthusiastic

blood: black platelets and clots at the bottom, red blood cells above that, white cells governing them, and finally clear plasma colored yellowish with bilirubin. Licks more thirsty than scholarly just break the four humors down as "angry, sad, lazy, and horny."

TEMPERAMENT AND DYSCRASIA Resonance comes in three temperaments: *fleeting, intense*, and *acute*. Fleeting temperament occurs in the moment, thanks to momentary stimuli. Humans in basic emotional equilibrium ("well-adjusted") experience fleeting bursts of all four Resonances in their day-to-day lives.

An intense temperament indicates a human with a very strong tendency toward one or another Resonance. This connection might be due to mental illness, age, past trauma, drug addiction, or just a very active reward loop; a good-looking person who enjoys sex can easily become intensely Sanguine, thanks to seeking and getting their kicks every night.

An acute Resonance is so intense that it creates a self-sustaining reaction in the blood. Kindred have adopted Hippocrates' term Dyscrasia, or "bad mixture," to refer to this effect. Younger licks, careless of alchemy and hematology alike, refer to it as a clot.

Resonance and Disciplines

Why should a lick care about Hippocrates? Because Resonance gives blood more than flavor and savor – intense Resonance gives it power. And a Dyscrasia, well, that gives the best hit of all. Resonances don't just give flavor to the victim's blood and personality, but also blend with vampiric Blood to energize Disciplines.

RESONANCE	DISCIPLINES
Choleric	Celerity, Potence
Melancholy	Fortitude, Obfuscate
Phlegmatic	Auspex, Dominate
Sanguine	Blood Sorcery, Presence
Animal Blood	Animalism, Protean

People all taste and kick different, and certain people make certain powers easier while a vampire is drunk on them. After hundreds of victims, patterns begin to

ANIMAL HUMORS

Do animals have emotional states complex enough to create Resonances? The Storyteller can go one of two directions here. Anyone who has ever owned a pet, worked a farm or ranch, or spent much time near animals, can tell you that yes, animals do have emotions, or at least moods. The Storyteller can connect animals' Resonances to their emotional state, although most zoo animals are Melancholic or at best Phlegmatic in captivity. However, any animal threatened with (or threatening) a fight is Choleric; one in heat is clearly Sanguine.

Another possibility, one that separates animal blood more firmly from human, defines animal Resonance according to their medieval personality types. Animals embodied various vices and virtues: both the unlucky rat and the wise owl therefore provide Melancholy blood, while Sanguine blood pumps through a lustful rabbit or cat. Faithful dogs are Phlegmatic; ravenous wolves are Choleric. In this case, an animal always enjoys the fleeting Resonance of its kind and nature, which the Storyteller can look up or just invent as needed. Paracelsus was silent on the nature of the raccoon, for example.

In either system, animal blood is most intense after the animal kills or while it mates. Except for certain beasts whispered of in Gangrel prophecy, animals do not provide Dyscrasias.

emerge to any feeder. The sad kills help you fade from sight, the horny kills boost the pull, and the angry ones fuel the punching. Blood accretes though time, combining and subliming through the strange alchemies that generate the supernatural effects of the gifts of Caine.

This is the way the Kindred overtly learn and develop disciplines: with a combination of feeding from a teacher and practicing conscious and often learned feeding habits. Vampires complement this process with undead biofeedback, pushing vitae through the vampiric system, revivifying Kindred organs, chakras, or nerve clusters at just the right moment. What you eat lays the foundation of what you can do.

And that goes for your enemies as well. Smart fangs study feeding habits and figure out the strengths and weaknesses of other Kindred. Every drinker in the world has their own pattern of feeding: changing or static over time. Perhaps all vampires, irrespective of age, generation, skill, and learning, intuitively look for the kind of blood that hones their curse and their disciplines to perfection.

EFFECTS OF TEMPERAMENT Fleeting temperament provides storytelling juice and savor to the hunt, but it has no immediate mechanical effect except as Thinblood Alchemy ingredients. That said, even fleeting temperaments flavor the blood sufficiently to justify buying dots in their associated disciplines (see Resonance and Experience, p. 231).

Drinking blood with intense temperament gives the drinker one additional die for dice pools involving a discipline that corresponds to that Resonance. This bonus lasts until the vampire's next drink of blood dilutes it, or until the vampire's system empties of blood when their Hunger reaches 5.

TAPPING A DYSCRASIA

Vessels with an acute temperament provide the same Discipline bonus as an intense Resonance. They also incorporate a Dyscrasia, which conveys a more sublime or powerful benefit to the drinker.

The requirements to gain its effect varies between different Dyscrasias, but unless otherwise stated the vampire must kill and drain the vessel or feed from them over the course of three nights. Some Dyscrasias can only be tapped once before leaving the blood of the victim, others linger and can be gained on repeated occasions.

The effects of a Dyscrasia usually lasts until the Kindred feeds again or reaches Hunger 5.

Hunting and Humors

Determining what Resonance a vessel has makes feeding more than just a pit stop. Most vampires observe their victims from a distance or engage them in conversation to feel them out. Roleplaying should give a pretty good idea of what Resonance a victim's blood carries, but after stalking or talking for a scene, the Storyteller may allow a Resolve + Insight test to clarify matters.

Tasting the blood of a human dispels all doubt; the Storyteller's description of the taste, texture, and kick of the blood should give the leech a clear indication of what Resonance the mortal carries. If the mortal harbors a Dyscrasia, the Storyteller may hint at its nature. When the character slakes a level of Hunger from a victim, they feel the rush of the essence locked in their victim's blood. This rush of Resonance may kick vampiric powers into overdrive or manifest as a unique condition.

To determine the temperament of a potential victim that the Storyteller (or scenario author) hasn't created and detailed before the session, roll a d10 to determine a random temperament. If you get a 6+ on that die, roll again to determine the human's Resonance. The Storyteller should absolutely shift the numbers dependent on the surrounding environment: nightclubs encourage the Sanguine and don't attract the Phlegmatic; Protestant churches perhaps the opposite.

RANDOM TEMPERAMENT	RANDOM RESONANCE
1-5: Well-balanced, negligible Resonance	1-3: Phlegmatic
6-8: Fleeting	4-6: Melancholy
9-0: Intense, potentially acute: roll again below	7-8: Choleric
1-8: Intense, 9-0: Acute	9-0: Sanguine

Changing Resonance

Characters can change a victim's Resonance through roleplaying or through the various social systems of the game. If the character successfully scares, seduces, or drugs their victim, the Storyteller should shift the victim's Resonance to match. If a vampire seduces a scared victim, for example, the human gains the Sanguine (fleeting) temperament while their Melancholic Resonance is (temporarily) submerged.

Intensifying a victim's Resonance follows a similar process to increase their temperament by one step (from fleeting to intense, or intense to acute) on a successful social test or following a cool roleplaying scene. Once a victim acutely feels a Resonance, a properly callous vampire can begin the long process of manipulating them into a Dyscrasia. A love affair with a mortal lasting for months or years may lead to them developing an appropriately Sanguine clot; keeping a victim locked up for months to endure repeated waterboarding or brainwashing could develop a Melancholic or Choleric Dyscrasia, depending on the precise sequence and nature of the confinement.

Such long-term grooming and abuse of victims is not a scientific process, and likely incurs plenty of Stains. Chronicle Tenets more likely forbid torture, but some may excuse themselves for seducing a mortal into a Sanguine-farming love affair. Humane vampires find it all distasteful; it's up to the Storyteller to determine what works and how much Dyscrasia farming damages a Kindred's Humanity.

Sample Dyscrasias

Here are a few examples of Dyscrasias the Storyteller can sprinkle into the next mortal crowd or carefully populate into a rival vampire's Herd. Characters may want to keep track of supporting cast mortals who carry particular Dyscrasias, so they can feed on them for tactical advantage. The Storyteller should absolutely curate Dyscrasias to player agendas and to the desires of their enemies.

Some Dyscrasias are enduring, nesting within a mortal for years or even a lifetime, while others are temporary, dependent on external circumstances. It is up to the Storyteller to decide if each Dyscrasia can only be used once or remains a property of the vessel's blood for longer.

Choleric Dyscrasias

BULLY: Drinker does +1 damage against weaker foes (or against the kinds of foes the vessel most enjoyed bullying). This bonus applies to both social and physical combat.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE: Your next feeding on choleric blood slakes one additional Hunger; other blood slakes one less Hunger.

ENVY: Drinker does +1 damage against better (more attractive, younger, more talented, taller, richer, higher-status, etc.) foes. This bonus applies to both social and physical combat.

PRINCIPLED: Reroll any one roll in a conflict with a perceived ideological enemy. You may not reroll Hunger dice that resulted in 1s during the first roll.

VENGEFUL: Add two dice to one test against the type of target on which the vessel wished revenge (cheating spouses, social rivals, loud neighbors, the government, etc.), or on all rolls against the specific individual the vessel hated.

VICIOUS: Reroll any rolls using the Intimidation Skill. You may not reroll Hunger dice that resulted in 1s during the first roll.

DRIVING: Gain 1 free experience point towards the purchase of Celerity or Potence. This fully consumes the Dyscrasia.

Melancholic Dyscrasias

IN MOURNING: Add one die to Remorse tests.

LOST LOVE: Add one die to all pools to resist seduction attempts, including Presence.

LOST RELATIVE: Slake 1 additional Hunger when feeding from remaining members of your family.

MASSIVE FAILURE: Constantly reminded not to fail in the same way, the drinker can reroll tests that remind them of the vessel's failure. You may not reroll Hunger dice that resulted in 1s during the first roll.

NOSTALGIC: Add one die to all pools for rolls that connect to the specific decade, art form, or social group about which the vessel was nostalgic; add three dice to a Memoriam pool exploring that subject.

RECALLING: Gain 1 free experience point towards the purchase of Fortitude or Obfuscate. This fully consumes the Dyscrasia.

Phlegmatic Dyscrasias

CHILL: Add two dice to pools to resist frenzy.

COMFORTABLY NUMB: Feel no pain: receive no penalties or other negative effects from pain, both physical and social.

EATING YOUR EMOTIONS: Eat and digest food without becoming nauseous (or slaking Hunger, of course).

GIVEN UP: Your next feeding on phlegmatic blood slakes 1 additional Hunger; other blood slakes one fewer Hunger.

LONE WOLF: Add one die to your tests when alone, subtract one die from tests to assist others or use teamwork (p. 122). Lasts only one scene.

PROCRASTINATE: Regain 1 point of Willpower if you delay something important by a day or more. Can only be used once per session.

REFLECTION: Gain 1 free experience point towards the purchase of Auspex or Dominate. This fully consumes the Dyscrasia.

Sanguine Dyscrasias

CONTAGIOUS ENTHUSIASM: If you can touch your target skin-to-skin and sweat-to-sweat, you can add three dice to one test to convince them to do something. Treat this Dyscrasia as Dominate with regards to core beliefs, secrets, and so forth.

SMELL GAME: Add three dice to all rolls to detect other Sanguine vessels.

HIGH ON LIFE: The drinker can use Blush of Life without making a Rouse Check.

MANIC HIGH: The drinker adds one die to all tests until they fail a roll; after that point, they subtract two dice from all tests.

TRUE LOVE: Slake 1 additional Hunger when feeding from the vessel's true love. If the drinker has Auspex, they can see through the true love's eyes by Rousing the Blood.

STIRRING: Gain 1 free experience point towards the purchase of Blood Sorcery or Presence. This fully consumes the Dyscrasia.

Resonance and Experience

In order to justify spending experience on Disciplines, your character must feed on blood with the matching type of Resonance. The amount of blood and vessels consumed varies, but by and large it scales with the Discipline rating sought. The Storyteller is well within their right to have you seek out stronger and stronger Resonances, even Dyscrasias, to achieve higher Discipline ratings. Learning a new out-of-clan Discipline also requires you to taste the Blood of one who possesses it ■

The Camarilla is powerful enough to give you everything you want but it is also greedy enough to take everything you have. Whatever you earn by serving it will be taken from you later by your shrouded masters.

STATES OF DAMNATION

Vampiric Blood can enact profound change in those who consume it, whether the drinker is mortal or undead. Whether these changes are for better and worse depends, as Leninist Anarchs put it, on who's drinking whom.

The Blood Bond

Feared by those who have known it, the Blood Bond creates and enforces the most severe allegiances within the Camarilla, both between Kindred and from their mortal servants. The Anarchs generally philosophically reject Blood Bonds between vampires (although exceptions must sometimes be made for the good of the Movement) and some radicals even refuse to Blood Bond mortals.

Anyone who drinks the Blood of a vampire becomes progressively more attached to their donor until finally, after three drinks or more, the Bond reduces them to servile lackeys when in the donor's presence. Vampires call the one Bonded the *thrall*, and term the source of the Bond the *regnant*. When under a completed Blood Bond, the thrall experiences a sense of loyalty, sometimes even infatuation, toward their regnant. They attempt to please their master, becoming wary and eventually even terrified of angering them. Unlike many Disciplines, nothing prevents a vampire employing a Bond against a vampire of lower generation or one whose Blood is more potent. Many Kindred do not even acknowledge that they've been Bound, believing their feelings to be true and even noble. A mutual

Blood Bond, sometimes called a Blood wedding, is not love – it's obsession and addiction. Abusive and dysfunctional doesn't even begin to describe how nasty these blood-enforced affairs tend to get after a few centuries, and they are frowned upon (to say the least) in Camarilla society.

Just as in the Embrace, the Blood consumed must be taken directly from the vein of the donor, as it loses its power to Bond in a matter of seconds unless drunk. The drinker must repeat the act on three separate nights with no more than a year between drinks for the Bond to fully form. (During their first year, a childe remains one-third of the way Bound to their sire, having already tasted their Blood once.) A regnant can have as many vampire thralls as they have dots of Blood Potency, and a thrall can only have one regnant, becoming immune to other Bonding attempts while Bound. If a regnant Bonds another thrall above their maximum Blood Potency limit, their oldest Bond with a thrall fades over the course of a week.

Blood Bond System

The Blood Bond gains a *Bond Strength* equal to the number of times the thrall has consumed the regnant's Blood (up to a maximum of 6) and decreases by one for each month during which the thrall consumes none of the regnant's Blood. To attempt something against their regnant's wishes, the thrall must succeed in a contest of Resolve + Intelligence vs. Bond Strength. If in the presence of the regnant, such defiance requires the test once per turn; if outside the regnant's perception, the thrall need only make a defiance test once per scene.

Breaking the Bond requires the thrall to reduce the Bond Strength to 0 (zero) by avoiding their regnant for an extended time. They must successfully make a defiance roll once per session to do so (or more often, if the Storyteller judges that something has recalled the regnant to the thrall's mind). Few thralls can resist this long, especially if their regnant actively comes looking for them.

Ghouls

A mortal who drinks a vampire's Blood becomes something both more and less than human, for a time. Derisively called a *ghoul* by western vampires, the mortal gains a smidgeon of the power of a true vampire. The vitae consumed not only brings a rush, but also arrests the aging process. The effects are temporary, however, and if weaned off vampire Blood, the mortal deteriorates rapidly, as the years catch up with their halted aging. Vampires use ghouls as retainers where loyalty outweighs keeping the Masquerade, since a single Kindred can Blood Bond as many ghouls as they can manage.

Unlike the Embrace and Blood Bonds, vampire Blood does retain its ghoul-sustaining properties for a few days while stored in an airtight container and not exposed to sunlight. Vampires usually only provide their vitae in such manner after having established a proper Blood Bond with a ghoul.

A Rouse Check's worth of vitae bestows the following benefits to a mortal for approximately a month:

- The mortal gains the first dot in their master's highest-rated discipline, along with a single level 1 power possessed by the vampire.
- The aging process halts, sometimes even setting the clock back a few years.
- Wounds heal twice as fast, unless caused by fire.

Ghouls who use powers above level 1 (thanks to Draught of Elegance or similar powers, alchemical effects, or other causes) take 1 point of Aggravated damage to their Health instead of making a Rouse Check.

Diablerie

An act reviled by most vampires claiming any form of civility or fearing righteous destruction, *diablerie* involves drinking another vampire dry, ingesting not only their Blood but their very essence. Vampires with a religious bent speak of consuming the victim's very soul, and those who can sense auras can clearly see the stains afflicting the perpetrator.

Committing Diablerie

To begin with, the would-be diablerist must generally immobilize their target. (Voluntary sacri-

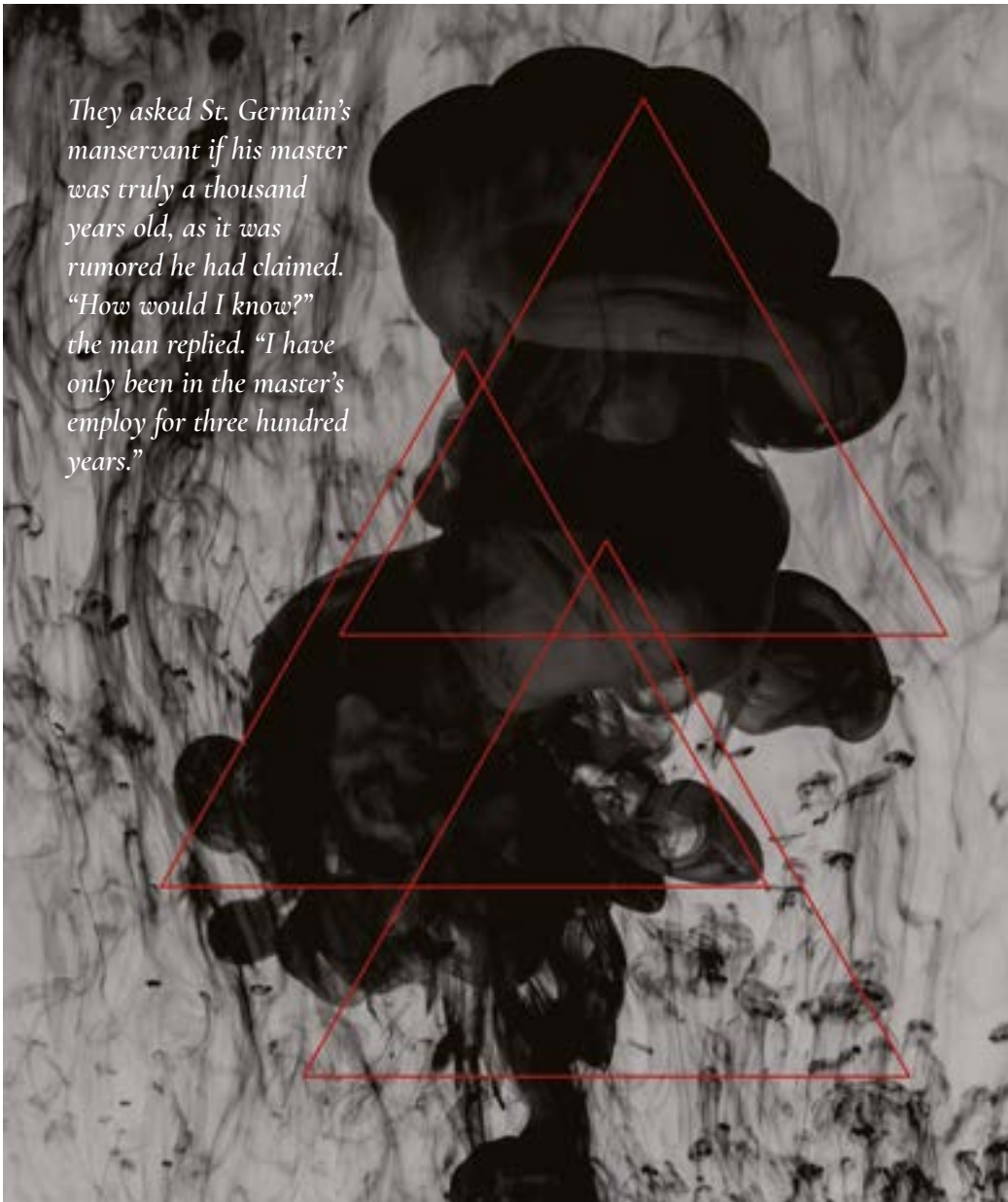
fice to diablerie is rare, but not unknown in the twisted opera that is the Jyhad.) Heavy chains, a stake, torpor, or many partners holding the victim down have all worked in the past. Then, the diablerist must drink the victim's Blood, a feeding similar to most others except, given the viscosity of vitae, it usually requires an entire scene to accomplish fully. (See p. 213 for the effect of vampire Blood on Hunger.) Partners may help consume the victim, but only one drinker can attempt to gain the target's power in full diablerie.

Having incapacitated and drained the target, the would-be diablerist can try to commit the final blasphemy: the true diablerie, incorporating the target's very nature and power into themselves. The diablerist needs to win a number of Strength + Resolve tests (Difficulty 3) equal to the victim's Blood Potency. The attacker can make one such roll per turn; if even one fails, the victim's animating spark dies unconsumed, thwarting true diablerie. In either case, the body of the victim swiftly decays in Final Death.

Effects of Diablerie

Once the diablerie is complete, the diablerist must assert control over the alien Blood in their system or risk falling prey to their victim's spirit. This process resolves as follows:

- The diablerist loses 1 point of Humanity.
- They must then roll a contest of Humanity + their own Blood Potency vs. the victim's Resolve + Blood Potency. Every success gives the diablerist 5 experience points to immediately spend on increasing Blood Potency (to a maximum up to the victim's Blood Potency) or on disciplines known by the victim.
- Should the roll fail, the diablerist loses an additional point of Humanity for each success by which they failed. If this failure corrodes their Humanity to 0 (zero), their prey's mind replaces the diablerist's; they become the host body of the Blood and personality of their target, becoming an SPC.
- If the victim was of lower generation, the diablerist lowers their generation by one.
- Black veins become visible in the diablerist's aura. They persist for a year, or if the diablerist's generation was lower than their prey's, they persist for a number of years equal to the original difference in generation ■



They asked St. Germain's manservant if his master was truly a thousand years old, as it was rumored he had claimed. "How would I know?" the man replied. "I have only been in the master's employ for three hundred years."

HUMANITY

Humanity measures how close a vampire is to their human life, to specific people that draw them toward life and light, and to human concerns generally.

Most vampires lose Humanity as they age, and as the alien Beast within them gnaws away at their sentiments, their memories, and their connections to the daylight world.

Barring special circumstances (such as a modifier based on Predator type), a Vampire player character begins with Humanity 7 (for regular Kindred) or 8 (for just-Embraced fledglings).

The Downward Spiral

Vampires are monsters, have no doubt, and even a Kindred with the highest of Humanity scores remains nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing. Nonetheless, as Humanity erodes, vampires not only become capable of, but also actively pursue, evermore depraved acts. It is in a vampire's nature to hunt and to kill, and eventually every vampire finds themselves holding the corpse of a vessel they had not intended to murder.

It is important, then, to know how vampires change as their Humanity scores deteriorate and less and less connects them with their origins. Vampires' behavior can become so utterly depraved and alien that the very thought of them causes discomfort in others.

Humanity 10

Humans with this score are rare, and the vampires who have achieved it even more so. At this level, mortals and Kindred alike lead a saintly, veritably ascetic life, tightly controlled by ethics and principles supporting this fragile condition. The merest selfish deed or thought is enough to topple this state of grace.

Humanity 10 vampires can appear human in other regards:

- Blush of Life is not necessary, because you appear as a pale mortal in good health.
- You heal Superficial damage as a mortal, in addition to vampiric mending.
- You can taste, eat, and digest food as if human.
- You can stay awake during the day as if human, though you do not lose your normal need for sleep.
- The rate of sunlight damage you take is halved.

Humanity 9

Kindred with Humanity scores this high act more humane than most humans. They seem natural among them; they can think and act the way mortals do, in the same unconscious way an expert method actor would. Killing feels horrible, almost as gut-wrenchingly so as the Hunger in full cry. Many fledgling vampires sometimes adhere to codes more rigorous than they ever held in life, as a reaction against becoming a predator. Older Kindred scoff at this practice, out of callous disdain or to muffle their own regrets.

Humanity 9 vampires can appear human in other regards:

- Blush of Life is not necessary because you appear ill, but not dead.
- You heal Superficial damage as a mortal, in addition to vampiric mending.
- You can taste, eat, and digest rare or raw meat, and many liquids.
- You can rise from day-sleep up to an hour before sunset if you wish and likewise stay awake an hour after dawn.

Humanity 8

You still feel pain for the hurts you and your kind inflict. Your human guise remains passable; the memories remain fresh, or new instincts for community spring up like green shoots from your long-dead soul.

Humanity 8 vampires can appear human in other regards:

- You can roll two dice for the Rouse Check to use Blush of Life and take the highest result.
- Blush of Life allows you to have sexual intercourse and perhaps even enjoy it.
- Blush of Life allows you to digest and taste wine.
- You can rise from day-sleep up to an hour before sunset if you wish.

Humanity 7

Most human beings have Humanity scores of 7 or so; vampires at this level of Humanity can usually manage to pass for mortals. Vampires with Humanity 7 typically subscribe to normal social mores – sure, sin is wrong, but dodging taxes and speed limits are not sins. The vampire feels some connection to other beings, even human beings, though more than a little selfishness shines through – just like everyone else in the world, mortal or not.

Rules for Humanity 7 vampires are much the same as those for other Kindred:

- You must make a Rouse Check to use Blush of Life.
- You cannot have sexual intercourse per se, but you can fake it by winning a Dexterity + Charisma test if you wish (Difficulty equals your partner's Composure or Wits).
- Unless using Blush of Life, food and drink makes you vomit; make a Composure + Stamina test (Difficulty 3) to be able to get outside or to a bathroom first.

Humanity 6

Hey, people die; stuff breaks. You have little difficulty with the fact that you need blood to survive and that you do what needs to be done to get it. You might not go out of your way to wreck things or kill people, but you don't cry bloody tears over it either. Not automatically horrid, Kindred at this stage of Humanity don't win any prizes for congeniality either.

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted, as the human mask becomes more difficult to wear:

- You cannot have sexual intercourse per se, but you can fake it by winning a Dexterity + Charisma test if you wish, made at a one-die penalty to your pool (Difficulty equals your partner's Composure or Wits).
- Even when using Blush of Life, you need make a Composure + Stamina test (Difficulty 3) to be able to keep food and drink down for an hour.

Humanity 5

At this point, you've been around the block. Most neonates and some ancillae fall into this range. You've internalized pain and anguish, and you begin to

accept it as part of existence. You don't particularly care about mortals one way or the other, except for pets and Touchstones and the like. After all, you're never going to be mortal again, so why bother? You're selfish, you lie like its second nature, and you may manifest some minor physical eeriness or malformation, such as an unnatural hue to the eyes.

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted:

- You suffer a one-die penalty on rolls to interact with humans. This penalty applies to most Social dice pools (including tests for interacting with Touchstones), especially Insight and Persuade, but not to terrifying Intimidation, inhuman Subterfuge (Seduction), or to any test to hunt or kill a human. This penalty also applies to creating art or other humanities; for example, Kindred prose markedly worsens and becomes more florid as they degenerate.
- Even with Blush of Life, you cannot have sexual intercourse per se, but you can fake it by winning a Dexterity + Charisma test if you wish, made at a two-die penalty to your pool (Difficulty equals your partner's Composure or Wits).

Humanity 4

Hey, some people gotta die. You have finally begun, even accepted, your inevitable slide into moral sloth and self-indulgence. Killing is more than fine; ask the elders, they've been around long enough to see whole genocides ignored. Destruction, theft, injury – these are all tools, not taboos. Physical changes become quite evident as "ashen pallor" shades more firmly into "corpse-like."

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted:

- You suffer a two-dice penalty on rolls to interact with humans.
- You can no longer keep food and drink down, even with Blush of Life.

Humanity 3

At this level, cynical and jaded describes you on a good day. You callously step over anyone and anything, stopping only to indulge a new hobby for cruelty. You take the safe route, the pragmatic route: kill witnesses and don't risk trusting anyone you haven't got your talons into somehow. You genuinely look monstrous, even under the most flattering light.

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted:

- You suffer a four-dice penalty on rolls to interact with humans, as above.
- You can no longer perform or even fake sexual intercourse, even with Blush of Life.

Humanity 2

Nobody counts but you. Idiots try your patience; worms attempt to take your belongings or attention; mortal meat sacks get in your way and delay your feeding. Only servants and feeding stock exist, and everyone needs to decide which one they are before you decide for them. You do have your hobbies, of course – immortals need hobbies. Twisted pleasures, decadent whims, atrocities, perversions, callous murder, mutilation – so much to do, so few hours of the night in which to do it. By now, every human and most Kindred recoil from your presence.

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted:

- You suffer a six-dice penalty on rolls to interact with humans, as above. (The penalty becomes four-dice with Blush of Life.)

Humanity 1

Only nominally sentient, you teeter on the edge of oblivion. Little matters at all to you, even your own desires outside sustenance and rest. You might do anything at all, or nothing. Only a few tattered shreds of ego stand between you and complete devolution. You need no speech, no art, nothing but gibbers and splatters of dried gore.

Rules for this level of Humanity work as the previous rating unless otherwise noted:

- You suffer an eight-dice penalty on rolls to interact with humans, as above. (The penalty becomes five-dice with Blush of Life, but who cares? Not you.)

Humanity 0

You have become the Beast. Your last urges express themselves in a final Rötschreck called the wassail (see Losing the Last Drop, p. 241). A puppet of the Blood, you are a wight, under Storyteller control forever.

The Humanity Track

The Humanity tracker has 10 spaces: □□□□□ □□□□□

Track Humanity by filling in spaces from left to right. For example, this represents a rating of Humanity 6: ■■■■■ ■□□□□

Stains

Humanity only shifts in response to actions with major story significance: Embracing a new childe, damage to a Touchstone, and so forth. The more usual corruptions and deformations of the character's humanity can cause *Stains* on their Humanity track. If too many Stains build up without repentance or redress, a character's Humanity might drop.

Track Stains by checking off spaces from right to left. For example, this tracker represents a Humanity 6 vampire with two Stains: ■■■■■ ■□□▨▨

If a character acts in violation of a chronicle Tenet, the Storyteller weighs the severity of the violation. A clear but justifiable or less-than-appalling violation may only incur 1 Stain. A truly bestial act, on the other hand, may incur 2 or even more Stains.

If the Tenet was violated in the service of a Conviction, reduce the Stains gained by one or more.

EXAMPLE:

Joan crushes the head of a person who was trying to reveal her nature to her younger brother. This callous murder would normally incur 3 Stains, but since Joan has the Conviction "my family must be kept out of this," she gets only 2.

Any extra Stains left over after filling the empty dots on the Humanity tracker trigger *degeneration* and causes Aggravated Willpower damage (see below).

Remorse

A character with any Stains marked on their Humanity track at the end of the session makes a *Remorse* test. Roll a number of dice equal to the unmarked, unfilled dots on the Humanity tracker; for example, a character with Humanity 6 and 2 Stains would roll two dice. The minimum number of dice in a Remorse roll is one; even if the whole track is full, the player can roll one die.

If the Remorse roll results in at least one success, the character has suffered enough guilt, shame, or regret to retain their current Humanity. They remove all Stains.

If the Remorse roll results in no successes, the Beast has won. The character must lose 1 point of Humanity and then remove all Stains.

Degeneration

If a character accumulates more Stains than they have empty boxes on their Humanity track, they become Impaired (resulting in a two-dice penalty to all pools in this case), as they are overcome with regret. In addition, they take one point of Aggravated Willpower damage for each Stain that could not fit in the open boxes.

In this state, the character is incapable of further intentional Tenet violations, and if forced to commit one, they must test for terror frenzy at Difficulty 4.

The Impaired condition remains until the end of the session, when Remorse is tested, as usual. The character can also choose to snap out of it by voluntarily losing a point of Humanity, wiping away the Stains as they rationalize their actions and accept what they've become.

DAMAGING AND DESTROYING TOUCHSTONES In addition to Tenet violations, other acts endanger the vampire's Humanity. When such acts occur, the vampire gains additional Stains based on the severity of the occurrence.

EXAMPLE:

After rescuing his Touchstone from the clutches of his rival, Marc makes sure this will never happen again – by removing this vulnerability. In a tearful scene in which he forces his Touchstone to drink poison, Marc suffers 5 Stains – 2 from the murder and another 3 because he destroyed his own Touchstone.

ACTION	STAINS
Blood Bonding a mortal	+1
Embracing a mortal	+2
Touchstone damaged	+1
Touchstone damaged by your actions	+2
Touchstone destroyed	+2
Touchstone destroyed by your actions	+3

A Touchstone is damaged when something bad happens to them, usually something caused by the Kindred or even something stirred up indirectly by the vampire's actions. (It's up to the Storyteller whether a normal disease or job loss counts as "bad" in this case.) A Touchstone is also damaged if they change in a way the vampire doesn't approve of: their widow remarries, the priest leaves the parish, the ballplayer moves from the White Sox to the Twins. By trying to prevent the Touchstone from changing, of course, the vampire may make things bad enough to damage the Touchstone anyway. A Touchstone is destroyed when they betray their convictions (specifically, when they betray the Conviction for which the vampire values them), when they are killed violently or Embraced, or when something truly disastrous happens to them.

If a vampire *directly* causes the damage or the destruction of their own Touchstone, the Stains gained increase. Of course, any Storyteller worth their salt creates story and drama that puts pressure on the player to decide between harming their Touchstone and achieving some vampiric goal.

If, by contrast, your Touchstone dies peacefully or just in the normal course of things, you may be able to transfer your fixation to another human connected to them: their child or sibling, their successor in the position, etc. This change requires a Humanity test (Difficulty 4) while meeting or observing them, and likely requires further story action.

Unless you manage to transfer your attention to a new Touchstone, your Conviction connected to the destroyed Touchstone is lost.

When Humanity Fails

Humanity is what keeps the Beast at bay. Thus, as Humanity drops, frenzy becomes more likely (p. 219). Add dice equal to one-third the vampire's Humanity (rounded down) to their Willpower test to resist frenzy. Humanity also allows vampires to awaken during the day (p. 219).

As Humanity drops, the length of time a vampire spends in torpor increases. The vampire's ability

to interact with humans outside a predator-prey context drops as well.

HUMANITY	DICE ADDED TO RESIST FRENZY	TORPOR LENGTH
Humanity 9	3	Three days
Humanity 8	2	One week
Humanity 7	2	Two weeks
Humanity 6	2	One month
Humanity 7	1	One year
Humanity 4	1	One decade
Humanity 3	1	Five decades
Humanity 2	0	One century
Humanity 1	0	Five centuries

Losing the Last Drop

A vampire who loses their last point of Humanity, from 1 to 0 (zero), goes out in a spectacular frenzy. All their Attributes and scores increase to 5 for that scene; if they survive this wassail they become a wight, lost to the will of the Blood, and an SPC.

Both Storytellers and players will likely have ideas for a suitably dramatic and characterful final scene for such a vampire; don't waste the wassail on incidental scenery damage.

Increasing Humanity

Vampires can only increase Humanity by selflessly involving themselves in human life and human concerns. Increasing Humanity should be a major personal story arc, involving (at least) the gaining of a new Touchstone and the deliberate turning away from Kindred society and power.

Some extraordinarily humane in-game actions (endowing and non-murderously protecting a museum or hospital, for example) might allow a player to buy Humanity with experience points at a cost of 10 x the new Humanity rating. This purchase remains at the Storyteller's discretion, and some Storytellers might not allow experience points to purchase Humanity at all.

Some of the arts and practices of Golconda may also allow the increase of Humanity, but those remain for the Storyteller to determine and reveal ■

DISCIPLINES

But supposing that there be any reality in the fact of these apparitions of vampires, shall they be attributed to God, to angels, to the spirits of these ghosts, or to the devil? In this last case, will it be said that the devil will subtilize these bodies, and give them power to penetrate through the ground without disturbing, to glide through the cracks and joints of a door, to pass through a keyhole, to lengthen or shorten themselves, to reduce themselves to the nature of air, or water, to evaporate through the ground …

– ABBÉ AUGUSTIN CALMET, *TREATISE ON APPARITIONS*

As soon as a mortal receives the Embrace, they receive access to the powers colloquially known as Disciplines. Developed from the temperaments of victims consumed and refined to devastating potential, vampires bring these Blood-borne gifts to bear against foes and prey. Disciplines remind the Damned of their separation from mortals, as the vitae in their veins allows them to subjugate others, demonstrate inhuman physical prowess, and perceive reality from the vantage of predators, looking down upon prey. Younger Kindred may only possess a few token powers, but even those minor gifts still provide an edge over the rank and file kine. Ancillae wield Disciplines with enough might to crush their lessers, and the elders, horrifyingly arrayed with these nightmare weapons, become unassailable against all but the most-prepared attackers.

General Rules

LEARNING DISCIPLINES **Vampire** rates Disciplines on a scale from one to five dots, just like other Traits. A character gains dots in a Discipline either at character creation or by purchasing them with experience points later. In order to spend experience points on this, a a character usually needs to feed on the matching Resonance (see p. 226). To later learn a completely new Discipline that is not one of their Clan Disciplines, the character also needs to taste the Blood of someone who possesses it.

SELECTING POWERS Every time a character gains a dot in a Discipline they choose one power from among the listed, either from their new Discipline level or below. Vampire characters normally have an equal number of dots and powers in a Discipline – no more, no less.

EXAMPLE:

At character creation, Martha has gained two dots of Fortitude. With the first dot she can choose either of the level one powers, picking Resilience. At the second dot she can choose either Unswayable Mind (the second level 1 power) or Toughness, the level 2 power. She picks Unswayable mind. When she later gains her third dot, she can pick either Toughness or any on the level three powers: Defy Bane or Fortify the Inner Façade.

Note that she cannot pick the amalgam power Enduring Beasts at any level, as she lacks the prerequisite of one dot in Animalism.

USING POWERS Unless otherwise stated, a vampire can activate a Discipline at any time; this takes little time or overt action. Powers do not usually activate retroactively; they respond to, rather than interrupt, actions taken against the user. A vampire can activate one Discipline power per turn. Any number of powers can be active simultaneously.

Vampires add dice equal to half their Blood Potency (rounded down) to their dice pools to use or resist Disciplines (see Blood Potency, p. 215).

General rules for specific Disciplines appear in the Characteristics section of each Discipline.

Amalgam Powers

Certain rare powers require proficiency in more than one Discipline. Characters must also possess the listed number of dots in the other Discipline to take these powers. For the purpose of type and other classification these powers count as belonging to both Disciplines.

Animalism

It was like something out of a horror movie. I just saw this guy walking by himself, noticed he had a bulging wallet in his back pocket, and held him up. You know, as you do? It shoulda been a simple transaction. "Your money or your life," as those old stories used to go. Well it got weird fucking quickly. The previously clear, still night filled with the baying howls and whines of I don't know... two dozen dogs? This small black guy just stared at me. His face was changing, becoming less... or more... I don't know. He looked like a rottweiler. He told me "Remember this. You fuck with a Rat, you'd better learn to run." I felt something in me breaking, and I was running.

I shouldn't have looked behind me. I don't know how many dogs were chasing me down the fucking high street, but loads of people saw it, as I screamed and spluttered and cried out for help. When those dogs brought me down and started biting me, I thought they'd eat me alive. But the weirdest thing... It's like they knew when to stop. They just... They just fucked me up! Now look at me. No fingers. No toes. No fucking nose or ears. I still see that motherfucker's staring eyes whenever I blink and I hear those fucking dogs whenever I sleep.

Nicknames: Doolittling, Taming, Bestiae Sermo

Perhaps the vampire has more in common with animal than human. A dangerous set of instincts drive them, and it takes a lot for them to withhold the urge to just lash out.. Much like a wild dog on a chain, a vampire's Beast will never truly be tamed.

Some Kindred find a way of becoming one with their Beasts. Those who do are the masters of Animalism. Some accompany the use of this power with howls, snarls, and roars, or communi-

cate with animals in the animal's "language," though this is an affectation and not a necessity.

The Animalism Discipline sees much use among vampires who struggle to fit in or have no taste for living among mortals. Often classed as one of Caine's gifts of utility, allowing a vampire to thrive on unrefined blood or form companionship with non-sapient beings, it is also a devastating weapon against vampires who cling to their towers, and against inquisitors who suspect their enemies will only come on two legs. A swarm of blood-hungry rats invading a Kindred's penthouse haven, the Animalism-proficient vampire who cows the Sheriff's Beast in Elysium, or the beady-eyed raven that spies on a Society of St. Leopold chapter all serve to strengthen Animalism practitioners, and weaken their foes.

Characteristics

By default Animalism powers involving animals can only be used on vertebrates. Additionally, any use of the ability on herbivores adds one to the Difficulty of skill rolls involved.

- **Type:** Mental
- **Masquerade threat:** Low to medium. While talking to animals might seem eccentric, only the most violent applications of the Discipline elicit more than a few raised eyebrows.
- **Blood Resonance:** Animal blood, preferably feral.

Level 1

BOND FAMULUS

When Blood Bonding an animal, the vampire can make it a famulus, forming a mental link with it and facilitating the use of other Animalism powers. While this power alone does not allow two-way communication with the animal, it can follow simple verbal instructions such as "stay" and "come here." It attacks in defense of itself and its master but cannot otherwise be persuaded to fight something it would not normally attack.

- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Animal Ken
- **Cost:** The animal must be fed the user's Blood on three separate nights, each of which requires a Rouse Check by the user. The amount of Blood needed to sustain the ghoul-state of the animal after this is negligible. Players starting with this power have completed this process and can chose a famulus for free.
- **System:** Without the use of Feral Whispers, below, giving commands to the animal requires a Charisma + Animal Ken roll (Difficulty 2); increase Difficulty for more complex orders. A vampire can only have one famulus, but can get a new one if the current one dies. A vampire can use Feral Whispers (Animalism 2) and Subsume the Spirit (Animalism 4) on their famulus for free.
- **Duration:** Only death releases a famulus once bound. As long as it receives vampire Blood on a regular basis, the famulus does not age.

SENSE THE BEAST

The vampire can sense the Beast present in mortals, vampires, and other supernaturals, gaining a sense of their nature, hunger, and hostility.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Animalism vs Composure + Subterfuge
- **System:** Roll Resolve + Animalism vs Composure + Subterfuge. A win allows the user to sense the level of hostility in a target (whether the person is prepared to do harm or even determined to cause it) and determine whether they harbor a supernatural Beast, marking them as a vampire or werewolf. On a win, a critical gives the user information on the exact type of creature, as well as their Hunger or Rage level. This power can be used both actively and passively, warning the user of aggressive intent in their immediate vicinity.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 2

FERAL WHISPERS

The vampire can commune with the beasts of the wild and the city. Feral Whispers allows two-way communication with animals. A cat might not be interested in debating Matisse's use of color but happily discusses the lack of prey around the brownstone building across the street. Depending on the

vampire's skill, they can even persuade animals to perform services; like humans, animals seldom agree to things that go against their nature or endanger them.

Vampires can also use Feral Whispers to summon a chosen type of animal (see Animalism limitations above) but the animals must be present to answer. Nothing prevents a vampire trying to summon an orca in Central Park, but success seems unlikely. Summoned animals listen to the summoner, but scatter or attack if endangered.

- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Animalism, Charisma + Animalism
- **Cost:** One Rouse Check per type of animal chosen for the scene. Allows one summoning and unlimited communication. Free when used on famulus.
- **System:** Simple communication requires no dice pool test. Persuading an animal to perform a service requires a Manipulation + Animalism roll; the Difficulty depends on the task required. Having a bird keep an eye out for anyone entering the park at night is Difficulty 3, while ordering any animal to defend a place with their lives is Difficulty 6.

  Summoning animals uses a Charisma + Animalism roll; Difficulty depends on the scarcity of the animals summoned. The number of animals summoned depend on the margin on the test; a critical win summons most, if not all, animals of the type in the area.
- **Duration:** One Scene

Level 3

ANIMAL SUCCULENCE

The vampire can slake additional Hunger by feeding on animals. In addition, the vampire can consume its famulus, gaining nourishment far beyond what would be gained from an animal of similar stature and absorbing a sliver of its primary trait.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** Feeding from animals slakes 1 additional Hunger, and the vampire counts their Blood Potency as two levels lower in regards to penalties to slaking Hunger from animal blood.

  Consuming one's famulus slakes 4 Hunger, regardless of animal size. This act can never remove the final Hunger die. In addition, consuming one's famulus increases the vampire's Attribute most associated with that animal (as determined by the Storyteller) by two dots. Consuming a cat might raise Dexterity or Composure; consuming a dog might raise Charisma or Resolve. Storytellers may vary the reward from famulus consumption: draining an owl might raise the Attribute in any perception pool by two dots, or in pools involving wise decision making. The bonus lasts until the vampire's next feeding or until their Hunger reaches 5.
- **Duration:** Passive

QUELL THE BEAST

By locking eyes with a target, the vampire cows their inner Beast into temporary slumber. Mortals affected thus become apathetic, unable to take any actions other than to stay alive, while vampires' bestial urges temporarily abate, for better or worse.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Animalism vs Stamina + Resolve
- **System:** Roll Charisma + Animalism vs Stamina + Resolve. A win against a mortal target incapacitates them for that scene, instilling severe lethargy. They act only to preserve themselves, not against the user or anyone else. A win against a vampire prevents the target from performing Blood Surges. While their Beast is quelled, vampires do not score messy criticals. Against vampires, this power lasts a turn plus a number of turns equal to the win margin on the contest. A critical win against a vampire target also ends their frenzy.
- **Duration**: One scene, or a number of turns equal to the test margin plus one.

UNLIVING HIVE

- **Amalgam:** Obfuscate 2

Most often seen amongst the Nosferatu, this unnerving power allows the user to extend their animal influence to swarms of insects such as flies or roaches. Certain vampires even go so far as to adopt swarms as famuli, giving them a permanent home within the folds and orifices of their malformed flesh.

- **Cost:** No additional cost
- **System:** This power extends all

powers previously restricted to vertebrates to insect swarms, treating a swarm as a single creature. The vampire can bind the swarm as a famulus, and some even give it the ability to nest inside the cavities of their body. This hides the swarm from sight while allowing it to nurse the minute amounts of Blood needed to sustain it indefinitely. While nested, the swarm is undetectable by anything less than X-rays.

Swarms do little damage in combat. They have Health 5 and a pool of 8 dice to resist attacks. Swarms take Superficial damage from Brawl; flame and insecticide cause Aggravated damage. Vampires can use swarms for spying, as distractions (resulting in a two-dice penalty on any roll for a single swarmed individual), or to intimidate mortals (add between one and three dice to Intimidation pools, depending on the type of insect and the victim's phobias). Players and Storytellers can doubtlessly come up with even more creative uses of this power.

- **Duration:** Passive

Level 4

SUBSUME THE SPIRIT

The vampire can completely transfer its mind into the body of an animal. They can control the animal and use its senses freely, even during the day should they manage to stay awake. While doing this, the vampire's body lies immobile as if in torpor.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check. Free if used on famulus.
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Animalism
- **System:** Make a Manipulation + Animalism test; Difficulty 4. On a win, the vampire can inhabit the animal's body for one scene. On a critical win, the vampire can inhabit the animal indefinitely.

  Extending this possession into the daylight hours requires the vampire to stay awake (p. 219); seeing the sun requires a test for fear frenzy though the sunlight does not damage the animal being ridden. The user remains oblivious to their original body, but harm to it pulls them out of the trance and releases the animal. Death of the possessed animal also ends the trance, and the vampire takes a point of Aggravated Willpower damage from the shock.
- **Duration:** A scene / indefinitely (see above)

Level 5

ANIMAL DOMINION

The power the vampire holds over beasts is now great enough to command flocks and packs as if they were extensions of their own body. At a gesture, animals lay down their lives by the dozens, even hundreds, to appease their master.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Animalism
- **System:** Chose a type of animal and make a Charisma + Animalism roll with a Difficulty depending on the nature of the animals and the order given. Getting a flock of crows to disperse and look for a specific individual (given some means of identifying their target) is relatively easy (Difficulty 3), but getting a pack of dogs to give their lives in a suicidal attack on another vampire is more of a challenge (Difficulty 5). The power does not allow the user to summon animals, but compels those already present to obey. The vampire can command the animals to return after completing their task, if they have means to do so.
- **Duration:** A single scene or until the directive is fulfilled, whichever is shortest.

DRAWING OUT THE BEAST

The vampire can project their Beast at the moment of terror or fury frenzy, transferring it into a nearby subject, either mortal or vampire. That person immediately experiences the frenzy instead, going on a merciless rampage or fleeing in terror depending on the trigger.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Animalism vs Composure + Resolve
- **System:** Instead of the Willpower roll to resist a terror or fury frenzy, roll Wits + Animalism vs Composure + Resolve of the target. If the user fails, they enter frenzy as though they had failed the Willpower roll. On a

win, the target experiences that frenzy instead of the user. Later stimuli can still provoke frenzy in the user, but they can use this power as long as they can make Rouse Checks and further targets remain available.

This power cannot transfer a hunger frenzy.

- **Duration:** Frenzy duration (see p. 220)

Auspex

I can still feel it, yeah? In my head. I call it "it" even though I know it's her. She got inside my damn head and won't stop laughing. She got in there and won't shut up! I'm sorry. I can be calm. First I thought God was answering my prayers. It said it wanted to get to know me and I'd been so lonely. It started telling me things about myself I'd forgotten. It knew every part of me. It felt nice, I guess, for someone to take an interest.

But then it started using my brain against me. It started telling me what I was going to do before I did it. It started telling me that if I didn't dance to its tune, I'd never be free of it. I didn't want to be alone, but I didn't like where this was going. That's why I took the drill to my head.

The thing is, and listen: I'm not crazy. I know crazy, and I know I look crazy, but I'm not. What I was dealing with was something, someone, projecting her mind into mine and picking me apart when I was at my most vulnerable. I still don't know why she did it other than for some cheap thrills and the combination to my company safe, but now I'm left with the memory of that intrusion and am convinced the only way I can stop it is by killing the woman responsible. That's why I was recruited by the government. All I have to go on is the word "Asylum," but I won't stop until her laughing does.

Nicknames: Voyeurism, Scrying, Anima Visus

Among the greatest gifts and worst curses afflicting vampires, the Discipline of Auspex allows Kindred to discern truth from lies, probe the minds of those around them, and perceive reality on a different level than other beings. What appears to be the ultimate power in foresight and vision grants its wielders perhaps too much knowledge. They may detect an assassin's blade before it strikes or get into an enemy's head to turn them around, but they can also sense every shift in emotion, good and bad, see things they wish they had not, and discern futures they may not wish to explore. Users of Auspex invite paranoia, but using it is addictive. Once you know the truth rests within your grasp, you seek it out at every opportunity.

Kindred use Auspex in many ways. Some vampires act as spies for their courts or factions. Others act on their own, blackmailing mortals and immortals with secrets gleaned from quiet conversations, subtle emotional shifts, and telepathic intrusion. Auspex allows its user to play the role of domain detective, studying the scene of a vampire's destruction for tell-tale spiritual clues or interrogating suspects with unnatural accuracy.

Characteristics

Storytellers may wish to make Auspex rolls for characters in order to more convincingly provide wrong or incomplete answers after failed rolls.

- **Type:** Mental
- **Masquerade threat:** Low. Auspex never by itself manifests in a way visible to the naked eye or causes effects that can't be rationalized, if only as dumb luck.
- **Blood Resonance:** Phlegmatic. Artists (especially photographers) and visionaries, certain schizophrenics, users of psychoactive substances, detectives.

Level 1

HEIGHTENED SENSES

The vampire's senses sharpen to a preternatural degree, giving them the ability to see in pitch darkness, hear ultrasonic frequencies and smell the fear of cowering prey.

- **Cost:** Free (but see below)
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Resolve
- **System:** The user adds their Auspex rating to all perception rolls. If exposed to extreme sensations, such as loud bangs, flashes of intense light or overpowering smells while the power is active the user must succeed on a Wits + Resolve (Difficulty 3 or more) roll to dampen their senses in time, or the overload causes them to sustain a -3 dice penalty to all perception-based rolls for the rest of the scene.
- **Duration:** Until deactivated. Having the power active for longer stretches of time without rest (more than a scene), especially so for high-stimulus environments, might necessitate spending Willpower, at the Storyteller's discretion.

SENSE THE UNSEEN

The senses of the vampire become attuned to dimensions beyond the mundane, allowing them to sense presences otherwise hidden from the naked eye. This can be anything from another vampire using Obfuscate to someone using Auspex to spy upon the character to a ghost in the middle of the room. Dormant Blood Sorcery spells and rituals might also be found with this power, at the Storyteller's discretion.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Auspex or Resolve + Auspex
- **System:** Whenever there's something supernatural hiding in plain sight, the Storyteller makes a hidden roll of Wits + Auspex against a Difficulty they choose. Against an entity actively trying to stay hidden, the Storyteller can call for a blind roll ("Lisa, roll seven dice for me") as a contest against the target's relevant pool. (For example, detecting a vampire using Obfuscate would be a roll of Wits + Auspex vs Wits + Obfuscate) If the vampire actively searches for a hidden supernatural entity, they roll Resolve + Auspex similarly.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 2

PREMONITION

The vampire experiences flashes of insight. These may take the form of raised hackles, sudden inspiration or even vivid visions. While never too precise, these visions can nudge the vampire out of harm's way or reveal a truth previously overlooked.

- **Cost:** Free or one Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Auspex
- **System:** Whenever the Storyteller deems it appropriate, this power gives the character a sudden hint that aids them in some way: letting them find a clue they've missed or saving them from danger. Whether it gives the character a sudden vision of themselves walking into a trap, an inviting red glow over the second right turn during a chase, or the brief flash of a skeleton beneath the floorboards in the Prince's office, this power always gives the Storyteller license to subtly speed up play or move the story onto a desired track. The suggested limit is one premonition per scene, even if more than one character has Premonition.
- The user can also actively provoke a premonition by focusing on a subject, making a Rouse Check and rolling Resolve + Auspex. The number of successes rolled determines the level of insight on the subject, if any.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 3

SCRY THE SOUL

By focusing on a person, the vampire can perceive the state of that person's psyche as a shifting aura of colors. Auras reveal little precise information, but do provide clues regarding many subjects, e.g., emotional state, Resonance, and supernatural traits. If looking for a specific condition, the vampire can cursorily scan the crowd to detect it. Such cursory scans provide no further information.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Intelligence + Auspex vs Composure + Subterfuge
- **System:** Make an Intelligence + Auspex vs Composure + Subterfuge roll. On a win, the Storyteller truthfully answers a number of questions equal to the margin of the roll about the target's aura and psyche, including:
  - The emotional state of the subject
  - The Resonance in the subject's blood
  - Whether the subject is a vampire, werewolf, ghoul or any other supernatural being
  - Whether the subject is under the influence of Blood Sorcery or other magic
  - Whether the subject has committed diablerie in the last year
  - A critical win allows discovery of something unexpected, as determined by the Storyteller

  If scanning a crowd, roll versus a Difficulty determined by the size of the crowd and external distractions, as well as the type of trait being sought. (Finding the vampire in the living room might only be a Difficulty 3, while finding the most nervous person at a crowded rave is most likely Difficulty 6 or higher.)
- **Duration:** One turn, or Storyteller's discretion

SHARE THE SENSES

By reaching out with their mind, the vampire can tap into the senses of another mortal or vampire, seeing, hearing, and feeling what they do. The user still retains their own perceptions and is still aware of their own surroundings, though the effect requires some getting used to. The user decides whether to tap into only one, some, or all of the target's senses. When used on a stranger this power requires line of sight to initiate. However, it can be used over longer distances on someone who still has some of the user's Blood in their body.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Auspex
- **System:** Roll Resolve + Auspex at Difficulty 3. This Difficulty can go up depending on distraction, distance, and other factors, such as the amount of the user's Blood that remains in the target. The target usually remains unaware of the intrusion, but Sense the Unseen can allow the passenger to be noticed. To get rid of an unwanted rider, the victim must beat the intruder at a Wits + Resolve vs Wits + Resolve roll. An Auspex user thrown out this way cannot make another Sharing attempt until the next night.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 4

SPIRIT'S TOUCH

By touching an inanimate object or the ground at a location, the vampire can sense the emotional residue left by those who have handled that object or visited the location in the past. The user gains insight into not only that person, but also what was done and under what circumstances. While rarely crystal clear, the information often provides leads impossible to gain from regular forensics and deduction.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice** Pools: Intelligence + Auspex
- **System:** Make an Intelligence + Auspex roll versus a Difficulty depending on the information sought. Gleaning the emotional state of the user of a murder weapon used a few days before is Difficulty 3, but sensing the surroundings in which a 300-year old letter was written approaches Difficulty 6 or higher. Each point of margin on the roll allows the user to sense roughly one additional previ-

ous handler and set of circumstances, counting backwards from the most recent.

- **Duration:** One turn

Level 5

CLAIRVOYANCE

By closing their eyes and entering a light trance, the vampire becomes master of its surroundings. In a few minutes it can gather information from roughly a city-block sized area (more if outdoors or less populated) that would normally take many hours, perhaps days of legwork and investigation. Once connected in such a way to their surroundings the vampire can also receive information on anything happening out of the ordinary in the area.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Intelligence + Auspex
- **System:** Roll Intelligence + Auspex against a Difficulty based on the security and level of activity of the area. Using Clairvoyance on one's own mansion would be Difficulty 3 while an unfamiliar city block in the slums of a major city would amount to 7 or more. The user adds their base Haven rating in extra dice to the pool when using Clairvoyance on their own haven.

  The Storyteller answers the vampire's questions about the comings and goings in the area, what people have seen and heard, topics of local gossip, recent major shocks or impressions, and so forth. The player can ask roughly one question per point of margin; answers about deliberately concealed information might consume more than one point. A critical win reveals something major, regardless of the questions asked, assuming there is something to reveal.

  The vampire can also clairvoyantly monitor events in progress, though this requires them to remain in the area for as long as the effect is active.
- **Duration:** A few minutes for information gathering, up to a night for vigilance.

POSSESSION

- **Amalgam:** Dominate 3

With this power the vampire can strip the will of a mortal and completely possess their body, using it as their own. While the mind of the subject remains hidden to the vampire, they can do anything and go anywhere the subject could while the power remains active. Using this, a vampire can even experience the sunlight, food, and physical sexuality long denied them, their host paying the price for whatever abuse the vampire wreaks on their body while riding it.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Auspex vs Resolve + Intelligence
- **System:** This power can only be used on mortals. If the mortal is a ghoul, they must first be Blood Bound to the user. Before possession can begin, the vampire must have eye contact with their victim (See Dominate, p. 254). The user then engages in a Resolve + Auspex vs Resolve + Intelligence conflict with the victim in order to inhabit their body. If the vampire's player rolls a total failure, the victim becomes immune to further Possession attempts for the duration of the story.

  Once the vampire inhabits the body of their victim, their own body falls into a torpor-like trance, completely unaware of their surrounding and their own physical state except for Aggravated damage, which breaks the trance and ends the effects. A vampire possessing a mortal can use Auspex, Presence, and Dominate through them. If the user wishes to extend Possession into daytime, they must make a roll to stay awake (p. 219). Failure to stay awake ends the power. Any Aggravated damage to the subject also risks ending the possession – the user must succeed at a Resolve + Auspex roll (Difficulty 2 + damage taken) to stay in control. If the subject dies during Possession, the resulting spiritual trauma immediately causes the user to sustain three levels of Aggravated damage to Willpower.

  This power does not give the user the ability to read the mind, use the skills, or emulate the manners of the victim. Any skills employed use the possessing vampire's rating. The user must make a Manipulation + Performance vs Wits + Insight roll to successfully impersonate the victim's manners, expressions, and the like.

Finally, Possession violates the victim even more profoundly than a Blood Bond. The Storyteller should consider awarding Stains for this action.

- **Duration:** Until ended, voluntarily or involuntarily.

TELEPATHY

At the highest levels of Auspex the vampire can now literally read minds, as well as project their own thoughts into the minds of others. While reading a mortal mind is relatively straightforward, undead minds requires a higher effort to penetrate.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check (plus one Willpower vs non-consenting vampires)
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Auspex vs Wits + Subterfuge
- **System:** The user is not required to roll any dice to project their thoughts to another, vampire or mortal, though they do require line of sight. To read the mind of a mortal within line of sight, roll Resolve + Auspex vs Wits + Subterfuge while looking into their eyes. (Unless the mortal consents, in which case no roll is required.) A win means that the user can discern surface thoughts as a stream of images, with higher margin allowing the user to probe for more distant or buried memories. A critical win gives a coherent picture of the subject's current thoughts and intentions. To read the mind of a non-consenting vampire, spend one Willpower point before rolling.
- **Duration:** Roughly one minute per Rouse Check. Increased to a full scene on consenting subjects.

Celerity

Report #600 – Unnatural Speed

We have now observed on 37 occasions the unnatural speed of the blankbody. The species is capable of bursts of speed and grace, appearing before one of us, moving to the rear, and biting from behind in what is estimated to be fewer than two seconds. Additionally, some rare blankbodies have shown they can continue acting at this fast rate, appearing down the other end of a street in ten seconds when it should take 60.*

There is no known remedy or defense against this quickness, which acts as one of the greatest threats to our termination of the species. It is supposed that they require blood in their systems to act in this way, but we do not know how much or how long said blood fuels their actions.

Current protocol is to record blankbodies of this type from a distance. If cornered by one, permission is granted to detonate a microbomb on the agent's person, as even the fast types do not show resistance to areas of fire or shrapnel. Slowing or destroying one of these creatures is worth a single agent's life.

**at time of report.*

Nicknames: Bolting, Slipping, Velocitas

The ability to strike fast, dodge blows, and escape pursuers allows Kindred to become extremely effective predators. Celerity enables vampires to move faster than any natural creature, though it does more than grant a supernatural speed, with vampires employing it actually appearing to think almost as fast as they act. While some vampires use to slice and stab at enemies without fear of riposte, others simply use it to get from A to B faster than any other person on foot.

Characteristics

- **Type:** Physical
- **Masquerade Threat:** Medium-High. Most Celerity powers are clearly inhuman, the only saving grace being that they're very hard to catch on film or photograph.
- **Blood Resonance:** Choleric. Fear and utter terror, runners, athletes, amphetamine and alkaloid users, habitual players of first-person shooters and other twitch games.

Level 1

CAT'S GRACE

The vampire gains a balance and grace equal to and surpassing world-class trapeze artists. They can walk and even run across ledges and wires effortlessly and can keep their balance on the slimmest of supports.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user automatically passes any Dexterity- or Athletics-based roll needed to keep their balance. Note that this power does not allow them to balance on support that cannot take their weight.
- **Duration:** Passive

RAPID REFLEXES

While their bodies still can't defy the laws of nature, vampires with this power perceive events instantly and can react to them with superhuman alacrity. They can observe incoming projectiles to the extent that they can attempt to dodge arrows and even bullets without available cover.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** With this power, vampires suffer no penalty to their defense pools for lack of cover against Firearms attacks. They can also take a minor action (see p. 298) worth up to two dice per turn, such as readying or reloading a weapon, for free.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 2

FLEETNESS

Their mastery of Celerity now allows the vampire to move and react with dizzying speed.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Add the Celerity rating to user's dice pool for non-combat Dexterity tests. Once per turn the user may also do this when defending with Dexterity + Athletics.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 3

BLINK

The vampire swiftly closes in on a foe, engaging or escaping in the blink of an eye. To an unprepared observer the user almost appears to teleport, a rush of wind the only sign of their passing.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Dexterity + Athletics, or as needed
- **System:** The vampire moves in a straight line toward a target, covering any distance under 50 meters while still having enough time to perform an action, such as an attack, during the turn. If the terrain is in any way hazardous, the character needs to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to avoid stumbling and coming to a halt on the way. The Storyteller may call for other contests as desired, especially if the vampire races a distant foe to an object or an action. Vampires engaging a foe with this power act as if already engaged when the turn begins.

EXAMPLE:

Seo-Hee has Blink, facing an FBI agent 40 meters across hazardous terrain with his Glock 17 out. She wants to get inside the shooter's arc before he can fire. She rolls Dexterity + Athletics vs. the G-man's Dexterity + Firearms. On a win, she can make a Brawl or Melee attack before the Fed can fire. If the agent wins, he can get a shot off at the vampire first, and then she can make a Brawl or Melee attack.

- **Duration:** One turn

TRAVERSAL

With blurring speed the vampire can run or climb along any surface, including vertical and even liquid mediums. While Traversal does

HOW FAST IS FAST?

Vampire does not ask players to move figures on a grid. We don't provide precise meters-per-second equivalents for the speeds attained by Celerity, and even if we did, not every combat turn lasts the same number of seconds. The Storyteller decides how many floors of a staircase a vampire with Celerity climbs in a turn based on the results of the contest with its foes or based on dramatic necessity, not by using dots and multipliers.

But some players want to ground their game, at least slightly, in the specific. Usain Bolt, the fastest human being ever timed, runs nearly 45 km/hour. If you assume a dot in Dexterity equals 9 km/hour running flat-out, you have a thumbnail answer to the eternal question "Can my vampire catch that speeding car?" ("No.") Of course in your game, a dot in Dexterity can mean whatever you need it to mean – but it mostly means an edge over those with one less dot in Dexterity.

not grant insect-like supernatural traction, running up or along walls present little problem. Walking on water remains impossible, but the vampire can run on water for a limited distance given a run-up.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Dexterity + Athletics
- **System:** Make a Dexterity + Athletics roll with a Difficulty of 3 (inclined surface with traction) to 6 (slick vertical surface, open water), depending on the surface and angle. Each point of margin gets the vampire further up or out; a margin of 0 gets to a close target, a margin of 1 to one farther than that, and so forth. The Storyteller should inform the player beforehand if a target is too distant to even attempt Traversal; as a rule of thumb, anything over water farther than 60 meters (or more than 30 stories up a building) probably exceeds this power's range.
- **Duration:** One turn

Level 4

DRAUGHT OF ELEGANCE

The Blood of the vampire becomes saturated with the power of Celerity, conveying a part of that power to anyone who drinks of it. While this is also a first step towards a Blood Bond, already bound thralls or servants have little use for such worries, and even non-bound allies might decide to brave a sip for the sake of temporary power.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Drinking a Rouse Checks worth of Blood directly from the user gifts the drinker with temporary Celerity equal to half the Celerity dots (rounded down) of the donor. The drinker gains the same non-Amalgam powers as the donor's, up to that level.
- **Duration:** One night; for vampires, until the next feeding or the vampire reaches Hunger 5

UNERRING AIM

- **Amalgam:** Auspex 2

The world around them slowing to a crawl, the vampire can aim and throw or fire any weapon at a target as if the target were stationary.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Use before making a ranged attack. The target makes no roll to dodge or defend; make the attack at Difficulty 1. An opponent possessing Celerity 5 can nullify this power by making their own Rouse Check, defending at the same speed.
- **Duration:** A single attack

Level 5

LIGHTNING STRIKE

Faster than the eye can follow, the vampire can strike with fist or melee weapon at such speed that the opponent is unable to defend or take evasive action.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Use before making a Brawl or Melee attack. The opponent makes no roll to dodge or defend; make the attack at Difficulty 1. An opponent possessing Celerity 5 can nullify this power by making their own Rouse Check, defending at the same speed.
- **Duration:** A single attack

SPLIT SECOND

The speed at which the vampire moves catches up with their supercharged perception, allowing them to react to events around them at a moment's notice. Ambushers find their prey already standing behind them, and favors asked are completed before the words leave the supplicants mouth.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- The player can supersede the Storyteller's narration of events, within reason. They can choose to have their character move through a door before it closes, circumvent an ambush after it has been triggered, roll out of the way of an explosion, and so forth. The action taken must be reasonable and should not take more than a few seconds in real time. The Storyteller decides what Skills, if any, need to be checked to successfully accomplish an action begun using this power.
- **Duration:** Roughly one action, as determined by the Storyteller.

Dominate

"Miss Savona, I assume." Talley bowed deeply to the Ventrue prodigy as she and her entourage entered the monument where their meeting was to take place.

"Call me 'Miss,' 'Madame,' 'Lady' or whatever you choose, Hound. Your actions carry more weight than your skill in etiquette." Fiorenza Savona dismissed two of her bodyguards with a gesture, a flick of imaginary dust from her sleeve. "You and your clanmates have done well. We witnessed the burning of four Sabbat Cardinals last month, thanks to your... sacrifice. We are ready to approach the Magisters with serious talks regarding your joining the fold."

Talley smiled, though his smiles were always false, and caught Savona's eyes. "You will dismiss your security immediately." The words cleaved through the Ventrue's mind like a broadsword, wielded without subtlety.

She grimaced and hissed at the Lasombra. "You think to manipulate me so directly? I am not some thinblood or ghoul to be commanded, Keeper!" Each member of her entourage went for their holstered weapons.

"Wait, wait..." Talley was grinning now. "I just wanted to ensure you were not some weak envoy. I prefer diplomacy with strong characters, and clearly, you are that. I meant no offense." Savona's guards froze, awaiting her response. She ordered them to put their weapons away.

Talley bowed again, mentally noting that to get to this Ventrue, he would need to focus on crushing the wills of her servants instead.

Nicknames: Snake Charming, Mesmerism, Mentis Imperium

Dominate grants the vampire the ability to control the actions of others, manipulate their memories, and force living creatures into acts they would not perform of their own volition. At its most basic, Dominate enables a vampire to make a victim forget the feed they just endured or enjoyed. At its most dangerous, it allows Kindred to enslave entire crowds of kine. This is the Beast at its most cruel and controlling.

Dominate acts as a bludgeon to enforce the Masquerade, create submissive servants, and reinforce the self-assuredness of the vampire. When using this Discipline, Kindred feel omnipotent, although the wisest of them know that this too may be shackles of a kind, slipped upon them by the Blood.

Characteristics

Most Dominate powers require eye contact with the victim. Once they establish contact, Dominate holds the gaze of the victim until the user conveys their command or commands, barring interference. Catching the eyes of someone actively attempting to avoid the vampire's gaze requires a contest of the user's Resolve + Intimidation vs the target's Wits + Awareness. It is of course impossible to catch the eyes of someone squeezing their eyes shut or wearing a blindfold, but that person should be easy prey to other tactics.

Using Dominate in combat or in other frantic situations is limited to people attacking or otherwise interacting with the user directly, as everyone else's attention is firmly focused on their own peril.

Unless the user has supernatural means such as Telepathy (Auspex 5) at their disposal, they must command the victim verbally. The victim must be able to hear the user and understand their language.

Without Terminal Decree (Dominate 5), commands resulting in obvious death or serious injury fail automatically. Subjects roll to resist commands resulting in other social or physical harm, such as undressing in public. (See individual powers for details.) Vampires cannot use Dominate to extract information, as the victim becomes a mindless puppet while under its influence. For example, the Compel command "Speak" results in blabbering word salad, while someone Mesmerized to "tell what you know about the assassin" responds "what you know about the assassin." Dominate cannot make subjects do something they could not do on command, such as "Sleep." Ultimately, the Storyteller determines what the Discipline can accomplish, but they should take care that Dominate remains one Discipline of many, rather than the catch-all solution to every problem.

Dominate cuts to the core of vampiric mastery and predation. Thus, vampires must resist attempts to Dominate them. A vampire of lower (stronger) generation can resist Dominate attempts from higher generation vampires by spending a Willpower point, negating the effect completely.

On a total failure on the roll of any Dominate power, that vampire can no longer Dominate that target for the rest of the story.

Dominate threatens Humanity, especially if the vampire has

any Principles involving personal freedom or forbidding violations of human integrity. Using it may incur Stains (p. 239).

- **Type:** Mental
- **Masquerade Threat:** Low. Barring someone Dominating an entire auditorium to jump off the cliffs of Dover, it remains one of the more subtle vampiric powers.
- **Blood Resonance:** Phlegmatic. The blood of the submissive or the dominant, masters and slaves, captains of industry, power trippers, cult leaders and followers.

Level 1

CLOUD MEMORY

By uttering the phrase "Forget!" the user can make the Dominated victim forget the current moment as well as the last few minutes, enough to mask a superficial feeding or a chance meeting. No new memories are formed and if pressed the victim realizes they have a few minutes missing.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Dominate vs Wits + Resolve
- **System:** No roll is required against an unprepared mortal victim. Clouding the memory of a resisting victim or another vampire requires a Charisma + Dominate vs Wits + Resolve roll.
- **Duration:** Indefinitely

COMPEL

With eye contact, the vampire can issue the victim a single-action command, no longer than a short sentence, to be obeyed to the letter. It must be possible to complete the command in a single turn. The Storyteller decides whether to interpret ambiguous commands in an unexpected or unfavorable way; alternatively, the command simply confuses the victim and fails.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools**: Charisma + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve
- **System:** No roll is required against an unprepared mortal victim. Commanding a resisting victim, a victim the vampire has previously Dominated in the same scene, or another vampire requires a contest of Charisma + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve. Commands that go against the victim's nature also require such a contest.
- **Duration:** No more than a single scene

Level 2

MESMERIZE

The vampire can issue complex commands to a victim, as long as they have the subject's gaze and relative quiet in which to issue instructions. The instructions must be carried out immediately to the victim's best ability, and must not contain any conditional actions ("…if you see Henry, give him the document"), as this would require the victim to exercise cognition.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve
- **System:** No roll is required against an unprepared mortal victim. Commanding a resisting victim or another vampire requires a contest of Manipulation + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve. Commands that go against the victim's nature also require such a contest.
- **Duration:** Until the command is carried out or the scene ends, whichever comes first.

DEMENTATION

- **Amalgam:** Obfuscate 2

This subtle power requires nothing more than casual conversation, as the vampire's insidious influence hides between the lines and inflections employed. The victim finds themselves increasingly agitated as their inner demons bubble to the surface, eventually drowning out all rhyme and reason.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check per scene
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Dominate vs Composure + Intelligence
- **System:** After engaging in conversation with a victim, the user can activate this power. For the duration of the scene, the user may attack a single individual each turn in a Manipulation + Dominate vs Composure + Intelligence conflict, causing Superficial damage to Willpower. A mortal who becomes Impaired by this power experiences a nervous breakdown or psychotic break, the shape and nature of which

depends on their personality (and perhaps their blood Resonance). A vampire that becomes Impaired by this power must immediately succumb to a Compulsion, as chosen by the power's user.

If the user wants to affect multiple victims, they need to make a separate Rouse Check for each one.

- **Duration:** One Scene.

Level 3

THE FORGETFUL MIND

The vampire can rewrite whole swathes of the victim's memories, as long as they can keep the victim's gaze and full, uninterrupted attention. The vampire verbally describes the victim's new memories, which the victim then accepts as their own. This power does not allow the user to investigate the victim's true memories; it more resembles blindly painting over the old canvas.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve
- **System:** The user rolls a contest of Manipulation + Dominate vs Intelligence + Resolve. Each point of margin allows the user to add or remove an additional memory. The victim recalls the edits vaguely, foggy ideations that can fall apart under close questioning. A critical win creates a flawless imprint, as real as any true memory.
- **Duration:** Indefinitely

SUBMERGED DIRECTIVE

When using Mesmerize, the vampire can now implant a post-hypnotic suggestion, allowing the command to remain dormant until a specific stimulus occurs. This trigger can be anything from a specific date, to a person ("When you meet Roland, tell him these words"), to hearing a specific phrase. The Submerged Directive never expires; people can conceivably walk around with an order buried in their mind for years. The user can only embed one suggestion per victim.

- **Cost:** No additional cost
- **System:** As Mesmerize, though the Storyteller might want to make any rolls in secret. There's no way of knowing if the submerged suggestion works until the conditions are met.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 4

RATIONALIZE

The vampire's victims now believe that anything they do under the influence of Dominate was a result of their own free will, and defend their actions, however absurd. Long-term exposure to this power can lead to severe mental trauma in the victim.

- **Cost:** No additional cost
- **System:** If pressed on their belief, the victim can make a Wits+Awareness test (Difficulty 5). A win makes them question their own statement, and possibly their sanity.
- **Duration:** Indefinitely

Level 5

MASS MANIPULATION

The vampire can now command entire gatherings of mortals, and in some cases even groups of vampires. The vampire can use this power both to issue instructions and to manipulate memories.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check in addition to the cost of the power amplified
- **System:** The vampire can amplify any of their other powers to affect a group of people, mortal or vampire, at once. All of the victims need to see the eyes of the user. The user makes any needed roll against the strongest opponent in the group.
- **Duration:** As per power amplified

TERMINAL DECREE

No longer hampered by the self-preservation instincts of their victims, the vampire can now issue commands that directly lead to the harm or death of the victim. Mortals can be made to blow their brains out, jump from rooftops, or swallow poison. Vampires can, with a bit of effort, be made to walk into fire or sunlight.

- **Cost:** No additional Hunger cost, but the Humanity cost is potentially severe
- **System:** Terminal commands now must be resisted (see individual powers regarding rolls involved), rather than failing automatically.
- **Duration:** Passive

Fortitude

A deafening rattle like several glass doors slamming shut punctuates the quiet ambience, as a hail of gunfire blasts through the office and into the company's directors. A few slump dead onto the mahogany table around which they were sat, while others writhe on the floor in pain. The gunman flees, dropping his weapon and charging out the fire escape.

A chorus of wounded cries and moans rises from the boardroom, as Mayumi Shibasaki pulls herself from the floor, wiping her hands down her suit, punctured with bullet holes. A few heavy thuds follow, as chunks of metal fall from the material where they sat after finding her flesh resistant to the bullet spray. She looks down at the wounded board members, and sucks a few mouthfuls of blood from the open wounds on display, her mind fixated on two things:

Whoever ordered this hit couldn't have known how resistant her flesh could be.

Whoever ordered this hit would pay for a new damn suit.

Nicknames: Bricking Up, Stone Flesh, Resistentia

Much prized by immortals, Fortitude grants the ability to resist physical and mental assault. Few vampires survive longer than a century without at least a mote of Fortitude, especially in a world where violence is common and not even Kindred are safe. In these nights, fewer vampires use Fortitude to resist the sun than they do to withstand violent harm, fire, and supernatural coercion.

Those possessing Fortitude exemplify the stolid pillars of Kindred society, able to withstand blows and charms without movement or sign of dilapidation. Few vampires feel as secure in their immortality as do elder Blue Bloods and Ferals.

Characteristics

- **Type:** Physical
- **Masquerade Threat:** Medium. Eyewitnesses undoubtedly react upon someone taking a terminal beating or a hail of bullets and getting back up seemingly unhurt. Favorite cover-up explanations include erroneous recollection in the excitement (the bullets only seemed to hit), special effects (YouTube prank), or the tried-and-tested "must have been on PCP" rationale.
- **Blood Resonance:** Melancholic. Survivors of war, abuse, or misfortune; endurance runners; mountain climbers; infantry and special forces; those with very powerful immune systems.

Level 1

RESILIENCE

Endowed with supernatural endurance, the user can strengthen their physical resolve.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user adds their Fortitude rating to their Health track.
- **Duration:** Passive

UNSWAYABLE MIND

The user gains a mystical ability to resist any attempts to sway them through mundane charms, coercion, and wiles. Some exhibit Unswayable Mind as zen-like calm, others as supernatural stubbornness.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user adds their dots in Fortitude as extra dice in any roll made to resist coercion, intimidation, seduction, or any other attempt to sway the user's mind against their will. This power also works against supernatural abilities such as Dominate and Presence.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 2

TOUGHNESS

All vampires with this power exhibit an innate ability to ignore damage that would otherwise inconvenience and even disable others of their kind. While this power alone gives no protection against banes and other aggravated damage, the protection it confers adds up in the long run.

- **Cost:** One Rouse check
- **System:** Subtract the Fortitude of the defender from all Superficial damage sustained. This occurs before halving the damage, and cannot reduce the damage below one.
- **Duration:** One scene

ENDURING BEASTS

- Amalgam: Animalism 1

The user shares a small portion of their unnatural toughness with the animals they influence. Teeming swarms and great beasts alike exhibit a resistance to fleeting injuries almost equal to the vampire themself.

- **Cost:** Free (for famulus); One Rouse Check (for other animals)
- **Dice Pools:** Stamina + Animalism (for non-famulus animals)
- **System:** The vampire can choose to extend some of their Fortitude powers to animals affected by their Animalism. Any animal thus imbued gains additional Health levels equal to the Fortitude dots of the vampire. Using this power on their famulus is free and automatic. To imbue other animals besides their famulus, the user must make a Rouse Check and roll a test of Stamina + Animalism (Difficulty 3). The user can fortify one animal per point of margin. When the effect ends, remove unmarked Health first; this may result in the animal expiring.
- **Duration:** One Scene.

Level 3

DEFY BANE

By preparing themselves with an expenditure of power, the vampire can make themselves temporarily resistant to fire and sunlight as well as other grievous wounds that would threaten them with Final Death.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Survival (to activate reflexively)
- **System:** The user can convert a number of Aggravated damage equal to their Fortitude rating to Superficial damage when sustained. They may not heal that Superficial damage for the rest of the scene. This power converts a number of damage per scene, not per wound or per attack.

EXAMPLE:

Salman has Fortitude 3. During the upcoming brawl, he could for example convert 2 points of Aggravated damage to Superficial, then convert 1 more point of Aggravated damage taken the next turn before his power expires.

  The user can renew this power once expired by making another Rouse Check. If endangered unexpectedly, the user can activate this power reflexively with a Wits + Survival roll (Difficulty 3) upon receiving Aggravated damage. If the user fails the test, the power does not activate; if they win the test, they must make a Rouse Check to pay for the power.
- **Duration:** One scene or until expired, whichever comes first

FORTIFY THE INNER FACADE

Instead of hardening the vampire's physical frame, this power allows the user to protect their thoughts and emotions from supernatural prying. Their mind appears completely blank while their aura is, for lack of better words, flat.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** Increases the Difficulty of using Scry Soul (Auspex 3), Telepathy (Auspex 5), and similar powers on the user by half their Fortitude rating (round up). If the rules allow the user to resist these powers, they add their Fortitude rating to their dice pool instead.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 4

DRAUGHT OF ENDURANCE

The Blood of the vampire becomes saturated with the power of Fortitude, conveying a part of that power to anyone who drinks of it. This is the Fortitude equivalent of Draught of Elegance (p. 254).

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Drinking a Rouse Check's worth of Blood directly from the user gifts the drinker with temporary Fortitude equal to half the Fortitude dots (rounded down) of the donor. The drinker gains the same powers as the donor's, up to that level.
- **Duration:** One night; for vampires, until the next feeding or the vampire reaches Hunger 5

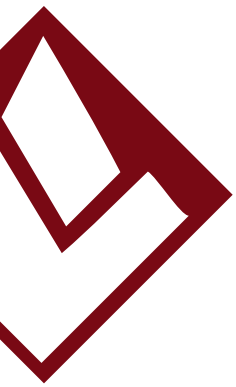
Level 5

FLESH OF MARBLE

The power of the Blood causes the skin of the vampire to harden, taking on a marble-like sheen that

is still supple but stops almost any blow before momentarily breaking and reforming. A vampire using this power is almost impossible to destroy outright, barring a lucky blow or physical restraint.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks
- **System:** With this power active, the vampire ignores the first source of physical damage each turn, including fire but not sunlight. If confusion arises about which source is "first," the Storyteller either decides based on the narrative, or the vampire ignores the most damaging single source that turn. A critical win on an attack roll bypasses this power.
- **Duration:** One scene



PROWESS FROM PAIN

Injuries and impairments now only fuel the powers of the vampire, who grows stronger and faster from each blow, rend, or tear received. Only utter destruction can stop one who calls upon this Fortitude power.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Upon activating the power the vampire no longer suffers any dice penalties from Health damage sustained, such as physical Impairment. Additionally, they can increase one Physical Attribute by one dot (derived stats are unaffected) for each level of damage on their Health track, aggravated or superficial. The user's Attributes cannot exceed a value equal to their Blood Surge + 6 through this ability.

EXAMPLE:

Darin has Blood Potency 3, giving him a Blood Surge of 2. He cannot increase his Physical Attributes past 8 using Prowess from Pain.

- **Duration:** One scene

Obfuscate

Okay, I'll start from the top. I'm just a courier, and after I received word of this order that went through three companies to get to me – clearly someone trying to cover their tracks – and I was given a hush bonus, I said "fuck it, why not." That's how I ended up delivering that box to the mansion. No, I never saw what was in the box, but judging from the setup at that place, I'm guessing it was something computery.

So the guy who answers the door is this butler-looking fellow. Looks normal, if a bit pale and out of a comic book. I just hand over the box and ask for a signature, but he eyes me up and down. He asks me to come inside for my bonus. I've already received one bonus, but hell, what's another? So in I go. The butler wanders off, and someone else comes back. A maid this time. She asks if I want a drink. I tell her I'm cool. I just want my money and to get out.

The maid goes away and the butler emerges again. I'm developing a funny feeling. He hands over an envelope of cash and asks if I want to see the gear in this place. Thing is, I've never been a tech-head, but I decide to look anyway. As he takes me through the house, I see servers, computers, cables all over the damn place. It's a firetrap. I reach out to move one aside as I think my bag will catch on it. That's when it happens.

The butler turns around and he shrieks at me to touch nothing. His face shifts before my eyes. His body too. He turns into this scaly little slime of a man. And then he's the maid. And then he's the butler again. And then he's someone different. And then he's running away into all the shadows I suddenly notice around this place. I get the fuck out.

So yeah, the guy's name was "Maropis," but weird thing: I checked out the mansion again a week later and it was completely empty and dusty, like it had been vacant for decades.

Nicknames: Stealth Mode, Cloaking, Veiling, Occulto

For any hunter, the ability to hide, move without being seen, and employ camouflage proves vital. For the Kindred practitioners of Obfuscate, the Discipline provides the perfect cover to get close to a victim, disguise themselves as harmless, and escape when the heat grows too much.

Obfuscate experts may utilize the Discipline to lurk in the shadows while spying, change appearance in a crowd while under surveillance, or even spread the gift to a group of vampires looking to hide.

Characteristics

Obfuscate powers work through ambient, low-level mesmerism. Observers see the vampire but

their minds choose to ignore it. Witnesses unconsciously move out of the way if the user blocks their path and rationalize their behavior if pressed. Obfuscate affects all five senses unless otherwise noted.

The Discipline does have limits: the illusion fails if the observer cannot ignore the user or if the user backs the observer into a corner. A vampire blocking a doorway cannot maintain Obfuscate against someone walking through it. Likewise, violent action jeopardizes the façade, as does actions like raised voices, failed pickpocket attempts, and weapons raised to strike. Whispering without breaking Obfuscate is still possible.

Generally, the Discipline offers no protection against machine surveillance. A human staking out the vampire has a hard time pointing the lens in the right direction, but automatic cameras and other types of detectors can catch them.

A vampire with Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can detect Obfuscated characters by rolling Wits or Resolve + Auspex vs Wits + Obfuscate. Anyone can detect an Obfuscated vampire who draws attention to themselves; such observers detect such accidental revelations with a contest of Wits + Awareness (or Resolve + Awareness for an active searcher) vs Wits + Stealth. This also applies to surprise attacks from Obfuscate – a victim always has a chance to sense the danger a moment before the strike..

- **Type:** Mental
- **Masquerade Threat:** Low. Avoiding detection is the whole point of this Discipline.
- **Blood Resonance:** Melancholic. The ignored and unseen, the homeless, forgotten, and depressed; spies, pickpockets, excellent servants, roadies and stagehands, and all the background people.

Level 1

CLOAK OF SHADOWS

Standing perfectly still, the user blends into the surroundings. As long as they have some kind of cover, make no sound, and don't move, only mechanical or supernatural means can detect them.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** Follow the general rules for Obfuscate. The effect lasts until the user moves or they are detected by other means.
- **Duration:** One scene

SILENCE OF DEATH

Popular among the Banu Haqim, this power completely silences the user, nullifying all sound made by them. As with other Obfuscate powers, this only works on people within earshot and does not fool microphones or other electronic sound detectors. Unlike Obfuscate in general, this power works only on the sense of hearing, but in exchange operates more robustly. A vampire needs to make a whole lot of noise to break this silence.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user silences their footsteps, clothing, minor collisions, and other sounds of their person. This makes the vampire undetectable if an observer could only notice them by sound, such as when on a different floor of a house.

  This power does not eliminate sounds the user makes outside their personal space (throwing or dropping objects, or slamming doors, for example). Failing that, only Sense of the Unseen (Auspex 1) can detect the user.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 2

UNSEEN PASSAGE

With this power, the vampire can now move around while staying hidden. The user is functionally invisible, per the usual Obfuscate limitations.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** As long as the user emits no overpowering odors and no sound louder than a whisper, this power automatically works. Only if the observer has their attention drawn to the user can they make a detection roll.

  Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can also detect the hidden vampire, as per the general Obfuscate rules.

  Note that the user cannot use this power to disappear while being actively observed; it automatically fails in such a case.
- **Duration:** One scene or until detection.

Level 3

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

The user can now transmit the effects of Obfuscate through electronic media, allowing the vampire to appear invisible or masked when viewed live on screen. If an observer views the image later, as in a photograph or recording, the effect lessens: the image seems slightly blurred, making identification hard. In addition, automated surveillance has a tendency to glitch in the presence of the vampire, lessening their chance of being caught by automated systems.

- **Cost:** No additional cost
- **System:** No additional roll is required when being viewed on a live feed. Treat observers as present with the vampire, with regard to the Discipline. The observer adds +3 to their Difficulty on tests to identify the user on film, video, in photographs, or the like taken during active Obfuscation. The user also gains three additional dice to pools they use when trying to circumvent automated electronic surveillance and countermeasures.
- **Duration:** As power used

MASK OF A THOUSAND FACES

Instead of disappearing, the vampire using this power can make themselves appear as a nondescript stranger, someone expected to be present in the area. Unlike other Obfuscate powers, this allows the user to interact and communicate with those they might run into. They arouse little suspicion as long as their presence is at all plausible (meaning that it will not fool people who do not expect anyone or would be hostile against anyone they didn't know). The power also does not provide any personal identification or other ways of misleading an identity check.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** No test is required. Anyone viewing the vampire sees a forgettable face of the same gender and approximate build and height as the user. Clothes take on the same kind of blandness, depending on the environment. At an office the user might appear as a nightwatchman, while they may seem to wear overalls at an assembly plant. Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can pierce the power as usual.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 4

CONCEAL

- **Amalgam:** Auspex 3

This ability allows the user to cloak an inanimate object such as a door, a car, or a small house. As with other Obfuscate powers, this does not actually make the object invisible, but creates a lingering hypnotic effect that causes most people to simply ignore it. In this case the power is especially effective, given that the object is unlikely to call attention to itself. Unless something causes passersby to collide with it or someone points it out, people behave as if the object wasn't there, moving around larger objects if need be.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Intelligence + Obfuscate
- **System:** The vampire touches the object and rolls a test of Intelligence + Obfuscate against a Difficulty from 2 (Concealing a ring in a drawer filled with other memorabilia) to 6 (Concealing a house in the middle of an open square), depending on the target's size and location. The power lasts for one night. Each point of margin on the win conceals the object for an additional night.

  This power conceals anyone and anything inside the object (e.g., people in a car or shed), as long as the viewer remains outside. This power cannot affect anything larger than a two-story house or any object moving under its own power (such as a moving car). Someone with the Auspex power Sense the Unseen (or equivalent) can notice the object by winning a contest of Wits + Auspex vs the Intelligence + Obfuscate of the user.
- **Duration:** One night, with an additional night per point of margin on the win.

VANISH

- **Prerequisite:** Cloak of Shadows

The vampire can activate Cloak of Shadows and Unseen Passage even while under direct observation. The vampire appears to vanish in the blink of an eye; even the

memory of them becomes foggy and indistinct.

- **Cost:** As per power augmented
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Obfuscate vs Wits + Awareness
- **System:** When vanishing in front of a mortal, roll a contest of Wits + Obfuscate vs Wits + Awareness. On a win, the observer questions whether the vampire was ever there to begin with; their memory clouds on the topic. With a critical win, the vampire vanishes entirely from the observer's memory. This power does not affect vampires' memories, but any win by the user hides them as if they initiated their power unobserved. This power can only be used once per scene.
- **Duration:** As per power augmented

Level 5

CLOAK THE GATHERING

The vampire can shelter their companions under the cloak of Obfuscate.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check in addition to the cost of the power extended
- **System:** The vampire can extend their power of Obfuscation to a number of additional willing subjects equal to their Wits, plus one for each additional Rouse Check made. The Obfuscate power used on the group can be any known to the user, and every member of the group count as having used it on themselves, using the Obfuscating vampire's rating as their own when needed for a roll. Members of the group can still perceive each other while under the effects of the power. If anyone besides the user is revealed, either through their own doing or an astute observer, the rest of the group remains hidden. If the user is revealed, so is everyone else.
- **Duration:** As power extended

IMPOSTOR'S GUISE

- Prerequisite: Mask of a Thousand Faces

With some preparation the vampire can make themselves appear as a specific individual of any build and gender. The user must carefully study the subject, otherwise the charade fails when meeting anyone with more than a casual familiarity with the person being mimicked.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Obfuscate, Manipulation + Performance
- **System:** The user must study the face to be copied for at least five minutes, from different angles. The user requires another ten minutes of observation to mimic the subject's voice and mannerisms. The user can only copy human appearance, not animal form. The Storyteller then makes a hidden test of Wits + Obfuscate (Difficulty 4). A failure means that the resemblance is less than convincing, and anyone close to the person copied notices something amiss automatically. A win creates a convincing illusion, but the user must make a Manipulation + Performance roll to impersonate speech and mannerisms. A critical win creates a perfect illusion with no further roll necessary. Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can pierce the mask as per General Rules.
- **Duration:** One scene

Potence

"I'm not some thug." Theo stood on a broken stage in Berlin, alongside Hesha Ruhadze of the Ministry and Rudi of Clan Gangrel. Three corners of the Anarch Movement, even though the 30-or-so strong audience was mainly comprised of Caitiff and thin-bloods. "And neither are you good guys and girls. None of you are the simple-minded fools the Camarilla claim you are! You were mortal, and now you're not, but you're just as valid as those motherfuckers over in the Ivory Tower!"

A small cry of support resounded throughout the old theatre, as Hesha slowly clapped his hands. Theo continued, walking over to a pillar running from the side of the stage to the ceiling. "We won't take their belittling shit any more! We will not be second class! We we will not be trash to be kicked into the path of the Inquisition!" Theo Bell threw a punch into the concrete pillar, his fist smashing through the stone and out the other side. With a roar, he pulled his arm free and held it up.

The supportive cry was now a cheer. Hesha raised an eyebrow. It was a theatrical gesture, but it confirmed his view: better to be on this side of Theo Bell's fists than the other.

Nicknames: Hulking, Blood's Might, Percutio

There is a popular saying among the members of Clan Brujah: "You only underestimate our strength once." Potence is vitae-fueled strength above and beyond other vampires' capabilities. More powerful than any performance-enhancing drug, more unnatural than the physique of any bulging bodybuilder, Potence is the Beast let loose through the fists, feet, limbs, and raw bodily power of a vampire. The Discipline is used for more than just hitting things, though it is certainly good for this task. It is the vampire's ability to force their body into actions impossible for mortals to replicate.

Potence trumps the other Disciplines in sheer incongruity an elderly-looking Nosferatu strikes harder than a mortal heavyweight boxer or a Brujah Embraced as a child can decapitate a target with one blow.

Characteristics

- **Type:** Physical
- **Masquerade threat:** Medium to high. Lesser exercises of the Discipline might be passed off as "hysterical strength," but once pavement cracks and buildings start to crumble that explanation loses what little credibility it had.
- **Blood Resonance:** Choleric. The strong and healthy; athletes and young men and women in their prime, gym rats, wrestlers, construction workers and lumberjacks, longshoremen.

Level 1

LETHAL BODY

Using this power, the user is capable of causing horrendous damage to mortals, tearing skin and breaking bones with bare fingers.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user's unarmed attacks can now do Aggravated Health damage to mortals, if desired. They also ignore one level of armor per Potence level of the user.
- **Duration:** Passive

SOARING LEAP

Possessing unholy strength in more than arms and fists, the user can leap far higher and further than any mortal.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The user can jump a number of meters equal to three times their Potence level vertically, and five times their Potence level horizontally. The user needs no run-up to make these leaps.
- **Duration:** Passive

Level 2

PROWESS

Vampires with Potence gain far greater strength from their Blood than those who lack it.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** When activated, add the Potence rating of the user to their unarmed damage value as well as to feats of Strength.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 3

BRUTAL FEED

Known as the "Savage Kiss", this power allows the user to employ an unholy inner strength when draining a victim. In mere seconds, the attacker swallows torrents of blood while mauling the victim. The result is an efficient, if messy, feeding often employed in the heat of battle where the mangled remains of the victim can be disguised.

- **Cost:** Free.
- **System:** The vampire can drain a human completely in seconds, usually within a single turn. Every point of Hunger slaked causes one point of Aggravated Health damage to the victim, as their blood vessels burst and organs bruise and rupture internally. Using Brutal Feed on a vampire does only Superficial Health damage to their dead and inert organs.

  In combat, Brutal Feed comes immediately after a successful Brawl attack using fangs. The victim first takes bite damage, then damage from this power. Armor does not protect against Brutal Feed, as the wounds are, or at least begin as, mainly internal.

  Storytellers may decide such mutilation-killing warrants Stains (p. 239).
- **Duration:** One feeding

SPARK OF RAGE

- **Amalgam:** Presence 3

Combining Potence and Presence, the vampire can incite anger and even frenzy in onlookers, as easily as awe or dread. The user must take care not to rile up an angry mob to turn on them rather than the target or each other.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Potence
- **System:** When active, the user can add their Potence rating to any attempt to rile or incite a person or a crowd to violence. In addition, the user can activate this power and roll a contest of Manipulation + Potence vs Composure + Intelligence of another vampire. If they win, the opposing vampire must make a fury frenzy test at Difficulty 3.
- Duration: One Scene

UNCANNY GRIP

Focusing their unnatural strength into their toes and fingers, the vampire grips and burrows their extremities into almost any surface, enabling them to climb and even hang otherwise unsupported from walls and ceilings. Close observation reveals telltale scarring or deformation on these surfaces afterward, however, as this is an application of brute force, not superhero-style adhesion.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** A vampire using this power automatically succeeds on any Skill test to climb a non-metallic surface. The user might also be able to climb copper or bronze cladding or other softer metal surfaces, at the Storyteller's discretion. Thin glass surfaces (though generally not the glass curtain walls of modern office buildings) may shatter under the stress. In the same way, a vampire can hang from a wall or ceiling for up to one scene, though only barefoot vampires can hang by their feet.

  The climb or clinging leaves obvious tracks detectable by anyone with an Intelligence + Investigation test at Difficulty 2. Detecting Uncanny Grip tracks on glass doesn't even require a roll.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 4

DRAUGHT OF MIGHT

The Blood of the vampire becomes saturated with the power of Potence, conveying a part of that power to anyone who drinks of it. This is the Potence equivalent of Draught of Elegance (p. 254).

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Drinking a Rouse Checks worth of Blood directly from the user gifts the drinker with temporary Potence equal to half the Potence dots (rounded down) of the donor. The drinker gains the same powers as the donor's, up to that level.
- **Duration:** One night; for vampires, until the next feeding or the vampire reaches Hunger 5

Level 5

EARTHSHOCK

Their strength an elemental force, the vampire can slam their fist or foot into the ground, creating a shockwave that throws their opponents prone. One of the more dramatic applications of Potence, this power needs to be carefully employed, lest the user literally bring the house down upon themselves.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks
- **System:** No additional test is needed to create the shockwave. (The ground is hard to miss.) Anyone within a five-meter radius of the user must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (Difficulty 3), with the results below. Anyone prepared for the Earthshock (such as the user's companions) can shift their results up by one step.
  - ☐ **Critical Win:** No effect.
  - ☐ **Win:** Knocked off balance. Lose current action
  - ☐ **Failure:** Fall prone. Lose current action; must spend a turn getting up.

  This power causes significant collateral damage. If used on the ground, the earth cracks. If used indoors, furniture breaks and mirrors shatter. On anything but the ground floor the floor might shatter, causing everyone within the radius to plummet to the floor below. This power can only be used once per scene.
- **Duration:** One use

FIST OF CAINE

The vampire's bare hands can inflict grievous injuries, lethal to both mortals and other vampires. They can dismember, pierce, impale, decapitate, and even rip a heart out of the chest.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** For one scene the user can inflict Aggravated Health damage to mortals and supernaturals alike while Brawling, as they literally rend flesh and tear their opponents limb from limb with their bare hands.
- **Duration:** One scene

Presence

So yeah, I snuck in late at night, only to find a whole load of people with picks and shovels, brushes and you know, the normal archaeological paraphernalia. Nobody seemed to notice I was even there, at least not at first. They were all too hard at work, and the odd thing for how late at night it was? They all seemed happy. Like drugged happy.

I got to see the hole they were digging. I got to see the big black sarcophagus – I guess obsidian, but why's there an obsidian coffin in this part of the world? I wanted to get closer, but then this woman, she seemed to be leading the dig, stopped me. She was... I guess "beautiful" is a simple word when describing her poise, her confidence, and her clarity of voice... She asked why I wasn't working and I stuttered and stumbled over myself. I was bewitched. Is that the word? I couldn't look away from her.

Then her eyes narrowed. She told me I shouldn't be there. She looked unhappy. My heart broke. It sounds ridiculous, but somehow I'd fallen head over heels in love with her within a minute. I fell to my knees, but she commanded me to leave, and it was like she was a nightmare from my childhood all of a sudden. She was... She went from love to hate.

I couldn't help but get the hell out of there and never look back. I know where the dig is, and it's still going on, but I'm too terrified to return. What did she do to me?

Nicknames: Superstardom, Enthrallment, Sublimitas

Most vampires are creatures of grace and lethality. Associated with horrific violence and devastating beauty, Kindred embody opposites, alternating between nightmare and dream depending on the onlooker and the vampire's whims. Presence is a Discipline that expresses this bipolar existence. Used to attract victims or disperse them in fear, Presence allows crowd control, emotional manipulation, and enforced devotion. A mortal's greatest fear could stand before them and suddenly look like the most radiant creature on Earth.

Many Presence practitioners use this Discipline to easily acquire feeding vessels, while others use it do stalk the night as creatures of horror, making weak-willed kine flee terrified, unsure of what they've just seen. Effective as a lure as well as a defense, vampires with Presence enjoy an easier nightlife at the expense of forgetting what feelings projected at them are normal and which are compelled.

Characteristics

Presence affects the emotions of those subject to it, not the minds. While this is useful in that victims are cognizant (unlike Dominate), they are not under the direct control of the user and are thus often unpredictable. In order to be affected by Presence, the subject must be in the physical presence of the user or at least within earshot. The Discipline does not transmit electronically unless the user possesses Star Magnetism (Presence 5). Detecting the use of Presence is very hard unless one has access to Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) and can even then be too subtle to notice unless one is looking for it specifically.

Presence power effects do not stack, so someone using Awe and Entrancement on the same subject would only add their Presence rating once for any Social-based Persuasion rolls.

In combat, only the Dread Gaze and Majesty powers have any effect, as charm is of little use when someone has decided they want you hurt.

- **Type:** Mental
- **Masquerade threat:** Low-Medium. A subtle power, people seldom realize Presence has affected them at all. As with most Disciplines, its higher powers can leave puzzled witnesses behind, especially once the effects wear off.
- **Blood Resonance: S**anguine.

The beautiful and lustful, those completely infatuated with the vampire, models and actors and movie stars, compelling public and private speakers from politicians to car salesmen, YouTube sensations and Instagram influencers.

Level 1

AWE

Anyone in the presence of the vampire finds their attention inexplicably drawn to them. Those listening to the vampire speak might suddenly agree on subjects where they once held different viewpoints. While this power doesn't cause rapt infatuation, it is still strong enough to sway the minds of most mortals.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Presence vs Composure + Intelligence
- **System:** Add the Presence rating to any Skill roll involving Persuasion or Performance as well as to other Charisma-related rolls, at the Storyteller's discretion. Anyone aware that they're being affected can try to resist with a contest of Composure + Intelligence vs the user's Manipulation + Presence. On a win, the target can resist the effects for one scene; a critical win makes the target immune for the entire night. Once the power wears off, victims revert to their previous opinions.
- **Duration:** One scene or until intentionally ended

DAUNT

Instead of attracting people, the vampire uses Presence to repel. With this power the user appears threatening and exudes an aura of menace powerful enough to make most mortals avoid their attention and even vampires think twice about acting against them.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** Add the user's Presence rating to any Intimidation rolls. Attacking the user requires a Resolve+Composure roll at Difficulty 2.

  Vampires cannot use Awe and Daunt simultaneously.
- **Duration:** One scene or until intentionally ended

Level 2

LINGERING KISS

The Kiss of a vampire induces near-ecstasy in mortals, but this power leaves other Kisses in the dust. Mortals fed upon by the user become addicted to the Kiss, obsessing over it and even seeking the vampire out for repeated feedings. Mortals often become anemic, self-harm, or even die from this addiction, but vampires find it a useful power for cultivating a herd.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** The vampire can choose to use this power or not during each feeding. The user adds dice equal to their Presence to any subsequent Charisma Attribute-assisted pool against the bitten subject. A mortal fed upon with this power can make a Willpower test (Difficulty equals the user's Presence) every week to resist the effects. Winning this test for three consecutive weeks breaks the effect, as does a single critical win.
- **Duration:** Until successfully resisted

Level 3

DREAD GAZE

Briefly exposing their vampiric nature, the user instills a single subject with utter terror. Mortals are cowed, run, or freeze with fear, while other vampires either submit like whipped dogs or flee in frenzied Rötschreck.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Presence vs Composure + Resolve
- **System:** Displaying their fangs, their face twisted in a predatory grimace, the user rolls a contest of Charisma + Presence against their target's Composure + Resolve.
  - **Failure:** Mortals are unable to act other than in their own defense, backing off for a turn. Vampires are unaffected.
  - **Win:** Mortals run in fear. Vampires are unable to act other than in their own defense for a turn unless they spend Willpower equal to the users margin of win (to a minimum of one).
  - **Critical Win:** Mortals freeze or crumple into a fetal position. Vampires must make a terror frenzy

test (Difficulty 3). If they win, they are still affected as above.

- **Duration:** One turn

ENTRANCEMENT

The vampire focuses their unnatural allure on a single person, instilling in them a rapt fascination or infatuation akin to falling head over heels in love or meeting one's lifelong idol. The person affected does their best to remain in the vampire's good graces, but stops short of causing themselves or their other loved ones physical harm.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Presence vs Composure + Wits
- **System:** The vampire only needs to gain the subject's attention and win a contest of Charisma + Presence vs Composure + Wits. The effect lasts for roughly one hour plus one per point of margin on the win. The vampire can renew this effect indefinitely, but a failure ends the effect and makes the subject immune for the rest of the night.

  After succeeding, the user adds dice equal to their Presence rating to any Social dice pool against the entranced subject. Requests resulting in obvious harm to the subject or their loved ones, or that oppose the subject's Tenets, fail and require an immediate power contest roll as above, or the Entrancement immediately fails.
- **Duration:** One hour plus one per point of margin

Level 4

IRRESISTIBLE VOICE

- **Amalgam:** Dominate 1

The Presence of the user becomes a conduit for Dominate. The vampire now only needs their voice to be heard in order to employ Dominate powers.

- **Cost:** No additional cost
- **System:** The user's voice alone is now enough to Dominate a target. This does not apply to voices transmitted through electronic media such as phones, television, or apartment door-buzzer speakers.
- **Duration:** Passive

SUMMON

The vampire can call to themselves any person, mortal or vampire, upon whom they've previously used Awe, Entrancement, or Majesty, or who has tasted their Blood at least once. The target knows who is summoning them and the user's current location. This calling lasts for a night. After that time, the effect subsides, but the user can repeat it night after night if required to reach the target or if the target is otherwise reluctant. Anyone Summoned feels a pull toward the summoner and tries to reach them, though without endangering themselves physically or financially. They won't sell their house to buy a ticket or miss a vital meeting, but they might skip out of normal work or social commitments.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Manipulation + Presence vs Composure + Intelligence
- **System:** The user needs to concentrate for five minutes and think of the person being summoned, then rolls Manipulation + Presence vs Composure + Intelligence. On a win, the target hears the summoning, but may or may not heed it. On a critical win, the target arrives as quickly as possible, barring immediate risk to their well-being.
- **Duration:** One night

Level 5

MAJESTY

At this pinnacle of the Discipline the vampire can amplify their countenance to supernatural levels. Whether they appear as heartrendingly beautiful, monstrously terrifying, or wielding absolute command, everyone who views them is struck by their image, unable to act or even speak against the vampire. To experience Majesty is to be in the presence of the divine – or the infernal.

- **Cost:** Two Rouse Checks
- **Dice Pools:** Charisma + Presence vs Composure + Resolve
- **System:** People in the presence of the user can only stare, slack-jawed, or avert their eyes in fear or submission. Anyone wanting to act in any way in opposition to the user, except for self-preservation, must successfully win a contest of their Composure + Resolve vs. the vampire's Charisma + Presence. A win allows one turn of freedom, plus

one per point of margin; only a critical win resists the effect for the entire scene.
- **Duration:** One scene

STAR MAGNETISM

The Presence powers of the user now effect people viewing them on live feeds or hearing them over the phone. Recorded images or messages do not retain the effect, however.
- **Cost:** One additional Rouse Check
- **System:** Awe, Daunt, and Entrancement can be transmitted through live feeds via screens or phones. If Entrancement is used, the victim's name must be spoken clearly, as that power only affects one person at a time. Anyone else viewing the same transmission only finds the user charming, but not supernaturally so.
- **Duration:** As power used

Protean

Rudi waded through the shallow waters, looking over his shoulder to see if his pursuers were tracking him now he'd left the land and stopped leaving a trail. He couldn't see them, but he could definitely hear their howls. He cursed. Meeting with lupines was never a safe proposition, but reacting the way he did, brandishing his claws and threatening to take out that werewolf pup's eyes... He should have had better control over his anger. He's not a Brujah.

The Gangrel was no expert when it came to sensing the unseen, but he knew the pack was close. He was still miles from Copenhagen, and would never make it on foot. Stopping for a second, he surveyed the night air and then the water beneath him. To take to the sky and try to outrace the sun, or to bed down for the night in the dirt and silt. He needed blood, but he needed to survive another night first.

The werewolves bayed as they closed on him, only to see the coward Gangrel give a mock salute as he shifted into the earth. The outraged pup swiped at the fetid water and stamped at the ground before being dragged away by her kin.

Nicknames: Morphing, Shapeshifting, Mutatio

Werewolves despise vampires for their possession of this ability. They consider it a mockery of their own nature, as undead beings become wolves or bats, bearing claws and gnashing fangs like one of their own. Yet, Protean has flowed through the Blood for almost as long as the Kindred have existed. The power to mutate, shift form, and become ever-deadlier predators is as natural to the vampire as it is to the lupine.

Practitioners of Protean employ the Discipline for its utility. The power enables a vampire to become a beast, turn their limbs into weapons, or change their shape into clouds of mist to evade capture, glide through keyholes, or slip through cracks in a window.

Characteristics

Protean powers that change the shape or in other ways transform the body of the vampire also affect clothing, swallowed items, and other small (under a few grams) wearables. Protean does not affect larger carried items, including backpacks, duffel and sports bags. For this reason users of Protean often travel light.
- **Type:** Physical
- **Masquerade threat:** High. One of the most overt Disciplines available to vampires, more or less all Protean powers can breach the Masquerade on their own.
- **Blood Resonance:** Animal blood, especially animals matching shapeshifted forms; the blood of werewolves, changelings, and other supernatural chimeras of man and beast.

Level 1

EYES OF THE BEAST

The vampire can will a supernatural red gleam into their eyes, giving them sight even in the total absence of light.
- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** No roll is required to activate Eyes of the Beast. While active the user ignores any sight penalties imposed by darkness, including supernatural. While active, the inhuman appearance of the eyes confers two bonus dice to Intimidation pools against mortals.
- **Duration:** As long as desired

WEIGHT OF THE FEATHER

The vampire can reduce their ef-

fective mass and density, making themselves almost weightless. This allows them to avoid triggering pressure sensors as well as avoiding major damage from falls, collisions, or being thrown. The power cannot be used for longer leaps, as the vampire's strength is proportionally reduced.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Survival
- **System:** If the vampire has time to prepare, no roll is required. As a reaction, such as during a sudden fall, activating the power requires a Wits + Survival roll at Difficulty 3. As long as the power is in effect, the vampire is immune to damage from falls, collisions, and being thrown. The user also avoids triggering devices that rely on pressure, at the Storyteller's discretion.
- **Duration:** As long as desired

Level 2

FERAL WEAPONS

The vampire can extend their natural weapons to monstrous proportions. This usually takes the form of fingernails extending into wicked talons but can also come in other forms such as fangs elongating into veritable daggers, as from a gigantic serpent.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** No skill roll is needed to activate this power. When activated, the vampire adds a +2 modifier to their Brawl damage, and causes Aggravated Health damage to mortals. Superficial damage inflicted from Feral Weapons is not halved.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 3

EARTH MELD

Becoming one with the soil, the vampire sinks into the earth. Unless in torpor, the vampire rises again the following night.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** No test is required, but the vampire must be on a natural surface: rocks, raw earth, grass, etc. This power does not work on concrete, asphalt, or other artificial surfaces. It takes a turn for the vampire to sink into the earth, leaving carried objects behind atop the soil. While in the earth the vampire is aware of their surroundings, except during day-sleep. At those times, disturbances (e.g., digging or loud noises) awaken them or not as with all vampires (p. 219).
- **Duration:** One day or more, or until disturbed

SHAPECHANGE

The vampire can assume the shape of an animal roughly the same size as their original mass. The vampire can only change into one type of animal (usually a wolf, sometimes a large feline or a giant snake), usually one associated with their clan or the type of prey they most commonly feed on. The animal, while usually a spectacular example of their species, shows no signs to a mundane observer of being supernatural.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** No test is required. The transformation takes one turn, during which the user may take no other actions. Upon transformation, the vampire gains the Physical Attributes, senses, and native Skills associated with that animal (see p. 373) and also gains that animal's natural limits of communication, manipulation (most animals can carry one thing in their mouth), and so forth. The vampire can use other Disciplines, at the Storyteller's discretion. (By and large, they can use Auspex, Animalism, Celerity, Fortitude, Potence, and Protean; many powers of Dominate, Obfuscate, and Presence pose problems; Blood Sorcery is completely off the table.)
- **Duration:** One scene unless ended voluntarily before that

Level 4

METAMORPHOSIS

- **Prerequisite:** Shapechange

This power grants an additional animal form to the user, this time also enabling them to change their size. Vampires most commonly metamorphose into bats, rats, unusually large insects, or snakes. (see p. 373)

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Same as Shapechange.
- **Duration:** One scene unless ended voluntarily before that

Level 5

MIST FORM

The vampire gains the legendary power to turn into a cloud of mist, perceivable to the eye but untouchable by anything save fire, sunlight, and supernatural aggression. They can fit through pipes, crevices, and cracks. While strong winds might buffet them, no natural force can disperse the cloud.

- **Cost:** One to three Rouse Checks
- **System:** No roll is required. The transformation takes three turns, though it can be sped up with additional Rouse Checks on a one-for-one basis. While in mist form, the vampire moves at walking pace and perceives their surroundings through mystical means as if there as normal. A vampire in mist form cannot make eye contact or speak. They can use only those Disciplines requiring no physical form or presence, at the Storyteller's discretion. While in mist form the vampire can only be damaged by sunlight, fire, and immaterial supernatural attacks (such as some Rituals).
- **Duration:** One scene unless ended voluntarily before that

THE UNFETTERED HEART

Having mastered the power of Protean, the very insides of the user become malleable, almost viscous. The heart, seat of the vitae and unlife of the vampire, detaches and moves freely, if sluggishly, within the chest. This makes the vampire exceedingly hard to stake as the position of their heart changes nightly, and can even allow the user to free themselves from paralysis.

- **Cost:** Free
- **System:** Increases the Difficulty on any non-combat test to stake the vampire by three. In Melee combat, only if the stake-wielder rolls a critical win does the stake penetrate the user's heart. Even if staked, the user can make a Rouse Check and roll their Strength + Resolve (Difficulty 5) once per hour. A win means they manage to free themselves from paralysis as the stake is pushed out of their body. They cannot attempt such stake expulsion at Hunger 5.
- **Duration:** Passive

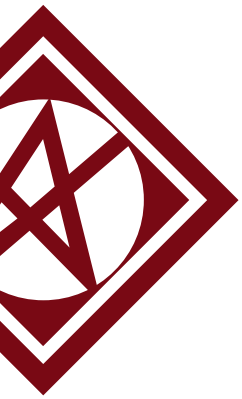
Blood Sorcery

Carna always found this ritual unwholesome, but playing with blood was a dirty business. Calling on her vitae to give strength, she used a warm spoon to pop free the unconscious victim's eyeball. She sighed, quite humanlike, as she twisted the orb from its tether and placed it in her mouth.

Holding her hand out, the eye still in place on her tongue, her clanmate placed a heavy knife on Carna's palm. Without hesitation, she pulled the tip of the victim's tongue out between his teeth, and sawed through the muscular organ. She placed the tip in her mouth, and proceeded to swallow the two components as her fellow Tremere treated the man's bleeding orifices.

Carna turned to study the Thracian text on the wall overlooking this entire macabre scene. The man had resisted her mental compulsions, had refused to translate the work willingly, and would have never succumbed to torture. It was a sad necessity that she would have to take his eye and tongue to read and speak the ancient language known only to him.

Nicknames: A Kind of Magic, Thaumaturgy, Quietus



The Tremere maintain that Blood Sorcery, or "Thaumaturgy" as they call it, was their invention. To hear the Banu Haqim give their version, "Quietus" was their blood right long before the Tremere became vampires. Other clans make the same statements. While its origins are murky, the dreaded nature of Blood Sorcery is not. Few Kindred trust the wielders of a power that can manipulate the vitae in their veins and turn Blood into poison.

Unlike other Disciplines, which could be described as advancing organically through the victims chosen by the vampire, practitioners of Blood Sorcery require teachers. The Tremere once relied on their pyramidic clan hierarchy to arrange tutelage for neonate apprentices, while the Banu Haqim stress the sire-childe relationship as being the best form of mentorship. These nights, many a Child of Haqim washes up in Europe or America far from their sire, and with the Pyramid broken Tremere neonates frantically search through moldy tomes and palimpsests for scraps of true lore. Genuine masters of this Discipline develop their own Rituals, though many guard them from others, revelling in the mystery surrounding their unknown cache of abilities. To practice Blood Sorcery is to twist one's own Blood into submission. Any form of this power reminds a vampire that they're far from human, as no mortal could wield magic in this way.

Characteristics

Blood Sorcery is a special Discipline in that it both confers powers, like other Disciplines, and also unlocks the ability to perform Rituals up to and including the level the user holds in the Discipline. Its regular powers seem comparatively weak, but the versatility of the Rituals more than compensates, assuming the user can learn them. At character creation, a player can choose one Level 1 ritual if they have at least one dot in Blood Sorcery. Characters can buy new rituals at the cost of the ritual's level x 3 experience points. Learning new Rituals during play requires both experience and time. Expect a Ritual to take at least the square of its rating in weeks to learn.

- **Type:** Sorcery
- **Masquerade Threat:** Low-High. The individual appearance of the powers and Rituals in Blood Sorcery varies as widely as their effects.
- **Blood Resonance:** Sanguine. Although not inherent in the Blood itself, Blood Sorcery responds eagerly to blood from human occultists, sorcerers, and cult leaders, as well as hemophiles and bibliophiles.

Level 1

CORROSIVE VITAE

Altering the properties of some of their own Blood, the user can make it highly corrosive to dead substances, able to corrode most items down to steaming sludge, given enough time and Blood shed.

- **Cost:** One or more Rouse Checks
- **System:** No additional skill roll is required. The user concentrates for a turn and forces Blood through an open, usually self-inflicted, wound. The user then spills their Blood on a nonliving object (except unliving flesh such as that of the Kindred) to corrode and decompose it. Each Rouse Check corrodes approximately 35 cm of matter in all directions from the splash; this takes approximately five minutes (longer on soft metals like copper or cast iron). Harder metals such as alloys and steel merely scar and pit; whether they meaningfully weaken remains at the Storyteller's discretion. (This power might corrode through handcuff chains given enough time and vitae.)
- **Duration:** N/A

A TASTE FOR BLOOD

By tasting a drop of blood, the user can discern certain basic traits of the one to whom it belongs.

- **Cost:** Free
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Blood

Sorcery

- **System:** The user dabs the blood on their tongue and makes a Resolve + Blood Sorcery roll (Difficulty 3). With a win, the user can determine the resonance and intensity of the blood if human. They can also identify whether the blood belongs to a mortal, ghoul, vampire, or other supernatural creature (it may not necessarily be able to identify the supernatural creature if not Kindred or ghoul). Tasting vitae also determines the relative Blood Potency (and thus the likely generation band) of the vampire. A critical win also reveals whether the subject has ever committed diablerie, and the generation (within one) of the vampire. If the user knows of the supernatural creature in question, they can identify the specific supernatural creature on a critical win after tasting the blood.
- **Duration:** N/A

Level 2

EXTINGUISH VITAE

The user can intentionally remove the unlife-giving properties of some of the Blood in another vampire, stoking their Hunger as the victim's inner reserves curdle into impotence.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Intelligence + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Composure
- **System:** The user rolls a contest of Intelligence + Blood Sorcery vs the Stamina + Composure of a target vampire in line of sight while concentrating for a turn and gesturing subtly. A win increases the target's Hunger by one while a critical win increases it by two. The victim can discern who afflicts them if they can see the user while making an Intelligence + Occult vs Wits + Subterfuge roll.
- **Duration:** N/A

Level 3

BLOOD OF POTENCY

The vampire can concentrate their Blood, increasing its potency temporarily.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Blood Sorcery
- **System:** The user makes a Resolve + Blood Sorcery roll against a Difficulty of 2 + their Blood Potency. A win increases their Blood Potency by one for that scene; a critical win increases it by two. The vampire can use this power to exceed their generation limit on Blood Potency during its duration.
- **Duration:** One scene or one night

SCORPION'S TOUCH

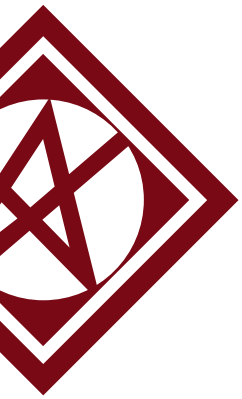
The vampire can transmute some of their Blood into a paralyzing poison, capable of affecting mortals and vampires alike. They can use this ichor to coat bladed weapons, or even spit it at a target. Scorpionated Blood incapacitates affected mortals, while hampering vampires if not necessarily rendering them helpless. Specific breathing and biofeedback exercises practiced by some secret societies form the best defense against this Blood, aside from Fortitude.

- **Cost:** One or more Rouse Checks
- **Dice Pools:** Strength + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Occult or Fortitude
- **System:** The user concentrates for a turn and forces Blood through an open, usually self-inflicted, wound. Each Rouse Check worth of poison made takes a turn and emits enough Blood to coat one bladed melee weapon stickily or to fill one mouthful to be spat at a foe. Spitting poison at someone involves a Dexterity + Athletics attack roll (which can be dodged like any ranged attack), although vampires have been known to French kiss a victim and transfer the poison that way. Even more subtle vampires scorpionate their Blood to poison would-be diablerists: drinking poisoned Blood from the vein guarantees a hit! Aside from such vein-to-fang transmission, however, scorpionated Blood is a contact poison that sublimes away in liquids and is too viscous to inject with a syringe. The user cannot poison beverages with it or (thanks to the pressure differential) inject it by their own bite. Arrowheads and bullets carry too little Blood to use this power with ranged weapons; the ef-

fect does not last long enough for the user to fill hollow bullets with scorpionated Blood.

If the poison hits, the user rolls a contest of Strength + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Occult. (Vampires with Fortitude may resist with Stamina + Fortitude.) If the user wins, the poison does the margin in Aggravated Health damage to mortals and in non-halved Superficial Health damage to vampires. A mortal who takes even one point of damage collapses unconscious.

- **Duration:** The poison remains potent for one scene



Level 4

THEFT OF VITAE

Through mystical means the vampire opens a wound in a major artery of a mortal victim, blood shooting out through the air in a stream toward the open mouth of the user. This has the additional effect of keeping the mortal subdued as if in the throes of the Kiss, and the wound closes by itself once the effect ends, whether the victim expired or not. This power is extremely spectacular and a potential Masquerade breach while in progress, but once ended leaves no traces.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Blood Sorcery vs Wits + Occult
- **System:** The user makes a beckoning gesture toward a mortal target in line of sight and rolls their Wits + Blood Sorcery vs Wits + Occult. A win opens an arterial wound, and the vampire can start feeding from across the room. (A target wearing full-body protection such as a hazmat suit merely bleeds ecstatically out into the suit.) The user can do nothing else while feeding, but they can feed at twice the normal speed (at triple speed on a critical win) thanks to the sorcerous pressure of this power.
- **Duration:** One feeding

Level 5

BAAL'S CARESS

The vampire can transmute their Blood into an extremely aggressive poison, lethal to mortal and Kindred alike.

- **Cost:** One or more Rouse Checks
- **Dice Pools:** Strength + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Occult or Fortitude
- **System:** This power uses the same system (and its poison has the same restrictions) as Scorpion's Touch (p. 273), with increased damage.

If the poison hits, the user rolls a contest of Strength + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Occult. (Vampires with Fortitude may resist with Fortitude in lieu of the Occult Skill.) If the user wins, the poison does the margin in Aggravated Health damage to mortals and vampires alike. A mortal who takes even one point of damage dies instantly.

If a vampire target takes Aggravated damage from this poison, the user rolls the contest again; on a win, the vampire enters torpor when next they go to sleep.

- **Duration:** The poison remains potent for one scene

CAULDRON OF BLOOD

This gruesome power lets the user boil the blood of a victim in their own veins, causing massive damage and excruciating pain. While there are more efficient ways to kill, few methods approach this level of cruelty.

- **Cost:** One Rouse Check and gain one (or more) Stains
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Blood Sorcery vs Composure + Occult or Fortitude
- **System:** The user pays the cost and touches the victim (Dexterity + Athletics in combat or similar situations), rolling a contest of Resolve + Blood Sorcery vs Composure + Occult. (Vampires with Fortitude may resist with Composure + Fortitude.) On a win, each point of margin causes one point of Aggravated damage in the victim. Mortals taking at least one point of damage die screaming. Vampire victims add 1 Hunger per point of damage inflicted, until Hunger is at 5.
- **Duration:** One turn

Rituals

Unless otherwise noted, performing a ritual requires a Rouse Check, five minutes per level to cast, and

a winning Intelligence + Blood Sorcery test (Difficulty = Ritual level + 1). Rituals usually require additional ingredients, though some need only the uninterrupted concentration of the user, and often involve the mingling of Blood with ingredients chosen according to the principles of sympathetic magic or alchemy. Unless otherwise stated the caster can only perform beneficial rituals on themselves.

Wards

The Tremere employ Wards extensively, basing them on their Hermetic traditional sigils. Banu Haqim Wards usually involve gematriac or abjadic writing, rather than occult symbols, but the methodology remains the same in both cases. Wards consist of a glyph or line of script keyed to repel a single type of supernatural, called "the trespasser" in these rules. When touched, they cause something like an electric shock to the trespasser's mind and body, imparting both physical burns and a sudden bout of sheer terror. The ward does not work on forced contact – a warded sword will not trigger the ward when striking a trespasser, but it will if a trespasser tries to pick it up.

Wards can only cover a space about a meter across: for example, a caster cannot ward a whole car, but they can ward a steering wheel. The caster pours their Blood on the object to be warded, tracing the glyph in it with their bare finger. Once the caster wipes the Blood off, the ward becomes invisible. The Ward lasts until the warded object is physically destroyed or broken; the trespasser cannot do this.

Do not make the Ritual roll until the first time the trespasser touches the Ward, triggering its effect. Gloves or other garments offer no protection. If the caster wins the Ritual test, the victim suffers one point of Aggravated Health damage. On a critical win, damage for this Ward is three points of Aggravated damage. The caster does not need to make the Ritual roll for each trespasser touching the Ward, only the first. Anyone affected who wants to touch the warded object again must spend a point of Willpower and then win a Stamina + Resolve test (Difficulty 4, or 7 for a critical-success Ward) to make the attempt.

Sense the Unseen (Auspex 1) can detect a Ward with a contest of Intelligence + Auspex vs the caster's Intelligence + Blood Sorcery.

WARDING CIRCLES A Warding circle resembles a regular Ward, painted on the ground or floor. It requires three times the ritual ingredients of a regular Ward of the same type. Knowledge of one Ward does not convey knowledge of its corresponding Warding circle, or vice versa. Trespassers who attempt to cross a Warding circle suffer its effect. Unless the caster inscribes the Warding circle "pointing inward" around the trespasser in the first place, it does not block attempts to leave the circle.

Its rules differ from regular Wards in a few respects: It costs three Rouse Checks worth of Blood

to paint the circle and pentacles, which can cover up to a three-meter radius. It takes one full night to cast and a Ritual roll made at the time (at +2 to Difficulty) if the caster wants it to last a year and a day; otherwise it dissipates at dawn.

When the trespasser attempts to cross the circle, roll a contest of Intelligence + Blood Sorcery vs the trespasser's Willpower. (If the Storyteller or player wrote down the result of the original Ritual roll used to cast a year-long Warding circle, they can use that result here.) If the Warding circle fails, the trespasser can enter it. If the caster wins, the trespasser takes three points of Superficial Health damage (three points of Aggravated damage on a critical win) and cannot enter. The trespasser must spend a point of Willpower to attempt to enter the circle again. If the trespasser wins the contest, enters the circle and leaves it again, they must repeat their half of the contest (the caster's initial result remains) to re-enter it.

Level 1

BLOOD WALK

This Ritual expands upon the power A Taste for Blood allowing the user to learn more details about the subject studied, assuming the subject is a vampire.

- **Ingredients:** A silver cup filled with Blood from the subject. (One Rouse Check's worth)
- **Process:** The user mixes their Blood with the subject's and repeats an incantation over the cup, spending an roughly an hour.
- **System:** A win on the Ritual roll (see General Systems) allows the user to learn the generation and name of the subject as well as the subject's sire. A Critical Win also informs the user of any Blood Bonds active on the subject, as regnant or thrall.

CLINGING OF THE INSECT

The vampire gains the ability to cling to walls like a grotesque insect or spider.

- **Ingredients:** A living spider
- **Process:** The caster fills a vial with their own Blood and crushes the spider into it, mixing the ground bits with the Blood before ingesting it. (This does not refund any Hunger gained.) The caster can only perform this ritual on themselves; others gain no benefit from drinking the mixture.
- **System:** A successful Ritual yields the ability to cling to walls and ceiling for a scene, while a critical win extends the duration to a whole night. The caster must cling to the surface with both hands and feet; they move at approximately half their usual rate.

CRAFT BLOODSTONE

This Ritual results in a Bloodstone, a magical tracker to which the caster always knows the direction as well as general distance. As the Camarilla retreats from modern technology, this previously neglected Ritual has seen a resurgence in use.

- **Ingredients:** A pebble of iron ore or a small magnet and a liter of blood from any source in a silver bowl
- **Process:** The user spills their Blood into the blood in the bowl and then recites a chant over it for an hour, repeating the chant over the next two nights. The pebble (or magnet) absorbs the blood over the three nights; upon successful completion, the liquid appears translucent.
- **System:** Make the Ritual roll at the end of the third night. On a win the caster attunes their mind to the Bloodstone. The caster can unerringly sense the direction and distance to the stone. This effect lasts until the Bloodstone is destroyed or a week has passed. A caster can have and keep track to a number of stones up to their Resolve.

WAKE WITH EVENING'S FRESHNESS

Performed before dawn, this ritual allows the caster to awake at any sign of danger, fully alert as if awake during the night.

- **Ingredients:** The burnt bones and feathers of a rooster
- **Process:** The caster mixes the ashes with their own Blood, drawing a circle with the mixture around their place of sleep.
- **System:** Do not make a Ritual roll unless true danger appears. If the caster is threatened during the day, make the Ritual roll then, with the caster rousing on a win. For the duration of the scene the vampire ignores the daytime penalties

for staying awake. On a critical win, the effects last until the following dawn.

WARD AGAINST GHOULS

Wary Tremere created this ritual to protect themselves from the minions of vengeful rivals.

This ward uses the standard rules for Wards (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** Nothing apart from the usual requirement of the caster's Blood.

Level 2

COMMUNICATE WITH KINDRED SIRE

The caster uses the bond between sire and childe to open a bridge between minds, allowing the childe to create a telepathic link for the purpose of long-distance communication. As with some other Rituals, this one sees a resurgence in these nights of wiretaps and electronic surveillance.

- **Ingredients**: An object previously possessed by the sire and a silver bowl filled with clear water.
- **Process**: The caster submerges the object in water and lets their Blood drip into the bowl, concentrating upon the last memory of their sire for up to 30 minutes.
- **System**: Make the ritual roll after 15 minutes have passed. A win allows for ten minutes of two-way silent mental communication once 15 more minutes have passed. A critical win allows immediate communication. Any major disturbance on either end breaks the connection.

EYES OF BABEL

By ingesting the tongue and an eye of a person the caster gains the ability to read and speak any language known by the victim.

- **Ingredients:** A fresh eye and tongue of a person
- **Process:** Plucking the ingredients fresh from the victim, the vampire chews and swallows them. (This most likely incurs a Stain.)
- **System:** The Rouse Check required for this ritual allows for the supernatural dissolution of the ingredients once swallowed. Once this is done, make the Ritual roll. A win gives the caster the ability to read and speak any language known by the victim, at the same skill level for a week. A critical win extends the duration to a month.

ILLUMINATE THE TRAIL OF PREY

The ritual allows the caster to perceive the previous whereabouts of a designated person as a subtly glowing trail, visible only to them.

- **Ingredients:** A white satin ribbon.
- **Process:** The performer of the ritual soaks the ribbon in their own Blood, setting it alight.
- **System:** If the Ritual roll is a win the ribbon catches fire despite being wet, burning fiercely like a fuse. Once consumed, the ritual takes effect. While the ritual remains active, the caster can follow faint traces of the target even in areas where they left no tracks, such as crowded cities. To follow the tracks, the caster makes an Intelligence + Survival roll against a Difficulty equal to 6 minus the margin on the ritual test. The target must be known by face by the caster, who sees the path travelled by the victim over the previous 24 hours. The path remains visible for the entire night; a critical win extends this to two nights.

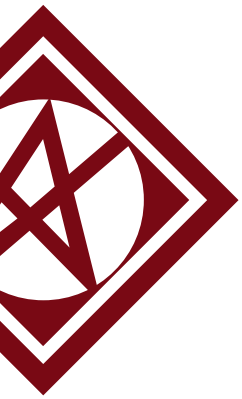
TRUTH OF BLOOD

Until recently known only to Banu Haqim viziers, this Ritual creates a mystic potion capable of sifting lies from truth. This Ritual has power enough even to sometimes uncover facts unknown to the speaker.

- **Ingredients:** One pint of blood from the subject
- **Process:** The performer of the Ritual mixes their own Blood with that of the subject in a vessel large enough to allow for the dipping of the finger.
- **System:** Instead of the regular Ritual roll, the caster immerses their finger in the mixture and makes a Resolve + Blood Sorcery vs Composure + Occult roll for every statement made by the subject. The first failed contest ends the Ritual. A Win tells them whether that statement is true, as far as the subject knows. On a critical win by the caster, the subject involuntarily expands upon their answer, providing more information, including details they glancingly saw or subconsciously forgot. (The Storyteller should inform the

caster if there is no more information about that topic.) The mixture bubbles and seethes during the process, turning completely to ash at the end of the scene.

This Ritual cannot pierce Cloud Memory, the Forgetful Mind, or other memory-wiping powers. The caster may well guess the cause of a blank or foggy recollection, but cannot recover the actual memory.



WARD AGAINST SPIRITS

This Ritual wards an item against incorporeal beings suchs as wraiths, ghosts, and elemental spirits. Any attempt by them to manipulate or pass through the item triggers the effect.

This ward uses the standard rules for Wards (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** A handful of salt (in some versions, a handful of brick dust) mixed with the Blood.

WARDING CIRCLE AGAINST GHOULS

This Ritual creates a circular Ward on the floor or ground, intended to prevent the passage of ghouls.

This ward uses the standard rules for Warding circles (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** The caster draws the Warding circle with a human bone dipped in the Blood.

Level 3

DAGON'S CALL

A terrifying technique employed by the assassins of the Banu Haqim, this Ritual lets the user rupture the very blood vessels of the victim from afar, having only touched them but briefly previously. Mortals expire rather messily, and even vampires must fear this silent killer.

- **Ingredients:** A gold inlaid ceremonial dagger
- **Process:** Before proceeding with the ritual the victim must be exposed the caster's Blood, either by drinking it or having it touch an open wound or even their bare skin: a single drop smeared across the arm is enough. After an hour but before a week has passed the caster can perform the ritual by piercing their own skin with the ceremonial dagger, shedding blood. As their Blood hits the ground the ritual takes effect.
- **System:** Make a Resolve + Blood Sorcery vs Stamina + Resolve roll. Every point of margin on a win does a point of damage to the victim, as their blood vessels burst and their lungs fill with blood. This damage is Aggravated for mortals, but only Superficial on vampires. The caster can repeat this process up to two more times, each time requiring them to make an additional Rouse Check.

DEFLECTION OF WOODEN DOOM

By performing this ritual the vampire protects themselves from being staked. The first stake that would pierce their heart shatters before penetrating the skin.

- **Ingredients:** Wood splinters or shavings
- **Process:** The vampire mixes the shavings with their Blood and draws a circle around themselves. They must then meditate in this circle for an hour, concluding by placing one splinter of wood under their tongue.
- **System:** Make no Ritual roll until the vampire is staked. If the Ritual roll is a win, the stake shatters as it touches the skin of the vampire. (A critical win blinds the attacker for two turns, showering their face with splinters.) This only works on genuine attempts at staking – merely holding the stake against the vampire does not trigger the effect. The protection lasts until the end of the night or until the splinter is removed from under the tongue of the vampire, whichever comes first.

ESSENCE OF AIR

The caster creates a potion that when imbibed allows for limited flight. The Camarilla frowns upon the use of this Ritual, due to the extreme risk of Masquerade breaches; for this reason, its popularity has lessened considerably in the modern nights.

- **Ingredients:** Leaves and berries of belladonna
- **Process:** The caster steeps the belladonna in their Blood, reducing the brew over a brazier while incanting words of power.
- **System:** Make the Ritual roll when reducing the mixture. (A

critical win prepares two doses worth of potion.) The caster can tell whether the ritual succeeded, so they won't end up with a dud. The resulting black potion retains its potency for a night and activates when imbibed. The potion enables the caster (and only them) to fly or hover at approximately running speed for a scene. The caster can carry a human-sized mass, though their speed drops to walking speed. Grabbing and carrying aloft an unwilling subject, or pulling the flier to the ground, both require a contest between the caster's Strength + Blood Sorcery and the other's Strength + Athletics.

FIREWALKER

A painful ritual to perform, this allows the caster to make themselves and even their comrades resistant to fire.

- **Ingredients:** A fingertip of the caster
- **Process:** The vampire cuts one of their fingertips off and burns it together with their Blood in a golden chalice or bowl.
- **System:** Make a Stamina + Resolve test (Difficulty 3) to cut off a fingertip. On a winning Ritual roll, a bluish flame consumes the Blood and fingertip, signaling the completion of the ritual. For the rest of the night fire damage to the caster is halved. This ritual can be performed on others, but the fingertips sacrificed must all belong to the caster. The mutilation is not enough to count as damage to the caster; the fingertip regrows during day-sleep.

WARD AGAINST LUPINES

This Ritual wards an item against werewolves, in any form. Any attempt by them to touch the item triggers the effect.

This ward uses the standard rules for Wards (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** A handful of silver dust mixed with the Blood.

WARDING CIRCLE AGAINST SPIRITS

This Ritual creates a circular Ward on the floor or ground, intended to prevent the passage of spirits. Although more difficult than some Warding circles, it is one of the most commonly found in grimoires and other sources. A human occultist could potentially reconstruct a functioning version of this Ritual with an Intelligence + Occult test (Difficulty 6), although they could not cast it without vitae or some other supernatural aid or element.

This ward uses the standard rules for Warding circles (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** The caster draws the Warding circle with an iron knife dipped in salt and Blood.

Level 4

DEFENSE OF THE SACRED HAVEN

The performer of this powerful ritual can ward their haven against the sun itself, protecting their resting place from penetration by its destructive rays as a mystical darkness blankets the area.

- **Ingredients:** Nothing but the Blood of the caster
- **Process:** The caster inscribes a number of sigils and glyphs on and around the area to be protected. They must take special care on windows and doorways, but may even ward an open doorway if the area is indoors. (The ritual wards gray or liminal areas, such as ruins, at the Storyteller's discretion.)
- **System:** The process takes an hour or more, depending on the state or the area to be warded. The area can be no larger than a circle with a six-meter radius. The ritual automatically fails if the caster steps out of the area at any time after the warding is complete. The caster makes the Ritual roll once the sun rises. On a Win, shadow blankets the area, closing off any view of the outside but also preventing any sun damage to the vampires within. On a critical win, those inside can spy the outside world dimly. The Ritual lasts through an entire day unless ended by the caster stepping outside the area.

EYES OF THE NIGHTHAWK

Related to the primitive powers of Animalism, this Ritual allows the caster to possess a carnivorous fowl, usually a raven or a bird of prey, directing its flight and seeing through its eyes. Parrots and mynahs, not being carnivores, cannot be used in this Ritual. Some Tremere spent years training crows or ravens to speak before using them

as nighthawks; with the Pyramid disrupted, fewer Warlocks have the spare time now.

- **Ingredients:** The eyes of the bird used, taken at the conclusion of the Ritual
- **Process:** The caster feeds their Blood to the bird and enters a trance.
- **System:** On a winning Ritual roll the caster can control the bird and see through its eyes. On a critical win, the bird can perform simple actions under control, such as picking up objects or manipulating keys or dials. The caster can use most non-physical Disciplines through the bird, even Dominate assuming the caster has Telepathy (p. 252) or some other way to communicate with targets non-verbally. There is no limit to the range the bird can fly, though unless the caster plucks the eyes out of the bird at the end of the night they themselves suffer blindness for three nights to come.

INCORPOREAL PASSAGE

The caster assumes an incorporeal state, not unlike a ghost, able to freely pass through objects and rendered totally immune to physical damage. They cannot interact physically with the material world except by sight and speech.

- **Ingredients:** A mirror
- **Process:** The caster spills their Blood on the mirror, chanting, and then breaks it.
- **System:** Make a Ritual roll. If the roll is a win, the caster assumes an incorporeal form as long as they hold a shard of the broken mirror. While incorporeal, the caster remains immune to everything except fire, sunlight, and arcane weapons and rituals capable of damaging spirits. The caster can still be seen and heard but cannot interact physically with anything or anyone. They cannot Rouse the Blood while incorporeal. Incorporeal casters have no access to any spirit realm; the ritual does not make them wraiths or spirits. The caster can walk through walls and other objects but must do so in a straight line; they cannot change direction while inside solid matter. This Ritual lasts for one scene or until the caster drops the shard. Returning to the material while inside solid matter can result in anything from destruction to entombment to minor inconvenience (the ashtray is stuck halfway through the caster's arm); the Storyteller decides the precise outcome.

WARD AGAINST CAINITES

This Ritual wards an item against all vampires except the caster. Any attempt by them to touch the item triggers the effect. However, a vampire examining the Ward with Auspex can read the name of the caster in it with a successful contest of Intelligence + Auspex vs. the caster's Intelligence + Blood Sorcery.

This ward uses the standard rules for Wards (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** Ash warm from a still-burning fire; casters risk terror frenzy, and cannot inscribe this Ward that night if they succumb to it.

WARDING CIRCLE AGAINST LUPINES

This ward uses the standard rules for Warding circles (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** The caster draws the Warding circle with a silver knife dipped in wolfsbane and Blood.

Level 5

ESCAPE TO TRUE SANCTUARY

By preparing two mystic circles in an arduous ritual the caster can instantly travel from one to the other. The journey is one-way, and the caster must designate one circle for departure while the "arrival" circle serves as an exit.

- **Ingredients:** Two charred circles of approximately a meter in diameter.
- **Process:** The caster burns the circles into the ground or floor with an open flame, then consecrates each circle. Consecration requires two hours of chanting per night and two Rouse Checks, for three consecutive nights. In total, this ritual takes twelve Rouse Checks worth of Blood from the caster.
- **System:** Once the circles are complete the caster need but step into the one designated for departure and concentrate for a turn, making a Ritual roll. (The caster makes the Ritual roll each time they attempt to travel, but can only make one

attempt per scene.) On a win the caster vanishes, reappearing in an instant in the middle of the exit circle. There is no limit to the distance between the two circles, but they must be inscribed on the ground or on the floor of a building, not on the floor of a vehicle. The caster can transport one person or an object or objects totaling roughly human mass with them. Damaging either circle ruins the ritual completely and renders both circles inert. A vampire can only have one pair of these circles functional at any given time.

HEART OF STONE

Performing this ritual turns the caster's unliving heart to stone. This makes them immune to stakes but also, through some fluke of sympathetic magic, completely remorseless and cold-hearted automatons totally unreceptive to emotional and social cues. Even more so than normal.

- **Ingredients:** A stone slab and a wax candle drenched with the Blood of the caster
- **Process:** The caster lies on the stone slab with the candle on their chest letting it burn down to nothing over the course of a night. As the fire reaches their chest, it causes one point of Aggravated damage and forces a terror frenzy roll (Difficulty 3). If the caster fails the frenzy roll, the ritual ends. If the caster does not enter frenzy, they make the Ritual roll. On a win the ritual completes; a critical win heals the candle-fire damage. The effect persists indefinitely, and should the caster wish to reverse the process they must repeat the ritual.
- **System:** While under the effect of the ritual, the caster's heart is literally made of stone. Stakes fail to penetrate it, breaking if forced. The caster also exhibits a complete emotional detachment, subtracting three dice from any Remorse rolls as well as active (not resisting) Social-related rolls, except for Intimidation and Dominate. The caster cannot employ Presence but gains three bonus dice to pools used to resist the effects of that Discipline.

SHAFT OF BELATED DISSOLUTION

The Kindred fear few weapons as they fear the dreaded stake created by this ritual. Thought to be the origin of the myth regarding stakes as the ultimate tool for slaying vampires, the Shaft of Belated Dissolution not only seeks out the heart of the vampire it's aimed at but actually causes Final Death when reaching its target. If need be, the Shaft works toward this goal as a splinter, inching its way through the target vampire's body to reach its goal.

- **Ingredients:** A stake carved of rowan wood, inscribed with baneful runes
- **Process:** The caster drenches the stake with two Rouse Checks worth of their Blood,

while blackening it in an oak-wood fire while reading incantations over it. The ritual takes five hours to complete.

- **System:** This stake confers a three-dice bonus to any pool on any attempt to stake a vampire, whether hammered in while the victim sleeps, wielded in melee, or fired from a crossbow. The caster need not wield the stake themselves. If the attack roll wins with a margin of five or better, the vampire withers to dust in a single turn as if consumed by an invisible fire. If the stake hits, but the roll has insufficient margin (under five) to pierce the heart, the stake breaks off in the wound, the tip burying itself as it slowly begins to inch its way toward the heart of the victim. Depending on where it struck this can take hours or nights, but unless extracted by medical or mystical means, Final Death is assured. To remove it surgically someone other than the victim needs to win a roll of Dexterity + Medicine (Difficulty 6) in a process that takes up to four hours. If no medical expertise can be found, someone can remove the splinter by severing the afflicted limb – unless the splinter has already reached the torso.

WARDING CIRCLE AGAINST CAINITES

This ward uses the standard rules for Warding Circles (p. 275).

- **Ingredients:** The caster draws the Warding Circle with a rowan wand dipped in the mixture of ash from a still-burning fire and Blood.

Thin-Blood Alchemy

I knew Pedro was into some weird shit, but I hadn't really known how weird. He had all of us looking for the strangest possible crap: leaded gasoline, green-apple flavored vape juice, depleted uranium shavings, Diet Jolt Cola, and ethidium bromide, whatever the fuck that is. We'd bring it by and he'd put it in Tupperware or an old vodka bottle or a Ziploc baggie or whatever, and paste a label on it. Plus every so often horse tranquilizers and ketamine and PCP and shrooms and that horrible Russian shit that turns your skin black, but that we could just chalk up to business as usual.

But like I said, the money was good and we could just take it and go get our own fun somewhere and ask no questions. Until I made a delivery to his lab one night. He hadn't called, but I'd scored a whole case of expired imported sauerkraut and thought Pedro might want to buy it off me. Yeah, I was dry and itching, but I swear I saw what I saw. And I saw Pedro shirtless, with a motherfucking kiln going full blast, the light reflecting off all those tubs and containers on his shelves. And he had a tube running from some girl's vein into a Mason jar, filling it up with her blood. He was writing the label for the jar so he didn't see me. I think he heard the sauerkraut hit the floor though, and I'm sure he smelled it.

But he just called and asked if my medical waste hookup had anything good, and I kind of don't want to go back there. Ever.

Nicknames: Cooking, Home Brew, the Craft, Mashup

The thin Blood of the latest generations holds barely any power of its own. But certain thin-bloods have learned to use it as a catalyst, awakening the latent power in everything from human trauma to gasoline. Born of the street drug scene and cocktail culture as much as it was uncovered by instinct or in moldering medieval texts, thin-blood Alchemy may be the defining art of the next-millennium lick. By blending strongly resonant human blood, and sometimes other substances, with their own vitae, Alchemists can counterfeit a wide range of powers from other Disciplines – and some unique powers of their own. Rumors already abound of specific elixirs that grant the ability to walk in sunlight, commune with Antediluvians, or achieve Golconda. But for now, the street-level cookers have all they can do to stay out of the Court's sight – plenty of elders consider Alchemy nothing but watered-down diablerie.

Alchemy can counterfeit some Blood Sorcery powers (those that affect the caster's Blood), but not Rituals. The Storyteller can rule any other power off-limits to Alchemy if they worry about game balance or the plausibility of the fiction – and reverse themselves later if they wish, or hint at unique recipes developed in Switzerland

or hidden in a Cairo library. The Discipline is young, and thin-bloods have hardly explored every possible working or tasted every possible cocktail.

Characteristics

All formulae require vitae from the Alchemist and human blood of the correct Resonance (p. 226). The Resonant human blood can be stored in a blood bag, or in a Starbucks to-go cup for that matter. The specific amount needed depends on the degree of the donor's Resonance and on the Storyteller's whim.

In these rules, "power level" always refers to the level of Alchemy involved, not the level of the power counterfeited with the formula.

All formulae have a cost to distill, and then the cost to activate. The distillation cost reflects the fact that all formulae include the Alchemist's own vitae: A single Rouse Check. Activation cost for a formula is the same as using the power normally: free, or some number of additional Rouse Checks.

Once activated, the Alchemist makes a distillation roll to determine how effective the particular mixture was. Each version of Alchemy builds a different dice pool for the distillation roll. The more successes, the more effective the mixture:

SUCCESSES	EFFECT OF THE MIXTURE
2	Power weak, fluky, or late in happening
4	Power works as intended
6	Power increased in effect

Some powers require their own dice rolls to take effect, or to measure the degree of success. The Alchemist makes those rolls where needed, substituting their rating in Thin-Blood Alchemy for the specific Discipline rating where relevant.

To learn a new formula requires research time, whether the Alchemist spends it poring through libraries or in meditation or on tasting expeditions or performing laboratory experimentation. Players should write down which formulae their character already knows, and any special ingredients it requires. A character receives a formula for free for each dot in Thin-Blood Alchemy and can purchase additional formulae with experience and experimentation.

- **Masquerade Threat:** Varies as widely as the powers it counterfeits and the method used.
- **Blood Resonance:** Required for each formula and varies accordingly.

INGREDIENTS The listed ingredients for each formula are suggestions. Each thin-blood alchemist develops their own proprietary formulae, often writing the recipes down in code just as the medieval alchemists did. The alchemist's own Blood is the only unvarying ingredient in all alchemical formulae, although almost all of them also require human blood of a specific Resonance. Cold or clotted blood can work in a formula if the alchemist has enough of it. Ingredients need not be physical – a specific experience or emotion caught in the blood can be just as powerful as rare research chemicals.

The Storyteller should modify the dice pool up or down by one or two dice based on the quality of the ingredients – and perhaps by the originality if the player comes up with suitably nasty or bizarre things for their Alchemist to use. As a rule of thumb:

- Add one die for very rare or expensive ingredients (ones that require at least a story to source or Resources dots higher than the level of the formula); subtract one die for cheap substitute ingredients you can buy at a big box retailer. (Many formulae include easily available industrial chemicals or foods as standard ingredients; invoke this penalty only when the characters substitute such things for a superior ingredient listed.)
- Add one die for very potent or magical ingredients, such as unicorn horn, red mercury, human blood with a Dyscrasia, werewolf blood, or vitae with Blood Potency two levels higher than the level of the formula; subtract one die for medical bagged blood, melted-down candles from the New Age shop, or other faux magics.
- Add one die for player creativity in suggesting ingredients, especially if sourcing them gets them into trouble or otherwise advances the story.

DISTILLATION METHODS When the first dot in Thin-Blood Al-

chemy is gained, the Alchemist chooses their method. This is the way they perform their distillation. Learning a different method means starting from scratch, essentially counting it as a separate Discipline. In this case, formulae for one method do not apply to other methods known, and the same formula must be learnt separately for each method.

ATHANOR CORPORIS The Alchemist uses their own body as the athanor, or alchemical furnace. This might be a bio-feedback routine, the result of an initial elixir consumed at initiation, or simply intuitive understanding of how resonances interact. Ingredients usually consist of different types of resonance mixes, requiring the Alchemist to sample the blood of multiple victims to get just the right blend.

The Alchemist drinks the different types of resonant blood required and the process is performed within their veins with a distillation roll of Stamina + Alchemy, together with a Rouse Check.

Only one power can be active at a time, and a new power must be distilled before it can be activated. This usually takes at least three turns of concentration, during which the Alchemist can do nothing else.

CALCINATIO The Alchemist uses the body of a human as the athanor, adjusting their biophysical state by means of emotional pressure and spoken incantations. (Some practitioners of Calcinatio use drugs on their subjects instead.) The Alchemist then feeds their Blood to the chosen human, paying the distillation cost, and makes the distillation roll with Manipulation + Alchemy.

The human's entire body distills the formula. The Alchemist then drinks their blood to use the power (required Hunger slaked equals power level minus 1).

The Alchemist can only distill one power per victim, though the victim retains the formula within them as long as they're kept in the same emotional state; each power takes as long to activate as it takes to drain that quantity of blood (p. 212).

FIXATIO Lacking the physical or social predilections of the other methods, the Alchemist uses a conventional athanor such as a kiln, a metalworking furnace, a meth cooker, a repurposed propane tank, or the like. This method most resembles "classical" alchemy: the Alchemist pours their Blood as well as inert, usually rare, ingredients into the athanor, pays the distillation cost, and distills them inside it with an Intelligence + Alchemy roll.

The resulting formulae are fixed, meaning that the Alchemist can carry them around on their person and imbibe them to activate their power. (Roll the distillation roll upon consumption, not upon production.) However, without a laboratory, they cannot make any more – at most, they might be able to "one-pot" a weak (Level 3 or less) formula using a pressure-cooker or other field expedient. Using such unsuitable equipment reduces the distillation dice pool by 2 dice.

The Alchemist can carry a number of fixed formulae (of any level) equal to their Wits or Dexterity – keeping the vials safe, stable, hidden, and leakproof is not a trivial task. (The Storyteller can decide if each vial takes up the space of a syringe, a can of Red Bull, or a thermos.) The Alchemist can store a number of fixed formulae (of any level) equal to twice the sum of Alchemy plus their dots in Haven: a refrigerator is almost a necessity. Fixed does not necessarily mean shelf stable, after all.

The Alchemist can activate one power per turn.

Level 1

FAR REACH

This formula allows the alchemist to use their mind to grab, hold, and push objects or people without touching them. While few can employ enough mental force to actually cause direct harm, a clever applicant can find many ways to get an opponent into, or themselves out of, harm's way.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, choleric human blood, melted nylon fibers or a grated refrigerator magnet or weird nootropics ordered off the internet
- **Activation Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Resolve + Alchemy vs Strength + Athletics
- **System:** The alchemist can lift,

push, or pull a physical object or person under 100 kg, within their sight and closer than 10 meters. The object moves swiftly, but not rapidly enough to injure a person with the blow; the object may break if it is fragile. The exception: knives or other small metal tools, which the alchemist can wield with a Resolve + Alchemy test, at a two-dice penalty because of the need for precision. A knife used this way does only one point of extra damage.

Trying to move someone actively resisting requires a contest of Resolve + Alchemy vs Strength + Athletics. On a win, the alchemist can pull the victim within grabbing or clawing range, or throw them one meter for each point of margin on the contest, doing an equal amount of Superficial damage. They land prone. Keeping someone or something floating in mid-air requires a Resolve + Thin-Blood Alchemy (Difficulty 3) roll every turn. Fine manipulation (such as pulling the pin of a grenade) requires a Wits + Alchemy roll at a suitable Difficulty, as determined by the Storyteller.

- **Duration:** One turn unless held (see above).

HAZE

This formula creates a field of mist that follows the user, rendering them more difficult to target with ranged weapons and concealing their identity.

- **Ingredients:** In addition to the alchemist's Blood and phlegmatic human blood, dry ice or cigar smoke or auto exhaust
- **Activation Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **System:** Upon activation a cloud of mist-like vapor surrounds the alchemist, masking their features and obscuring their silhouette. Anyone attempting to identify the user or hit them with ranged weapons suffers a two-dice penalty to their pool. The user can extend the cloud to encompass a group of up to five people by making another Rouse check.
- **Duration:** One scene or until voluntarily ended.

PROFANE HIEROS GAMOS

Alchemical texts speak of the Great Hermaphrodite, the union of contrasts. Day and night, male and female, life and death. Alchemists who master the worldly aspect of the Hieros Gamos use the fluid nature of their condition to change their gender. It is a messy process and requires great dedication and conviction, but it is a power that many Kindred secretly envy in their unchanging form. It is also a great way to change identity or adopt a new mask.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, blood from five different vessels identifying fully as the desired gender
- **System:** After brewing the formula, the Alchemist performs self-castration and / or mastectomy before falling into daysleep. Upon awakening they find themselves a perfectly formed specimen of the desired gender. In essence it is as if they had been born that way. There are even stories of self-made Duskborn women giving birth to children. If desired, a modified procedure can create any configuration of gender or agender imaginable.
- **Duration:** Permanent until performed again.

Level 2

At level 2, the Alchemist can develop formulae to counterfeit level 1 powers of other Disciplines.

Each of these formulae take at least a week to research.

ENVELOP

This formula creates a mist that clings to a victim, blinding it and (in the case of mortals) causing suffocation.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, melancholic and phlegmatic human blood, potassium chlorate, smog or halon gas
- **Activation Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Wits + Alchemy vs Stamina + Survival
- **System:** The alchemist activates the power and chooses a target within sight. A swirling mist envelops the target, obscuring their sight and penalizing them three dice from all sight-based detection and ranged attack dice pools. In addition, the alchemist can make the mist suffocate a mortal with a contest of Wits + Alchemy vs.

Stamina + Survival. On a win, the target can take no action except coughing and choking; on a critical win, the target loses consciousness. The alchemist can only employ Envelop on single targets, and only on one at a time.

- **Duration:** Until scene ends or the alchemist ends the effect voluntarily.

Level 3

At level 3, the Alchemist can develop formulae to counterfeit level 2 powers of other Disciplines.

Each of these formulae take at least a night to distill and at least one month to research.

DEFRACTIONATE

This formula results in a homeopathic elixir. When added to fractionated medical-supply blood, the elixir returns it to freshness, allowing vampires without the Iron Gullet merit to obtain nutrition from it.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, sanguine and melancholic human blood, O-negative human blood (only a few ml), moldy spinach, hot black coffee, sodium octanoate
- **System:** The alchemist taps their vessel (Calcinatio), or their own vein (Athanor Corporis) to get the Defractionate elixir if they do not use Fixatio. For each success on the distillation roll, they get enough elixir to turn one blood bag (slakes 1 Hunger) from fractionated to unfractionated blood. Any vampire can consume this blood and slake Hunger with it.
- **Athanor Corporis:** The alchemist can tap their own vein once per night for this elixir until their next feeding, or until they reach Hunger 5. They need not pay the distillation cost again.
- **Calcinatio:** If the vessel survives the tap, the alchemist can tap them again in a week for more elixir. They need not pay the distillation cost again, but the vessel pays the Health cost (3 Aggravated damage) each time they are tapped.

Level 4

At Level 4, the Alchemist can develop formulae to counterfeit level 3 powers of other Disciplines.

At this level, all formulae also require a drop of vitae from a vampire of a matching clan or from one who already possesses the counterfeited Discipline. For example, to counterfeit Shapechange the Alchemist needs vitae from a vampire with Protean or from a Gangrel. The Gangrel would not have to possess Protean 3, or even have Protean at all; the power is in the Blood, not the specific vampire.

As noted above, this drop does not cost the donor any Health, nor does it convey a Blood Bond. That said, Alchemists generally only get such donations as the result of a major Boon – or because the donor has some truly horrible and dangerous mission they are attempting to inveigle the Alchemist's coterie into carrying out.

These formulae take at least three nights to distill and at least three months to research.

AIRBORNE MOMENTUM

This formula enables the alchemist to lift themselves from the ground, achieving a state of swift flight or floating. They can fly in any direction, including up or down, though their carrying capacity is limited.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, choleric and sanguine human blood, champagne, bird blood, helium, scopolamine or belladonna extract
- **Activation Cost:** One Rouse Check
- **Dice Pools:** Strength + Alchemy vs Strength+Athletics (if resisted)
- **System:** The potion enables the alchemist (and only them) to fly or hover at approximately running speed. The flier can carry a human-sized mass, though their speed drops to walking speed. Grabbing and carrying aloft an unwilling subject or pulling the flier to the ground both require a contest between the alchemist's Strength + Alchemy and the other's Strength + Athletics.
- **Duration:** One scene

Level 5

At level 5, the Alchemist can develop formulae to counterfeit level 4 powers of other Disciplines.

These formulae take a month to distill and at least three years to research.

AWAKEN THE SLEEPER

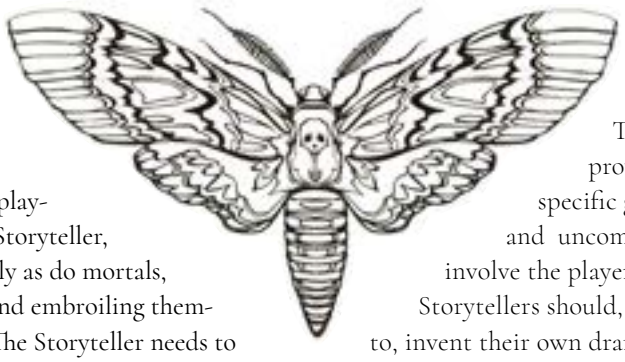
This formula results in an elixir which, when added to human blood, can awaken a vampire from Torpor.

- **Ingredients:** The alchemist's Blood, choleric or sanguine human blood, adrenaline, ammonium carbonate, hartshorn, caffeine or benzedrine, melatonin
- **System:** The alchemist taps their vessel (Calcinatio), or their own vein (Athanor Corporis) to get the Awaken the Sleeper elixir if they do not use Fixatio. They then mix the elixir into human blood. For each success above 2 on the distillation roll, the elixir can awaken a vampire of that Blood Potency.
  Example: Hari gets 5 successes on his Awaken the Sleeper distillation roll: this elixir can awaken a torpid vampire of Blood Potency 3 or less (5 – 3 = 2).
- **Athanor Corporis:** The alchemist can tap their own vein once per night for this elixir until their next feeding, or until they reach Hunger 5. They need not pay the distillation cost again.
- **Calcinatio:** If the vessel survives the tap, the alchemist can tap them again in a week for more elixir. They need not pay the distillation cost again, but the vessel pays the Health cost (5 Aggravated damage) each time they are tapped. The Alchemist can also simply feed the vessel's blood to the sleeper directly ■

Advanced SYSTEMS

"Then there are Ceremonies, which are all of them important, but some are more delightful than others."

– ARTHUR MACHEN, *THE WHITE PEOPLE*



Vampires, whether portrayed by players or by the Storyteller, act at least as multifariously as do mortals, launching complex plots and embroiling themselves in weird activities. The Storyteller needs to keep all this action organized, arbitrate success and failure, and plot what the rest of the world does in response.

Vampire: The Masquerade focuses on roleplaying and character interaction, but even dramatic scenes often involve some element of dice rolling, depending on the players' style. The Storyteller System's rules are intentionally abstract and streamlined to give structure to your drama without constraining it.

The more complex systems provided in this chapter offer specific guidance for some common and uncommon activities that might involve the player characters.

Storytellers should, and will undoubtedly have to, invent their own dramatic systems for new situations. The list of systems below is in no way exhaustive, but it provides a solid foundation on which to base events.

If you come up with a resolution system you like better, by all means use it! Or feel free to embrace no resolution system at all for freeform scenes and story elements, and just let roleplaying and dramatic logic take you through the chronicle.

Scenes and Modes

Each Storyteller and group of players develop their own rhythm for any given Vampire chronicle. One group may focus on gritty, street-level action; another might emphasize emotional turmoil and high politics; a third aims at uncanny conspiracies cut with lurid giallo gore. To tune their chronicles to their own rhythms, play groups can vary the mode of play from scene to scene, as well as the types of scenes from which they build that chronicle.

You can play any scene in any mode. Some groups default to freeform, others to dice-detailed or to any of the other modes given here. You might play a spotlight scene out freeform; scene types depend on the amount of attention you give them, not the number of dice you roll. Storytellers are less likely to call for a dice-detailed play of an abstracted scene. That said, a dice-detailed single combat could conceivably be the best or most dramatic way to decide an otherwise abstracted massive battle or month of politicking to determine the direction (or ownership!) of the chronicle's setting.

Types of Scenes

Scene types depend on how much attention (and usually how much time) you want to spend playing them. A scene of any type can take any amount of story time: minutes or months. Like everything else, it's up to the group to decide. In most games, the Storyteller drives this decision based on their overall sense of the game's pacing and style, but some Storytellers and groups enjoy building their chronicle more collaboratively.

Spotlight

Players and Storyteller play *spotlight* scenes very attentively, from their natural beginning to their natural end point. Spotlight scenes usually last longer than other scenes. Every player may get input, or a scene may focus the spotlight on one character and their Touchstone or on two Kindred. Regardless, the group should feel that this scene adds dramatic content to the chronicle, that it's worth spending a little more time on it, if need be.

Abstracted

The players and Storyteller play only the high notes of abstracted scenes. The outcome may be decided by a single die roll or a single pithy exchange of dialogue. An abstracted scene often begins in medias res and cuts out once its outcome is clear. Although an abstracted scene may have an impact on the chronicle or on a character, the players and Storyteller usually don't feel like focusing on it too much. The group may not want to explore a seduction or serial killing in anatomical detail or tactically plot out a whole combat or Elysium dinner party. An abstracted scene picks out a few telling moments for a montage or one critical exchange and moves on when its job is done.

Downtime

Nobody plays out a downtime scene; the Storyteller describes what happens and the story moves on. There might not even be a scene at all: "You wait in the lobby of the Prince's hotel for four hours before he summons you." Occasionally the Storyteller might ask a player to narrate a brief downtime scene: "Your contacts in the police force get you into the jail. How do you kill the prisoner?" Downtime scenes are typically brisk, with one or two lines of monologue or narration. Downtime scenes happen, if they happen at all, between Storyteller-played characters (SPCs) or among humans, or they have such foreordained outcomes that there's no point describing them, much less playing them out.

Modes of Play

You are not a prisoner of your game, sentenced by some court of rules lawyers to micro-play every single interaction your characters might have. You can tailor your game experience to suit your table by varying the mode of play from scene to scene. By and large, players who trust their Storyteller's dramatic instincts tend to allow a larger proportion of freeform play in various modes. Players who prefer tactical control to dramatic momentum tend to prefer dice-detailed play.

In general, mechanics such as spending Willpower to re-roll dice and using Blood Surges to increase dice pools assume there will be more dice rolling in a game session – if you're cutting back on the dice in play, you should also cut back on the rules intended to mitigate the impact of the dice on play (see Twisting the Dial, p. 158).

Freeform

You play through a freeform scene without dice. The Storyteller decides any conflicts based on the number of dots on each side or on simple dramatic necessity. Storytellers who want to keep the Hunger threat ever-present may wish to still call for Rouse Checks when the player characters use Disciplines or otherwise Rouse the Blood. In other cases, the Storyteller can just announce "your Hunger goes up" when someone tempting crosses the characters' path or when a character clearly exerts their Blood to accomplish something. Freeform play especially suits scenes between vampires and normal humans, between player characters, between two friendly (or at least polite) vampires, or between a vampire and their thralls or servants.

Directed Freeform

The players make a die roll (one total, or one per player) at the beginning of a *directed freeform* scene based on the Traits and systems most likely to determine its outcome. (The Storyteller should disallow re-rolls and Blood Surges for this one roll.) Then they play out the scene freeform, but the players direct their characters' actions toward the predetermined result. For example, if the roll led to a failed Rouse Check or otherwise increased their Hunger, they play up their hunger and its consequences. Directed freeform scenes work well for dramatic pivot scenes (like third-act turns), in flashbacks or Memoriam scenes, political and court scenes, and in scenes leading up to a showdown.

The Hunger Game

Every player character must balance the threat of frenzy with the freedom of the Kindred, the danger to the Masquerade with the desire to feed. In a Vampire game using mostly dice-detailed play, the Hunger dice and Rouse Check mechanics provide this sense of bloody urgency and risk. If your game has a lot of freeform scenes – pure, directed, or punctuated – the Hunger element can recede into the background, as the dice outcomes intended to drive it come up less often with reduced dice-rolling.

Every troupe and every Storyteller will come up with their own solution in play, based on what feels right in the moment or at their particular table. Here are a few possibilities to consider, to combine or hack to get exactly the level of thirst you want to play with. Regardless of which system you use, the Storyteller should keep track of player character Hunger somehow: by marking notes, by handing red poker chips or red dice to players as their characters' Hunger goes up (even in diceless games, they can serve as useful, tactile reminders for roleplaying), or by marking a corner of the Relationship Map. In some troupes, other players can also hand out Hunger tokens when something in the story justifies it.

STARTING HUNGER

For freeform scenes of all sorts, set the stage for the roleplaying and for the few rolls that occur by randomly determining character Hunger: roll a die and divide it by two, re-rolling a result of Hunger 5. Players roleplay using this starting Hunger as a base.

THEY HUNGER ME, THEY HUNGER ME NOT

Since a Rouse Check has a 50% chance of failing, the Storyteller increments the character's Hunger up by 1 every other time that a Rouse Check would normally occur in dice-detailed play.

TIME TO EAT

The Storyteller increments Hunger based on elapsed time: either play time, or setting time. Increase Hunger by 1 every 45 minutes or hour of play time or every two hours of setting time.

TICK WORDS

Before the session, the Storyteller chooses a tick word. This word might be "vampire," "blood," or some other word that players tend to say fairly often during play. When a player says the tick word for that session, the Storyteller puts a tick mark by their character name on a sheet of paper, indicating their Hunger has increased. (Storytellers should keep this act subtle, to disguise the specific tick word from the players, and they should change the tick word if the players catch on.) Once a character's Hunger becomes relevant to the drama (usually when it hits 3 or 4), the Storyteller tells the player their character is getting hungry. When it should take a leading role in the drama (Hunger 5), the Storyteller informs the player their character is starving. If the character feeds, the Storyteller erases however many ticks their drinking has slaked.

Punctuated Freeform

This mode of freeform play is *punctuated* by dice rolls at critical moments. When freeform play leads to a major conflict, players make a single die roll to decide (or direct) its outcome, and then continue playing the scene. The Storyteller abstracts wounds, faux pas, and other tactical questions to keep the story moving. Often, the Storyteller goes along with player suggestions if they add drama or interest, requiring only as many rolls as needed to keep Hunger present in the story. Spending Willpower on re-rolls weakens punctuated freeform play by removing dramatic tension. This mode works well for all sorts of scenes, but especially well for social or stress scenes, scenes with potential shifts of power and focus, lengthy side quests such as hunting or Memoriam, and even many spotlight scenes.

Dice-Detailed

Characters play through their actions in detail, using dice to determine outcomes, even on a turn-by-turn basis where tactically significant. *Dice-detailed* play takes longer to play out a scene than any other mode. Because of its potential for intense focus, players are often prepared for a spotlight scene to enter dice-detailed mode. Combat scenes are the paradigmatic dice-detailed scenes; these scenes can include not just physical combats, but also intense social combats, such as repartee with a hostile Harpy at court ■

Extended Tests

In cases where it is impossible to adjust the time-scale to the task, such as when there are several dramatic things happening at the same time, you might want to use more than one roll to accomplish a task fully. For example, your character might have to pick a lock while the other players play hide-and-seek with museum guards, load a truck with goods during a firefight, or take over an institution over the course of normal play.

Versions of Extended Tests

STANDARD EXTENDED TEST:
In the standard extended test, the Storyteller assigns a very large (10+) Difficulty to the task, allowing you to accumulate successes with each roll in a running total until you meet or exceed that Difficulty.

EXAMPLE:
Getting control over the human trafficking operation in New Orleans requires a total of 20 successes on rolls mainly involving Larceny and Streetwise. The players have to accumulate successes at the same time, as they are dodging all the others trying to do the same.

SERIES TEST: Alternately, the Storyteller assigns a regular Difficulty to a series of tasks, requiring a certain number of wins to ultimately succeed. Series tests model tasks with a specific number of components: defeating each alarm and lock on the vault, blocking each entrance of the haven, discovering all four volumes of a Tremere grimoire.

EXAMPLE:

Getting the goods from the museum reliquary requires three wins, one on each task: beating the roof alarm (Intelligence + Larceny), breaking in through the skylight (Dexterity + Larceny), and extracting the idol from the laser field (Composure + Larceny).

HARD EXTENDED TEST: Combines standard and series extended tests, and counts only the margin on each task toward the ultimate Difficulty. These work best on rolls made once or twice per session, intended to model incremental progress toward a background or long-term goal. These fit long-term goals with little or no worthy (or active) opposition.

EXAMPLE:

Tabitha slowly worms her way into the good graces of the local Tremere, so she can learn more rituals. Each session, she rolls Intelligence + Occult to impress a Warlock with her knowledge, accumulating her margin on each test toward an ultimate Difficulty of 20.

CASCADING TEST: A version of a series test, the player adds the margin on each task as extra dice toward the next task. This models situations where success breeds more success, but one failure ends the test. This might be a long-term blackmail or bribery scheme, an all-night seduction attempt, or a hack of a complex computer system with several layers of authentication and encryption.

EXAMPLE:

Vic needs four rolls (one per session) to put the local priest on his payroll. He rolls six successes on a Difficulty 4 Charisma + Subterfuge test and adds three dice to his next pool for a Difficulty 5 Manipulation + Persuasion test.

Extended Contests

To model two characters – whether a player character and an SPC or two player characters – racing against each other to complete an extended action first, the Storyteller can use an extended contest.

In the easiest extended contest, each character makes their roll once per increment, and the Storyteller awards the goal to the character who accumulates enough successes for the Difficulty first. If both reach the Difficulty on the same increment, the goal goes to whichever character accumulated the most successes.

If the characters are in position to interfere directly with each other's attempts, the Storyteller may have them roll a basic contest against each other once per increment. The winner subtracts the loser's successes from their own and applies the remainder to their accumulated successes. The loser adds no successes to their running total this increment.

Like a hard extended test, this version of the extended contest can take a very long time to play out.

Special Cases and Extended Tests

Some of the special results and rules for simple tests function slightly differently by default in extended tests. The Storyteller can mix and match these exceptions to fit the dramatic circumstances or the narrative.

TEAMWORK: Applies to most extended tests, but even when it doesn't, it might allow you to ignore or try to fix a total failure rather than blow the whole test.

TOTAL FAILURE: Erases all successes and wins; the player must start over again from the beginning. In some cases, the Storyteller might rule they can't even start over ■

Advanced Conflict

As predatory creatures, vampires often clash with each other, with their prey (sometimes), and with those who would try to keep them from their prey.

Sometimes, those clashes get bloody. Sometimes, they remain conflicts of words or emotions, especially when a Prince holds their courtiers to account. Sometimes, vampires conflict behind the scenes, using human institutions as their armor and their weapons.

This section expands on basic Conflict (pp. 123-130). The Storyteller can use any of the rules systems or modules in Advanced Conflict without having to use all of them in their game, in addition to the basic Conflict rules.

Three, Two, Done

As the classical three-act model indicates, drama often stales if the action drags too long. Conflict on a tabletop likewise feels tighter, and the results richer, with just three or so exchanges (we note this in the rules, see Three Turns and Out, p. 130). Especially when using the more detailed systems of Advanced Conflict, try to end conflict scenes after three exchanges.

Are We Done Here?

After three rounds of conflict, the Storyteller and players should ask: "Have we reached a conclusion? Will anything change dramatically with more exchanges?" The Storyteller should feel free to fast-forward to the end of a conflict if all that remains is more rolls, while being careful not to exclude the players from their own drama.

EXAMPLE:

The player coterie is mouthing off to another coterie during an Anarch moot, doing their best to impress the audience and the senior Kindred and establish themselves as the kings and queens of the lowest rung of the social hierarchy. After three exchanges of posturing, tough talk, and displays of bravery, neither group has backed down, but the Storyteller knows that the crowd is sufficiently impressed already, and summarizes the end of the conflict and its outcomes.

EXAMPLE:

The player coterie has tracked their quarry through the city in an exiting game of hunter-and-prey. Eventually the quarry escapes into an office where people are still burning the midnight oil, and the players pause to make grand plans on how to gain access to the building. While the players seem to be enjoying the challenge, the Storyteller knows that this isn't difficult, and that their quarry will be long gone by the time they make the attempt. They choose to zoom out and fast-forward the rest of the scene.

Concessions

If the outcome is still in doubt, the Storyteller can see if there is a *concession* of some sort to be made. This is a negotiated outcome between players and Storyteller, and it need not necessarily be reflected as a negotiation in the narrative. A concession means one side (usually the one that has the disadvantage) concedes, but does not suffer the full consequences of a loss. If the players has the disadvantage, the Storyteller should reward them mechanically (as well as in the story) for conceding; if adding a dot to the coterie's (or a character's) Background seems too grandiose, allow each player to recover a dot of Willpower.

EXAMPLE:

After a vicious hunter assault, the coterie teeters on the brink of extinction. Since it is still early in the chronicle, the Storyteller offers concession rather than playing out the final breaths of the coterie. The player characters get to escape, as long as one of them stays behind and covers the retreat. Instead of four new characters, the troupe will need only one.

EXAMPLE:

The last few exchanges have seen mind games galore as the player characters try to outwit their online opponents. Since they think online action is a little bit lukewarm, the players offer the concession that they fail in destroying the enemy's digital infrastructure, but instead uncover the identity of one of their foes. Their next meeting with the enemy will be more ... personal.

One Roll

If none of the above scenarios apply, consider raising the stakes and resolving the conflict with a *one-roll conflict* (see p. 298), where all consequences are amplified. You can set a Difficulty based on how the previous three rounds have gone. One-on-one conflicts have clear winners each round; sometimes larger combats do also.

- If most of the combat has gone the player characters' way or if they've won all three previous rounds, set the Difficulty at 3.
- If both sides have suffered fairly evenly or if the player characters have won two out of three rounds, set the Difficulty at 4.
- If the player characters have gotten the worst of it or won only one exchange out of three, set the Difficulty at 5.
- If the player characters have been lucky to survive this long or have lost all three previous rounds, set the Difficulty at 6.

Exeunt

Note that conclusion of a conflict need not resolve it completely. It could also just move it into a new scene.

EXAMPLE:

The player coterie has been shooting it out with a local gang seeking to "root out the monsters in their midst." Even if the humans were dumb (or just inexperienced) enough to attack the coterie after sundown, the player characters have suffered plenty. They gladly accept the concession that they get to barricade themselves in a room to recuperate, plan their next move, and angst over what the fight has revealed about their monstrous natures.

Additional Conflict Options

All conflict actions need not be straight attacks on the opposition. In fact, most engagements involve a goal that does not solely rely on removing all enemies, and there is no reason why players should be forced to confront their opponents head-on when they can achieve their ends with other means. Consider the following action variants when engaged in a conflict of any kind:

Advance

Working directly towards the goal(s) of the conflict: this could be cozying up to an elder when vying for a seat on the council, destroying evidence before getting overwhelmed, gathering influence in a housing project, hacking a security system before being discovered, Kissing students, etc. Note however, that advance is not applicable to all conflicts. The prime example being combat, where there are no goals except hurting the opposition and/or getting the hell out of there. Depending on the conflict, a prior Maneuver (see below) might be

required to advance effectively..

Advances are usually run as an extended test (see p. 293) with the player rolling to accumulate as many wins/successes as possible.

EXAMPLE:

In a Memoriam scene (see p. 311), Balzac's player is trying to establish that Balzac once bested Antoine in a contest to Kiss as many students as possible in one night of revelry in Paris' 1889 student quarter. As Balzac advances (often through, well, making advances), the rest of the troupe (taking roles as Balzac's entourage) attempts a more direct approach.

Maneuver

This option involves getting into an advantaged position, either in order to be able to take other actions at all or get an advantage, such as flanking a foe, making sure you are alone with the subject of your desire, getting access to important people, finding cover from oncoming shots, etc.

Depending on the situation, a successful maneuver should result in one of these benefits:

- A straight dice bonus to the next action. A 1-3 dice pool bonus is usually enough, perhaps depending on critical successes or on the margin achieved.
  Example: *a feint in melee, studying an opponent's weakness before delivering the perfect insult or finding just the right tools for a hunt.*
- Gaining a superior position. Whether by misdirection, speed, or stealth, this allows the attacker to strike the opponent unopposed (see Surprise, p. 300), though getting the advantage might be very difficult or require accumulating enough successes on an extended test.
  Example: *flanking someone's cover in a firefight, disengaging to return with a surprise attack, or working your way into someone's grace as a setup for betrayal.*
- In some cases a maneuver is required to make an attack or advance towards the goal in the first place. Only after a successful maneuver can the character attack the intended target or advance towards the goal.
  Example: *finding the target in a city-wide conflict, arranging to be alone with the target in a conflict of seduction and intrigue, getting into position to take over a company.*

EXAMPLE:

While Balzac seeks to win the contest with Antoine by making as many successful hunts as possible, the rest of the entourage wants to make unlife difficult for Antoine. The Storyteller rules that in order to attack Antoine, the players must first find him by making a Manipulation + Streetwise maneuver versus. his Wits + Awareness.

Block

Actively opposing another character's actions. This could be by positioning your character in front of an attacker, throwing distractions in the path of someone working to gather support, laying down suppressive fire, etc. When *blocking*, simply set the result of your block roll as opposition to the action you're blocking.

EXAMPLE:

Example: Balzac finds himself thwarted at every turn by a particularly perceptive superintendent while he is still trying to get private access to his second victim of the night. The superintendent opposes Balzac's Dexterity + Stealth (never his strong suit) with her Wits + Awareness (a prime skill for a superintendent).

Sometimes it is also possible to block someone's block. If this is the goal, test at the furthest link in the chain of blocks first, and if successful, the later block does not take place.

EXAMPLE:

One of the players, donning the mantle of Balzac's right-hand-girl for the Memoriam, intervenes by tying down the superintendent. First, they roll Charisma + Persuasion vs. the superintendent's Resolve + Insight, and if they win, the superintendent is "otherwise occupied" as Balzac makes his sneak attempt to get to his victim.

All-Out Attack

Sometimes a combatant wants to go all in, discarding safety in exchange for greater effect. In this case, afford the attacker a +1 damage bonus, but do not let them defend against any attacks. If using a ranged weapon, this tactic also empties the weapon. This option may not be used with surprise. If the attack fails, anyone acting against the combatant gains one additional die to their pools the next turn.

EXAMPLE:

Nahum goes all out with his claws, looking for a quick beatdown. He is opposed by Clara and her blade. Nahum's player rolls Strength + Brawl vs. Clara's Dexterity + Melee. Even if Nahum's player scores more successes than Clara's, he still takes their entire roll in damage. Clara takes damage if Nahum wins, including one additional damage for the all-out tactic.

All-Out Defence

A character concentrating solely on their protection and nothing else (save for perhaps a minor action, see p. 298) gets a bonus die to all defense rolls for the turn. If the character has access to solid cover and can hide completely behind it, this advantage can make them impervious to ranged attacks, provided they are not flanked (see Maneuvers, p. 297).

Minor Actions

Some actions might not warrant a full exchange, but they are still not minor enough to justify being done for free. These should not be actions that require a roll or that might otherwise be opposed in some way. Minor actions subtract dice from your character's main action, and the Storyteller might put a cap on how many are possible in one exchange. Readying a weapon, handling equipment, moving more than a few steps, running an errand, and taking care of your haven might all be examples of minor actions, depending on the scale of the conflict.

A player who wants to do only minor actions in a turn may do so, with the Storyteller setting a cap on how many are possible in a turn.

EXAMPLE:

In a later exchange, Balzac's right-hand-girl from the student quarter wishes to join the others in the hunt for Antoine. The Storyteller rules that given the timescale, this short hop costs her player two dice, but not their whole action.

Movement in Conflicts

Movement in **Vampire** is often abstracted, but it can nevertheless be a significant part of dramatic conflict. Perhaps a rabid wight is trying to close with a ranged attacker, a would-be backstabber attempts to get into position, or the conflict is very mobile, aking place all over the entire city.

Generally, handle movement beyond the immediate as Minor Actions (see p. 298), but if the movement is significantly opposed, it can also be handled as a Maneuver (see p. 297).

If necessary, the Storyteller can usually provide a simple map of the conflict. In some conflicts, the troupe's Relationship Map might even become an excellent conflict map!

One-Roll Conflicts

A conflict need not necessarily be resolved as a "zoomed in" series of exchanges as in the basic rules. It can also be resolved in a more "zoomed out" manner, especially if it holds less potential for drama or involves fewer players. (Or incidentally, if it involves too many actors to turn into a meaningful conflict!)

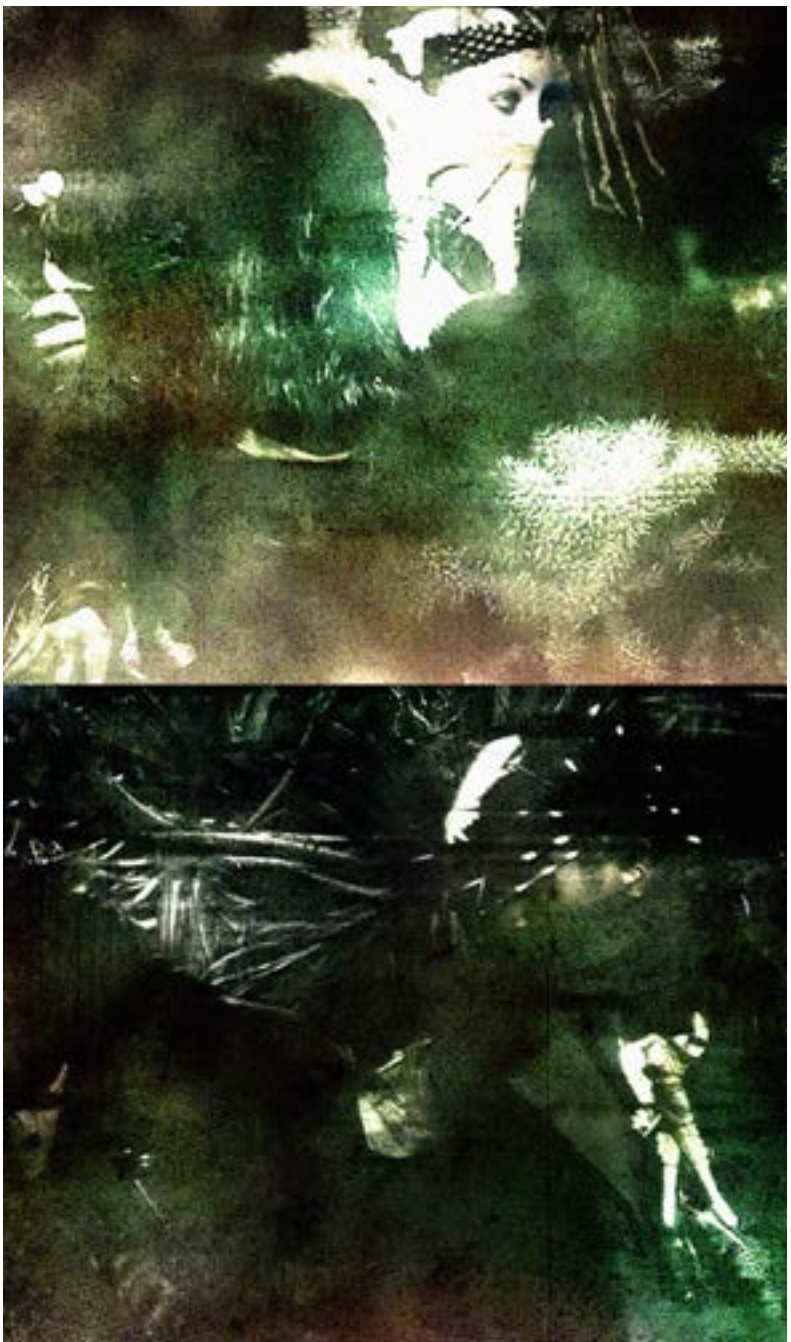
Simply set a difficulty for the opposition based on its power. Each player participating in the conflict then makes one roll of a conflict dice pool, without Will-

power re-rolls or Blood Surges, at the set Difficulty. (The opposition doesn't roll.) The more player characters that win, the better the results. If the majority of the player characters win, the opposition might for example break, fall down wounded, storm off in a fit of pique, surrender, or whatever else makes dramatic sense.

SAMPLE DIFFICULTIES:

- The opposition is significantly weaker or the the goal simple to achieve: Difficulty 2
- Both parties are equally matched or the goal is a significant challenge: Difficulty 4
- The opposition is much stronger or the goal is extremely hard to reach: Difficulty 6

Adjust the Difficulty by 1 to the side with the advantage in Disciplines or equivalent supernatural might.



Adjust the Difficulty by 1 to the side that has the advantage of position, preparation, or surprise.

Each player character then takes damage equal to the difference between their successes and *twice* the Difficulty. This damage can not be mitigated by armor or supernatural means such as Fortitude. The nature of the damage depends on the opposition and the weapons they are using – Second Inquisition agents often cause Aggravated damage, for example. Do not halve Superficial damage in this case.

Optional: Instead of applying levels of damage, allow a player to mitigate the damage with additional levels of Stains, having accomplished their goals with acts of greater callousness.

EXAMPLE:

Rebecca has given as good as she got in a debate before the Anarch Council, so the Storyteller sets the Difficulty at 4. She launches one more salvo of political theory and personal innuendo against her freedom-loving foes, her player rolling Charisma + Performance. Rebecca's player gets five successes, beating the Difficulty, and the Council rules in her favor. But she takes 3 more points of Aggravated damage to her Willpower: double the Difficulty (4) is 8, minus her 5 successes, equals 3 points of damage. The Storyteller explains that Rebecca had to expose more of her own role in the city's politics than she liked in order to win.

Advanced Conflict: Physical Combat

The following optional systems add flavor to and handle edge cases of physical combat.

Who Goes First?

While the Who Goes First basic rules (p. 125) should satisfy most troupes, these alternative initiative rules provide options for more traditional players who want a clear order of actions and initiative. Beware that this system slows combat down significantly.

Every character has an *Initiative* rating equal to their Composure + Awareness. In some conflicts, such as in a formal duel, you might substitute Dexterity (or Resolve, for a very formal duel) for Composure in the Initiative rating, but in most combat, staying calm enough to take meaningful actions is more important than anything else.

The participant in the conflict with the highest Initiative acts first; the rest of the combatants act in descending order of Initiative. You do not make an Initiative test. Initiative ratings stay the same during combat, even if a combatant changes the combat skills they use.

In case of ties, player characters act before Storyteller characters. If necessary, break other Initiative ties as follows: vampires before mortals, then by highest Composure. If you're still tied, roll a die.

At the beginning of the turn, each combatant declares and executes their action(s) in order of Initiative. They may also elect to pass, placing them last in the order (keeping this place for the remainder of the conflict). Any subsequent passing combatants are placed before any other person that also passed.

EXAMPLE:

Villeneuve goes first, but elects to pass, and is placed last. Next, Trish also passes, and is placed right before Villeneuve.

Surprise Attacks

Achieving *surprise* should generally need some sort of roll, such as Dexterity + Stealth vs. the best opposing Wits + Awareness. (Remember you can Take Half for large parties of SPC foes to speed up play.) This includes attacks from supernatural concealment such as Obfuscate.

The first attack with successful surprise should generally be made against a static Difficulty 1, allowing for devastating strikes.

EXAMPLE:

Papushka has managed to sneak up on her prey, and now slams a stake into their back. Her player rolls Strength + Melee and converts every success above the first into damage.

Close Combat

This system includes talon-to-talon brawling and attacks with hand-held weapons, excluding firearms and other ranged weapons.

The attacker usually rolls Strength + Brawl for unarmed attacks, Dexterity + Melee for one-handed melee weapons, or Strength + Melee for two-handed melee weapons.

The defender rolls as above, or uses Dexterity + Athletics for dodging.

In cases where both combatants are attacking each other, they both roll once, and the combatant who receives the most successes does damage to the other.

Optional: Award the combatant with the better reach (longer weapon) a bonus die in the first turn of combat.

GRAPPLING: A combatant can attempt to *grapple*, hold, tackle, or otherwise restrain a foe by rolling Strength + Brawl. If they get more successes than their opponent, they do no damage, but instead restrain the target, preventing them from moving and engaging other opponents, though the target can still act against the grappler as normal. In the next round, the grappler may engage their foe in a contest of Strength + Brawl. If the grappler wins, they can choose from the following options:

- Damage the foe based on their margin of successes, as a normal attack;
- Bite the foe (if a vampire) for two Aggravated damage (see Bite Attacks, p. 213); or
- Hold them in place.
- If the grappled combatant wins, they escape and can move freely the next round.

Bite attacks against a grappled foe suffer no bite penalty to the attack roll.

Ranged Combat

This system includes all manner of ranged weapons, from pistols, to crossbows, to vehicle-mounted machine guns.

In a standard guns blazing battle, combatants test Composure + Firearms, but a sniper shot might instead use Resolve, and a "high midnight" showdown tests Dexterity + Firearms, at least for the first shot. Firing at a target beyond the effective range of a given weapon incurs a -2 dice penalty.

Optional: Award the combatant with superior firepower (based on the weapons' rate of fire) or the one who is willing to expend more ammunition an extra die.

EXAMPLE:

Jason is using a SMG vs. Dragan, who only has a pistol. Jason's player gets an extra die. Gretchen and Lynne are both using pistols, but Gretchen is willing to empty hers, and her player gets an extra die.

The Storyteller can change this test during the battle; if the player characters are ambushing a truck, the aimed first shot might involve a Resolve + Firearms test. The truck's guards react with Wits + Firearms test, and the ambushers, now under counter-fire, return fire with Composure + Firearms tests.

THROWN WEAPONS: A character throwing a weapon at a target tests Dexterity + Athletics. For some vampires, this includes things not usually considered weapons, like pieces of I-beam or cars. For hunters, this often includes Molotov cocktails.

DEFENDING VS. RANGED ATTACKS: Defending against ranged attacks is usually done with Dexterity + Athletics, representing the ability to keep moving and making oneself a hard target using any and all available cover. A pitched firefight between two attackers can also be resolved as an opposed conflict. In both of these cases, modify the roll according to available cover:

COVER	DICE MODIFIER
No cover	-2
Concealment only (bushes, a small tree vs rifle calibre bullets)	-1
Hard Cover (a car engine block, the corner of a concrete building)	+/- 0
Entrenchment (sandbags, military bunker)	+1
Murder Hole (IFV firing slit)	+2

A stationary target lacks a defense pool, instead defending with a static Difficulty 1.

RANGED WEAPONS IN CLOSE COMBAT: If engaged in hand-to-hand combat, the wielder of a firearm uses Strength + Firearms against the opponents Brawl or Melee pool. The opponent does not receive a penalty for lacking cover. Instead, the firearm user suffers a -2 dice penalty if targeting someone outside the scuffle as well as a -2 penalty for firearms larger than a pistol.

RELOADING AND TRACKING AMMUNITION: **Vampire** generally does not track ammunition expenditure for small arms, but given that an attack test in **Vampire** usually represents more than a single shot, it can be wise to require reloading after a single attack with revolvers and other small-capacity firearms (such as the M1911, also known as the "Colt 45"), after two attacks with most automatic pistols and rifles, and after three attacks from 30+ cartridge magazines.

Reloading is a two-dice minor action (see above) for most weapons (assuming a revolver has a speed loader).

CALLED SHOTS: A combatant may seek to direct their attacks at a specific part of their target in order to produce a result other than maximal physical trauma – shooting out the tires of a car, swatting a goblet out of the hand of the elder, or putting a bullet in the leg of a fleeing informant. Called shots are also used when attempting decapitation or when trying to put a stake in the heart of a vampire (see p. 221).

To do so, the attacker declares their action and target before rolling the dice for their attack.

After the attacker tests, they *subtract successes*; hit-

ting a specific location is not just harder, it also makes achieving a safe center-of-mass hit less likely. Usually, the modifier is -2 successes, though the Storyteller can modify this number up or down depending on the nature of the target. Hitting the tires of a car might only incur a -1 penalty, while piercing the fuel line of a plane taking off is done at -4.

The exact effect of a called shot is up to the Storyteller, but it should not simply be more damage, as that is the assumed purpose of a normal attack. Instead, called shots are more likely to aim for less damage, going for a non-lethal incapacitation at the expense of effectiveness.

CRIPPLING INJURIES: For players looking for juicier and meatier combat, the Crippling Injury table allows for additional effects from extreme Health damage. After taking damage while Impaired, roll a d10 on the Crippling Injury table, adding the number of Aggravated damage currently on the track to the roll. This result can lead to further dice pool penalties (or even instant death), tracked independently from the abstract damage on the Health tracker.

AGGRAVATED DAMAGE + ROLL	CRIPPLING INJURY
1-6	**Stunned:** Spend 1 point of Willpower or lose a turn.
7-8	**Severe head trauma:** Make Physical rolls at -1; Mental rolls at -2
9-10	**Broken limb or joint:** Make rolls at -3 when using the affected limb, or **Blinded:** Make vision-related rolls (including combat) at -3 Storyteller decides which makes most sense for this combat
11	**Massive wound:** Make all rolls at -2, add +1 to all additional damage suffered
12	**Crippled:** Same effects as Broken, but limb is lost or mangled beyond use
13+	Death (mortal) or immediate torpor (vampire)

EXAMPLE:

Eric the vampire has Stamina 3, and thus has a Health tracker of 6. He has sustained 4 points of Superficial damage from bullets in a fight against some security guards. As he tries to escape, a guard manages to shoot him again, dealing 6 damage.

As gunshots cause Superficial damage to vampires, this result is halved to 3, and thus the two final boxes on his tracker are filled, making him Impaired. The third point of damage turns a previously Superficial damage box into Aggravated.

Being injured (having received that third point of damage) while Impaired necessitates a roll on the crippling injuries table. Eric's player rolls a 5 and adds Eric's 1 point of Aggravated damage for a result of 6; Eric is temporarily stunned. The player gladly pays a point of Willpower and Eric can continue his escape.

Criticals in Combat

To speed up play, if a player rolls a critical for their character in combat against a nameless mortal foe, the human is incapacitated without the need for damage calculation. A messy critical is usually lethal in this regard.

Sample Weapon Ratings

Add the weapon's damage rating to the margin on the winning attack roll for the total damage inflicted.

Example: Adam throws a stone cherub from a fountain at Pauline, scoring two successes. The Storyteller places the cherub at +3 damage – it is rather heavy – and thus Pauline suffers five levels of Superficial damage (halved, as usual).

WEAPON	DAMAGE VALUE
Improvised weapon, stake*	+0
Light impact (brass knuckles)	+1
Heavy impact (baton, club, tire iron, baseball bat) **Light piercing** (crossbow bolt, switchblade) **Light gunshot** (.22 pistol)	+2
Heavy melee (broadsword, fire axe) **Medium gunshot** (.308 rifle (single-shot), 9 mm pistol, shotgun at effective range)	+3
Heavy gunshot (12-gauge shotgun (close range only), .357 Magnum) **Huge melee** (claymore, steel beam)	+4

* If an attacker with a wooden stake succeeds at a called shot to a vampire's heart and inflicts 5+ damage, the stake pierces the vampire's heart and paralyzes them.

ARMOR

Each point of armor changes 1 point of Aggravated damage from puncturing or bladed weapons (per damage roll) to Superficial damage, which is then halved as usual. This protection is in general only useful to mortals and thin-bloods, as vampires already consider those types of damage Superficial.

ARMOR TYPE	ARMOR VALUE
Reinforced clothing/heavy leathers	2 (zero vs. bullets)
Ballistic cloth	2
Kevlar vest/flak jacket	4
Tactical SWAT/military armor (one-die penalty to Dexterity rolls)	6

Advanced Conflict: Social Combat

Social combat or conflict, can occur anywhere and take many forms, from a stare down in the streets to a duel of repartee and ridicule at a princely court. Given the wide variety of potential conflicts involved, these rules operate at a slightly higher degree of abstraction than the rules for physical conflict.

Social combat responds well to the Three Rounds and Out structure or the One-Roll Conflict system. Coming up with a novel rhetorical strategy on the fly isn't as easy as remembering a fight scene from your favorite martial arts or horror film; player creativity tends to tap out faster in social combats than in physical ones.

As in One-Roll Conflict, it's important to set the stakes ahead of time; what happens to the winner of the social conflict and what happens to the loser?

Social combat requires an opponent: someone who actively doesn't want you to succeed and who attempts to defeat you on the same ground on which you attack them. For social actions without such an opponent – persuasion of a disinterested audience, seduction of a victim, fast-talking your way past a military patrol, etc. – use normal resolution.

Social Conflict Pool

Depending on the conflict type, arena, and audience (if any) the players and Storyteller build a dice pool reflecting the methods to be used in the throwdown. Here are a few examples:

- Stare down a rival gang uses Resolve + Intimidation.
- You and a rival each attempt to convince the Prince the other is lying; use Manipulation + Persuasion.
- You and a rival both seek to increase your social positions during Elysium; use Composure + Etiquette.
- A rap battle (21st century) or duel of poesy (17th century); use Wits + Performance.
- Win an architectural contest to convince the city to build its new marina using magical geometry; use Intelligence + Craft (Architecture).
- A jaded roué and a seasoned adventuress see who can seduce the other into Blood Bonds; use Charisma + Subterfuge.

- Holding a living chess match with blood-doll pawns representing some shadowy machination in the real world; use Intelligence + Academics (Chess).

Social conflict pools can vary by combatant, even in the same conflict:

- During the staredown, you slowly crush a dumpster; use Strength + Intimidation.
- Convince the Prince your foe is lying with ample research instead of smooth talk; use Intelligence + Persuasion.
- Seek social position by gossiping and undermining your rival, rather than engaging them in a public display; use Manipulation + Etiquette
- Fight that rap battle with stage presence rather than rhyming; use Charisma + Performance.
- Convince the city another design fits their plans for the marina; use Manipulation + Politics.
- Play on your seduction rival's vanities and subconscious desires; use Charisma + Insight or even Manipulation + Insight if you involve third parties.
- Don't play to win the chess match. Instead play to persuade the watching Ventrue that you're ruthless enough to promote; Manipulation + Academics (Chess).

Just like in any other conflict, these pools may vary with actions taken and circumstances.

Knives in Their Smiles

Resolve social conflict with the same mechanics used for physical combat.

Order of operations seldom matters in social combat. If it does, use Wits + Etiquette for Initiative order in most cases – although for example, a lengthy intrigue in which planning to obtain an opening plays a key role might use Manipulation as the pool Attribute instead.

Combatants roll their respective dice pools and compare numbers of successes. The combatant with more successes subtracts their opponent's successes and applies the result as damage to Willpower.

A social combatant always has the opportunity to concede before pools are rolled – it is often better to step down than be shamed and exhausted if defeat seems inevitable.

Willpower damage hurts most when others see your weakness. Add a damage modifier depending on the audience (just being present doesn't cut it, they also need to be interested in the outcome).

AUDIENCE OR WITNESSES	EXTRA WILLPOWER DAMAGE
Opponents only	+0
Your coterie	+1
Kindred whose opinions you value for themselves: your mentor, lover, etc.	+2
Primogen, Harpies, or other socially important figures; another serious rival besides your current opponent	+3
The Prince, Baron, or another powerful figure	+4

Time and Social Combat

Unlike physical combat, which generally happens within the same scene, social combat can spread out. Rivals petitioning the Prince, an artistic duel between two Toreador, or a mutual Malkavian gaslighting contest could unfold over days, weeks, or even centuries.

In a long-term conflict, Willpower loss doesn't necessarily represent a sudden shock, but an ongoing, irritating distraction that flares up during the chapter it spends in the spotlight.

For long-term social conflicts especially, simply counting successes over three rounds (or taking the winner of two out of three rounds) provides sufficient benchmarks for drama and roleplay. The Storyteller and players don't need to track damage at all; they can just play according to the outcome of the rolls.

Winning Social Combat

Social combat ends when one of the parties concedes defeat, usually when Impaired, but sometimes an opponent goes all the way to total mental breakdown when their Willpower tracker fills with Aggravated damage. The winner of the social combat achieves the stakes agreed to at the beginning of the conflict by the Storyteller and the players.

The Storyteller may impose a further penalty on the loser of the social combat in interactions with the winner, at least until the memory of the affray fades ■

Systems of the Blood

The systems above, along with the base Storyteller System rules (pp. 115-130), provide ample rules structure for any Vampire chronicle. Storytellers can riff on them and improvise in the moment without regret. However, some Storytellers in some chronicles may wish to pursue the hunt, launch projects, recall their past centuries, or exchange loathsome favors in more lurid detail while feeling the comfort of system's bone beneath their drama's flesh.

Hence the following more detailed discretionary systems are provided to model these and other characteristic activities of vampires within the World of Darkness.

Hunting

Vampires hunt by nature and by desire. Hunting and feeding form the bloody core of their legends, fiction, and film. However, like any other activity in the chronicle, players and Storytellers may wish to focus on the hunt or flash past it – and perhaps decide to do the opposite the next night.

As far as time allows, Storytellers and players should both propose and describe a hunt creatively. Keep descriptions short and bloody, unless the hunt is the main activity for the story, but always make it dramatic and exciting.

There are generally two modes of portraying hunting scenes: blow-by-blow, when you want detailed, visceral hunting scenes at the forefront of the drama, and zoomed out when you want faster scenes with a minimal disruption to the flow of the game.

The simplest and fastest way to handle a hunt in-game resolves it with a single roll of the pool given for the character's Predator type, or for another plausible approach. A Gangrel might suggest a harrowing chase across the park (Stamina + Athletics), while a Nosferatu prefers to wait like a trap-door spider in the

refuse of a dark alley to feed on the inevitable passing druggie or drunk (Resolve + Stealth). However the roll is determined, the player makes a simple test against the Difficulty of their chosen hunting ground.

A win means the vampire has found prey and fed: killed, injured, or just sipped from a human. Their Hunger reduces by the relevant amount (see Feeding Table, p. 212) and the cleanup probably happens without too much immediate blowback. Killing a human, and even attacking one in some places, can always come back at a vampire, especially if the local Masquerade thins or the Second Inquisition comes to town.

Unless time is a critical element in that night's story, don't bother keeping track of how long feeding takes. In the rare case that it actually matters, the Storyteller can assume a hunt takes an hour, set the time to match the vampire's approach narrative, or choose the elapsed time to heighten the drama.

If the character chooses to succeed at a cost, the vampire's Hunger goes down but something went wrong; the vessel died unexpectedly or messily, a credible witness got away, or the hunter poached on another coterie's turf. (This last error proves very common in cities where both Anarch councils and Camarilla Princes hand out hunting grounds.) Make the complication something the whole coterie can choose to address (or hope to ignore) after the hunter rejoins the party, not something the vampire tries to fix during the debacle.

In some chronicles, or at some points within some chronicles, the Storyteller may simply allow vampires with a stable Herd or ongoing control of a rich hunting ground to top up without a test when the course of the story plausibly allows it. After all, finding prey isn't necessarily the hard part – it's holding on to one's Humanity or preserving the Masquerade when the Beast hungers.

Predator Pools

Many vampires try to change up their feeding methods as opportunity presents itself, but their instincts drive them to certain default patterns. The Attribute and Skill combination a vampire uses for a hunt depends on their approach, which generally follows their Predator type (p. 175).

Players in an improvisational moment may suggest variations on any of these; the Storyteller can roll with it or respond with complications caused by a predator trying to think instead of hunt. Disciplines and Merits can also affect the pool, even beyond the options given below.

ALLEYCAT: Strength + Brawl: You take blood by force or threat, stalking, overpowering, and bleedings your victims. If you feed on criminals as a sort of dark knight of the streets, use Wits + Streetwise to find a victim.

BAGGER: Intelligence + Streetwise: You acquire preserved blood rather than hunt, or you feed from the dead or dying. Find your prize, gain access, and purchase or otherwise convince someone with the goods to give you access.

CLEAVER: Manipulation + Subterfuge: You take blood covertly from your mortal family or friends. Socialize with your victims, feed from them, and cover it up to groom them for next time.

CONSENSUALIST: Manipulation + Persuasion: You take blood by consent, under cover of medical work or a shared kink. Cultivate your victims, feed from them, and validate their choice to feed you.

FARMER: Composure + Animal Ken: You feed from animals. Find your quarry, catch your chosen animal, and feed from it.

HEADHUNTER: You feed from other vampires; if you make a mistake, you die – either tonight, or in a blood hunt. The Storyteller should not abstract something like this to a set of die rolls.

OSIRIS: Manipulation + Subterfuge or Intimidation + Fame: You feed from your fans, church, or other adoring crowd. The Skill for which you're famous may be Performance, Science, Craft, Academics, Politics, or something else. Display yourself, choose a victim, and flatter or bully them into feeding you.

SANDMAN: Dexterity + Stealth: You feed from sleeping victims. Case a hotel or house, break in, feed silently and get out.

SCENE-QUEEN: Manipulation + Persuasion: You feed from a high- or low-class subculture in which you enjoy high status. Make the scene, groom and isolate a victim from whom to feed, and gaslight or silence them to keep the scene cool. "I'll let the others see us together if you keep it together."

SIREN: Charisma + Subterfuge: You feed under the guise of sex. Pick up your victim, charm them, and take them somewhere alone to feed.

Hunting Grounds

The Difficulty of any hunting roll depends on the number of possible victims in the area and on the area's level of surveillance and social cohesion. A crowded tenement where everyone looks out for each other and a dispersed housing development where folks mind their own business are roughly equal hunting grounds by these metrics. An airport is full of travelers nobody will miss for hours or days, but is also full of security and security cameras.

A given hunting ground may have specific modifiers based on the particular establishment the vampire chooses (see Cities, p. 335) or on some quality (good or bad) of their domain's Chasse (p. 195).

A heavier than normal police presence increases Difficulty by +1; a heavy security presence (e.g., to guard a dignitary or deal with a terror alert) increases Difficulty by +2 for some types of hunting. A festival, parade, rally, riot, or other large temporary gathering decreases Difficulty by -2. The minimum Difficulty of a hunt is always 1.

In some neighborhoods, vampires may need to hunt as a pack or at least in pairs: a wingman to assist with seduction, a backup to tackle bigger prey, a lookout to warn a distracted feeder. If the plan sounds plausible, the Storyteller may allow teamwork (p. 122).

Storytellers may increase hunting Difficulties for particularly inhuman vampires (Nosferatu, some Gangrel, those with Humanity ratings of 4 or below), as such monsters find it difficult to blend in with a crowd.

Hunting as Heist

The players may decide that what they really want to do is feed on the French Minister of Defense, on Rihanna, or on the Prince's pet blood doll (whose blood grants visions of the future). This scenario is hunting as heist, and it should be as thoroughly planned and played out as any heist movie ever. A heist hunt necessarily involves the whole coterie – even if it's theoretically possible for a single vampire to get access to such a valuable neck, it takes more than one to case the setup, keep a lookout, launch a diversion, and handle the getaway.

The Storyteller should feel free to introduce all manner of security, scrutiny, and other complications and obstacles between the vampires and their goal. Nothing is off the table, from the Prince ordering them to stand down to preserve the Masquerade to the Second Inquisition getting wind of their plans and setting an ambush complete with body doubles in place. Of course, the player characters might win. That's when they learn all about the problems of success: the French government redoubles its support for the Second Inquisition, Rihanna threatens the Masquerade by dropping an album called *Camarilla Amor,* the Prince becomes even more

HUNTING GROUND	DIFFICULTY
Slum neighborhood, Skid Row, public housing projects or banlieues, the Rack	2
Bohemian or hipster neighborhood, gentrifying or blighted working-class neighborhood	3
Healthy working-class neighborhood, downtown business district, tourist district, airport or casino	4
Manufacturing, warehouse, or port district; urban parkland; middle class suburban sprawl	5
Wealthy neighborhood	6

paranoid and tyrannical. Or worse yet, their accomplishment remains a secret – except one ambitious ancilla has figured it out and has a price for keeping it sub rosa.

Kindred Intimacy

Sooner or later, all Kindred are denied certain parts of the pleasures of the flesh. To some that is the end of that, while others realize that the play of Blood offers experiences that are so much more interesting than mere copulation. Intimacy does, however, carry its own set of dangers, as vampires lost in the throes of passion are prone to sip straight from the source, thereby exposing themselves to the dreaded Blood Bond. Unscrupulous vampires callously use this fact to their own advantage, using their powers of seduction to inflame their lovers to the point where they cannot resist this urge. Conscientious vampires use all sorts of methods and protections to edge closer to the front without actually going there, denying themselves the true pleasure of the Kiss. This could be cutting and dripping, letting the blood flow for a while along the body (hopefully long enough to "cool off" its Bonding properties). Others imbibe only small drops, cutting and only licking (no swallowing!), and so on.

Provided that both parties are doing their best to play safe, avoiding stepping closer to the Blood Bond requires a simple Composure + Insight test vs. a Difficulty based on the level of precautions taken (2 for "raincoat level," 5 for unprotected). Needless to say, for many vampires, pleasure is inversely proportional to protection.

Manipulating someone into crossing the line is a contest of Charisma or Manipulation + Performance vs. Composure + Insight. Trying to do it without the other party realizing the intention reduces the dice pool by 2.

Faking a direct sip tests Composure + Subterfuge vs. Composure + Insight.

TAINTED BLOOD

As undead, vampires have little fear of conventional poisons. However, they may be affected by poisons or drugs contained within their victims' bloodstreams. Some vampire "juicers" or "heads" actively seek out prey under the influence of intoxicants to receive a vicarious buzz. Drugs can also alter the Resonance of the prey's blood, see p. 226.

By and large, most drugs have reduced effect on vampires than they do on humans. Use these values as the baseline for mortal incapacitations and the ceiling for vampire binges. In most cases, these effects last for a scene or two, depending on the nature of the drug and amount imbibed.

- **Alcohol: Lower Dexterity and Intelligence dice pools by one die.**
- **Cocaine/Meth/Speed: Spend two Willpower points to reroll a messy critical or bestial failure. Difficulties to resist or control frenzy increase by 1.**
- **Hallucinogens: Unable to concentrate, the vampire's Wits, Resolve, and Manipulation pools are lowered by two dice.**
- **Heroin/Morphine/Oxy/Opiates: Subtract two dice from all Physical dice pools. Difficulties to resist or control frenzy decrease by 1.**
- **Marijuana: The vampire experiences a slightly altered perception of time, suffering a one-die reduction to Wits dice pools. Difficulties to resist frenzy decrease by 1.**
- **Poison: Subtract one from all dice pools and take 1-3 points of Superficial damage per scene (or per turn, in the case of extremely fast-acting and lethal poisons). Few poisons have any real effect on the undead; the Superficial damage reflects short circuits as the tainted Blood activates and then paralyzes the vampire's dead nerves. Poison leaves the vampire's system as they use up the tainted blood or dilute it; either by reaching Hunger 5, or during their next feeding.**

Many vampires find that this type of intimacy with people who are already Bound to someone else lacks a certain something, and avoid it if they can. If one party is Bound to the other, it is usually significantly more entertaining for the Bound party, and many avoid intimacy with those Bonded to them for this very reason, unless offering it as a treat. If both parties are Blood Bound to each other, the practice is usually frowned upon, and sometimes creates a source of great jealousy. With multiple parties involved, the complications quickly escalate.

Compulsion Variants

Storytellers and players can vary the existing Compulsion rules to increase the role and effect of Compulsions on the game, or to better tailor them to the player characters. Some possible variant rules for Compulsions follow. By and large, groups who use these rules should be comfortable with losing character agency and with pursuing the less-attractive aspects of vampire existence. They can feed great (or at least wildly operatic and highly colored) drama, but beginners may wish to avoid them until they've used regular Compulsions enough to become comfortable (or jaded) with them.

COMPULSION SEVERITY

For experienced groups, it is possible to increase the severity of your Compulsions when you roll more than one 1 on your Hunger dice. For two 1s, the compulsion should lead to a scene of its own, and with three or more 1s, it can cause permanent changes to the vampire.

LONG-TERM COMPULSIONS

Long-term Compulsions are best used when a test covers a longer timescale, and must by necessity look a little different than "in-the-moment" Compulsions. Either simply narrate the Compulsion's effect (or ask the player leading questions like "doesn't that fill you with Rage?") during the course of the effort, turn the Compulsion into a spotlight scene within the given time frame and play it out in detail, or work out how this Compulsion could mechanically or dramatically affect the effort as a whole.

EXAMPLE:

Marco suffers a Compulsion when rolling for a sustained effort to outmaneuver a political rival's assets over a few weeks. Marco's incessant outbursts during the taut political campaign anger even his allies, lowering his Influence by one for that period.

STORYTELLER OFFERS

In addition to the normal Compulsion prompts, the Storyteller can also urge a Compulsion on a character when the moment seems right. If the player rejects this urge, they must spend a point of Willpower. If they choose to act on this offer, their character regains a point of Willpower.

EXAMPLE:

Keisha gets shot down by her chosen meal at a local dive bar. The Storyteller urges her, "Surely such insolence must not go unpunished?" and she must choose to either spend a point of Willpower to resist acting on this Compulsion or she must go with the urge and gain a point of Willpower.

HIDDEN COMPULSIONS

Hidden Compulsions offer particularly mature and experienced groups a path to explore the darker themes of Vampire. Each player comes up with their own signature weaknesses and dark impulses, including their version of the clan Compulsion, calibrating them with the existing Compulsions with the Storyteller's help. They then play as normal, with the Storyteller passing notes urging relevant Compulsions (chosen or rolled secretly) at thematically proper times and after failed rolls while at characters are at high Hunger.

Ideally, players never disclose or discuss which of their actions were compelled and which were not, presenting the others with a seamless portrait of vampiric temper, appetite, and cruelty. While this might seem a trivial thing to do, it can darken your game markedly.

Memoriam

Vampires are immortals, and some are very old indeed. Even thin-blood player characters might have

decades of unlife to look back on. In those past decades, a vampire doubtless starred in stories as dangerous and dramatic as the ones on the table tonight. Memoriam is how the player returns to those stories, flashing back to solve mysteries, learn motives, and demonstrate their uncanny prescience in, for example, leaving those gold bars here so long ago.

Goals

The player whose character undergoes Memoriam has a reason for their action, besides simple temporal tourism. Not that there's anything wrong with an adventure where the whole coterie is comprised of 1980s punks or 1880s cowboys, of course – but it's best to combine Memoriam with something relevant to the contemporary chronicle. That player explains what they did, learned, or started in the past that might tie into the modern nights' events; in other words, they set a goal for their past selves to have already accomplished.

The rules demarcate those goals, as they do most things, in terms of dots:

- ● The answer to one minor question, one expendable dot in a Background, two additional dice to one Skill test in the present
- ●● The answer to a major question, two expendable dots in a Background, four additional dice to one Skill test in the present
- ●●● The answer to an epic question, three expendable dots in a Background, a major boon

ANSWERS

Answers might range from "Where was the access tunnel when this bank was built?" to "Who killed the former Prince of Miami during the Great Hurricane of 1926?" A minor answer helps the player character in one scene, a major answer helps them in one chapter or story, and an epic answer casts the whole chronicle in a new light and likely gives the player character considerable leverage. It also likely puts them in considerable danger, but that's vampire unlife in a nutshell.

TEST BONUSES: These represent a specific advantage gained by recalling something from the past. The player can cash them in whenever they wish in the present during the current chapter or the next, as long as the roll connects in some way to their experience during Memoriam: "We were friends in 1978, what happened?" or "Now I remember, Billy the Kid taught me to throw a lariat."

EXPENDABLE DOTS: Expendable dots in a Background add to rolls or otherwise benefit the player character for the duration of one story. This benefit can affect the currently ongoing story, or the player character can save the benefit for another story in the future. Once spent, the dots go away: the player has used the advantage, spent the capital, or otherwise returned themselves to normal.

Storytellers should feel free to allow any number of possible goals in Memoriam, from recovering Willpower to learning the formula for an alchemical elixir or gaining readers' privileges at a key Nosferatu archive. Just set the dot value by interpolating on the table, or base the value on other dot-demarcated advantages.

Entering Memoriam

A vampire who remembered every detail of their past would soon go mad as incident piled on incident, crowding out the present in a lightning-riven fog of reminiscence. Aside from a few special enmities or delicious sense-memories, the details of decades and centuries ago fade. Vampires must force blood into long-dead brain vessels and taste dormant nervous signals again to recall such memories; entering Memoriam requires a Rouse Check.

A player character can enter Memoriam no more than once per story,

and the Storyteller can also limit the number of Memoriams played in each session, usually to no more than one. Obviously, the character cannot enter Memoriam to recall a date before their birth. Multiple characters can enter Memoriam at the same time if they were all present at the chosen place and time.

The player likely already has some notion of where and when their character was Embraced, and perhaps of what their character has been doing since. They select the place and time their character seeks to remember and if it's a blank spot the player hasn't decided anything about, so much the better! Make a note of it for future reference ("August 1918: drinking from flu victims and dodging the draft in Boston."), and go.

If the character enters Memoriam under the right circumstances, they receive extra dice to use during the conflicts they remember – and re-enact in their minds. They can use these dice one by one or all at once if they prefer. If they enter Memoriam:

- On the spot where the past events occurred: gain two dice
- Just after drinking mortal blood that was present on the scene (such as a survivor or a descendant): gain one die per point of Hunger slaked by that drink
- After drinking vitae from an immortal SPC present on the scene: gain one die for a tiny sip; earn dice equal to the donor's Blood Potency +1 after a deeper drink
- While holding a particularly evocative artifact to be used in the Memoriam scene (e.g., the gun with which they killed Sheriff Pat Garrett): gain three dice, usable only in tests involving that item

MEMORIAM AND STATISTICS: While the character in the Memoriam would realistically have lower Traits, representing their reduced experience, calculating this difference would be too time-consuming for most troupes. Instead, assume that all Attributes and Skills remain the same, while subtracting a dot in one Discipline for roughly every 50 years that the Memoriam goes back, unless special circumstances apply. (A character who has spent 500 years in torpor and only recently resurfaced should not be penalized for the time spent in undead slumber, for example.)

Advantages and Flaws apply at the Storyteller's discretion. The Storyteller should work to fit the character's past self into the fiction. If they should have access to a Haven that their backstory establishes they were expelled from in 1945, give it to them; if they should have fewer Resources because they made their fortune by diamond-trafficking after the fall of the Soviet Union, lower it. The goal should be both entertaining drama and consistent backstory, if possible.

Vampires start play in Memoriam at the same level of Hunger as when they entered it, unless the Storyteller deems otherwise.

Running Memoriam

The Storyteller should present the players with at least one challenge per dot of their goal unless the fiction would suffer from doing so.

Players whose characters are not in Memoriam play SPCs, roleplay-

ing in response to player character action. This casting can offer some fun contrasts from their normal selves: the staunch puritan of the main chronicle becomes a lusty habitué of the demimonde in 1880s Paris. Think of it as the equivalent of casting the regular actors as different characters in a flashback episode of some TV show.

The Storyteller should strive to clearly present the goal and challenges of the Memoriam to keep the scene focused and moving at a brisk pace. It is also up to the Storyteller to decide when and how the Memoriam ends, either through success or irrevocable failure.

OPPOSITION: Depending on the goal level of the Memoriam, the Storyteller should set the opposition so that it challenges the players with roughly one challenge per goal level. These can be simple tests or be played out as one-roll conflicts. If looking to play out a whole conflict turn-by-turn, that conflict should be the entirety of the Memoriam.

After Memoriam

If successful, the characters gain the benefit sought when entering the Memoriam. A failure on any of the challenges fails the entire Memoriam, which instead becomes a dire reminder of how ill the characters fared the last time they encountered whatever problem to which they now seek a solution.

Any Willpower damage sustained is kept in the present. Health damage sustained is also translated to Willpower damage, as traumas remembered now weigh heavy on the psyche. Crippling injuries gained in Memoriam are assumed to have healed in the intervening time.

If a character enters torpor in Memoriam, they are assumed to have awoken somehow before the present day. (Use the torpor length for their Humanity at the time of the Memoriam, and block that period off from future Memoriam exploration.) If a character dies in Memoriam, well – how they came back, and just whom they owe for that dark and horrible favor, will make an excellent question to resolve in further play. Perhaps by another dive into Memoriam....

Storytellers and players should cooperate even more in Memoriam than in the regular chronicle – too many inconsistencies and weird divergences from the plot work against dramatic unity, unless the chronicle intentionally takes on the aura of madness and nightmare.

Prestation

While power over one's fellow undead may be the truest currency of the Damned, boons and favors also enjoy a healthy trade. The process of trading, repaying, and incurring favors, known as prestation, is the cornerstone of the vampiric social structure. Put simply, a clever Kindred grants favors, while a foolish one incurs them – and becomes a servant to their promises and their debts. A vampire who calls in as-yet unearned favors from other Kindred too often finds their entire existence dictated by the obligations they have incurred. In exchange for whatever tokens of help they requested, they become a puppet of those who came to their aid.

Kindred society is a byzantine knot of favors owed, loyalties sworn, debts repaid, and promises broken. From the highest Prince to the lowliest fledgling, the coin of the Kindred realm – after blood, of course – is the boon.

Boons

One Kindred's promise to another is known as a boon. In some domains, boons operate like credit, in that a vampire must owe a boon for another vampire to extend them one boon – they must be seen as trustworthy. In other domains, the opposite is true; the more debts a Kindred owes, the less capable of repaying those boons they are assumed to be. The one universal truth among all domains, however, is that a boon is a boon, and there's no way to get out of it other than to satisfy it or to have it excused by its holder.

If a Kindred kills the holder of their boon (directly or provably indirectly) the debt is transferred to the holder's sire or eldest childe in most domains; to the Prince or the Harpies in others. Kindred touchy about their honor often insist on formally transferring such debts themselves, even if the holder died at the hands of the Second Inquisition. Defalcating on a boon, or claiming to still hold a boon after its repayment, destroys a Kindred's reputation. Harpies remain alert for

any sign of chicanery; some even go so far as to keep lengthy and exact records of all boons owed and held in their domains. The cheater may even find themselves exiled from court – if a vampire's word means nothing, their oath of allegiance cannot be trusted either. Even Anarchs honor boons, in large part to prove that they don't need courts and princes to keep themselves honorable.

Kindred use a number of different ways to keep track of boons in different domains. In some, a specially appointed Harpy keeps careful books of who owes who, in others, each major figure has their own currency representing boons (such as rare coins, signed slips, lengths of thread and so on) that they hand out, in a third there is only the honor system.

The more powerful the granter of a boon, the more powerful the boon.

In general, the society of the Damned recognizes four classifications of boons:

TRIVIAL BOON: The easiest boons both to acquire and to satisfy. A trivial boon generally involves no risk or significant cost for the granter. A Kindred might earn or promise a trivial boon for aid in finding blood, for getting an invitation to an exclusive soiree or entrée to a hot nightclub, or for making space in a haven. In most domains, coterie members perform trivial boons for each other without recording them, although a vampire who doesn't carry their share of the favor load might get "accidentally" locked out some morning.

MINOR BOON: Minor boons require one of the Kindred going out of their way to perform or pay off. They have a small but lasting cost, or involve some risk – physical, social, or other. A Kindred might promise or demand a minor boon for casting a vote in favor of another during a convocation of elders, killing an inconvenient but not very important human, granting access to a book of lore or an ancient diary, or providing a vessel or sanctuary in a desperate hour.

MAJOR BOON: A major boon can alter the flow of Kindred affairs in a domain, directly or indirectly. They always involve real risk or real expense, and both parties usually intend to recoup. Examples of major boons include investiture as the Filius Major of the Cainite Heresy in a city, grants of rich hunting grounds, revealing a major secret, leveraging significant resources toward someone else's agenda, or reversing one's expected vote in council.

LIFE BOON: This is the rarest and most valuable of the boons observed by the Damned, and perhaps ironically, the one most often promised at a moment's notice – when the next moment might bring Final Death. One might earn a life boon by killing another powerful vampire, but most life boons come under duress. Kindred have sworn life boons in exchange not just for their own unlives, but for protection for Touchstones, offering an alibi in a case of princely justice, or just for keeping some hideous secret.

Getting and Spending Boons

While a given domain may have rigorous conventions in place for recording and observing who has sworn boons to whom, the completion of a boon is comparatively simple. Once the Kindred who holds the boon declares it satisfied, that's it. It's done.

In terms of game mechanics, calling in a boon mostly affects Social tests. A trivial boon is worth one or two dice on the roll; a character might offer a boon to the target, payable on a win on the roll. Alternately, the target may already owe the character the boon; the character reminding the target of the debt causes the die modifier. In this case, a win for the character fulfills the boon debt.

A minor boon held by a character should ideally equal an automatic win on a Social test against the debtor. Going the other direction, a Social test may instead resolve the question "Does the target require a minor boon in exchange for this favor?" If the character wins the roll, the target doesn't demand a boon; if they lose, they still get what they want, but at the cost of a minor boon.

Major boons and life boons are game developments larger than single tests encompass. Major boons can risk the equivalent of two- or three-dot Backgrounds, or more. Player characters should promise them only in extremis and use them for domain- and chronicle-changing efforts ■

CITIES

I have seen phantoms there that were as men
And men that were as phantoms flit and roam;
Marked shapes that were not living to my ken,
Caught breathings acrid as with Dead Sea foam:
The City rests for man so weird and awful,
That his intrusion there might seem unlawful,
And phantoms there may have their proper home.

– JAMES THOMSON, *THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT*

Odds are, your chronicle unfolds in a city. Vampires belong in the city, the natural habitat of the unnatural. Like rats and cockroaches, they thrive wherever humans congregate and build their homes. As the Storyteller, you shape and use the environment where your characters live their unlives.

The city has two key functions in your game. The first, obviously: The city acts as the stage on which everything happens. The second: The city provides a thousand reasons for player and Storyteller characters to want something. City as motivation seems more abstract than city as scenery, but plays a more important part. Stories emerge from character motivation, which you can tie intimately to the geography of your city.

Consider hunting. All Kindred hunt for blood, the defining quality of the vampire. This makes humanity into a resource, a foodstuff unevenly distributed across the cityscape. Some areas are easy to hunt in, others are hard. What's more, individual taste can make an area unusually desirable or undesirable.

For example, a given Ventrue Prince drinks only the blood of homeless vagrants. Many of these sleep in the city's metro tunnels, the domain of the Nosferatu. Since the Nosferatu hate the Prince and know about their culinary predilections, they have decreed the tunnels off-limits to everyone, even members of their own clan. Ostensibly they seek to maintain the Masquerade and avoid suspicious deaths too close to their havens, but everyone in the Camarilla knows the real reason.

The question is, will the Prince assert their

The tower's built of spit and spite,
Without a sound, without a sight.
The biter bit, the bitter bite.
(It's better to be out at night.)

privileges and hunt in Nosferatu territory, or will they accept the Nosferatu rule and risk appearing weak? If they hunt, they destabilize the city for a petty personal reason, but if they don't, it suggests they don't have complete control over their city.

The Feudal System

The way Kindred divide and organize urban territory resembles the medieval feudal system, although local variations abound. Anarchs assign territory by arbitrary ideological guidelines that rapidly devolve to who knows whom, and who has the support of the Baron or Council tonight. In both cases, strength provides the ultimate title to turf, while favors, hierarchy, and territory interplay to create conflict, or in other words, to create story. For example, the Prince of a Camarilla city gives the docks to the Sheriff. The Sheriff is too busy with their duties to hunt, so they give five other vampires permission to have their havens in the Sheriff's territory and to hunt there. In exchange, they must provide the Sheriff with a regular supply of vessels.

Kindred feudalism generates story options for player characters. If the characters are in the bottom of the hierarchy, they need a place to live. This provides a simple goal with a clear set of options. Do the characters decide to live in a downscale suburb claimed by nobody? The upside is freedom, the downside is poor hunting grounds and unglamorous unliving. If they want something better, they may decide to take over the house of a rich family and make them into blood slaves. But to do that, they need permission from the Toreador who have the rights to that territory. In exchange, the Toreador Primogen demands that the characters must organize the amusements for one night at the Elysium each month.

This way, a simple question of living arrangements starts to transform into a story. The same happens when it comes to feeding rights. Perhaps the characters want access to a new feeding territory because they need to feed on another type of blood. To do this, they have to feed illegally (with its own interesting story consequences) or seek permission. Maybe a Nosferatu elder controls their desired feeding area, and their price is open romantic companionship at Elysium.

If the characters advance from the bottom of the hierarchy, or if the chronicle concerns more established vampires, they can use the system from both perspectives: They need to do favors for others, but they can also demand favors of their own.

Domains

Vampire territories go by the name "domains" even in ostensibly Anarch cities, although some Anarchs use "turf" or "assignat" or "hood" or "tusovka." Camarilla Princes hold the largest domains, their regnum comprising all the lesser domains within the entire city – in theory. In practice, independent lords, Anarch gangs, and the needs of the Masquerade keep some space out of the Prince's talons even in the most seemingly organized city.

DOMAINS BY AREA: Physical ground and boundaries on the maps define the archetypal vampire domain. More influential and respected (or feared) Kindred hold larger domains in more desirable areas. Up-and-comers, the so-far loyal, and other Kindred with potential utility hold smaller corners of the city by Princely decree. In between lie streets and blocks and sometimes kilometers of urban landscape, open to neonate covens and vulnerable to Anarch gangs.

Some domains spread from a central spot – "five blocks around the water tower on Hillside" or "six streets off the Odeon." This leads to fuzzy boundaries, which leads to wittingly poaching and unknowingly trespassing. Vampires paint their turf with "the marks," Kindred graffiti, and defend it with their talons or their pull with Council or Court.

Higher-status Kindred may hold whole neighborhoods in fief: the Duke of Echo Park, the Count of Cross Bay, the Lady of Guell. These nobles allow their own vassals to hold smaller blocks within their domains, providing protection from turf-jumpers in exchange for service or vessels.

DOMAINS OF ASSOCIATION: Domains may only cover one building, albeit a large one such as a hospital complex or shopping mall, and their parking garages and sewers. But in some cities, all the sewers belong to the Nosferatu by right, domains by natural expertise or clan authority. Kindred may claim rights from centuries ago over the "highway," now interpreted as everything touched by the Interstate or Autobahn. The large parks may be Gangrel turf after a truce in the Anarch war, while the small parks remain parceled out to individual coteries or under the authority of ley-line tracing Tremere.

DOMAINS OF AUTHORITY: In some cities, the Toreador hold prior claim over public art and private galleries, a Lady of the Stage commands all theaters and doles out actors as chosen blood dolls to her favorites, or a Lord of Medicine controls all hunts at hospitals and clinics. The latter scuffles with the Gangrel Haunt of Dogs over veterinarians and animal hospitals, even as the Haunt claims protection over the coyotes that seek food in the city no matter whose block they feed on.

Hunting Territories

Anarch or Camarilla, every Kindred city turns on the politics of hunting. At the raw end of it, almost everywhere too many vampires compete for too few kine. By extension from predator-prey dynamics in the natural world, a vampire should have about sixty square kilometers of city as their exclusive hunting ground; in most cities, Kindred count themselves fortunate with one percent of that. Hunting must be limited for practical purposes: every vampire in the city can't stalk the same nightclub and maintain the club as a going concern, much less maintain the Masquerade. However, Kindred rulers also limit hunting as a power play, a way to assert predatory dominance.

Every city varies: in some cities the Primogen or Anarch council declare the Rack (the city's nightclub district, teeming with temptingly wasted humans – and with police) off limits to hunting. In others, they reserve it for themselves, stating that only experienced, responsible vampires can be trusted to hunt there without making mistakes. In some cities, certain neighborhoods become the "Prince's Forest" or the "Game Reserve," off limits without special permission. In others, rulers parcel out hunting rights with domains, allow hunts all across the cities on feast days, grant licenses in exchange for special services, or anything else that secures their control and imperils their rivals.

Kindred new to town must therefore make sure they know the lay of the land before too many nights pass. Sometimes local Kindred mislead the newcomers and direct them to forbidden grounds, as a way to test their masters without open rebellion, or just to cull the competition. Breaking the law seems easy – is the Prince watching this seedy bar toilet? – but the penalties can be extreme. Some rulers make hunting law murky, onerous, and contradictory on purpose. This way, almost every vampire in the city ends up breaking the law sooner or later. If the Prince or council wants to dispose of a rival, they simply wait for the inevitable illegal hunting incident and banish or execute the offender on this ostensibly just pretext.

The Marks:
Vampire Graffiti

How do vampires communicate with each other when they're all hidden in the dark, dwelling in secret lairs, lying to each other and off the grid?

They do it with the marks, sometimes called "the vampire cant." Similar to modern gang tags, subvertisements and graffiti, these public works of art or vandalism contain jargon, coded symbols, or archaic terms that signal meaning to fellow Kindred – and hopefully, only to them. The marks evolve from graffiti going back to Pompeii and from gang tags invented this decade. By design, they blend with old posters, guerrilla art, urban spray sign, and street construction rhumb lines.

A paper rat pasted to the wall of the train tunnel, the ornate curlicue red V sprayed on the bank's alley wall, the yellow hieroglyph chalked in the abandoned church doorway. The words "red teeth" tagged on the stairwell, the Warhol Marilyn airbrushed over the transom. The tattoo on a blood doll, the seemingly random words on newspapers pasted over a boarded-up storefront. These marks tell Kindred whose turf they're on, what clan claims the block, whom the Council has declared anathema.

The marks also give Storytellers a simple tool for inserting Kindred culture throughout the city. Mentioning meaningful tags and symbols in setting descriptions helps create the illusion that other characters are moving through the game world when the players' characters aren't there; somebody painted all that stuff, somebody has something to say.

MARKS AND MECHANICS

Sometimes the tension or dramatic outcome of a scene hinges on whether a character spots something, recognizes what they automatically notice, or can truly puzzle out the meaning of the object in front of them. If a scene's drama doesn't hinge on the success or failure of an action – if they fail to spot the mark, they won't discover the secret entrance to a rival's haven; if they misinterpret the mark, they'll accidentally lead the coterie into hostile territory, etc. – then don't roll for it. Give knowledge for free; charge only for drama. Focus on just the part that's important.

Vampire characters can use regular Skills on the marks. Mortals need some sort of occult or other special knowledge to read the marks – although the Second

Inquisition may have assembled a collection of the most obvious ones. Storytellers may impose Difficulty bumps or die penalties for quality of paint, rough or cracked surfaces, lack of time, exposure to the elements, etc.

SPOTTING, RECOGNIZING AND DECIPHERING MARKS

Characters who know specific marks notice them in the urban tapestry, catching sight of them in the gloom, on the crumbling concrete, in caked-on layers of graffiti.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Streetwise (for street tags) or Investigation (for repeated patterns) or Insight (for double meanings); Difficulty depends on the obscurity of the mark and whether the tagger wants it found by outsiders.

COMMUNICATING WITH MARKS

These marks just send messages, from "this is my turf" to "Inquisitors working undercover here." The tagger doesn't intend to hide their meaning, but to signal fellow Kindred.

To create a coded mark, use Intelligence plus the lower of your Craft and the Skill associated with the message.

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Craft (Painting or Poster Art or Graffiti), although tagging a particularly hard-to-reach spot might use Dexterity; disguising the mark as normal graffiti tags might use Wits + Streetwise. On a critical win, word of the mark rapidly reaches the intended audience even if they haven't passed by the spot.

PERSUADING WITH MARKS

This is how subvertisements undermine the company line, how pop culture cracks the façade of the powers that be, how viral memes infect the body politic. Naturally, the majority of graffiti, Kindred or other, doesn't result in real change. Only those works that strike a nerve and get carried through the culture of the Damned like a bug become profound and unforgettable enough to be considered real power plays.

Dice Pool: Roll to encode the mark with Manipulation + whichever Social Skill best fits the intended message: Intimidation (to frighten or weaken), Leadership (to rally allies), Persuasion (to convert onlookers), or Subterfuge (to send a false message). The Social Skill cannot contribute more dice to the pool than the tagger's Craft plus the relevant Specialty. The Storyteller can have the tagger roll this pool as a contest against a specific target to influence them or as a Social test against a Difficulty set by the audience attitude.

The more successes, the longer the work's meaning stays with the viewer, the further word spreads of its quality, the greater the number of eyes that see it. In general, the work stays au courant for a number of nights equal to the successes on the roll. On a critical win, the tag genuinely changes something, if only outraging its target into foolishly premature action ■

Broken Social Scenes

In these example hunting grounds, the crowd serves as the draw and the event. These hunting grounds don't depend entirely on a location; they could happen on many sites and in many districts throughout the city.

For each hunting ground, consider the Resonances provided to be guidelines only. Double the odds of Intensity, however, as the kine tend to get their blood up at these events.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY

Soccer practice, art club, drama club, band practice, the list goes on. Preying on kids draws far too much attention; the clever hunter targets tired parents coming to pick their children up after a hard day at work. Often frazzled and not really paying attention to their surroundings, they barely pick up on any but the most violent attacks. Best part: If a dad starts to feel tired every day, he definitely won't suspect vampires.

Victim Types: Working parents (Phlegmatic, Choleric, Melancholy)
Systems: Add one die to all Social or Mental hunting dice pools.

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETING

Or NarcAnon, or SexAnon, or any other twelve-step group on folding chairs drinking bad coffee and eating stale donuts. But the blood is probably clean, and you can find out a lot about a victim for long-term stalking. You can even testify about your own addictions … just change the details a little.

Victim Types: All walks of life, though mostly Melancholic. Some Sanguine blood, perhaps, at SexAnon.
Systems: Lots of traumas here; add two dice to Insight rolls to find and understand a Dyscrasia. Difficulties at -1 for all non-Physical hunting rolls.

Designing Domains

Domains have three Traits: *Chasse*, *Lien*, and *Portillon*. (see p. 195 for details). It's probably best when designing domains for the game to begin with Chasse: a measure of a domain's richness as a hunting ground, it's the most important concern for the ruler granting the domain and the Kindred who receive it.

As a general rule, good stuff is rarer than mediocre stuff. This holds true for everything, but especially for vampire domains. One-dot Chasse domains vastly outnumber all the other values put together.

For a city of three million people, consider this an average breakdown:

Chasse	Possible Geographical Equivalents
●	Single very large apartment building, one residential or industrial city block
●●	Two to four blocks, one park, one small site (hospital, tourist landmark, mall)
●●●	Eight blocks on a major street, one medium site (airport, major employer, casino, college), small domain of authority
●●●●	One square kilometer, one district, one large site (amusement park, university), medium domain of authority
●●●●●	One of these is the Prince or Baron's personal estate Large domain of authority, prime hunting turf (e.g., the Rack)

Most potential domains never show up in the game – either the Prince keeps them all off limits as their Royal Forest, or they are endless residential or industrial stretches and stripmalls barely adding up to one dot apiece, locked up tight in gated communities or empty at night and essentially worthless.

Every country and city differs greatly, and every chronicle even more so – but as a very general rule of thumb, one dot of Chasse equals between 500 and 1,000 mortals. Don't put too much credibility into, or stress on, this number. A single "farming" vampire needs an absolute minimum of 30 mortals to feed from to avoid anemia and other debilities in their herd, but the Masquerade is a much bigger problem when dealing with that small herds. A "hunting population" should be (at minimum) two orders of magnitude

larger: closer to 3,000 mortals per vampire to conceal their depredations in the red noise of conventional murders, cruelties, and disappearances. Thus, a coterie of three to five vampires "should" have, at minimum, a domain of 10,000 people. And that's in the relatively violent US. The number of mortals needed to hide the ravages of a player coterie could be much higher in a European country like Norway, where the number of murders per capita is seven times lower than the US. Or you could say that the Kindred are so deeply embedded in the semi-socialist hospital and elderly care systems of Scandinavia that Camarilla vampires have easy access to prey. This would allow more vampires to feed off fewer people without arousing suspicion. The numbers are up to you. As long as they feel somewhat plausible, you're good.

However, Chasse measures more than raw numbers of throats; it also takes into account the physical size of the domain, the ease of hunting there, and the richness of the prey. For example, a decent-sized club holds 800 to 1,000 people, with perhaps three or four times that number cycling through over the evening. (A really good-sized dance club might hold 10,000 or more.) But most of those are delicious and easy prey, "multiplying" the numbers by two or three. A domain consisting of three nightclubs thus equals one covering a whole neighborhood in a quieter part of town. At

ART INSTALLATION

At this experimental art happening, a trained assistant draws blood from the gallery audience, ostensibly to be used as the medium for durational works in which the artist sprays blood live onto canvas, where it slowly rots. Of course, some clever Toreador has swapped out the good stuff for corn syrup.

Victim Types: Adventurous urban art aficionados (Melancholy), blood scene freaks (Sanguine)
Systems: Unless you set the gallery up, it's hard to hunt here; tight monitoring adds +2 to hunting Difficulties. However, if you did set it up (with Influence in the gallery world, perhaps) it's ample blood for a month.

CONVENTION

Hundreds or thousands of out-of-town strangers flood into some random hotel for a long weekend of seminars or panels or looking at appliances or buying old magazines. To hunt successfully here, you need to scout out ahead a little, but once you understand who the people are, it's easy. Best of all, the prey rotates, so you don't have to worry too much about being recognized.

Victim Types: Professionals (Phlegmatic), subject-matter nerds (Choleric or Sanguine), vendors (Melancholy).
Systems: Hunting Difficulties at -2; add one die to your Social pools if you possess a specialty relevant to the convention; add Fame if relevant; no danger of over-hunting (p. 331).

ILLEGAL OUTDOOR RAVE

It's somewhat hard to get to – you have to walk through some woods or down a canal, but after midnight it's guaranteed to be full of stoned and drunk people who never call the cops, no matter what happens. On a party night you can hear the bass for kilometers, and the beach or forest is a smorgasbord of people doing drugs and fucking.

Victim Types: Hippies and junkies (Melancholy), broke party kids (Sanguine), aging organizers (Phlegmatic).
Systems: It's a feast! Hunting Difficulties at -3. However, alcohol and drugs fizz through all the blood (p. 310).

MILONGA

Devotees of the tango flock to seedy dance halls, hotel ballrooms, or family social clubs for these events, often coming from other cities with a less active tango scene. If you can dance, you can hunt. Contra dancing, swing meetups, square dances – any sort of group dance event works here. Why fight over the same drunk club kids when you can drink your fill from bored moms and desperate singles?

Victim Types: Bored moms and nice kids (Phlegmatic), lonely singles (Melancholy), poly couples and triads (Sanguine).
Systems: Make a Dexterity or Charisma + Performance (Dance) roll and apply all successes as bonus dice to Hunting rolls throughout the night.

NIGHT GAME

From office-league softball to professional jai alai, the real hunt happens off the field, in the bleachers and in the bars afterward. Lots of strangers come together, drink and shout for four hours, and then drift away – you couldn't design a better hunting ground if you tried.

the end of the night, the Trait exists not to map some sort of vampire census tract, but to provide mechanical support for the story.

Stories often work better with smaller domains, that are easier for players to feel they know. Chronicles work better – have richer conflict – with vampires competing constantly for territory. The actual sprawling size of most cities (Chicago comprises nearly 21,000 city blocks; it's not particularly vast, for a modern city) works against both dramatic necessities, so downplay it. Similarly, the chronicle becomes increasingly unwieldy with more than one vampire per 10,000 people in a city. Chicago has a population of about three million, and 300 vampires can feel like a lot, even for "Chiraq." The size of domains and their populations, and how badly they have been thinned by Second Inquisition and the Beckoning is ultimately up to you. Focus on stories, not numbers; use these values as a skeleton – they can support your story, but they shouldn't break through and be seen.

Blood and Hunting

The Hunting systems on p. 306 provide the basic rules frameworks to model hunting in a given location or using a specific *modus predationis*.

As noted on p. 196, one dot in Chasse indicates (all else being equal) a Difficulty of 6 for the hunting roll in that location. Each additional dot lowers the Difficulty by 1, but the Storyteller should freely alter these values depending on the local circumstances. A superstar DJ is in town, so hunting becomes much easier amid the crowd of newbies and bridge-and-tunnel geeks. It's raining hard, making hunting hard as well in the thinner, surlier crowd. Your city's environment always, always, affects the hunt.

Mapping the Territories

The Storyteller should design their city for the story, not the other way around. Set up domains, hunting grounds, and other aspects of the vampire ecology to drive as much action, plots, and drama as possible. Then use the city's physical aspects to reinforce what you have already decided. The result: a rich environment for the players to experience, one that supports the atmosphere you want for your chronicle and provides a dynamic setting where things keep happening.

To start with, map your local vampire territories as a quirky patchwork of historical accidents, bad policy, and purposefully divisive leadership. The better the city works, the less conflict – i.e., story – you have. Infuse your city with as much strife as possible. Perhaps start with method and reason, but leaven it with selfishness, egomania, arrogance, and greed. Vampires don't divide turf to benefit everybody equally, not even Anarchs. Perhaps especially not even Anarchs.

MIX DOMAIN TYPES: Mix territorial and abstract domains. The old Prince granted the city center to his lover a century ago in a desperate attempt to make her stay, and she still holds it although that was two Princes ago. Unfortunately, the new museum got built in the city center in an urban renewal boondoggle, and the chief Harpy claims it by right as the court's ancestral curator. Meanwhile, the Gangrel who "ranch" the homeless in the city do not care that they camp out

Victim Types: Hardcore fans (Choleric), comfortable dates (Sanguine, Phlegmatic)
Systems: Hunting Difficulties at -1. About half the fans have alcohol in their bloodstream (p. 310).

PROTEST

Large anonymous angry crowds can easily turn into rioters, but they begin as lunch. The basic situation – close quarters and shared emotion – applies both to protests and to rallies, and both might draw police presence in larger numbers than you'd like. But that's why they call it "hunting," not "dining."

Victim Types: Organizers and police narcs (Phlegmatic), wannabes and activism groupies (Sanguine), passersby (Melancholic), true believers (Choleric)
Systems: Heavy police presence (+2 to hunting Difficulties) can cancel out the bonus from crowds (-2 to hunting Difficulties) unless you can trigger some looting or a riot on the other side of the crowd as a diversion.

STREET FESTIVAL

Anything from a rib fest to a funk concert to a religious parade to a cannoli contest draws the kine out into the street in the warm summer night. Smoke from grills, noisemakers and sparklers, and happy talk fills the air. Alleys run off the street for privacy, and the crowds keep moving so nobody looks at you too long.

Victim Types: All types, although the chances of alcohol and weed in the blood go up.
Systems: Hunting Difficulties at -2.

in the increasingly deserted city center.

Because abstract domains are not tied to territory, they can easily get in conflict.

IMPOSE A SYSTEM, THEN BREAK IT: In their wisdom, the Prince has decreed that all the Camarilla clans must have territories of equal value. The Seneschal lays them out carefully, and the Sheriff walks the bounds to ensure fairness. The Prince has also decreed that no Malkavian may feed or nest anywhere except in asylums, and he reserves medical blood banks for his fellow Ventrue. The resulting sense of grievance and unfairness motivates both player characters and supporting characters into all kinds of action.

INCLUDE SECRETS: In an Anarch city, the commune rules that the old abandoned amusement park is off limits to all Kindred. Why? They're not telling. In another regnum, the Prince allows a seemingly inconsequential neonate a massive personal feeding area, much to the neonate's bewilderment.

INCORPORATE HISTORY: Quirks and curiosities in domain divisions can spring from events centuries ago. Why do the Malkavians have a massive territory in the suburbs? The Prince granted them the domain in 1723 and failed to anticipate the massive expansion the city would experience in the coming years. What was once a prime hunting ground of seedy juke joints got homogenized into middle-class housing after WWII or in the 1960s.

Atmosphere

A Vampire city is a world unto itself. In the shadow of the Second Inquisition, communication between cities moves slowly and fitfully, travelling with couriers and by physical letters. Most Kindred leave their regnum only with very good reason. Local Princes, Barons, and strange cults rule their urban demesnes in panic and with terror, and local variance in Kindred customs is huge.

What does your city feel like? This ties very closely to the question of what kind of chronicle you're running. Ideally, the city supports the themes and ideas of your game, providing the appropriate backdrop to the dramatic action. You can approach this in two ways: take an existing city that has the right atmosphere or impose the feeling you want on any city you choose.

Consider a tragic game of vampire romance in which undead corruption inevitably dooms every relationship. Why not set it in Paris, the city of love, or Venice, the city doomed to sink into its own filth? Sure, these are clichés, but from the inside, clichés work very well.

When imposing your own atmosphere on an existing place, it's all about choosing the elements you want and sticking with them. **Vampire: The Masquerade** already does this very effectively in

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Something is always happening in the city. When the characters go into a location, walk down the street, or even return to their haven, enliven things with a nearby event in progress. Happenings can be totally unconnected to the characters' actions, or only reinforce the chronicle theme. The city remains alive, even if the Kindred are not.

1. City workers and the electric company trucks sort out a blackout, replacing a blown transformer, climbing poles, and hopping in and out of the access tunnels.
2. A bike messenger collided with a pedestrian. Now the pedestrian is shouting bloody murder. The situation may escalate into violence.
3. Immigration officials raid a building, checking identification papers and hauling off the undocumented in a big paddy wagon. Crowds gather along with some protesters and TV cameras.
4. A fire mounts into the night sky. The fire department parks their massive trucks all over the place, water rains down, hydrants open while people rush to their windows to see what's happening.
5. Unearthly looking models parade under bright lights for a photographer and a micro-managing art director, as a fashion magazine mounts an outdoor photoshoot. Lighting techs swap cigarettes, assistants scurry with lattes and waters, and someone somewhere has coke.
6. Police and intelligence agency operatives have cordoned off the area and severely restrict movement through it. Apparently a high-ranking government official from the U.S. or China is going to pass by in a motorcade. Knots of protesters gather, but they don't want to shoot their wad just yet.
7. A party spills out of a bar, lots of shouting and revelry and maybe one or two fights. Is it game night? A bachelorette party? Whatever the reason, music and smoke hover in the air, and Ubers and taxis drop off and pick up all down the block.
8. A strike stops public transport in the city, leaving people stranded all over the place, trying to get a taxi, or looking at their cell phones, trying to determine a good walking route.
9. A local media frenzy breaks out, with cameras and lights in the way, cords under foot, and reporters doing remotes. Maybe a celebrity is visiting the neighborhood to generate publicity for a social project or a grisly murder has crime reporters hunting for eyewitness comments.
10. A Masquerade breach. People haven't realized what it is yet, but the player characters understand the situation. There's a corpse drained of blood, a bestial Gangrel running through a crowd, or a madman screaming very accurate information about the Kindred. The characters can react, or just run and hide from the possible response from the Prince, the Second Inquisition, or both.

one powerful way: virtually every scene takes place at night. It has an in-game cause, but it also ensures that players shroud the setting in darkness throughout.

More specifically, if you want to underline the corruption and degradation of age, set scenes in decaying industrial buildings. Get variety from types: actual ruins and blighted brownfields, desperately repurposed lofts and failed renovations, and still-functioning but dilapidated and obsolete factories. For sadness and loneliness, favor rooftops, eternal rain, and late night cafes where every patron sits alone.

Obviously, verisimilitude as much as pacing dictates that you change up the mood sometimes, but repeating simple environmental motifs effectively builds atmosphere. Remember, things don't always need a rational explanation. Why does the Sabbat informant want to meet the characters in a derelict church? Because they feel like it and because it works dramatically.

QUICKSTART CITY

You want to play Vampire, not fiddle with urban planning. Let's get your city started as fast as possible.

Step One: Choose a city. Is your hometown a city? Use it! If not, use a famous city that's easy to fake from pop culture and media: London, New York, Tokyo; or one you have another Vampire book about. Or make up a mid-sized American city that looks like cities do on television shows filmed in Vancouver.

Step Two: Pick a starting milieu. Does the coterie hang out in biker bars or nightclubs? Do they rule the underside of middle-class comfort or a public-housing hellscape? Start with those locations, in that district; figure out how the Kindred affects things there, and how your story's themes manifest there.

Step Three: Insert your chronicle. Go back to your chronicle design for some quick sects play. Did you want a locked-down Camarilla city, an Anarch free-for-all, or a town without elders where it's every clan for itself? Just quickly sketch where the power players hang out, and where they might rumble.

Step Four: Meet the neighbors. Spend a little bit more time with the specific corner of the vampire ecosystem the coterie starts out in. If they start by tangling with the Brujah, figure out the deal with the Brujah: where they rule, where they want to rule.

Step Five: Start the game! Build the rest as the players encounter it, and as you need it.

Vampire Parasitism

As the city takes on a character of its own in your game, you can begin depicting it as a living thing. At first, it doesn't notice the infestation within, but as the damage spreads, the city reacts. Often seemingly unconnected, these reactions emerge indirectly from the damage the Kindred cause in the deep tissues of the urban environment.

Kindred turf wars or feeding sprees increase the visible police presence, but possibly result in nothing more than militarized gear and security kabuki – or in sub rosa death squads and the actual Inquisition. If characters Dominate and Blood Bond politicians left and right, city government creaks to a halt as its members service their addictions instead of serving the public. Weird laws come down, lobbyists get their way, garbage piles up.

If a famous Kindred celebrity distorts the city's cultural space, its artists and its fans become obsessive and strange. The Masquerade becomes harder to break, or perhaps it breaks a thousand times as weird blood fashion sweeps the elites and the clubs. Confusion created by vampiric powers combine with normal human shortsightedness and greed to breed strange results.

The reactions of the city do not have to make things harder for the player characters. Rather, they reinforce consequences, intended and otherwise. Vampiric methods for influencing humanity are inherently damaging. Blood Bonds replace real human emotion with

artificial obsession. Dominate forces mortal free will into a meaningless, irrational pattern. Presence creates strange tropisms and stunted emotions. Victims start to behave in unusual ways as corruption spreads through the mortal ecosystem.

OVER-HUNTING: More vampires feeding from a domain than it can support eventually exhaust the territory. (The Storyteller decides whether one dot of Chasse supports one vampire, three vampires, or one coterie of vampires with different predation methods; see p. 195). More vampires using the same predation strategy creates a similar effect, as humans subconsciously put together the threat pattern and begin their prey response: going out less often, or only in groups, or only by daylight.

In an over-hunted domain, hunting Difficulties increase. Even free-range Herds (those the vampire simply allows to wander freely on their own) might start producing less, as fringe members stop showing up to the scene or the cult meeting.

Each vampire over the supportable level for a Domain either:

- Increases the Difficulty of hunting rolls there by +1, or
- Lowers the effective dots in the domain's free-range Herds by one

A police crackdown, a Masquerade breach, or just a really disastrous total failure on a hunting or frenzy roll might also result in similar outcomes.

An exhausted territory rejuvenates if left alone for a period of time determined by the Storyteller: three months seems like a good average. Continuing to hunt in an over-hunted territory starts pushing it into actual urban decline: businesses flee the area, housing values drop, nightclubs close. Mortals seek comfort in church, and before you know it the Second Inquisition starts to sniff around.

Your City by Night

Adapting real-world cities begins with gut reactions, not facts. The facts you can really use are the ones that help bring attention and focus to the themes of your story. A city with a high murder rate can provide great context to a story about human frailty or wrath, but you don't have to follow that fact any further than you want to. If the crime stats say most of those murders are drug related, but you want them to spring from police-on-gang warfare to create a backdrop of factional battle in your chronicle, do that. Facts provide a starting place for drama. They can

The more you know, the crazier you think. Our is a world of cabals within conspiracies hidden inside intrigue sealed by perfidy and wrapped in betrayal and treachery.

make a story feel realistic – the only kind of realism that matters in the game – or they can spoil the aura of mystery.

Drama outweighs fidelity. You're not delivering a report on Karachi, you're dramatizing a story set there. The play's the thing, so don't fret details that will not enrich your story. A city's first jobs in **Vampire** is to facilitate play, reinforce the mood and atmosphere you are after, and alter the play dynamic in new ways, as mentioned earlier. You do not owe the city anything. It shouldn't matter if you get street names and demographics wrong. If the facts contradict your drama, change them.

The fact is that there are most likely no vampires in any cities in real life, but you don't let that stop you. Use only the data that inspire and let the rest fall into the deep background. Maybe your so-called "facts" are just a comforting cover-up the government or the chamber of commerce promulgates to keep business and tourists coming. Maybe the Ventrue have distorted the record or the Malkavians distorted historians' memories or the Nosferatu sacred architects literally altered the facts on the ground.

Finally, this is the World of Darkness. It's not flattering. No city looks good through the cracked and smoky lens of this game. Even when a city is beautiful, it is high contrast and washed out, fogged by rain and sparkling like broken glass – pretty the way the bare and beaten wood behind waterlogged old wallpaper is.

A City of Districts

To bring the city alive in your chronicle, create and portray memorable locations. When the players believe in and understand the city, their characters' battle for territory or search for safety takes on interest and dimension. To enable this, break the city down into manageable, distinct parts that each have their own separate characteristics.

SITES

Real cities tend to have landmarks that have come to define them. Make sure that if you create a city of your own, it has a few of these as well. Rio de Janeiro features beaches like Ipanema, Barcelona has Sagrada Familia. Other landmarks might be generic: the used bookstore, the dance hall.

The coterie's domain usually has at least one site. The site may be the center of the domain, one feature of it, or the whole thing. With a site in your domain, you can often reap benefits from it: use the back room, crouch on the roof, even keep your haven there. Sites can affect rolls – a library gives more dice to an Academics pool, for example. You can also harvest blood from the site and often count on specific Resonances and even low-level bonuses from it rather than figure out specific Dyscrasias for each night's hunt.

If the Storyteller wants to use a site this way, they define the Resonance and possible bonuses the site's habitués provide.

The city comprises many districts: downtown, the docks, and so forth. Each district does something in the life of the city and in the game. Districts vary in size, from a few blocks to whole swaths of the city. A district may equal one domain (especially a high-Chasse domain) or contain three or four small domains warring over common resources – this depends on the Prince's notion of how big a domain should be and on the Storyteller's concept of territorial conflict in their game.

Crossing district boundaries changes the feel of the story, even if it's just going from a neighborhood with lots of cops to one with only the occasional prowl car. However, for the darkness to really have an effect, it pays to include some positive things as well. The shadows seem deeper after you light a candle.

Most cities have a downtown area or a city center. A big urban area might have several – the Lille metropolitan area in northern France comprises towns such as Roubaix and Tourcoing that together form the bigger conglomerate. Public transit hubs, government buildings, sometimes office buildings and museums sit here. Some downtowns empty out at night; others remain residential, even high-end. In Helsinki or Paris, city center real estate is extremely desirable, and rents reflect that. In Brussels or Detroit, the rich live in suburbs; the city center is affordable – or dead.

Capital cities hold embassies, which tend to accumulate in specific areas. Large cities have consulates, similarly. Embassy Row provides endless story hooks to its tiny pieces of foreign soil: diplomacy, cultural exchange, Ventrue from out of town and exiles from Anarch cities. Individual embassies might be small, friendly townhouses or enormous compounds like the US Embassy. Embassies of rogue states like North Korea may host criminal activity, and all embassies host spies.

Many cities have both old and new areas. Stockholm's Gamla stan features picturesque buildings and winding streets. Buenos Aires' Puerto Madero gleams on the

Hitting the Streets

Characters wrest information from the city in many ways, from newspapers to contacts to omens. But often, they find themselves hitting the streets to find something or someone, and sometimes what someone – or Something – doesn't want them to find. These feats take Resolve: just plugging away, never losing focus, staying on track and on point. All of them can play as extended tests (p. 293) or just take an hour for each failed die rolled in the pool.

For these kinds of feats especially, Contacts can truly come into their own. If the player has defined a contact useful in the specific investigation, the Storyteller may allow them to add that Contact's dots to the dice pool.

LEGWORK

The character criss-crosses the city, knocking on doors and prying into conversations. Perhaps they're trying to find a witness or a runaway or someone else who doesn't want to be found. Maybe they're just looking for a fence or a chop shop in a strange neighborhood or trying to figure out where gang turf begins and maybe who decides that question. They could be just asking around to find out if anyone heard anything weird two nights ago.

Use Resolve + Streetwise for feats of legwork, unless they're looking for something that doesn't move or hide, like a building or a set of the marks, in which case use Resolve + Awareness. Once they find the person, that's when the other Social tests come out.

PAPER CHASE

The character needs to find something and they can't just pay someone to hit the Internet for them. Especially in the World of Darkness, cities don't make finding out where the bodies are buried or who holds the levers of power very easy. The paper chase involves running down county files, assessor's plats, property deeds, probate inventories, forensic accounting, baptismal records, or something else written down and immediately piled up for filing much later. Government buildings are only open during the day, which means there might be some breaking and entering or some judicious use of Influence to have a door left unlocked. Court records and tax files may well be sealed, officially. The actual paper chase depends on Resolve + Investigation.

SCROUNGING

The character needs to find a thing. Not a unique thing, but something more specific than just "a soda." Scrounging isn't just shopping, though it might involve knowing that one botanica with the really good vervain and High John de Conquer floor wash. Alchemists always need to scrounge up weird ingredients, but everything's a weird ingredient at three in the morning.

Build scrounging pools with Resolve and the relevant Skill for the thing you're scrounging for. Looking for ritual ingredients? Resolve + Occult. Alchemical compounds? Resolve + Science (Chemistry). One specific designer drug? Resolve + Streetwise. A 2008 Peugeot? Resolve + Drive. Bullets for a materiel rifle? Resolve + Firearms. You may need to build a separate Larceny pool to obtain what you find with Scrounging if the store's closed or its owner just doesn't want you to have it ■

waterfront, all shining glass and steel and modern art. Cities change and grow enormously over the centuries – an older vampire may find the modern city a bewildering place, and stay in the Old Town as much as possible. Gentrification changes neighborhoods and drives out old populations with higher rents; it also might discomfit a Brujah elder who entered torpor in a factory district and wakes up surrounded by hipster bistros.

Consider the city's logistics: no city feeds itself, so they all have docks, rail yards, and warehouses covering acres of real estate. The Port of Antwerp or Navi Mumbai form vast cities within cities in themselves, but every city has somewhere with more goods and rail cars than eyewitnesses. Industrial areas often go hand in hand with the city's logistics hubs. After all, stuff needs to go in and out of the factory as efficiently as possible. The Port of Antwerp has chemical refineries literally on the pier just for this reason.

So where do the people live in your city? Residential and suburban areas come in many flavors, often following class lines. The wealthy live in enclaves, the middle class in vast suburbs, and the poor in slums and shoddily constructed tenements. In some cities, the classes separate; in Kolkata, a squatter shack may sit just a few meters from a mansion's gates. Residential areas tend to be large, but also uniform. They also tend to shut down at night. Just use what you need, and leave the mortals to slumber in the rest. Play into stereotypes from The Wire or play against them: tightly knit favela communities in Rio de Janeiro keep crime against their residents far less common than on tourist beaches like Copacabana.

Look at real cities, and you can see these patterns repeating; study them to get a sense of how your city operates. Of course, some cities break the rules. Detroit is the city in the process of being dismantled: its downtown features shining skyscrapers, abandoned wrecks, and empty fields cheek by jowl. Meanwhile, the government builds Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, under extremely strict architectural controls. An aesthetically uniform space city in white and gold rises on the steppe, with a populace cowed by secret police and hoping for jobs.

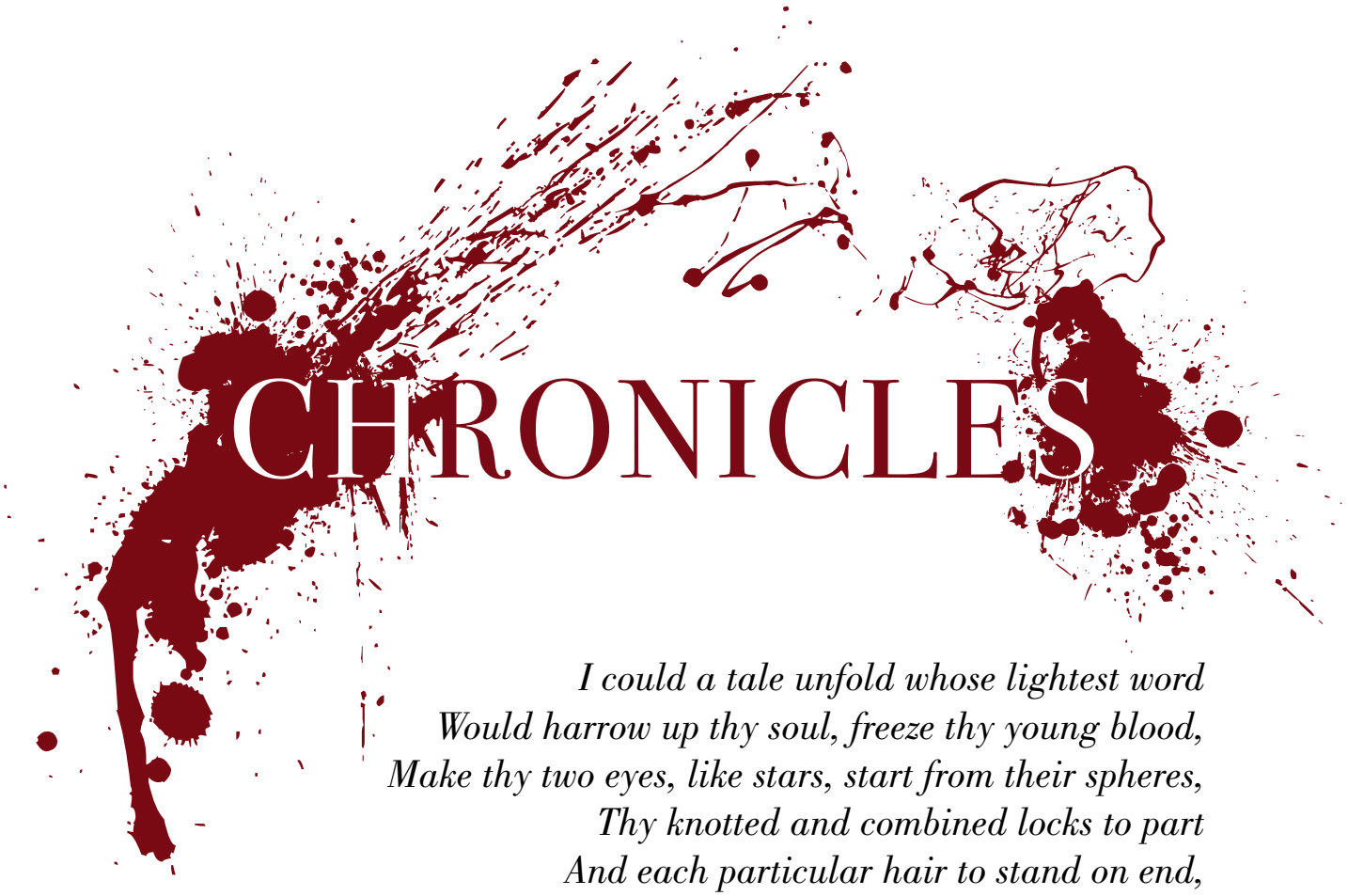
GAMING THE CITY: As you sketch out your city, assign mechanical characteristics to districts and whole regions as you see fit. You are a Storyteller, not a municipal official. Your system for breaking down the city only needs to follow the logic of your chronicle.

You don't have to game out every district to give the city's regions their own rules feel. It makes no sense to expend your efforts coming up with local mechanics for places the characters will never visit. Remember that the bonuses and penalties you come up with for a particular place don't have to be realistic. These tools exist to shape the game in a certain configuration. It's all about the specific needs of your chronicle.

For example, a chronicle set in Paris with non-French players can keep things abstract and touristy. You know the Marais for its nightlife (hunting Difficulty 3), so you make it hotly contested among the Kindred, changing lords all the time. However, it's high profile, so a total failure on a hunting roll results in a big Masquerade breach.

You want mortal politics to play a role, and the Axe Historique from La Defense to the Arc de Triomphe to the Louvre symbolizes that well with its monumental architecture. All rolls related to political maneuvering there get a two-dice bonus. A "realistic" rule might hold that the large police presence there increases hunting Difficulties in the Axe Historique. But a "symbolic" rule implies that mortal power and Kindred feeding have much in common, and lower hunting Difficulties there instead.

Camarilla vampires find themselves at a disadvantage in the Anarch banlieues around the city: they suffer a two-dice penalty to all social and mental rolls, and a one-die penalty on physical rolls so far out of their comfort zone. In an Anarch chronicle, you might simply reverse these numbers, or give each banlieue its own specific effect to differentiate them in your players' minds. But both sides venerate the Sacré-Cœur atop Montmartre; all rolls related to diplomacy between Kindred get a two-dice bonus, and it's a respected long-standing Elysium ■



CHRONICLES

I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.

– WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET*

Everybody in a game of **Vampire** shares the same goal: to play a good, interesting game together. The players and the Storyteller collaborate in creating a shared experience. The Storyteller provides the world, the supporting characters, and external events. The players each portray a character who lives in this world and interacts with the Storyteller's creations and the other player characters.

While the player has to create a character, the Storyteller has a much more daunting task: to create an entire chronicle. And then run it.

Planning a Chronicle

The first thing you need is a concept. What is your chronicle about? Who are the characters and what do they do? What is the experience you wish to build?

For example, your concept could be a group of Anarchs seeking to depose a corrupt baron who secretly serves the Camarilla. The chronicle is about creating political change. The characters can be created very differently, but the important thing is that they should want to do this. The experience of the chronicle is about the danger, hope, excitement, and the ambition of deposing a ruler.

Concepts can vary wildly in style and substance. There is no right or wrong way to play Vampire. If the chronicle works for you and the players, all is good.

Another example of a concept would be a chronicle about the slow erosion of humanity as the characters go deeper into the inhuman world of the Camarilla. They start young and hopeful, traumatized by the Embrace but seemingly fitting in at the Elysium. As the game proceeds, they find that success and dehumanization often go hand in hand. Their powers grow, and their connections to their old lives wither away. A game like this can be contemplative and deliberately paced, with long conversational scenes about the characters' various circumstances.

As a very different kind of a Vampire game, the characters could also be a team of archons sent to the Middle East to try to navigate the Gehenna War in search of an elder who disappeared with essential information about the Camarilla's political and financial assets. Without the elders, nobody knows how the machine is supposed to work, dealing a blow to the sect's power and influence.

Using the Relationship Map

During character creation you create a custom Relationship Map that features the player characters, their sires, touchstones, allies, enemies, and their various interpersonal relationships. This co-created cast of characters is a great resource to make sure you all care about the chronicle from the get-go. The players helped create these people, and their Kindred have strong relationships to them, so they are already invested in them.

When planning a chronicle before character creation begins, it is a smart move to use some placeholder names and descriptions for several of your key characters and then later switch them out for characters from the relationship map. This method is also easily applicable to customize published stories.

THE DEFAULT CHRONICLE

This is your first Vampire game, or maybe you just want to get on with it. Here is a basic concept for what a chronicle can be:

The characters are young vampires in your home city. Maybe they are already undead when the game starts, or they could be Embraced in the first session. The city has a Camarilla elite and an Anarch underclass into which the characters automatically belong.

The first sessions are all about acclimatizing to vampiric existence. The characters hunt, deal with the remnants of the mortal lives they left behind, and try to survive simple challenges presented by Camarilla authorities and the Second Inquisition.

As the game progresses, the focus increasingly turns to finding a place for themselves in the world of the dead. Do the characters want to ascend to the Camarilla or foment rebellion with the Anarchs?

EXAMPLE:

You're planning a noir-style murder mystery chronicle set in the Camarilla city of St. Petersburg, an ancient domain full of betrayal and hidden agendas. The inciting incident is the destruction of an influential Camarilla Kindred by her close friend – another Primogen. The crime is covered up as a Second Inquisition attack, leading the player characters on a dangerous chase for clues until they discover the identity of the killer, just before they strike again.

As you run character creation, you inform the players that St. Petersburg is the setting and for your chronicle to work, they need to be a Camarilla coterie based in the city. They then progress to create their roles and the relationship map. After character creation is done, you switch out the first victim from

your story with one of the player characters' sires, the killer with another's mentor, and during the chronicle the killer will threaten the lives of a third player character's Touchstone.

If you wait with detailed chronicle and story creation until after "session zero," the table will have done a lot of your work for you. You might even want to tell the players this is what you are doing – the sense of feeling included in chronicle creation is empowering and exciting to many groups of players. As the table co-creates the social (and perhaps also the physical) setting, ideas and possibilities for stories will inevitably occur to you. Write them down and base your pre-chronicle work on these notes. This method makes for a truly emergent chronicle, where almost all the characters involved are drawn directly from the relationship map and the coterie and background choices the players have made.

EXAMPLE:

A group of players create a nomadic Anarch gang roaming from town to town in the American Midwest, masquerading as a country music festival. After some bickering, the players decide they are a unbound "commando coterie," working for an unknown Kindred commander who communicates with them by possessing a ghoul singer-songwriter whenever he goes on stage. The Storyteller has no idea where this is going, but since the players seem fired up by the idea, she goes with it.

One player gives their character the Bahari lore sheet merit Ritual Scarification, another picks a three dot Camarilla adversary and names her "Akalia." The Storyteller sees an opportunity to get some structure and a core conflict into this potentially free-floating chronicle. She decides that the commander is a Bahari heretic and freedom fighter, imprisoned by Akalia, who becomes an old-school Cainite preacher in San Jose.

During the first few sessions, the singer instructs the coterie to strike against patriarchal Camarilla oppressors and secret worshippers of Caine, but then the Storyteller has the singer kidnapped by one of Akalia's congregations in Kentucky. After a daring rescue from the Creationist Museum, he comes back different. The targets have changed. After a few strikes against Anarch bands, the player characters realize that it is no longer the commander who communicates through the singer. Only when he engages in self-harm (a Bahari practice) is the commander able to reach communicate through him. The coterie now has their work cut out for them trying to trick Akalia into revealing her location, probably by interacting with her while she possesses the singer, until they finally get to the climactic showdown where they free the Bahari heretic and destroy Akalia.

Styles of Play

So, **Vampire** is a roleplaying game in which joyless monsters wrestle with morality in the shadows of suitably gothic architecture. Right?

Well, it can be. But it can be fun too.

Past editions described **Vampire: The Masquerade** as a "Gothic-Punk" game. Punk is still as good a word as any to describe the sordid, transgressive joy of playing in a good **Vampire** game. But **Vampire** can accommodate many different play styles, and they are all valid, as long as everyone in the game has a good time.

You can explore lots of interesting things in a roleplaying game, even if – especially if – you would never in a million years want to do them in real life. Do you want to hit on that intense, unbalanced psycho dude, crash a wedding to hunt for blood, and end up hiding in a dumpster to escape the deadly rays of the sun? Those things can be great fun in a **Vampire** game, especially as your character suffers the consequences and not you.

Miserable premises for a coterie of vampires can act as springboards for action-oriented games. The characters are hoodies, thugs, and drug dealers Embraced in a series of sordid accidents. They know nothing about the World of Darkness and must learn to deal with their new vampiric nature, fight against mortal rivals, and try to navigate the lethal night of the Camarilla. Or perhaps they are the progeny of ancient, immensely powerful vampire lords and ladies, inducted straight into the royalty of Kindred society. Stuck with overprotective, controlling sires, they can act out to their hearts' content, taking crazy risks to assert their independence.

At an extreme, a **Vampire** game can resemble cyberpunk or even splatterpunk. The characters operate in a city defined by monolithic shadows, walking the border between moral and supernatural law in a neo-feudal society of humanoid monsters increasingly influenced by technological advances and mass hysteria. You could do worse than watch Blade Runner as inspiration for a game like this. And if you want to crack skulls, there will be plenty of opportunity to do that when the Second Inquisition calls a SWAT team on a Brujah hideout, and the characters have to fight to extricate themselves before sunrise.

CHRONICLE: INHERITORS OF THE ILLUMINATI

The coterie has been chosen, or even created, to guard the legacy of an elder of the Camarilla as she is called into the Middle East by the Beckoning. On her travels she will meet the Ancients and learn untold secrets, at least if she makes it through the crucible of the Sabbat's Gehenna Crusade. While she is gone the coterie has been empowered to claim her vote in the Primogen Council, and they may choose to run her empire as they see fit. They have vast resources at their disposal but all of Kindred society is envious of them, waiting for the smallest mistake to tear them to shreds. What the elder never told them is that they are inheriting her enemies as well as her influence. They will have to use all of their combined smarts and powers to survive their inheritance.

The coterie's mortal cover is likely to be a major company, an estate, a hospital, a university, or a hotel.

This is the chronicle for those who want to begin near the top and (probably) have to fight tooth and nail to not come crashing down as their empire is besieged.

CHRONICLE: JUDGEMENT NIGHT

You play the Sheriff's brood, the scourge's elite anti-Anarch troops, Ventrue enforcers, or any other self-styled or official group of Camarilla soldiers. Your characters could be a task force created to oppose the Second Inquisition in the field or through infiltration of mortal intelligence agencies or even an elder's personal squad of bodyguards fighting in the Gehenna War.

Whatever the history, the coterie's role is that of an undead intelligence or para-military operation, and the stories you tell will test the characters against both monstrous creatures and innocents who are just trying to get by. Will they be protectors or oppressors? Heroes or villains?

The key to this kind of chronicle lies in moral ambiguity and hard choices. The characters' mortal cover could be very similar to what they really are – a paramilitary group, security company, or even a police department (for hiding in plain sight), but Kindred law is not mortal law and a criminal gang, terrorist group, or even a night-open church could just as well be the front for this coterie.

Secrets Within Secrets

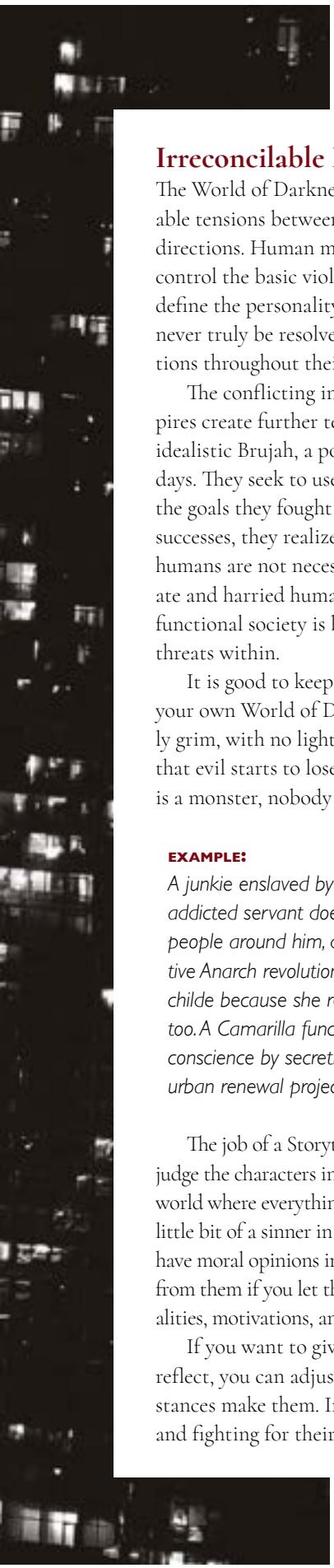
The World of Darkness is a world of secrets. As a mortal, the first inkling of the true nature of the world comes when you start to grasp that everything is not as you once believed. This is not just a question of parasitic monsters infesting human institutions. Human society has its own hidden agendas, and sometimes there is not much difference between a secret society of humans and one of vampires.

A **Vampire** game of secrets is a game where the truth is always a little different than you first expected. The elders who hate each other are actually lovers. The kindly old man who lives across the street from your childhood home is alone because he suffocated his wife and children 40 years ago, and no one ever found out. The Ventrue proudly exclaiming that they control the inner workings of Parliament fail to rival the influence exerted by massive corporations like Amazon.

There is always more to every story, and when you play in a **Vampire** game, you are invited to join secret societies within secret societies. The first and most obvious of these is the world of vampires. When you have been Embraced into a clan, you are introduced to an unknown and convoluted world nestled deep within the one you once knew. Many other revelations follow.

Navigating this landscape is part of the joy of playing **Vampire**. During the first session of your game, the characters may be Embraced into the Brujah and the Gangrel. They experience the world of vampires as squatting in warehouses, dilapidated buildings, raves, and dodgy bars. As they discover more of the World of Darkness, they are inducted into another level of Kindred society: the elysiums of the Camarilla. They see vampires in boardrooms and fashion shows. Suddenly power does not mean the strength to rip off the head of your enemy but the ability to make sure your financial holdings remain exempt from taxation.

Of course, you can flip this. If the characters start in the lap of luxury, the energetic and transgressive world of the Anarchs can be exciting and fresh, a secret they can become part of.



Irreconcilable Differences

The World of Darkness can be expressed as irreconcilable tensions between forces tearing into different directions. Human morality and intellect striving to control the basic violent urges of the Blood inside define the personality of a vampire. This tension can never truly be resolved, and it guides the vampire's actions throughout their existence.

The conflicting interests of humans and vampires create further tension. Perhaps a character is an idealistic Brujah, a political activist in their human days. They seek to use their vampiric powers to further the goals they fought for in life, but after a few initial successes, they realize that the things that are good for humans are not necessarily good for vampires. Desperate and harried humans are easier to hunt, while a functional society is better at detecting the invisible threats within.

It is good to keep tension in mind when planning your own World of Darkness. It cannot be unrelentingly grim, with no light whatsoever. Pure horror means that evil starts to lose its significance. When everybody is a monster, nobody is a monster.

EXAMPLE:

A junkie enslaved by a character to be a Blood addicted servant does his best to take care of the people around him, despite his circumstances. A vindictive Anarch revolutionary spares the life of the Prince's childe because she realizes that the childe is a victim too. A Camarilla functionary tries to assuage her guilty conscience by secretly diverting the Prince's funds into urban renewal projects.

The job of a Storyteller or a player is not to morally judge the characters in the game. **Vampire** works best in a world where everything is in shades of grey and there is a little bit of a sinner in everyone. While the characters can have moral opinions inside the story, you get more play from them if you let them act according to their personalities, motivations, and personal logic.

If you want to give the characters a chance to reflect, you can adjust how vulnerable their circumstances make them. If they are constantly cornered and fighting for their lives, they do not have the luxury of balanced moral reflection. If they get a little space to breathe, they can think about the consequences of their actions.

Say one of the characters murders a human in a back alley behind a bar one night while feeding. The characters dispose of the corpse but you as the Storyteller feel the death should have more heft. The characters have not killed so far, so it should feel like something.

So, a couple of nights later, the characters are hunting at the same bar when the dead man's sister comes in. She chats up the characters and finally asks about her brother. It is clear she poses no danger to the characters. She is not going to become a hunter and try to kill them. She will not even find out what happened to

FUN WITH EVIL

Maybe you are making a game where the idea is just to have fun playing terrible monsters. The characters are selfish, murderous assholes who damage and degrade everything around them. In a game like this, you have to pay attention to how you present the consequences of the characters' actions.

It is pointless to start guilt tripping the players for playing the game you set up. It's not fun to play a monster if you have to keep looking your victims in the eye. The simplest way to avoid unnecessary guilt trips is to make the victims of your characters really unsympathetic. Perhaps they are wealthy Ventrue neonates who sneer and belittle the characters at every turn, only to start a tantrum when things fail to go their way.

However, maybe you do want to home in to the consequences of the characters' actions every now and then. If the characters are unrepentant monsters, you can highlight this by making some of their victims act like heroes. They can dedicate their lives to good or forgive the characters for their actions, revealing them to be the sordid creeps they are.

her brother if the characters do not tell her. She is just an ordinary human being, hurting from a tragedy caused by a player character.

Symbolism

Vampires are fictional monsters created to tell stories about different themes. In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the vampire represents the seductive allure of something dangerous and foreign. You could even say the vampire is about sex. In the classic movie *Nosferatu*, the vampire is a metaphor for infectious disease, infesting a town like the plague.

It helps to bring your chronicle to focus if you consider what the vampire means in your game. **Vampire: The Masquerade** provides a framework for a wide variety of interpretations:

If you want to make a political game, the vampire is a simple and effective metaphor. They can represent capitalism, the super-rich, political corruption, and private interests controlling society from the shadows.

You can make the vampire a metaphor for conservatism, describing the old Kindred as relics still clinging to their medieval worldviews. This theme can also be explored from the angle of intellectual history, underlining how differently people used to see the world in the past.

The vampire can be a metaphor for colonialism, a foreign invader sucking the lifeblood out of a society and forcing its people to become servants. They can be war, the story of comfortable men and women in far-away rooms directing their drone fleets to bomb weddings and funerals. They can be fascism, the imposition of order through pure will.

History in general can be your theme, and the vampire the tool you use to explore it. Vampires live forever, so you can start in the Middle Ages and work your way towards modernity.

If you choose to make the vampire about sex, you will also have plenty of angles of approach. They can be a transgressive object of desire or they can represent exploitation and unequal power relationships, the loss of control in the face of lust, the secret fantasies we can only achieve with strangers.

CHRONICLE: HUNTING PARTY

In the age of the Second Inquisition, hunting is complicated. Many Kindred have discovered that hunting in a group, approaching scoring blood like a confidence trick, a heist, or a kidnapping makes things a whole lot safer. Crews who master a variety of methods of hunting are even hired by elders and other Kindred to bring them specific prey or set up a safe feeding that inspires the correct Resonance in the victim.

Some hunting parties include a Tremere Blood Sorcerer or a duped or enslaved thin-blood blood-cooker who can preserve the resonance of the blood long after it has been drained and enter the cut-throat world of the blood trade. Hunting parties inspire stories of daring heists and high-stakes seductions in the search for the perfect blood, but also messy, fucked up stories of dehumanizing treatment of mortals.

A hunting-focused chronicle will involve heavy interactions with mortal society.

The vampire – a transhuman being, postmortal and postmoral – can transcend gender and socially imposed structures of society. They can be a perfect autonomous agent, imposing their will and world-view on their surroundings. They can represent the need for redemption, perhaps through Golconda. They can be a Satanist ideal, with no regrets. They can seek to regain their lost humanity by engaging with science, fashion, and magic, looking forward instead of backward. The vampire can be everything you secretly long for and the fear that follows when you get it and realize it was not what you expected at all.

Motivation and Group Dynamics

There is a couple of simple things you can keep an eye on when the players are creating characters to make sure that the chronicle will work. First, all characters should want to do the things they will be doing in the game. This may sound simple, but experience suggests that it may go wrong if you don't pay attention.

For example, you want to make a combat-focused game where Anarch revolutionaries battle the forces of the Camarilla in the streets. For this to work, all characters must be motivated and able to fight in the streets. If they are non-combatants focused on their personal issues, your game will crash.

Another thing to consider is group dynamics. Simply put, all the player characters should want to hang around with each other. If they do not, your game will constantly be pulling into separate individual directions. Maybe they are friends or share a lot of common history. They could have been Embraced at the same time. Whatever it is, if character motivation is in line with the design of your chronicle, your life will be much easier.

You should also pay attention to the individual goals characters come up with. For example, if a player decides that their character wants to take care of their sick

CHRONICLE: FANG GANG

Whether your coterie rolls with MS-13 affiliates, outlaws, Tottenham fans, or a black bloc antifa group, they hide in plain sight. They are members or even leaders of a group outside society and the law. By attaching themselves to predators, their behavior is much harder to spot for the Inquisition but if their gang includes mortals, they have their work cut out for them. The player characters can choose to make their mortal allies Blood addicts, pay them off, or meticulously keep the Masquerade in front of them. No matter what they do, there will be problems, drama, and tragedy. Hopefully, the benefits outweigh the dangers.

A fang gang is a great coterie for taking a deep look into life on the outside using real world source material. A wealth of information and even video interviews with gang members is available online.

A gang coterie does not have to be violent. Perhaps the player characters are posing as a group of card-skimmers, burglars, or quiet dealers working in gated communities or with the Burner scene.

CHRONICLE: NOMADS

No city is your home. Travel and Anarchs have a long history, and with the influx of many Gangrel into the movement, nomadic vampires are more common than ever. Tonight over 23 million people are fleeing war and persecution in their home countries, and there are many vampires moving across Europe and Asia attached to these ever-growing throngs of web-designers and mothers and chefs looking for a future, constantly shuffled between refugee camps and temporary solutions. In other parts of the world, subcultures like the New Age Travellers and the Roma are on the move constantly, as are bands, truckers, and backpackers. The coterie is disguised as one of these moving social groups, or perhaps exists within it.

Nomad chronicles are good for telling stories about escaping something (perhaps oneself), xenophobia, and freedom and are useful for exploring many different cities and perhaps nations and their varied and bizarre Kindred societies – kind of like a travel show where every destination wants to kill and enslave you.

mother, that could be a problem leading the group to have to go deep underground to infiltrate the Camarilla of another city. Individual goals are great, but they should pull in the general direction of the chronicle, not against it.

Structure

No chronicle lasts forever. It can be three sessions, twenty, or a hundred, but eventually all things must end. When you are planning your chronicle consider how long you wish it to run for and what the general structure should look like. This does not mean that you have to make an exact timetable of everything for the next twenty sessions. Rather, you can sketch out a broad outline which will then adapt to what happens in the game.

Let's say you are planning a ten-session chronicle about young neonates in a Camarilla city. The first three or four games can be about exploring the setting and getting to know the different factions, as well as trying out the systems **Vampire** provides for play.

When the chronicle is running comfortably, you can up the stakes by introducing external threats, surprising power plays, important new supporting characters, and other developments around the fourth session. Maybe an elder departs for the Gehenna War and inexplicably decides to make the haven of one of the characters into an Elysium, promoting the character into the Keeper.

This middle section of the chronicle will feature a more active stance on the part of the characters. They now have some resources and influence and can start making plans of their own. The players will also have gotten more used to how the game works and be more comfortable taking initiative.

The general rule about structure is that the longer the campaign, the vaguer your plans will necessarily have to be. A ten-session chronicle can be sketched out, but if you are going to run the game for years, it might be better to think about themes and subject matter rather than specific story beats. The chaos of a good game will change so many things that sticking to an original plan will probably not work.

The End

You don't have to plan a specific ending for it, but even a very long chronicle will benefit from a broad idea about how things will end. For example, your chronicle is about characters who fight the dirty politics of the Camarilla to take over the city. The game ends when one of them becomes the Prince, whether this takes five sessions or fifty.

Having an ending in mind will also help you avoid making a chronicle which will just fizzle out. A chronicle is almost always more satisfying with a proper ending.

When you consider what kind of ending you want, try to avoid ones that leave no agency for the characters. If the chronicle ends the same way no matter what the players do, something is wrong. For example, if your game is set to end when the elders come back from the Gehenna War and kill everybody, the events leading up to that ending will have been meaningless. But if the elders come back and the characters get the opportunity to either welcome them or renounce them, the ending will be much more meaningful.

Sometimes surprising developments during the chronicle invalidate your original ending. That's perfectly fine! Just re-evaluate the chronicle to see where it can develop a new ending. A good Storyteller needs to get used to implementing the old adage of "kill your darlings," and this applies to endings as well.

Talk To Each Other

Playing Vampire is a group activity. Maturing as a troupe, learning what everyone – including the Storyteller – wants out of the game and what they consider worthwhile, learning methods to minimize conflict and ensuring smoothness of play – these things all take time, practice, and communication.

Don't be afraid to actually talk about what you are doing on a meta level in coming to an agreement on how you want to play. This can be especially important when sitting down with new players or player groups. It's not about what is the right or wrong way to play, but rather about making sure all players are on the same page.

A simple thing to talk about is the logistics of play. Traditionally, it often falls on a single individual, usually the Storyteller, to organize play session logistics. This does not always have to be the case, and sharing the load of purchasing books, coordinating the schedule, and setting up a play area can actually increase engagement in the game. It also makes the troupe less vulnerable to composition changes as members move, fall ill, have periods of heavy workload, and so on.

CHRONICLE STARTER PACK

Here are five quick things to consider and discuss with the players as you start a new chronicle.

1. **The chronicle concept. Who are the player characters? What are the major themes and settings? Is everybody on board with the plan?**
2. **The scope of the commitment. Is this an open-ended chronicle, or are you planning to run it for three, five, ten, or twenty sessions?**
3. **The style of play. Will focus be on social interactions, combat, or political backstabbing? Will the players try to "beat" the game by playing smart, or is it okay to play to lose if that leads to something interesting?**
4. **Food and location. Does everybody feed themselves? Is there a rotating cooking assignment? Are snacks shared? Who hosts the game?**
5. **Exit policy. How do you leave the chronicle? No game benefits from having someone who does not want to be there, so we suggest an articulated policy where players can leave the game with no hard feelings if it is not working for them.**

If there are problems in the group, good communication is key. If a player consistently acts in a destructive way in the game, never punish them in-game. Instead, talk with them outside the game and see if the issue can be resolved. If not, you will have to ask if that player really wants to be in the game.

Narrative Control

The question of narrative control is a sensitive topic in many groups, and one that can create great clashes between playstyles. Who has the right to enter what into the game world?

In some groups, players are strictly limited to what their characters do and say, while the Storyteller takes care of everything else. Other groups are more flexible, and allow the players to improvise in the game world to a greater extent, such as deciding the contents of their bag, what their home looks like, their friends and acquaintances, etc. Some groups go even further, allowing the players to control things far removed from their characters, often guided by the character's skills. For example, a player rolls Wits + Streetwise and declares that "everyone knows that this turf is controlled by the Red Ravens gang." In this example, the player assigns the turf to the Red Ravens, or even invents the entire gang.

CHRONICLE: CHAMPIONS

What use is immortality and the gifts of Caine if you don't make a difference? Your coterie is dedicated to help a mortal cause, perhaps to rationalize their predatory nature or from a sincere belief that they are helping the world. They may do a lot of good along the way, but their hunger and the politics of the Kindred ensure there will be collateral damage and messy solutions.

The coterie may masquerade in plain sight as humanitarian workers, an urban monastery, or as feminist performance artists. For a more sinister take, they could even be gun rights lobbyists, working simultaneously for the right to bear arms and to increase gun violence to provide cover for vampires on the hunt.

The player characters either feed from enemies of their cause or from the humans they struggle beside on a nightly basis.

While giving a lot of control to the players is a perfectly acceptable mode of play, it is perhaps best suited to more narrative games. The horror of a game such as **Vampire** can be compromised if it becomes more about telling a horror story than being in a horror story. A Storyteller-created world frees the players to experience it through their characters.

Realism and Game Logic

Even if it can feel strange to talk about realism in a game about Blood-driven corpses and their undead intrigues, it's wise to be aware that it is possible to have radically different expectations in this area. A comparison with the world of movies can be a good way of opening a discussion in your group. Here realism ranges from movies where somebody calls the cops if you start shooting in the streets to action movies that defy the laws of gravity.

Does a baton to the back of the head cause the guard to slump down unconscious, or does it cause head trauma and death? Is it possible to go through a window without horrible cuts? Are grenades explosions of death or cool background effects? Each troupe will have their own truths, and given that roleplaying has no script, a relatively consistent approach is preferable.

The thing to avoid is to spring a different level of realism than expected on a player after the fact. For example, a player decides their character kicks open a door.

CHRONICLE: THE HANGOVER

The player characters have no idea what they are. The sky hurts, the nachos taste like cardboard, and they want to bite a rat. Nothing makes sense at first. They are all alone in the night, and every thick-blooded vampire they meet is stronger than them and wants to kill them. So they stick together and trust no one.

The characters were likely a group of mortals infected at the same time, and their creator is unknown or dead. They could be family, a tabletop roleplaying group, a band, a polycule, a police or military squad, or any other group of people that have a very strong reason to stick together. Perhaps they are the only survivors of a city-wide scourge on the Kindred or the first thin-bloods in town to band together. Their goal is to understand what's happening and find their place in the world.

They think the game follows action movie logic, so this should be possible. If you feel that the player is mistaken about the game's level of realism, you should say: "Your character knows that only works in action movies," instead of "Your character hurts their foot, and everybody laughs at them" (unless the player is making their character act stupidly on purpose, in which case it is perfectly fine to make the environment react to that).

One side effect of a situation where the players do not have full grasp on the game's level of realism is unnecessary debilitating paranoia. The players are not sure how careful their characters should be to avoid repercussions, so they play it safe and go for an extreme level of caution. This tends to be destructive to games, as they slow down to paranoid crawls. For example, a character feeds from a mortal in an alley. If the players are unsure how the world works, they might get stuck discussing how to stop the mortal from remembering what happened. One or two discussions like this can be interesting for beginning vampires, but after a while they can really slow down a game. As the Storyteller,

CHRONICLE: NOTHING IS AS IT SEEMS, AND EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED

Your characters are most definitely NOT vampires. Don't be ridiculous, if vampires were real someone would have blown the whistle a LONG time ago. Now reptilian shapeshifters - there are plenty of reports of those, so that's probably what they are. Yeah, reptilian super soldiers rebelling against their masters!

The characters believe themselves to be infected by an extraplanar virus, abducted and genetically altered by aliens/the government, chosen and blessed/cursed by God for their personal sins, literal angels, demons, reptilians, Agarthians, or awoken to genetic memories and capabilities of a race of ancient Übermenschen. You explain their condition and powers creatively to align with the theory.

The characters probably maintain mortal identities to hide behind as they seek to oppose the Illuminati (or whatever), make more of their kind (using imperfect knowledge of how the Embrace works), stay alive, and expose the Truth.

This darkly humorous concept deals with the nature of conspiracy theory (confirmation bias) and will likely end in tragedy, crushing disillusion, awakening to an unwanted truth (and the vengeance against their sire that follows), unexpected confirmation of the theory (hey, it's your game, maybe the Camarilla ARE reptilians in your World of Darkness), or some other huge twist. The goal of the coterie is truth or revenge.

you can combat this by being consistent in how you apply consequences and by being merciful when players take risks in the interests of exciting gameplay.

Finally, while some groups might want to go towards hyperrealism, remember that your game will never function exactly as in real life. It is a game about vampires, and sometimes you will want to simplify or adjust things for the sake of a smoothly running game, no matter what your style is.

Hooks and How to Avoid Hook Refusals

Non-sandbox games usually have a *hook* that propels the player characters into the scenario. Hooks can look very different, but the players are meant to follow where they lead, or much preparation will go to waste. Some groups resent this intrusion into the "free will" of their characters and might refuse the hook, in which case a solution will have to be found.

However, a key method for making sure that hooks work is to make them align with the general motivations of the characters. If the characters are all Camarilla-hating revolutionaries, you cannot fault them for refusing a hook which requires them to start working for the Prince. Ideally, the characters are already well-disposed towards the hook, so you can assume they will want to follow it. This does not have to make every hook a positive thing for the characters. Some can be negative. Perhaps the characters are being blackmailed or pressured by someone so powerful they can't be resisted. In the case of these negative hooks, however, prepare for significant resentment on the part of the characters.

A simple way to make a good hook is to connect it personally to the characters. If some random person wants the characters' help, they can easily say no. If the long-lost sire of one of them suddenly appears, begging for shelter, things become much more interesting.

A good way to deal with missed hooks is to design them so something interesting happens even if the players

COTERIE IDEAS

- **Middle-aged swingers catching something more than STDs in upper-class Östermalm in Stockholm.**
- **A techno crew inspiring extreme Resonance in their victims through carefully curated parties, drugs, and sound. The plan is to grow strong, build a small army of ghouls, and take down an elder.**
- **Four unlikely refugees hiding in a hospital from something they witnessed in the Gehenna Crusade. They keep their heads down and feed from perfectly conditioned vessels to fuel the Obfuscation they need to stay off the Camarilla's radar.**
- **Novices of an inner-city monastery with a vision to help the people of their neighborhood, while simultaneously feeding from them. Who lives and who dies as the monastic Kindred try to improve conditions for the community?**
- **A supposedly dead (murder-suicide), obscure cassette-tape Norwegian black metal band with a tiny dedicated fanbase who will believe anything and do anything.**
- **Syrian construction-workers who only do jobs at night. They use their cover to gain access to havens and carry out contract killings on unbound and thin-bloods for the Camarilla.**

refuse them. Let's say the Prince wants the characters to pretend to be Anarchs to get information on Anarch plans. The characters refuse. In the next session, another group of neonates suddenly defects to the Anarchs, and the characters are left wondering if they took the deal.

Competence Assumption

Another tricky subject is the level of competence assumption in the game. Are the player characters assumed to do certain things without the specific instructions of the player, such as turning on the alarm in their haven before tucking in for the day?

For players who are used to high levels of competence assumption it can be frustrating having to constantly verbalize things that seem obvious. For others it might be boring if their characters just automatically coast through the game world. For them, a high level of detail in how they control their characters might be one of the core attractions of tabletop roleplaying games.

The important thing is to make sure that everybody is on the same page about how the chronicle works. In a game makes sense to assume that the characters can generally take care of themselves, while in a paranoid game of cat and mouse with the Second Inquisition it can be interesting to go through every safety measure a player character enacts.

The Etiquette of PvP

While traditional tabletop roleplaying is usually "player versus environment," in a game of undead intrigue player characters are sometimes in conflict with each other. Most groups will likely benefit from discussing in advance how to handle this, especially if you are playing a chronicle and not just a one-shot session.

Are the players free to have their characters do whatever they want to each other? Are there limits? Is there a "don't break the group" assumption? Can they use Social Skills on each other?

In all cases, players absolutely must make sure that what happens between the characters in the game does not stain real life relations. The basic rule is that the players are always more important than the game. If the game is not working for the participants because of conflict between player characters, take a moment to discuss the issue off-game and be ready to make changes in the game if necessary.

CHRONICLE: WE ARE THE HUNTED

The attacks start small, with solitary, reclusive Kindred disappearing. When a coterie's haven is discovered empty of Kindred and their possessions, immaculate as if bleached by a clean-up crew, whispers turn to worried shouts. Someone is hunting vampires in the domain and leaving no evidence of their passing. Even the traditional methods of investigation – scrying the area with the powers of the Blood – seem to turn up minimal information on the perpetrator's identity.

The hunt hits close to home when a coterie close to the characters disappears. The characters have visited the group's communal haven many times, only now it looks like a show home ready for sale. Before she disappeared, one of their friends said she felt like someone was watching her movements when she last prowled the Rack.

Once the characters manage to discover the killer, it turns out to be someone close to them. An ally, a friend, perhaps even a family member, Kindred or kine.

EVENT: LET SLEEPING GODS LIE

Every so often, rumors swirl about the two Kindred who founded the domain in which the coterie is based. Supposedly, they warred for dominance for centuries, only stopping occasionally to ensure their true natures were never discovered. These nights, they both rest torpid beneath the city, while their minions continue their rivalry above it.

The coterie finds a shambling figure who turns out to be a vitae-starved ghoul once in service to one of city's most powerful Kindred. In exchange for Blood, the retainer shows the coterie to the haven of their former master, where clues can be found to the domain founders' secret resting place. However, the coterie now has a treacherous, Blood-crazed ghoul as their slave, and this slave wants more.

When investigation reveals the resting place of the elders, their minions fall to frenzied combat. Even in their torpid states, the old Kindred seek to destroy each other. The city falls to war, with select Kindred summoned to the gravesite to wake the elders.

Running a Game

You've planned a chronicle. Your players have characters. You've talked with the group about how you each wish to play. It is time to run your first game of **Vampire: The Masquerade.**

The first question you should learn to ask is, "*What do you do?*"

"You wake up to the pounding on your front door. The cops are threatening to bash it in if you don't open. Looking at the clock, it's an hour still before sunset. What do you do?"

"The Toreador Primogen looks you straight in the eye and says she's always found young Kindred wonderfully energetic and lifelike. Her hand caresses your chest. What do you do?"

"Your phone rings. It's your mother. She's in a panic, crying, saying there's a horrible strange woman in her house threatening to kill her unless you go there. From her description, you recognize the Sheriff. What do you do?"

"The pretty club kid you were feeding from is lying motionless on the floor of the bathroom. He'll die of blood loss for sure. What do you do?"

"The anarchist is just about to punch you in the face. You can see it in her eyes, and the way she balls her fist. What do you do?"

If you have not asked this question in a while, it is probably a sign there is not enough stuff in your game for the players to react to.

The Scene

Every individual game session in your chronicle has to start with a specific situation. The characters are somewhere, doing something. The situation does not necessarily have to be dramatic. They can be at their haven, playing pool. The important thing is to get the players inside their characters from the first minutes of play. Typically, it is a good idea to have something interesting happen at to get things moving. Maybe a supporting character comes to visit, bearing surprising news. Maybe a dear friend of one of the characters has disappeared. As long as the players get something to react to.

Your game will progress as a series of scenes in which somebody is doing something interesting enough to be worth playing out in detail. Sometimes these scenes are initiated by you, but players can also make them happen. Perhaps a character calls his mortal mother, leading to a short conversation scene.

There is a roleplaying phenomenon known as if-gaming where participation in the actual game is replaced by player speculation about what might possibly happen in different scenarios. Avoid this at all costs by making sure the players are always focused on actual scenes.

Talk, Action, Challenge

There are many different types of scenes, and sometimes they can morph from one to another during the flow of the game.

A fight scene involves a violent conflict in which at least one side is trying to seriously hurt the other. The characters are the victims of an assassination attempt or a hit from a mortal gang. They are trying to murder the Prince in her haven. Whatever the case, the situation devolves to combat. Note that not all fight scenes are like this. Sometimes the stakes can be so low that the scene does not even need game mechanics, such as in a friendly brawl at a Brujah clubhouse. If nobody is trying to kill or defeat someone, the fight can be played for color instead of victors and losers.

A social scene is about interaction between characters. It can involve game mechanics if the players and the Storyteller feel it is necessary, but many social situations do not really involve challenges that need to be resolved. For example, if two characters go out on a date, the content of the scene is much more about the nuances of the social interaction between them. We want to see what happens, not who wins.

Some social scenes are practically irrelevant to the plot, yet fun to play. Perhaps the characters are shooting the shit after a horrible night at the Elysium. They are joking, debriefing, making grandiose plans. By the next night, much of it will be forgotten, yet the interaction can be interesting for its own sake. A common type of an incidental yet interesting social situation is when characters talk about how to set up their haven. Questions of personal style can be fun too. Perhaps one character is expecting to meet their ex, and the others offer advice on what to wear.

You are a ghost driving a skeleton covered with dead meat made up of the dusk of a million eons of lost history in pursuit of meaningless distractions. What is there to fear?

Social scenes can also be very dramatic and absolutely crucial to the story. After the player character Anarchs fight their way to the Prince's haven, the Prince suddenly surrenders and begs them to help him with an incoming rival incursion. A fight scene turns into a social scene in which the characters interact with the Prince.

As the Storyteller, running social scenes tends to require the use of your actual social skills to judge what is interesting to the players and what is not in terms of themes, types of conflict, and so on.

Challenge-based scenes are a third common scene type. The characters are breaking into the haven of a baron, set up in an abandoned warehouse. The Storyteller explains the layout, and the characters make a plan. These types of scenes often involve a lot of dice rolls and descriptions.

The Cut

The cut is one of the most important tools in the Storyteller's arsenal. The cut is when you move from scene to scene. Here the difficult thing is timing – picking the right moment to exit the scene and the right one to enter the next.

The start of a scene is the easier of the two to get right. Cut to the characters when something interesting happens. For example, the characters decide to go see the Prince. The details of driving to Elysium are inconsequential, so there is no need to play them out in detail. The moment to cut in could be when the characters walk into the Prince's chambers, but it could also be a little earlier, when they stride through the Elysium and overhear strange gossip.

In combat scenes, the end typically comes when the fighting is over, although sometimes the result becomes obvious before the actual end of the fight. If one side is clearly going to win, the Storyteller can cut the fight short and just summarize the end. This applies especially if the player characters are winning.

In a challenge-based scene, the scene is over when the challenge has been dealt with. If the characters are breaking into the Baron's haven, the scene ends when they succeed. Sometimes the Storyteller can speed things along if the scene stops being interesting, in a similar fashion as with a combat scene.

Judging when to end social scenes is more difficult. Seemingly boring discussion between characters can actually be extremely important to the players, in which case they will resent it if you cut it short. Yet, sometimes players are just killing time with their characters waiting for you to move the game along. This is one of the situations where Storyteller experience really counts.

Of course, cutting is not just about the timing of a scene. It is also about the timing of your session. If you need to make it to the climax before the end of the game, you might start cutting scenes short, or even summarize their events without really playing them out. On the other hand, if you feel you are running out of material, you could start encouraging player digressions to eat up more time.

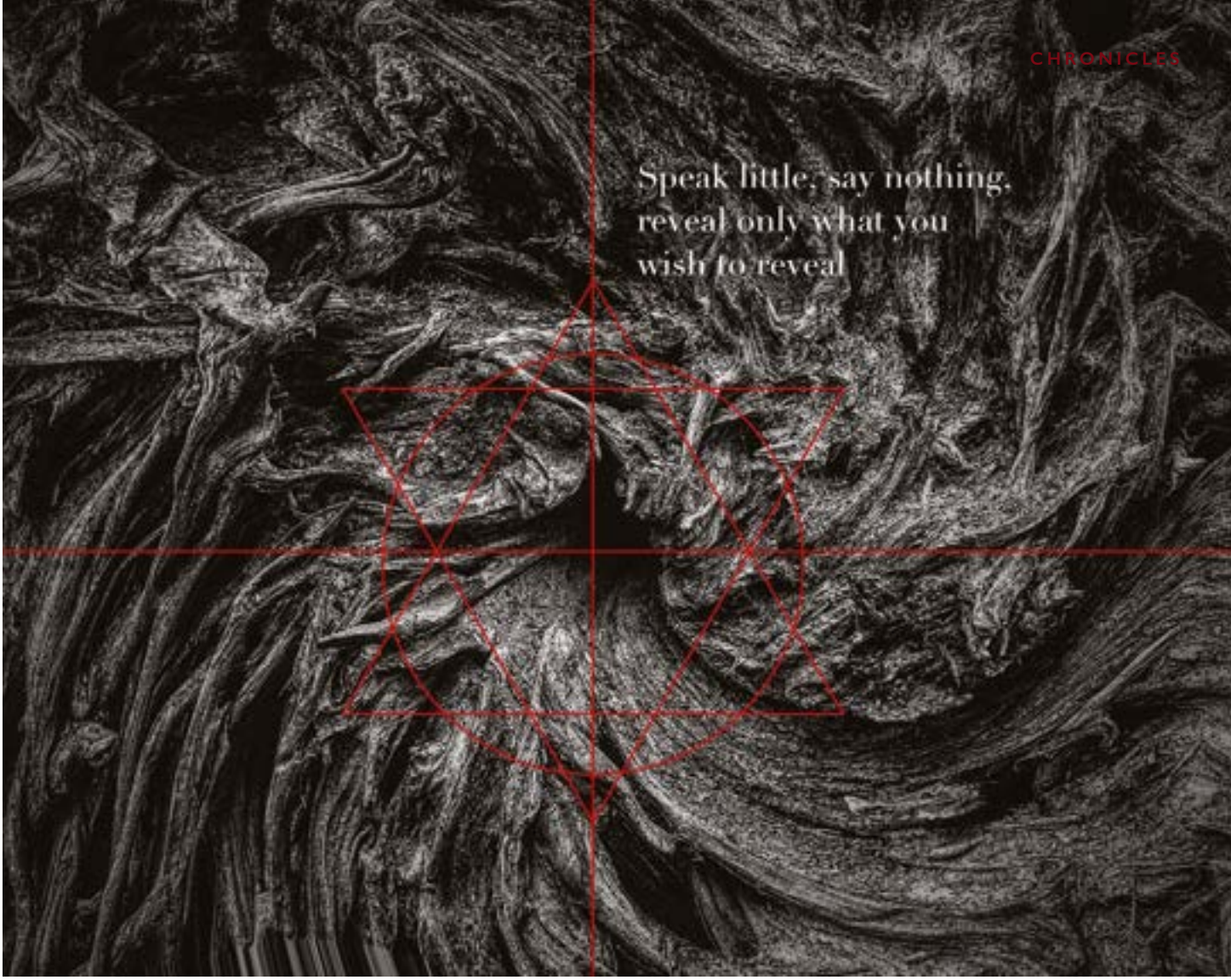
Note that sometimes players can cut too. Perhaps a player feels that a social scene has run long enough and says: "Okay, we'll continue bad-mouthing the Primogen but I don't think anything interesting happens." That is a cue for the Storyteller to move things along.

Spotlight Distribution

Spotlight distribution is a good thing to consider when running scenes and deciding when to cut. It is important to divide the spotlight among the players at least somewhat fairly, so that everybody gets to do interesting things. Keep an eye out for who naturally grabs the spotlight and who remains silent, and make sure to ask everyone what they're doing equally.

The question of spotlight is relevant both in a scene where all characters are present and when the characters are divided. If one characters goes out on their own, you will have to judge whether their scene is interesting enough to be played even if the other players have to wait it out. If one character goes to scout the Prince's mansion, perhaps you can just summarize the findings. If they go to pay their final respects to their dying mother, perhaps you can take the twenty minutes of game time it requires.

If many characters have solo scenes, be sure to balance them as well, so that everybody gets an equal amount. In a chronicle you can vary the spotlight a little, making sessions that focus on the issues of a particular character, but even then nobody should feel like they showed up to the game just to sit and do nothing.



Description

Describing what happens is one of those Storyteller skills where it is easy to get started but there is a lifetime of nuances to learn. Basically, your job as the Storyteller is to describe where the characters are, what happens, and who they are with. The key to good descriptions is understanding when to make them evocative and when to be concise.

A roleplaying game differs from literary fiction in that the environment you describe must be actionable for the player characters. The players must understand how the things that are relevant to them relate to each other. For this reason, many things will have to be described clearly and succinctly. This can be illustrated with the example of "the big rock." The Storyteller says that there's a big rock on the ground. One player assumes "big" means the size of a fist, another thinks "big" means the size of a car. Problems arise when one character tries to throw the rock while another hides behind it. If the rock is a relevant feature of the landscape, the Storyteller has to describe it using less ambiguous language to make sure that all players understand what their characters can do with it.

However, not all descriptions need to be exact. The Storyteller can say: "The stars shine bright in the night sky, like cold eyes of judgement." The exact appearance of the stars will probably have no bearing on what the characters can actually do. This is especially relevant when describing supporting characters. The exact shape of a man's nose or the width of his face is rarely important, so you can use evocative language. Perhaps players will form different mental images of the character in question, but that is fine. You can say: "The girl looks like a fox caught plundering a trash can." What does that really mean? The players' imaginations will take care of it.

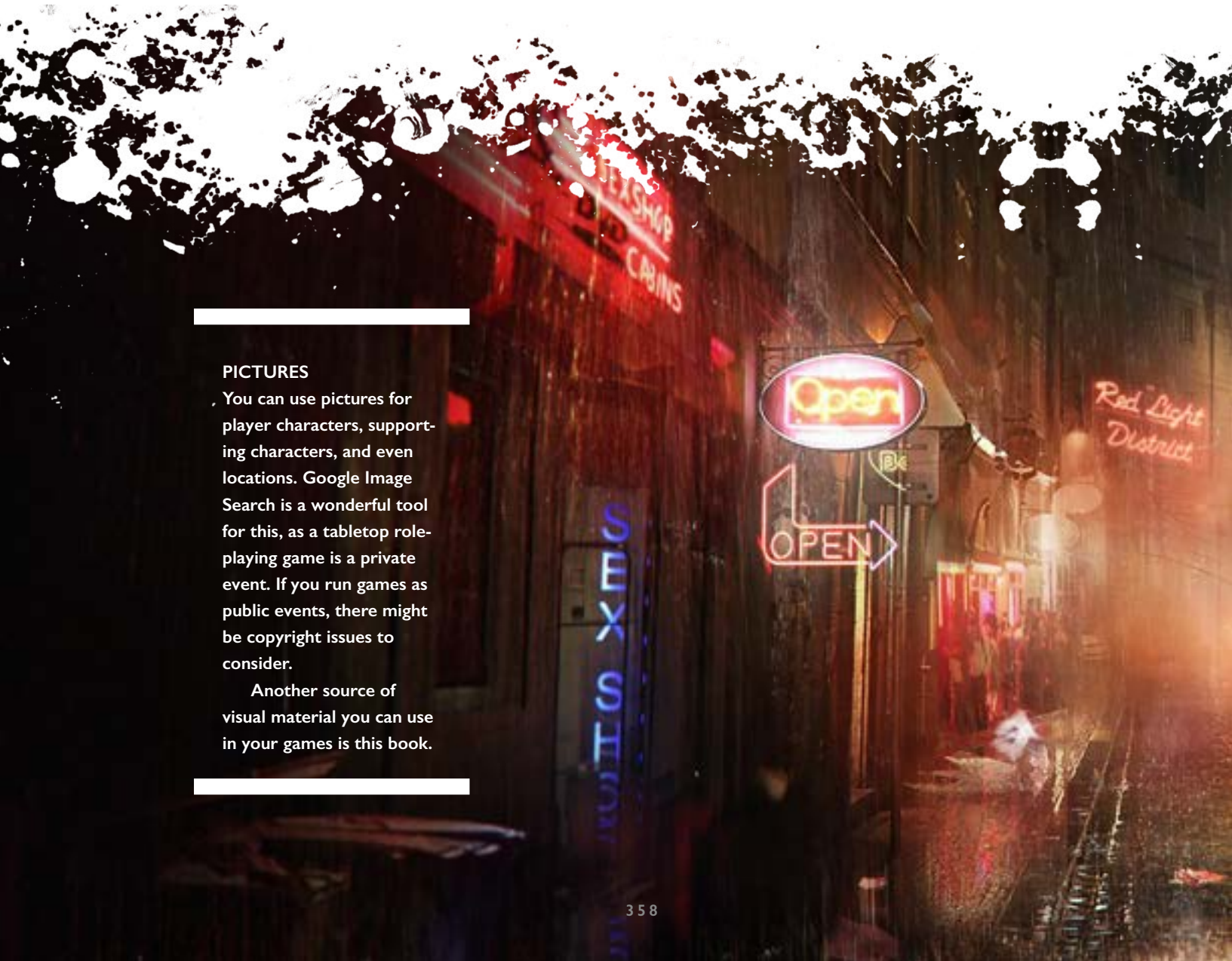
The Session

When it comes to running a session, preparation is key. You can create a toolbox of materials for yourself, so that in the heat of the action, you can supplement your improvisation with stuff you came up with in advance.

Generally, a good way to prepare a session is to plan a series of scenes that can happen in a predetermined order or change place with each other, depending on how the game runs. Plan scenes, so that they trigger either with a pre-planned hook the characters will probably take or with action from supporting characters.

The simplest way to start a scene is this: "A stranger on the street hands you a phone. 'It's for you... I think,' she says," or, "Your burner phone rings." A supporting character wants something from the player character. To talk, to invite them somewhere, to gossip. Supporting characters can also come to visit, send letters, or whatever it takes.

As you plan your scenes, you can give them very distinct beginnings, but try to make the endings open to player choice. For example, making a scene where the characters kill the Prince and then take their place in front of the entire Elysium is bad, because what if they do not? However, if the players have said they want to kill the Prince, you can provide an opportunity for it in the Elysium and then have a supporting character ask them, "So what now? Do you



PICTURES

You can use pictures for player characters, supporting characters, and even locations. Google Image Search is a wonderful tool for this, as a tabletop role-playing game is a private event. If you run games as public events, there might be copyright issues to consider.

Another source of visual material you can use in your games is this book.

think you can take their place?" This way, the idea is inserted into the game, but the players can make their own choices.

If a dramatic scene will likely have big implications for the rest of the game, leave it to the end. That way, you will have until the next session to map out its repercussions. Maybe you do not know if a player character wants to be the Prince or if they want to elevate their supporting character buddy into the position. The choice impacts the game a great deal and provides opportunities for a good, explosive start of the next session.

As a general rule, unless you really know what you are doing, avoid cliffhangers. The energy at the end of a session dissipates between games, so it is best to do all the dramatic stuff at the end, not the beginning.

HERE IS A SAMPLE PLAN FOR A SESSION:

Scene 1: The characters are at their haven when a representative from the Tremere chantry comes to invite them for a visit. She's very friendly and helpful, to a creepy degree.

Scene 2: The characters go to the chantry where the Tremere are clearly making a play for political support by being more open than before. There are other guests as well, and the characters note that they're mostly from the more embarrassing sections of the local Kindred population. Choice: Do the characters play nice with the Tremere, or do they stand aloof?

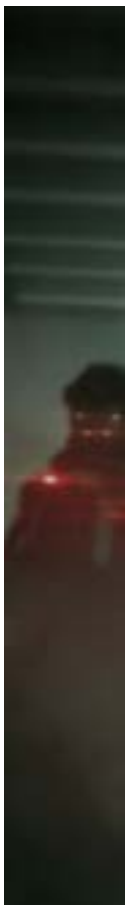
Scene 3: Immediately as the characters leave the chantry, an acquaintance contacts them, asking if they were at the chantry and demanding that they come to the Elysium to share what's happened. It turns out the Tremere attempt at becoming more politically viable is the subject of a great amount of gossiping.

Scene 4: The Elysium. This is a great moment to kick all kinds of personal stories along, with relevant supporting characters. The backstabbing brutality of Elysium politics becomes apparent as everybody gangs up on the Tremere, at least socially. Choice: Do the characters go along with the general ridiculing of the Tremere, or do they play it cool?

Scene 5: A player character hears word that his mortal sister has been taken by the Second Inquisition. She's at a black site, probably being tortured to reveal the secrets of the Kindred. Unfortunately, she knows many of them. Choice: Do the characters ask for help from the Tremere? They have a lot of arcane power that could be very useful, but if the characters associate with them, it will damage their reputations among the Camarilla.

Scene 6: With or without the Tremere, the characters attempt to get the sister from the black site. This is probably a pretty involved action sequence, and it can be given a social twist by having a rival of the characters there as a prisoner. They can make a choice to free him or leave him.

Remember that you should be ready to discard all plans if they no longer work in the game. This is especially important if the players introduce interesting ideas or themes. Sometimes the players come up with something better than what you had planned. In that situation, just grin and pretend that was what you were thinking of all along.



EXAMPLE CHRONICLE FLIER: YOUNG KINGZ

Are we like this because we're here, or here because we like this?

There have been 313 reported cases of serious youth-on-youth violence in Croydon in the last 12 months. Ali was stabbed by his sister, straight through the neck with a screwdriver, Demi was set on fire outside Tesco Monk's Hill, and let's not even talk about Miss Mullins and Griffin.

What if that galdem of Adidas-girls with much too much makeup been high, giggling and vicious since the early 70's? What if the lost kids of the projects only seem old because they really are old? What if there's a secret story behind all them stabbings and overdoses? A solid reason for skipping class, doing X on a Tuesday, and starting riots? A reason no grown-up can understand. At least no living grown up.

"Sabrina Mullings had just agreed to marry the 24-year-old Ivan Griffin, but just hours later on March 13, 2017, she would be brutally stabbed to death by her fiancée. The killer demanded his 38-year-old victim drink his blood as she lay dying in the flat they shared in Ravensdale Gardens, Upper Norwood. Griffin said he 'killed her because [he] loved her,' and that he was a 'puppet to the devil's work.'"

Teenage drinkers painting South London red. London proper has just fallen to the Inquisition. There are no more limits defined from above. Few proper grown-ups except parents and coppers, fewer rules, and no Cam Tommy or elders to compete with. No gods, no masters, no excuses for the pain you will bring to your community. A summer month before the riots start. Mature players. Immature characters. Themes that will burn your heart.

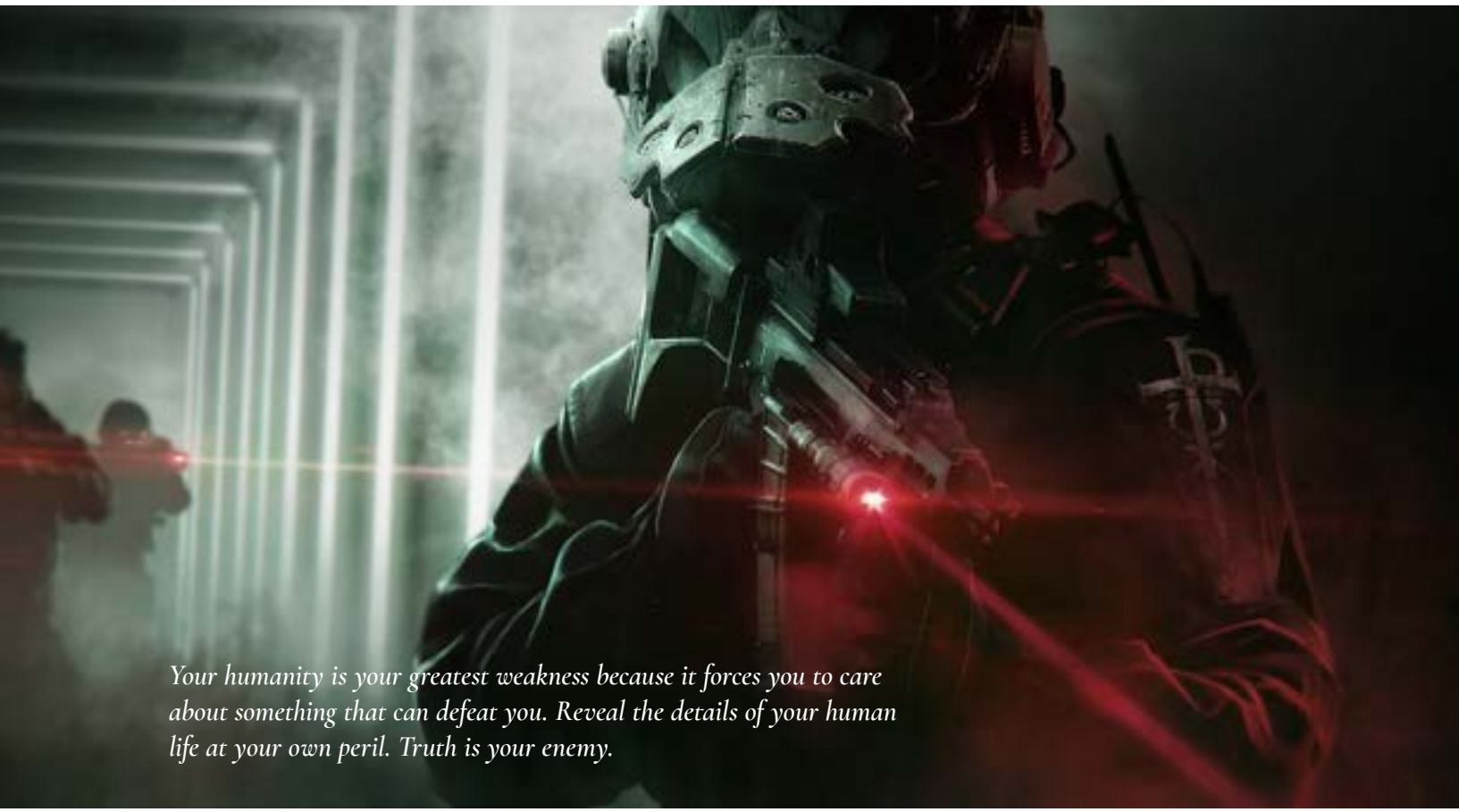
The Second Inquisition in Chronicles

Rifts have appeared in the Masquerade before. Individuals and small groups inside intelligence agencies like the Okhrana, MI6, NSA, and the DGSE have stumbled into the Jyhad many times. Vampires have used agents as pawns and fled temporary cells of government-trained hunters throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Camarilla assets within mortal states and the sheer impossibility of such an "immortal conspiracy" between them always diluted and drowned any real coordinated human response. 9/11 and the global "War on Terror" changed all that. The Camarilla gambled on an attempt to turn the American security state against the Sabbat and Anarchs, and every vampire lost. Massive surveillance programs and big data analysis pierced the Masquerade; when the NSA penetrated and flipped the Nosferatu SchreckNET after 2004, the mask came off for good.

But you won't find the Kindred mentioned anywhere on the news or even in top-secret Congressional briefings. This decentralized Inquisition of intelligence operators uses fake mission briefs, bogus subcommittees, and false flag operations to black out this secret war even from their colleagues and superiors. Anyone in the agency – or the governments that employ them – could be a blood-slave, so no, Congress doesn't know, and briefings happen very sporadically and on a strict need-to-know basis. Despite this crippling paranoia, a few high-ranking officials in several countries compare notes and share intelligence globally.

Church and States

A joint NSA/CIA Special Access Program called FIRSTLIGHT coordinates aware agents all over the Western world, liaises when possible with the Brujah-hunting Eighth Direction of the GRU, and funnels arms and support to the Entity, the secret service of the Vatican. The traffic in intelligence does not go only one way: the Entity now incorporates the newly re-canonized Society of St. Leopold, which provides FIRSTLIGHT and others with records from the last Inquisition and important per-



Your humanity is your greatest weakness because it forces you to care about something that can defeat you. Reveal the details of your human life at your own peril. Truth is your enemy.

spective on the "blankbody" threat. The Entity also provided cadre and vital support for Brazil's BOES anti-vampire urban death squads, bringing them into the global picture.

In 2008, FIRSTLIGHT analysts identified the Tremere Prime Chantry in Vienna as "Vampire Central" and directed their largest operation to date. A coordinated USSOCOM and Vatican ESOG force augmented with experienced Brazilian hunter-killer teams annihilated the Chantry, destroying it with drone strikes and relic-reinforced ground operations. The official cover story blamed the explosions on ISIS-aligned terrorists, just as FIRSTLIGHT has concealed dozens of other strikes under the blanket of "counter-terror operations."

Beginning in 2006, the British anti-terrorist police unit SO13, under the leadership of Captain Ishaq Khan, has systematically cleared London, beheading Queen Anne in November of 2013. The FBI's renewed Special Affairs Division stakes vampires from Long Island to Las Vegas, wherever their own investigations (or off-book FIRSTLIGHT briefings) find them. Israel's Unit 8211 tracks elders following the Beckoning to the Gehenna War and targets their abandoned domains. France's Calcédoine program within DGSE has driven Villon into hiding and slowly clears Marseilles. SOCOM units operate in 177 countries around the world, with an unknown number of FIRSTLIGHT-cleared officers within them ready to order another haven hit with thermobaric missiles. Half a dozen governments hold Kindred in scores of very sunny black sites, experimenting on them to discover their weaknesses and true nature.

The unknown Toreador who first dubbed it a "Second Inquisition" did not err. Two of the strongholds of the Camarilla have fallen, and more been besieged. Anarch and Sabbat havens have been burned out wholesale. The Giovanni uncovered, sundered, and forced to align with their Hecata brethren. Thousands of Kindred met with Final Death. The unthinkable has happened: Humanity grows bold enough to resist their masters. Mitre and crown once more join forces to end the bloodline of Caine. The hunters are hunted, again.

The Camarilla Veil Out

The Camarilla has responded by totally retreating from a digital world they never trusted and often despised. Princes ban all online communication, even cellphone conversations about Kindred affairs, and crack down fiercely on dissent and disloyalty. They run counter-intelligence in Washington and Brussels, isolating their operations from each other as surely as they close their cities down. Every phone call rings in the ears of the NSA; even deep encryption and the Dark Web might as well be open books to these digital witch-hunters.

The sect returns to the old ways of analog spycraft, skills they mastered when John Dee spied for Elizabeth I, and when the Borgias conspired against cardinals and kings. Letter codes refer to passages in obscure editions of J.G. Ballard novels, contacts wear gloves matching the color of their aura, raven couriers make physical dead drops of USB sticks where only bats or rats can retrieve them. So far, the veil-out has contained the problem, staunched the bleeding. After Vienna and London, the SI may believe they have eliminated the worst of the "blankbody" threat. Perhaps the Camarilla can pull off the same trick they pulled during the Renaissance: discredit, infiltrate, and destroy their enemies. They plan to try, as certain as Hell.

BLANKBODIES

It's not easy to accept the existence of vampires. Outside the Society of St. Leopold and its partners in the Entity and BOES, even hunters who have faced them in the field often fail to grasp exactly what they are up against. The impossibility of vampires combines with bureaucratic discomfort with plain speech – even within FIRSTLIGHT, nobody uses the v-word unless they want to get frozen out of the next briefing. (SOCOM especially hates using it, not least because the NATO phonetic alphabet term for "V" is "Victor," which sends a needlessly pessimistic message.) The NSA began investigating "paradimensionals" in the 1990s, and the SAD prefers the catch-all term "anomalies." When bringing a new asset into the Inquisition, it's best to stick to a neutral, objective term.

"Blankbody" fits this purpose, and has become the most widespread euphemism for the target. (SOCOM operators in the Inquisition happily use "Bravo-Twos" or "Double-Bravos.") The word comes from the generally low body temperature of the Kindred, which shows up as a void or dark blotch in infrared night-vision. Field operatives often default to IR checks of suspects to separate the living from the dead. Institutional paranoia and a shortage of cleared staff means that field agents don't always know about the Blush of Life (p. 218) which enables vampires to glow rosy red in heat vision. They quickly learn, of course, assuming they survive long enough.

The Anarchs Burn Out

The Anarchs and the unbound approach the Inquisition problem in their own style. Like drug dealers or protestors, they use burner phones, disguises, fast getaways, constant mobility, and online identity theft to stay safe. They tear out GPS units from their laptops, Dominate humans to post manifestoes and communiqués, hire Ukrainian hackers to watch their backs, and fleshcraft body doubles to fool pursuers. It's harder than the Camarilla way, and the slow movers die fast, but it beats going completely dark.

Thin-bloods hide in plain sight, carrying on as they did when they were still human. And much to the irritation of their elders, they mostly get away with it. They take selfies with a "Bloody Mary" and a wide grin, vaguebooking about their "habit" and bad daytime comedowns. Sometimes the police find jury-rigged meth labs caked in blood, and sometimes the reports end

up on the wrong desk, but in general the FIRST-LIGHT operatives in the DEA have worse monsters to deal with. A daytime interview or a medical inspection usually suffices to get a Duskborn off the hook. If the thin-blood holds a grudge against their resentful elders, well, dropping a dime on a real "blankbody terrorist" is another good way to get your case dropped. And you know, government work comes with job security – becoming an SI consultant could easily tempt any Duskborn with a grudge, which is most of them.

As an enemy, the Second Inquisition is nebulous and frightening, implacable yet hard to pin down. As the Storyteller, you can fit it to your chronicle so that it fulfills the function you need it to serve. Here are six different approaches you can take to using the Second Inquisition in your chronicle:

ACTIVE THREAT: The Second Inquisition is hunting vampires, and the characters are in their crosshairs. Perhaps American spec ops break down the door of their haven. Their friends and relatives get hauled away to be interrogated and tortured in featureless rooms. If the Second Inquisition is an active threat, much of the chronicle's content will be about how to deal with this threat. How to survive the attacks? How to protect loved ones? How to hide from the enemy? How to strike back?

This is a good choice if you want to run a game with a focus on action scenes and combat.

PASSIVE THREAT: The Second Inquisition is a feature of the landscape, a natural hazard the characters need to consider as they go about their unlives. In this type of a game, the actual content of the chronicle is not about the Second Inquisition. The characters are trying to do something entirely different (foment Anarch rebellion, become the rulers of the city, try to maintain their fading mortal relationships, etc.), and the Second Inquisition hits them if they draw attention to themselves.

In a game like this, bad things happen if the characters break the Masquerade or post revealing information on social media, but if they stay sharp they will evade the Second Inquisition.

THE ALL-POWERFUL MONOLITH

It is easy to see intelligence agencies as all-powerful monoliths, and they might well look like that to vampires who are desperately trying to evade their grasp. However, especially if the Second Inquisition has a big role in your chronicle, it can be interesting to break this monolithic facade.

Local Second Inquisition agents could turn out to be badly briefed law enforcement with only a rudimentary idea of what they are hunting for. Maybe there is a liaison officer from another agency who is so paranoid about vampire mind control that she refuses to reveal even necessary details to her teammates. The funding of the local Second Inquisition operation could be contingent on political approval, vulnerable to being cut off by Kindred influence in local government.

Secrecy breeds incompetence and paranoia makes people do stupid things. Perhaps the only edge your characters need against the Second Inquisition is human nature.

SYMBOLIC PARALLEL: Intelligence agencies are shadowy organizations thriving on secrecy, unaccountable networks of power driving their own agendas. They are staffed by people with questionable morals who are focused on destroying perceived enemies both within the public and from agencies similar to their own. From this perspective, the Second Inquisition can offer a symbolic parallel to Kindred society. Secretive cabals strive for power. Does it matter if they are called the Ventrue or the CIA?

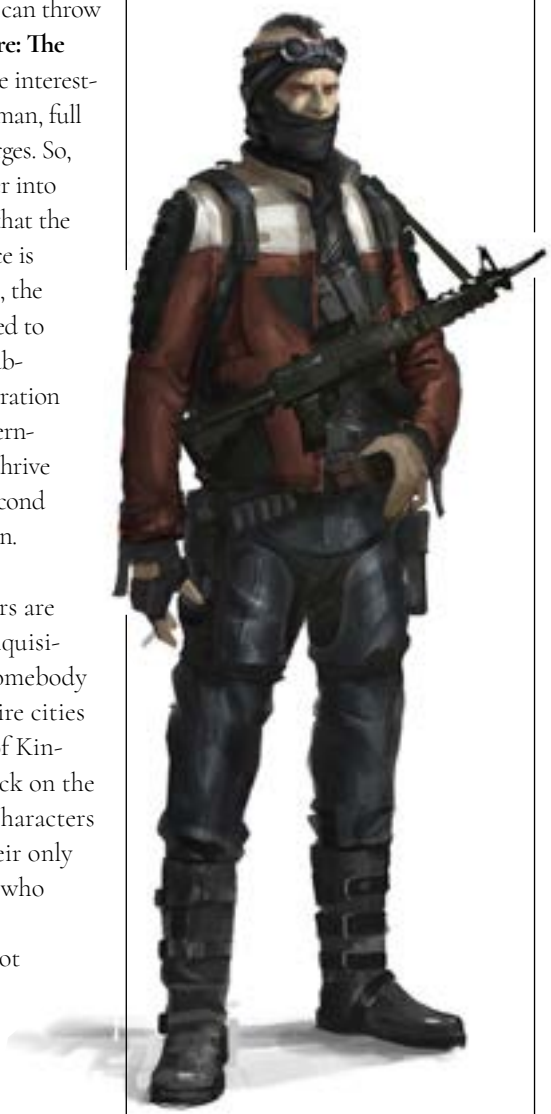
With this approach, the players and characters will need to know a lot about how the Second Inquisition operates. As the characters see more similarities between themselves and their enemies, the Second Inquisition will become an important element in your chronicle.

FRONT AND CENTER: Let's put the Second Inquisition front and center in your chronicle. It's no longer about how it affects the story; it is the story. To make this interesting to play on, the Second Inquisition must be presented with depth and variety, as something more than just an unknown enemy or a stylized metaphor.

Let's say the characters attempt the extremely dangerous operation of infiltrating the Second Inquisition. They might find a sleek modern command center staffed by hypercompetent super agents impervious to anything the characters can throw at them. But this is **Vampire: The Masquerade**, and it is more interesting to make the enemy human, full of weakness and strange urges. So, as the characters dig deeper into the Inquisition, they find that the director of a local task force is secretly a vampire fetishist, the SWAT team are all addicted to performance-enhancing substances, and the entire operation is being done without government approval. Vampires thrive on human sins, and the Second Inquisition is all too human.

FAKE OUT: The characters are terrified of the Second Inquisition. Everybody knows somebody who's lost their lives. Entire cities have been wiped empty of Kindred. When the cops knock on the door of their haven, the characters know that time is up. Their only choice is to kill everyone who comes looking for them.

Only, this time it is not the Second Inquisition. It turns out that another intelligence agency, the secret police, or a similar organization is after them because they mistook them for terrorists, minority rights activists, leftists, foreign agents, or similar traditional targets of intelligence agencies around the world.



In this situation, the Second Inquisition does not even have to make an appearance to be effective. The paranoia it generates is enough.

FOLLY: Finally, the Second Inquisition can represent folly and hubris in your chronicle. It does not come after the characters on its own initiative, but because it was invited in. A prince thought they could use it to destroy the Anarchs. A disgruntled Nosferatu leaked information in a bid for revenge. The characters make a play to control Inquisition agents without understanding how they operate. Whatever happens, the end result is disaster.

You can also use the Second Inquisition as purely a world element, something that happens while the characters do other things. For instance, it will build the Second Inquisition up as a credible threat if it destroys the Tremere Primogen after the characters hear he tried to use it as a pawn in his own schemes.

Hunters Hunted

The Second Inquisition has decided to hit the characters. Who is coming after them? Here are three different examples of a Second Inquisition team (see Antagonists:

The Tactical Squad

The Inquisition has a lead on the characters and are on their way.

This kind of encounter can be extremely dangerous for the characters, as it demonstrates the power the Second Inquisition can wield when it is at its most effective.

The squad consists of a liaison from a religious agency, as well as a team who could be a police SWAT team, ex-military mercenaries or a rogue American spec ops unit.

SAMPLE STATS:

Liaison: As Faith Hunter, p. 371
Squad leader: As Inquisitor Investigator, p. 372
Four squad members: As Inquisitor Delta, p. 372

To make things more difficult, the squad can strike at dawn, use controlled demolitions to dismantle the characters' haven, or use equipment that makes it hard to use vampiric powers on them. Alternatively, if you want to ramp down the threat, they can botch the operation by signaling their approach.

Old School

The characters are targeted by honest-to-God Catholic Society of St. Leopold inquisitors. The inquisitors do not attack immediately. Rather, the characters start noticing strange things in their neighborhood. One of their contacts mentions intense monastic types visiting a local Catholic church and talking with the people there. The ghoul of a neonate they know is found choked on his own blood. Grim-looking people seem to be on a stakeout on the street outside their haven.

The Society of St. Leopold team has received information from their partners in the Second Inquisition. They suspect the building the characters live in to be a vampire front, but they want to make sure before they go all van Helsing on it.

The challenge from the perspective of the characters is to decide what to do. Should they try to kill the inquisitors? Or would that only bring more trouble? Is it better to switch havens for a month or two and see if the inquisition loses the scent? Should they make some sort of a play to try to fool the inquisitors?

Repressed religious fanatics that they are, inquisitors can provide for interesting roleplaying opportunities. Maybe one of them feels a strange attraction to vampires, a Satanic whisper that just won't go away? This unfortunate can contact the characters to betray his fellows for the chance to get closer to his object of obsession. Unfortunately for the characters, the next morning he repents his weakness and confesses everything to his fellow inquisitors.

SAMPLE STATS:

Four Inquisitors: As Faith Hunter, p. 371

Secret Agents

The Second Inquisition is coordinated and directed by smaller organizations hidden within the vast intelligence apparatuses of countries like the US, the UK, Russia, and France. Often the Second Inquisition agents the characters will meet are not actually from these agencies, but from smaller, local organizations who do the work of the Second Inquisition for them. However, sometimes the characters really do get approached by the real deal, Second Inquisition agents from deep within the NSA, the FSB, or a similar agency.

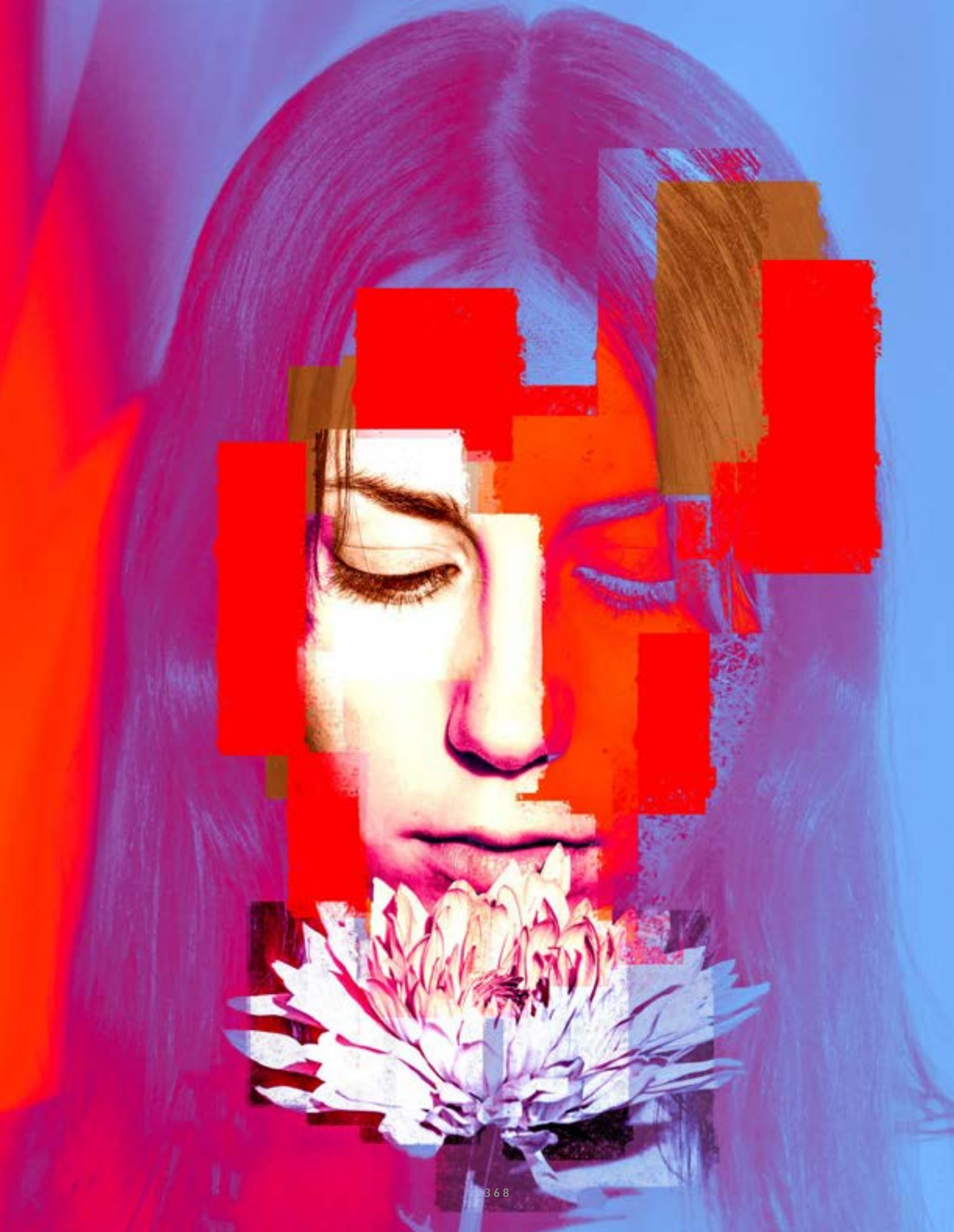
Intelligence operatives can be manipulative, devious liars. In this example, they do not initially seek to kill the characters, but to use them to further their own ends. They make initial contact, perhaps pretending to be interested in defecting to the other side or promising that the Second Inquisition can help the characters against their enemies. If the characters fall for it, the agents can try to pump them for information about vampires, the locations of the havens of their enemies, and so on. The agents can try to use the characters as informants or pawns, making them betray their fellows.

As combat opponents, the agents are not very dangerous, at least not to a vampire. If the characters catch them unprepared, they will be able to win against them. However, do they really want to do that, considering all the magnificent things the agents promise?

It is easy to make a liar sound convincing if you are the Storyteller, so in in the name of fairness remember to actually make it possible for the characters to figure out the truth.

SAMPLE STATS:

Two agents: As Inquisitor Investigator, p. 372 ■



TOOLS

Change incidents and plot whenever the developing process seems to suggest such change, never being bound by any previous design. If the development suddenly reveals new opportunities for dramatic effect or vivid storytelling, add whatever is thought advantageous – going back and reconciling the early parts to the new plan.

– H.P. LOVECRAFT, *NOTES ON WEIRD FICTION*

This chapter provides the Storyteller with an arsenal of elements to introduce into their chronicle, as they see fit. Stories come from characters in conflict, but they take their shapes from incident, from detail, from all the pieces that flow together in a mosaic or a jigsaw puzzle until the final images emerge. No single chapter – no rule book, not even thirty years of rule books – can substitute for, or encompass, the endless possibilities of even one Vampire chronicle, much less all of them.

But this chapter lines up some colorful pieces of story, some jagged and some mysterious. The Storyteller in a hurry can throw a prefabricated cop into the warehouse or send the players to the old observatory on the edge of town. Casting their eye over a list of victims, the Storyteller can jump-start their own creativity and breathe life into a vampire's lunch – or just roll the dice and let the player feed the story as their character feeds on the kebab seller. This chapter also opens a few doors to further mysteries for the Storyteller to explore, or not: magicians and enchanted blades and strange sights in the night sky.

Who walks through that door, and what happens when they get there ... that's up to them.

Antagonists

Kindred like to imagine themselves as predators feared by all; unmoved by mortals wielding guns or blades, immune to the vagaries of aging, and capable of bringing down any beast, no matter how feral they might be. For the most part, vampires are correct in their assessment. They *are* hunters, blood drinkers, and in many cases, killers. They *are* the antagonists in the stories of others.

Yet, Kindred do not just coast through their domains, feeding without meeting resistance, hunting without finding challenge, or existing without threats to their hollow lives. There exist many who would do harm to vampires, no matter their sect, clan, or apparent moral standing. Understandably, mortal hunters such as those within the Inquisition pose a great threat to Kindred, but other creatures, such as werewolves, ghosts, the fae, and even mortal magic users stand in the way of vampires claiming the role of uncontested apex predator.

Some of the greatest threats to vampires come from within their own ranks. An upstart neonate may attempt to topple a Prince from their throne, an Anarch may sabotage a Camarilla Elysium with explosives and inferno, or a Sabbat savage might roll into town with nothing but blood and destruction on their mind.

SIMPLE ANTAGONISTS

Just like with scenes, the Storyteller can zoom in and out on the mechanical details of antagonists and other supporting characters At their very simplest, foes just need a description and a difficulty level, for example "Thug ••• ". This makes defeating this antagonist a Difficulty 3 roll with the appropriate ability. In a conflict, falling short of this difficulty can cause damage.

Example: Zoë goes up against the aforementioned thug, but only gets one success on a Strength + Brawl roll. She suffers two points of damage (perhaps +1 or more if the thug is armed) and the thug remains a threat.

If you need to roll a pool for the antagonist, roll twice the Difficulty, but note that this is rarely necessary. You can also, as an option, roll a single die every time the antagonist's Difficulty comes into play - on a 0 they are considered to have rolled a critical, adding +2 to their Difficulty for that test.

Mortals

Mortals serve a manifold purpose to Kindred. They ground a vampire, allowing the dead to maintain contact with life. They act as food, their blood infinitely more nourishing than that of any beast. But sometimes, they act as surprising predators. Mortals are not content to be pushed around, fed from, and discarded. They fight back. Some discover the existence of Kindred and resolve to burn them from their havens. Others simply wish to maintain order, go about their lives, or lead other kine as teachers, leaders, and spiritual guides. Any of them might pose a threat to an individual vampire, or group of neonates.

Minor characters such as mortals and animals have generic dice pools for physical, social, and mental actions are concerned. The exception to this rule comes where their Secondary Attributes and profession or role-specific challenges come into play, such as a cop's aim being higher than their typical physical pool, or an inquisitor's perception of danger. These exceptions are stated where relevant and should be rolled as a complete dice pool, but in all cases, the Storyteller should adjust dice pools to reflect an exceptional or weaker version of the character specified.

For creating your own mortals, see Mortal Templates on p. 185.

Police Detective

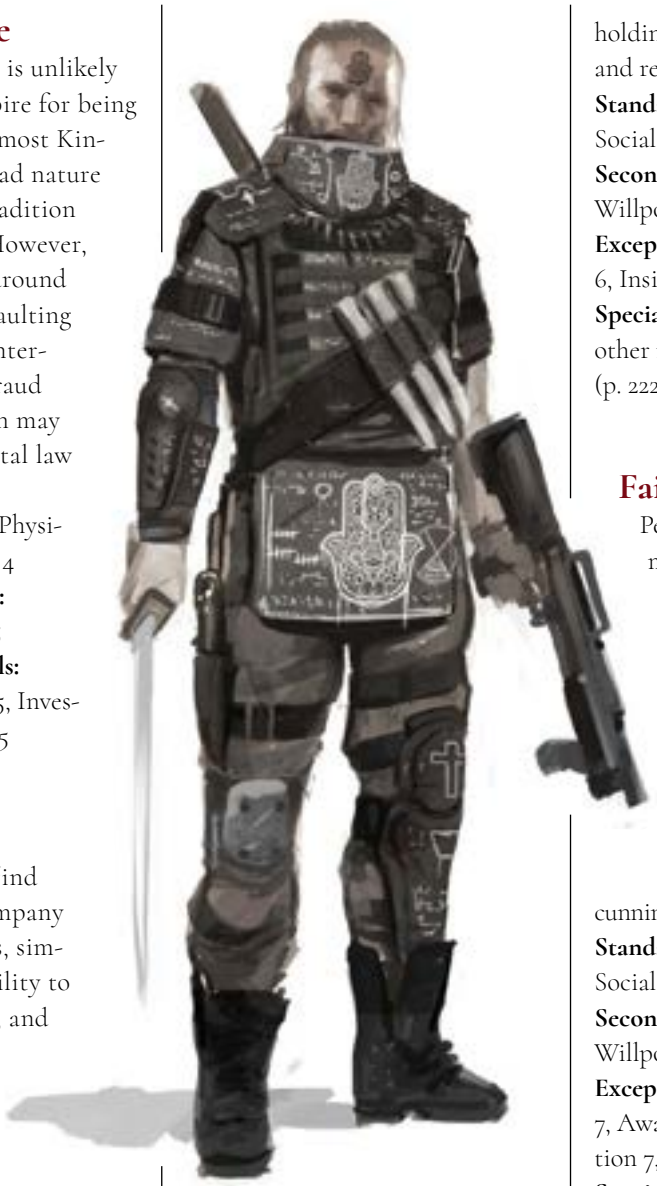
An officer of the law is unlikely to investigate a vampire for being a vampire. After all, most Kindred keep their undead nature a secret under the Tradition of the Masquerade. However, a vampire who goes around breaking the law, assaulting kine, breaking and entering, or committing fraud to furnish their haven may well fall afoul of mortal law enforcement.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 3, Mental 4
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5
Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 5, Firearms 5, Investigation 6, Streetwise 5

Gangster

Kindred oftentimes find themselves in the company of villains and rogues, simply due to their inability to earn money honestly, and occasional need for daytime protection, assassinations, or information. Gangsters cover a broad spectrum, from the street drug dealer to the mob boss operating from a penthouse apartment.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 3, Mental 3
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 4
Exceptional Dice Pools: Brawl 5, Firearms 5, Intimidation 5, Larceny 5, Streetwise 7



Clergy

Clergy comprise a varied group, spanning multiple faiths and each posing a danger to the Kindred. At their weakest, they are capable of rallying the kine in worship, hope, and resilience against undead predation. At their strongest, they wield their faith like a weapon, burning the flesh from vampires by holding aloft their religious icons and rebuking the dead.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 5, Mental 4
Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 7
Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 6, Insight 7, Occult 5, Leadership 6
Special: Some clergy – and some other mortals – possess True Faith (p. 222).

Faith Hunter

Perhaps hailing from the enigmatic Society of St. Leopold, perhaps a local imam assisting an investigative team, this old-school inquisitor believes in faith and fire. Likely with extensive contacts among the churches of the world, and comparably great insight into the foe, this antagonist is as cunning as it is relentless.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 4, Mental 5
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 8
Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 7, Awareness 7, Melee 6, Investigation 7, Occult 8
Special: Some hunters carry chemical or mystic imbuements in their blood, giving them exceptional abilities to find and confront the undead. They add four dice to any pool to resist or contest a vampiric Discipline. Drinking their blood inflicts 4 points of aggravated damage unless the vampire can win a Stamina + Resolve test at Difficulty 5.

Inquisitor Investigator

The Second Inquisition knows the broad details of Kindred society, thanks to the penetration of SchreckNET and a decade of successful interrogations and surveillance missions. It dispatches its agents into the field with set missions: spy, research, capture, or kill. They are each equipped appropriately to best handle their assigned role.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 4, Mental 5

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Academics 6, Awareness 7, Firearms 6, Investigation 7

Inquisitor Delta

Part of a Second Inquisition assault team, the standard SI Delta is no mere rank and file foot soldier. Often recruited from mortal intelligence and/or special operations operatives, they are skilled and capable operators well versed in the quirks and foibles of their quarry.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 7

Exceptional Dice Pools: Athletics 8, Awareness 7, Brawl 8, Firearms 9, Melee 8, One Expert Skill 9

Special: Inquisition operatives are often festooned with kit as befits their mission, such as body armor, specialized ammunition, breaching tools, and the like. They are also smart enough to only engage foes when they are at an advantage.

This right here is what we call a bad date. Some bloodsucker lost his shit and now it's our job to clean it up - because no one's going to believe a tiger got loose in the city... again.

Ghoul

Ghouls form the stock of retainers, servants, and slaves of many Kindred. Addicted to the vitae in their masters' and mistresses' dead veins, ghouls will obey their creators in any way they can, even to the point of injury, and in some cases, death. Ghouls may be stoic butlers, steady bodyguards, or blood-crazed savages, depending on their regnant.

Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 4, Mental 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 5

Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Intimidation 5, Occult 6, Stealth 5

Disciplines: One Discipline at 1

See p. 234 for more on Ghouls.

Animals

Whether or not they like to admit it, Kindred share a kinship with primal creatures. In their cold dead hearts, all vampires simply crave the hunt and the blood that follows.

Many animals rear or shy away in the proximity of the undead, though a few are drawn to the blood-drinking predator, recognizing a new alpha to follow. By and large, vampires use animals for scouting in the city or surprise attacks in the wilderness, courtesy of the Animalism Discipline. It is not unknown, however, for a vampire to own a loyal pet or animal companion.

Bat (Large)

Commonly associated with vampires, perhaps in part due to the forms Kindred with Protean often adopt, the bat is far from a predator, but benefits hugely from an impressive sonar ability.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 2, Willpower 1
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 7, Stealth 5

Bear

Impressive in size, lethality, and speed, the bear is a surprisingly dextrous creature capable of ripping flesh to ribbons with one single flex.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 7, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 3
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 3, Intimidation 6
Special: Add +2 to damage done by bear attacks.

Bird of Prey

Though many birds of prey exist, the hawk, eagle, vulture, and owl are among the more likely to keep company with a vampire, lurking around its haven for staggering, blood-drained morsels.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 4, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 3, Willpower 2
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 6, Brawl 5, Stealth 6

Guard Dog

A man's best friend is his dog. Many Kindred agree with the sentiment, retaining vicious yet obedient hounds to guard their properties or set loose on intruders.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 5, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 2
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 4, Brawl 6, Intimidation 4, Stealth 4
Special: Add +1 to damage done by guard dog bites.

Horse

Horses tend to shy from vampires, unless in a rural Kindred's stable for the purposes of quick, unexpected escape or as a stock of copious, if unpleasant, blood.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 2
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 4
Special: Horses do +2 damage when trampling prone opponents

Rat

The Nosferatu's favored creature, the rat, or swarm of rats, make for ideal messengers or spies when using the Animalism Discipline. When utilizing a swarm, add 3 to Health and all physical-based rolls.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 3, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 1, Willpower 1
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 5, Brawl 4, Stealth 7

Wolf

For the vampire who wants to make a statement, using a wolf as guardian or attack creature is certain to revolt local Gangrel and werewolves. Wolves often respect vampires as pack alphas.
Standard Dice Pools: Physical 6, Social 1, Mental 1
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 3
Exceptional Dice Pools: Awareness 3, Intimidation 5, Stealth 5
Special: Add +1 to damage done by wolf attacks.

Vampires

Camarilla vampires enjoy telling each other about the harmony within their sect, just as the Anarchs like to act as if the Movement is a united fight against tyranny and abuse. Vampires imagine they are free from the Jyhad, but elders pit ancillae against neonates, while fledglings conspire to take down Princes.

As vampires require a range of Attributes and Skills to use their Disciplines, they possess full lists of both unlike other minor Storyteller characters.

Elysium Harpy

Sometimes, the sharpest weapon is the tongue. The domain Herald, or *Harpy*, knows everyone and all their secrets. This Kindred will share them with others, for the right price. "Harpy" is an originally negative epithet, but some wear it with pride, knowing the role of information broker is valued in any court, at least until another vampire decides the loose-lipped Kindred requires destruction.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 3; Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3
Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 6
Skills: Academics 2, Awareness 4, Finance 2, Investigation 3, Politics 4, Occult 1; Athletics 1, Brawl 1, Craft 1, Drive 2; Etiquette 5, Insight 4, Intimidation 3, Leadership 1, Performance 3, Persuasion 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4
Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 2, Fortitude 1, Presence 3
Humanity: 6
Blood Potency: 3

Anarch Revolutionary

Anarchs talk a big game, threatening to tear down the establishment to replace it with something fresh and lead Kindred into a brave new world. Most members of the Anarch Movement in fact concentrate on their personal domains, reasoning that as long as they're left alone, they're good. This revolutionary Kindred spits on such "Autarchs," lighting a Molotov before charging into Elysium.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2; Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 4
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 6
Skills: Academics 1, Awareness 3, Investigation 1, Occult 1, Politics 3, Science 2, Technology 3; Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Drive 3, Firearms 3, Larceny 4, Melee 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3; Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 1, Insight 2, Intimidation 2, Leadership 3, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 1
Disciplines: Animalism 2, Celerity 2, Fortitude 3, Potence 2, Protean 1
Humanity: 7
Blood Potency: 2

ANTAGONIST EXPENDITURES

For Storytellers who desire less bookkeeping, keeping track of Hunger and Willpower levels for several antagonists can be a chore. One solution is to dispense of it altogether, but raise the appropriate antagonist dice pools somewhat to compensate, another to keep a general tally of expenditures per scene, such as "in this scene the antagonists may use a maximum of five Rouses of Blood and three Willpower between them." A third option is to have a general pool of bonus dice to throw in when appropriate.

Noddist Bishop

Membership in the Church of Caine has surged within the Camarilla, though the sect hates to admit it. To some, the Noddists represent hope, spirituality, and guidance on a tormented path. Others see the Church as just another means of oppressing the Kindred masses. "Not content to take our bodies, they take our souls as well." The Noddists preach that loyalty and belief in Caine's precepts will see all Kindred to their just rewards.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Charisma 5, Manipulation 3, Composure 4; Intelligence 5, Wits 3, Resolve 5
Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 9
Skills: Academics 4, Awareness 2, Finance 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Politics 4, Occult 5, Science 1; Larceny 1, Melee 2, Stealth 2; Animal Ken 1, Etiquette 4, Insight 3, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Performance 2, Persuasion 5, Subterfuge 4
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 3, Presence 4
Humanity: 5
Blood Potency: 3

Bloodthirsty Sheriff

It seems every city's heard of an especially bloodthirsty Sheriff, keen to destroy other vampires for the slightest infractions, call Blood Hunts for looking at the Prince the wrong way, or lead the charge against Sabbat on the domain's outskirts. The Sheriff is a formidable warlord, but may enjoy the taste of vampire Blood a little too much.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Composure 3; Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4
Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 7
Skills: Academics 1, Awareness 3, Finance 1, Investigation 4, Politics 2, Technology 2; Athletics 4, Brawl 3, Drive 2, Firearms 4, Larceny 3, Melee 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3; Animal Ken 2, Etiquette 1, Insight 1, Intimidation 5, Leadership 1, Persuasion 1, Streetwise 3
Disciplines: Animalism 2, Celerity 3, Obfuscate 3, Potence 4
Humanity: 5
Blood Potency: 4

Wight

This is a vampire completely consumed by their Beast. All human personality disappears as primal cunning and aggression dominate, the persona of the Beast now and forever more at the forefront. Few vampires exist for long as wights, for the Beast compels them to savage violence each night. Those rare wights that do exist for longer than a few months learn how to hide, ration their hunts, and inflict awful torturous torments on their prey.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1; Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 2
Secondary Attributes: Health 8, Willpower 3
Skills: Awareness 5, Investigation 4; Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Firearms 1, Melee 3, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5; Animal Ken 4, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 2
Disciplines: Animalism 3, Celerity 4, Fortitude 3, Potence 4
Humanity: 0
Blood Potency: 3

Creatures of Horror

Vampires are far from the only monsters dwelling in the night. From shapeshifters that despise the undead to mortals capable of creative and destructive magics in equal measure, vampires share the night with potential allies and likely enemies.

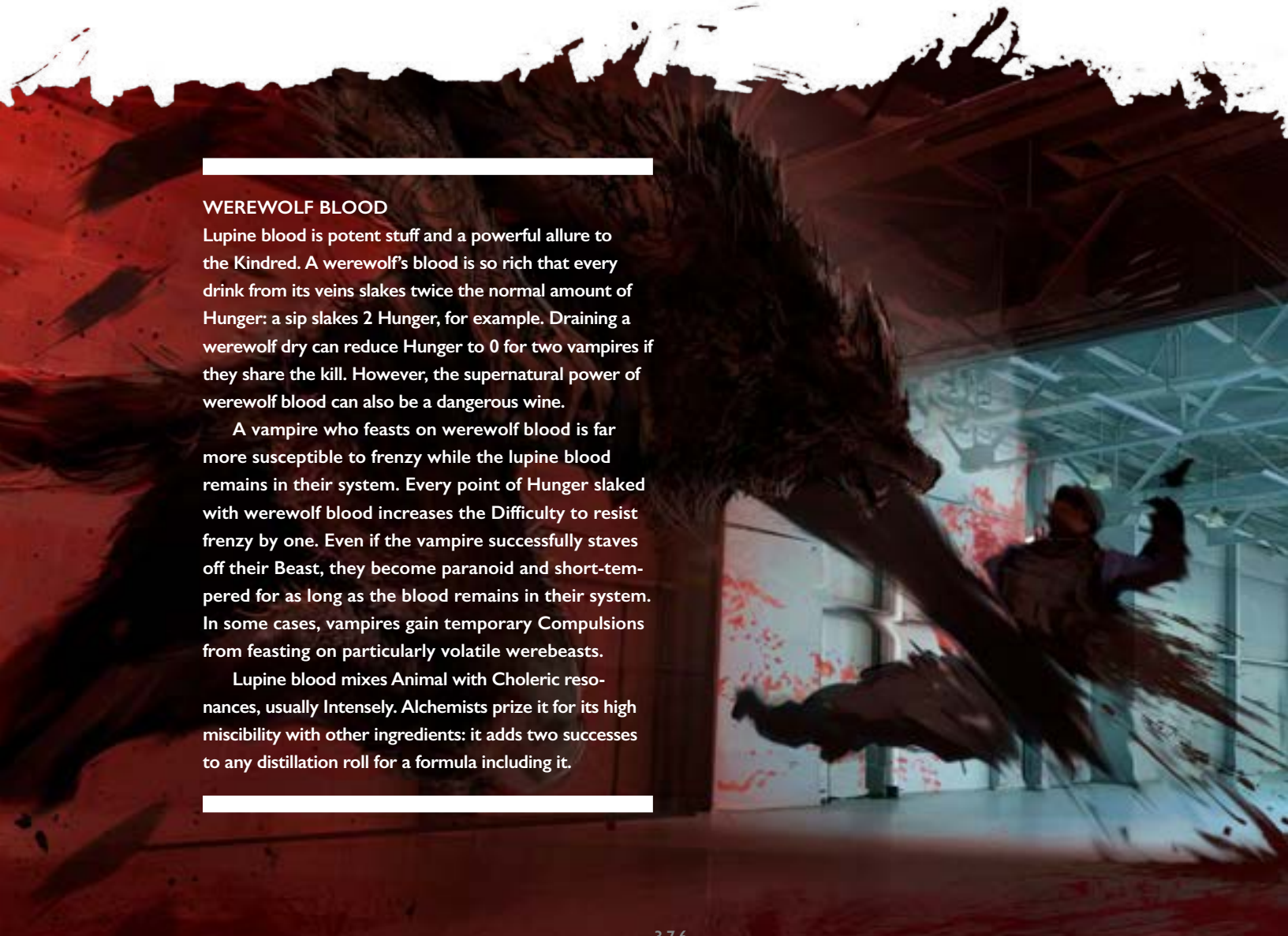
Note: While non-vampires and non-ghouls cannot possess Disciplines, they do tend to have access to their own range of supernatural powers. For troupes using this book alone to detail their antagonists, treat their powers the same as the Disciplines provided for each creature entry. If they fail their "Rouse Check," rather than gaining Hunger they suffer a point of Superficial damage to either Willpower or Health.

Werewolf

Dubbed "the Great Enemy" by elder members of Clans Gangrel and Ravnos, the lupines stop at nothing to destroy vampires whenever they cross paths. Some even track Kindred from afar, encouraging all vampires to ensure their havens are safe and secure from werewolf attacks. These creatures are at their best in the wilderness. As vampires control the cities, lupines control the wild.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2; Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4

Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 6



WEREWOLF BLOOD

Lupine blood is potent stuff and a powerful allure to the Kindred. A werewolf's blood is so rich that every drink from its veins slakes twice the normal amount of Hunger: a sip slakes 2 Hunger, for example. Draining a werewolf dry can reduce Hunger to 0 for two vampires if they share the kill. However, the supernatural power of werewolf blood can also be a dangerous wine.

A vampire who feasts on werewolf blood is far more susceptible to frenzy while the lupine blood remains in their system. Every point of Hunger slaked with werewolf blood increases the Difficulty to resist frenzy by one. Even if the vampire successfully staves off their Beast, they become paranoid and short-tempered for as long as the blood remains in their system. In some cases, vampires gain temporary Compulsions from feasting on particularly volatile werebeasts.

Lupine blood mixes Animal with Choleric resonances, usually Intensely. Alchemists prize it for its high miscibility with other ingredients: it adds two successes to any distillation roll for a formula including it.

Skills: Academics 2, Awareness 4, Investigation 1, Medicine 1, Politics 1, Occult 3, Science 2; Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Melee 4, Larceny 2, Stealth 4, Survival 5; Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 1, Insight 2, Intimidation 5, Leadership 1, Streetwise 3
Disciplines: Animalism 5, Auspex 2, Celerity 4, Fortitude 5, Obfuscate 1, Potence 5
Special: Werewolves suffer Aggravated damage from silver weapons and fire only. They recover 1 Superficial Health per turn. Werewolves gain claws and teeth, that deal non-halved Superficial damage (+3 damage modifier) to vampires, as well as +3 to all physical attributes when they shift to their half-wolf war form.

Magician

Mortal will-workers possess the ability to craft rituals, incantate complex spells, and live for longer than their unawakened kin. However, they are punished by Paradox – some believe from divine forces, while others maintain reality intercedes – when they practice vulgar, unbelievable magic. Some mage Traditions harbor a fascination regarding Kindred, and especially the properties of vitae.
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Composure 5; Intelligence 5, Wits 4, Resolve 5
Secondary Attributes: Health 5, Willpower 10
Skills: Academics 5, Awareness 3, Finance 1, Investigation 2, Medicine 2, Politics 1, Occult 5, Science 2, Technology 1; Athletics 1, Craft 3, Drive 1, Firearms 1, Melee 1; Etiquette 3, Insight 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Performance 3, Persuasion 4, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 3
Disciplines: Auspex 4, Blood Sorcery 5, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 3, Presence 2
Special: Magicians are as vulnerable as normal mortals, but can erect ad-hoc defenses using 1 Willpower point per incantation.

Faerie

The Fair Folk come in a dizzying variety of forms and shift their seeming into still more. This particular sidhe enters the city on their own uncanny errand, and it suffers no interference from mere blood-lappers.
Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3; Charisma 7, Manipulation 5, Composure 3; Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 4
Secondary Attributes: Health 6, Willpower 7
Skills: Awareness 2, Occult 4; Athletics 2, Melee 4; Empathy 3, Etiquette 4, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Performance 4, Subterfuge 2
Disciplines: Celerity 1, Dominate 4, Obfuscate 4, Presence 5
Special: This faerie takes Aggravated damage only from fire and cold iron. They can create powerful illusions that even Auspex must labor to pierce (Wits or Resolve + Auspex vs. the faerie's Manipulation + Wits).

Spectre

Spectres are otherwise known as angry ghosts. These dead beings possess a fiery rage, embodying their anger through destructive acts, including possession of the living to make them vessels of their wrath. Spectres have all lost something dear to them, with it often being their link to the world of the living. They have nothing left to lose, and so take out their anger on all other beings.
Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Composure 2; Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 2
Secondary Attributes: Health 7, Willpower 4
Skills: Academics 1, Awareness 5, Investigation 1, Medicine 2, Occult 4; Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Drive 4, Larceny 2, Stealth 5, Survival 2; Insight 2, Intimidation 3, Persuasion 1, Subterfuge 2
Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 2, Dominate 2, Obfuscate 2
Special: It is not possible to strike a spectre unless it takes solid form. Only dark magic or an exorcism performed by a priest or inquisitor can banish, destroy, or enslave a spectre. A spectre possesses a mortal using a power equivalent mechanically to the Possession (Auspex-Dominate) power. Spectres use Manipulation + Drive to control a possessed human into performing functions they would normally avoid. Spectres use Dexterity + Brawl to hurl objects telekinetically ■

Items

Some of these items can be found in any big-box hardware store; others have claimed dozens of lives in the search. Any of them can turn up in your chronicle if they seem to add something to it.

Gear

Marvelous toys proliferate wherever bored immortals and immense unaccountable government operations intersect.

Sunbag

A simple sleeping bag made out of thick sunlight-resistant materials, used by Kindred to sleep safely. It covers the entire body and has the zipper on the inside. Only particularly brave Kindred dare sleep with only this as protection, and in some circles, "sleeping outside" for a day is a test of courage. Common among travelling Gangrel who have yet to master sleeping in the earth.

Chaoscopes

Coronal Halo/Analyzing Oscilloscopic Electromagnetic Differential Readers, to use their official name, detect disruptions in electromagnetic frequencies – including those caused by, or existing as, ghosts and demons. Vampire Blood has similar, although less obvious, resonances under chaoscopy. The NSA began modifying chaoscopes to detect "paradimensional infiltrators" in the 1990s, and some of those agents joined the Second Inquisition once they learned what they were looking at. Vampires of different ages disturb different frequencies, so it takes diligence and precision to discern vampires and ghouls from regular humans when using this device.

So far, chaoscopes can only be installed in place or used in dedicated trucks. Their range is classified at Storyteller's Eyes Only level.

The operator must make an Intelligence + Awareness test at Difficulty 6 to reliably detect a vampire with a chaoscope. If they have reliably detected a vampire of the same generation or clan before, they can lower their Difficulty by -1. Blush of Life has no effect on a chaoscope.

EXAMPLE:

Agent Vasquez has detected a 10th Generation Gangrel before; so her Difficulty to detect either a 10th Generation vampire or a Gangrel is 5. To detect another 10th Generation Gangrel, her Difficulty would be only 4.

XScopes

At their core, XScopes use simple technology – from a distance they determine if someone is living or dead by looking for heartbeat, respiration, and body heat. The SI has installed basic XScopes in every airport security scanner, set

to send up a red flag to the duty agent if a blankbody trips them. Man-portable XScopes resemble large video cameras, and the SI often disguises them as exactly that. However, Kindred can deceive basic XScopes with Blush of Life.

Second-generation XScopes – mostly not in common use, although Heathrow, Reagan National, Da Vinci Airport in Rome, and other "critical installations" deploy them already – using specialized software to differentiate between natural blood flow and imitated life. For now, detecting thin-bloods remains just outside the technical threshold, although the Inquisition and CIA are pursuing several promising leads.

For non-Duskborn, concealing oneself from a second-generation XScope reading requires Blush of Life and a Composure + Stamina roll against Difficulty 5 + the operator's Resolve.

Conventional Weapons

Both Kindred and their hunters depend on specialized loadouts, often for hunting the same game.

Disguised Weapons

Whether in the form of the among Ventrue ever-popular sword cane, .22 caliber fountain pen, or the inventive pocket watch razor spinner, disguised weapons find increasing popularity in Camarilla domains as the Inquisition increases scrutiny on individuals via Homeland Security, random police stops, and customs searches.

Making a disguised weapon uses Intelligence + an appropriate Specialty of Craft; spotting one usually requires Wits + Awareness against a Difficulty of 1 + either the wielder's Stealth or the maker's Craft (whichever is higher). Because they cannot be properly balanced or shaped, they penalize the user one die from their attack pool unless the maker got a critical win on their crafting test.

Incendiary weapons

Incendiary weapons are as effective against vampires as they are horrifying. Among Kindred, they are anathema because of their lethality, the potential for collateral damage, the unavoidable terror frenzies, and crafting mishaps. Hunters and the far-flung Gehenna war, becomes another issue entirely...

Most Kindred are toast when facing hunters who have the ability to bring these weapons to bear, and this is just another reason that vampires tend to flock to mortals, hoping that the hunters will seek to avoid collateral damage.

Home-made and black-market incendiary weapons often contain inferior substances and liquids such as fuel, fertilizer, and cleaning fluid. They do one less point of damage, and might set the user's hands and face on fire (3 Aggravated damage) on a total failure of the attack roll.

Common tracer rounds does not contain enough incendiary

material to cause significant Aggravated damage.

DRAGON'S BREATH ROUNDS: These powdered-pelletized zirconium-magnesium shells turn any pump shotgun into a flamethrower. Available in many American states, but illegal in most of Europe, Dragon's Breath ammunition appears on black markets wherever vampires have been indiscreet.

Dragon's Breath shells has no damage bonus (+0), but turn the damage into aggravated versus vampires, and incidentally set what they hit on fire (doing a point of Aggravated damage per round to the target until put out). With factory shells, a total failure on the attack roll jams the shotgun. They have an effective range of no more than 15 or so meters.

RAUFOSS Incendiary explosive rounds, such as the *Raufoss*, are fortunately rare outside military hands, but do show up occasionally in hunter arsenals. They have excellent range and armor-piercing capability, and usually come in calibers (12.7mm) that make any target (up to and including armored civilian cars) have a really bad day.

Raufoss ignores any body armor, causing +5 damage, all of it Aggravated.

HAFLA The original *handflammpatrone* is virtually non-existent in the modern nights, but it is not particularly difficult for a skilled artisan to make a copy of this one-shot weapon. About the size of a large flashlight, the hafla shoots a projectile up to roughly 80 meters that detonate in a large cloud of fiercely burning material.

Successfully striking a target with a hafla is at least Difficulty 3. The target immediately takes three levels of aggravated damage when struck, and three levels every turn thereafter. Only immersion in water (followed by removal of the material), sand, or similar will stop the burn.

FLAMETHROWERS The backpack flamethrowers of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam are rare, bulky, and remove the "potential" from "potential collateral damage." Their range is limited, but the effects turn most

battlefields into a raging inferno. Very few hunters use these, as the potential for disaster is too great. Flamethrowers deal +0 Aggravated damage when the target is struck and every turn thereafter. They also make everything in the environment burn, as it is coated with burning material. Only immersion in water (followed by removal of the material), sand, or similar will stop the burn.

MOLOTOV COCKTAIL A proper molotov cocktail is made not with a rag and gasoline, but with jellied petrol and a sparkler. The difficulty in anti-vampire use lies in getting the bottle to break upon contact with the target, and a wise user therefore often targets the ground in front of the victim, hoping to splash its legs with burning material.

Successfully striking a target with a Molotov cocktail is Difficulty 4, and causes two levels of Aggravated damage every turn. A Composure + Survival roll (Difficulty 3) action is usually enough to remove enough of the material (often including clothes) to stop the burn.

Net Gun

An apparently simple device often used when hunting wildlife or for riot control, the net gun finds its way into the hands of inquisitors and Kindred who wish to slow down their prey. The nets fired from these small launchers are designed to entangle, but also have an adhesive quality to their weave. When the Inquisition uses net rounds in their grenade launchers, the adhesive is very flammable.

Damage from a net gun subtracts from the target's Dexterity rather than Health, though it is halved as Superficial damage. A foe at Dexterity 0 is thoroughly entangled, and cannot attack. Tearing free of a net requires an action; roll

a conflict of Strength + Athletics vs. a pool equal to the total successes from all previous net attacks.

Stake Launcher

Modern SI shock troopers mostly fire sharpened wooden stakes (retrofitted from regular baton rounds) from conventional grenade launchers underslung from their assault rifles, fired at almost contact-shot range. They do damage as regular stakes, +0.

Supernatural Equipment

The few items here merely hint at the panoply of fetishes, artifacts, and sorcerous impedimenta that collect around the Kindred. Many Elders are old enough to have believed unquestioningly in such things in life, and their experiences since have hardly disabused them of such superstitions.

As befits the mystical and dubious nature of such beliefs, the exact mechanics (if any) of these tools remain up to the Storyteller.

Ancestor Urn

A legend among the Ventrue goes that if you possess the ashes of three direct ancestors and contain them in the same urn, the vampire who owns the urn gains great power. The vampire is supposedly never to hold the urn personally – they need to entrust this role to a ghoul – but whenever a trusted living hand touches this urn, the vampire to whom the ghoul is beholden will rise from torpor, no matter their state. This rare power has been known to force stakes from hearts, bring almost skeletal Kindred forth from a near-death state, and even compel vampires to claw through salt covered earth to rise once more.

Carved Stones

The tales say that when three stones carved with the names of the Second Generation are placed atop a vampire's resting spot, the vampire's soul moves from their body to that of the individual placing the stones. These stones are not special in their history, material, or origin – it is the text on them that matters, which must be etched in ancient Enochian. What happens to the soul of the vampire's new host is unknown.

Grave Dirt

Most vampires receive the Embrace during a passionate event, for better or worse. Their sire drains them and feeds their dying body a mouthful of vitae. In rarer cases, usually in France or the Balkans, vampires exhume the recently buried and feed them vitae. In most cases, there is no effect and the Cainite moves on, a grave robbed in their wake. In other, rarer cases, a vampire awakens. To the mercenary Clan of Death, the stunning feature is not the new Kindred, but the properties of the grave from this time on. Grave dirt that housed a corpse risen to life carries sacred properties among Kindred. Whether or not it was their grave in particular, the Kindred who sleeps with a couple of handfuls of such sacred grave dirt wakes up the following night no hungrier than when they slept. This effect lasts for a week or so, until the dirt becomes inert.

Old Money

In Eastern Europe and Asia, a tradition holds that old, out-of-market money should be burned to ease the passing of the dead. It so happens that such cash – usually in the form of coins or old notes – when blessed by a holy individual burns any undead it contacts with Aggravated damage. This odd form of weaponry is not limited to use against Kindred and ghosts, however, as old money cursed by a demon or sorcerer does that same aggravated harm to the living.

Preserved Blood

Through jealously guarded rituals of Blood Sorcery, it is possible to preserve vampire vitae for later consumption. It is often imbued into another liquid, creating a wine-like beverage. Although expensive and not particularly slaking, the taste and ability to drink at social functions is worth it to many vampires ■

THE BAHARI

Vampire adherents of the Path of Lilith, otherwise known as the Lilin, Lilitu, or Bahari, revere the progenitor vampire as primal femininity. They believe Lilith is the first, usurped vampire, the mother who births the vitae, and that all Kindred are her children. Stagnant, patriarchal vampire society perpetuates the lie of Caine as progenitor.

The Bahari seek enlightenment through pain and conflict, turning this masochistic urge into the strength to endure and overcome. As Lilith rebelled against God's commands and fought against her curse, her followers defeat the weaknesses and curses upon them to become something else. Some Bahari lead other Kindred to enlightenment, others become perfected predators. Bahari deprecate compassion in favor of fleshly pleasure, transient love, and strict parenthood over lesser Kindred.

As a Bahari, you fulfill the role of torturer, student, teacher, or lover to other Kindred. All evidence you have seen points to Lilith as the first, usurped vampire. Or perhaps you secretly adhere to the Church of Caine and gnaw at the Bahari from inside out.

Lore

● **Dangerous Reputation:** Bahari intimidate vampires not of their order. Vampire believers in the Cainite mythos feel uncomfortable in your presence. Once per story, you may add two dice to Intimidation pools in tests against Caine-worshipers, assuming they know of your allegiance.

●● **Ritual Scarification:** You know pain leads to enlightenment. Specifically, the Lilitu preach that bringing one's physical shell to the extremes of sensation grants greater insight. Once per session, you may scar yourself with one point of Aggravated damage to recover a level of Willpower damage: superficial or Aggravated.

●●● **Sacrifice the Children:** The Bahari believe both in siring childer and sacrifice. Faithful Bahari know the ultimate sacrifice is the murder of their own childe. If you diablerize your childe, you gain three extra dice in your Resolve + Humanity + Blood Potency dice pool to absorb Disciplines (see Diablerie, p. 234).

●●●● **The Womb's Blood:** Bahari consider fertility and sex sources of strength, with some factions placing special prominence on blood or vitae taken from the womb. Once per story, after drinking blood from the uterus, you receive an additional two dots in either Stamina or Resolve (thus increasing Health or Willpower by two) until the dawn.

●●●●● **First-Cursed:** Lilith's worshipers maintain that she was the first living being cursed by God, before Adam, Eve, or Caine. The Bahari strive to emulate Lilith's lesser curse, and in so doing find their Cainite weaknesses lessened. You retain your clan bane, but you can now walk in the first hour of daylight and final hour of dusk; you can also engage in intercourse without Rousing the Blood. However, you radiate danger: the equivalent of the Obvious Predator (●●) Flaw. All Social tests to ostracize or slander you have their Difficulty reduced by one. Finally, any vampire assessing you with Auspex immediately suffers migraine-like headaches; their Resolve and Willpower drop by half your Resolve (rounded up) for one scene.

THEO BELL

Long-seen as the Camarilla's loyal lapdog, Theo's recent defection to the Anarch Movement triggered shockwaves still felt throughout Camarilla domains. It was Theo Bell who served at the whims of the Ventrue Hardestadt and Jan Pieterzoon for years, even begrudgingly taking up arms for the Lasombra Marcus Vitel in recent years. It was also Theo Bell who fired the first shot at the Convention of Prague, ultimately causing Hardestadt's and Pieterzoon's deaths.

Kindred gossip these nights positions Theo Bell as an unwilling messiah among the Anarchs. He desires no position of leadership; he just got sick of bending over for blue bloods and snapped. His actions compelled hundreds of Brujah to follow suit, taking out the Princes who long lorded over them and forming Anarch bastions alongside the Gangrel.

Despite his notoriety, Theo still acts as liaison between high-status Camarilla and Anarchs, for the sole reason that he brooks no shit at meetings. He short-circuits Sabbat ambushes, quells any Anarch riots, and shuts down Camarilla extortion and coercion. As a mediator, Theo's judgement cannot be faulted.

Lore

● **Rebel Cell:** You command a pack of rebellious mortals and fuel their fire with something that keeps them fighting. Perhaps you feed them vitae or maybe you embody their ideals. Either way, these rebels (a three-dot Ally group equivalent) perform a single dangerous task for you without your presence, before disbanding until the next story.

●● **True Anarch:** You were an Anarch before Bell led an army of Camarilla Brujah into the Anarch Movement, and you resent these tagalongs joining the Anarchs just as they grow popular. You have records, names, places, and dates about who the rebels were and are, fed to you by the Man or gathered personally. Either way, you get two automatic successes on any Investigation test concerning vampires who defected to the Anarch Movement.

●●● **Contact Information:** Whether by dead drop, messenger, or arcane means, you can get word to Theo. Whether he responds, or even listens, depends on the message and your earlier interactions, but if he likes what you have to say, he might be able to move mountains. The precise game effects of a message to Theo are up to the Storyteller.

●●●● **Bell's Circle:** Theo trusts you, perhaps because of your earlier revolutionary actions or manipulating your way into his good graces. Bell is equivalent to a five-dot Mawla, but your association with him also has many drawbacks.

●●●●● **Sect Neutrality:** Following Theo Bell's lead, you have a small contingent of a few Brujah loyal to your vision, and you can influence them in any direction: the Camarilla, the Anarchs, or even to form a smaller subsect neutral amidst the Jyhad. You may resent their existence or take pride in your following. Not mindless disciples, these Kindred keep track of favors granted. But until they rebel against you, you have five dots to spend among Contacts, Haven (safe houses), Mawla, and Retainers.

CAINITE HERESY

At the beginnings of Christianity, Gnostic heretics and Kindred exchanged information and Blood, creating the *Cainite Heresy*: the belief that Caine was the true messiah, Christ was the Second Caine, and Cainites are His angels on Earth, opposing the wicked Demiurge: the "God" of the Old Testament. The Inquisition burned the Heresy to its roots in the 15th century – but roots can grow back, watered by enough blood.

The antinomianism of the Anarch Revolt and the millenarianism of Gehenna's rising fertilized the Heresy in the last century. Vampires who use the Heresy to subvert human faiths and Cainites who truly believe in their divine mission evangelize the Heresy throughout Anarch circles.

Lore

● **Let He Who Hath Understanding:** The Storyteller will give you one clue freely to understand, investigate, or detect the Heresy's actions or plans, now or in previous centuries. You can use this lore once per story.

●● **Hand of the Heresy:** Take a total of three dots from among Allies, Herd, Mawla, or Retainers to represent your role in the city's Heretical deaconate. For example, if you took Herd ● and Mawla ●●, you might bless a small cult of human worshipers and have a renowned scholar of the Heresy as your teacher. You also have the Dark Secret Flaw (Heresy) in some domains.

●●● **Counter-Inquisition:** You can smell True Faith on a human; if you need to test to do so, your pool is Resolve + your highest rating in Cainite Heresy. You might also oppose the Heresy, and instead use this gift to know who to trust.

●●●● **Red Celebrant:** You know the rituals and the specific dosages to induce the Red Pentecost in a human congregation: a kind of ecstatic religious version of the frenzy. During the Red Pentecost, humans act according to their worst natures. You can procure enough herbs and fungi for one ceremony per story; the Red Ceremony requires a Hunger check and may trigger frenzy in Kindred participants.

●●●●● **The One Named in Prophecy:** You are a linchpin of the Heresy's plans: perhaps they consider you an avatar of Caine, you possess the only copy of the *Testimony of St. Panteleimon,* or your vitae is the only effective sacrifice to Ialdabaoth to propitiate or distract the Demiurge. Every informed member of the Heresy, and many who simply want to curry favor with the Anarchs, know your role. Once per story, you can use this fact to dictate the winner of a Social conflict if you can give a plausible reason for that outcome.

CARNA

Once Prince of Marseilles and Primogen of Milwaukee, Carna ultimately formed her own splinter cell from Clan Tremere. House Carna (as other Tremere dub it) speaks for freedom from the Blood Bond and against the tyranny of the Pyramid and the hard-coded misogyny present in the Tremere. Around the time the Pyramid's head in Vienna intended to drop the axe on Carna and her band of rebels, the Second Inquisition paid a visit to the Great Chantry.

Without the shadow of the Pyramid, House Carna draws increasing numbers of Anarchs and disenfranchised Camarilla. Carna seeks no followers, but she recognizes them for their value. Carna didn't survive 600 years by ignoring possible danger; she believes it's only a matter of time before Tremere himself appears to curse her to ash. Until then, she pushes as hard as possible for a modernization and feminization of Clan Tremere.

Lore

● **Embrace the Vision:** You are fully committed to Carna's vision for a new Tremere clan and find yourself possessed of a greater sense of self-belief in the presence of your fellow sub-faction Kindred. When around other members of House Carna, you have one additional die for all Willpower tests.

●● **The Rebel Trail:** You followed Carna's trail after her initial breakage from Clan Tremere, soaking up the feelings of rebellion and freedom. You resolve to never be a Blood slave again. Whenever at risk of becoming Blood Bound, you may make a Willpower test (with a Difficulty equal to the Blood Potency of the ingested vitae) to ignore it.

●●● **Unorthodox Rituals:** Carna gives of her sanity or her soul to fuel her magic, instead of divesting her vitae in Hermetic orthodoxy. Your understanding of her process enables you to perform rituals in the same way. You can perform one known ritual per story without the need to expend Blood, but on a messy critical, you also become deranged in some way (typically becoming intensely paranoid or fearful of blood) until the end of the story.

●●●● **Reimagined Bond:** You have studied Carna's magic and her unusual method of reimagining the vinculum, and you can extend the effects of her ritual to others. Having sex with a target, mortal or undead, creates a Blood Bond between the partner, yourself, and Carna, despite Carna's absence. Repeated sexual encounters strengthen the Blood Bond, as per the normal Bond. You can thus circumvent the Tremere clan bane, but the Bond only lasts until the conclusion of the story.

●●●●● **Book of the Grave-War:** According to rumor, the tome known as the *Book of the Grave-War* allowed Carna to break her Bond to Clan Tremere. You own a copy, granting you one automatic success on all Occult tests pertaining to Gehenna, its prevention, and breaking the shackles binding vampires to their elders. The book makes you unbondable for as long as you retain it and follow its arcane teachings. However, Tremere seek to destroy you and the book; the Storyteller can also penalize you one die on any Social or Mental test affected by your ongoing paranoia.

THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM

The exploration of blood and its Resonances has spawned rings of Kindred eager for knowledge, power, and profit. The international human trafficking network known as *the Circulatory System* smuggle important vessels between domains and chronicle the powers of the blood vintages they move.

The Circulatory System care little for the long-term well-being of their vessels, beyond the dip in profits they suffer when such kine die prematurely. Many Kindred can look past such minor issues to the pioneering studies the System makes possible by unlocking new and valuable features of the Blood.

Your relationship with the Circulatory System may be as a trafficker, a client, or even as a former mortal vessel turned vampire. You may detest the faction's exploitative practices or see their potential and crave a taste of their operations.

Lore

● **Tap into the System:** Once per story, you can request specific blood vessels from the Circulatory System to convey certain abilities – or to provide for a Ventrue who finds their feeding preference neglected in the domain.

●● **Little Black Book:** You have come into the possession of one of the System's little black books. These books contain records of blood experiments and theories on the power of select vessels' blood. The Storyteller determines the book's accuracy on specific matters; in general, it adds one die to Investigation, Alchemy, Medicine, or Science tests to track down or test a specific vintage. It also cuts the time to research a new two-dot or three-dot thin-blood Alchemy formula in half.

●●● **Farm Upstate:** You know where the System keeps a farm of valuable vessels: mortals with blood potent enough to convey benefits to Kindred drinkers. You can raid the farm, lease specific vessels at cost, or try to muscle your way in. These vessels are equivalent to four dots of Herd, but you can only feed from them once per week unless you overtly take over the farm.

●●●● **Secure Transit:** The Circulatory System uses armored vans and armed ghoul drivers to transport vessels from A to B. These protected modes of transit are more than simple security vans; they bristle with weapons and sometimes contain incredibly valuable vessels destined for important buyers. You have access to one of these vans. Whether you're riding up front as a legitimate driver or have successfully hijacked one of these vans, you may arrange secure travel for one or more Kindred with little effort.

●●●●● **Blood Sommelier:** You know the Circulatory System's secret methods for taste, analysis, and refinement, and you can replicate them. Perhaps you own a blood laboratory, have an alchemist or blood sorcerer on call, or you just stay au courant on aficionado gossip. You can add two dice to any test to discover the Resonance of blood, and you can select three dots of Contacts, Allies, or Haven Merits to explain your knowledge. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller the properties of the most valuable vessel's blood.

CONVENTION OF THORNS

You are a scholar of the *Convention of Thorns*, at which vampires of all clans arranged the formation of the Camarilla. Perhaps you descend from one of the most important participants who spoke up at the convention, voicing their proposals for the new Traditions. Maybe you study this historical period avidly, in search of higher meaning or understanding of the laws that govern Kindred society today.

You can recite the names of vampires who attended, the iterations of the Traditions proposed at the convention, and even know some of the hidden proposals between clans that deigned not to join the Camarilla at that time. Knowledge of the Convention of Thorns can still be used to this night to apply pressure to Camarilla and Anarchs alike.

Lore

● **Thorns Historian:** The Convention of Thorns was a complex, moving beast of diplomacy. Hundreds of small meetings took place between representatives of this clan or that, forging pacts that lasted years, decades, or centuries in some cases. You possess an encyclopedic knowledge of the convention's minor meetings, and you can call on this knowledge to apply legal pressures on the participants or their descendants, where pacts may still be in force but not practiced or revoked without consent of all parties. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for a piece of known information regarding the convention.

●● **Tradition Master:** The six Traditions the Camarilla cling to tonight were first codified and agreed upon at the Convention of Thorns. Your knowledge of the convention extends to multiple apocryphal or proposed Traditions, some of which nearly passed. Once per chronicle, you can exercise fringe laws in domains where the ruling clans may still be sympathetic to the unaccepted Traditions of Thorns.

Example pseudo-Traditions might include: Kindred in this domain are only permitted one Embrace; all law enforcement is forbidden as feeding stock; combat in Elysium is punishable by Final Death; diablerie is permitted against any Caitiff discovered in this domain; etc.

●●● **Convention Secrets:** The Ministry declined an invitation to join as the eighth pillar clan; the Lasombra rejected the Camarilla when it refused to acknowledge the existence of Antediluvians. You have uncovered still-more obscure secret proposals from the Convention: the Cappadocian petition to join, the Malkavians' symbol draft, and more. You can drop enough hints to always take a one-die bonus to Social tests involving Kindred who were present at the convention. You also know a number of major secrets, each worth a Major Boon to some powerful Cainite. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for the name of a Kindred who needs your knowledge.

●●●● **Prospective Justicar:** The Camarilla Justicars first received appointment during the Convention of Thorns. No matter your political allegiance, somehow you (or your sire, if you are far too young) have powerful support to become the next Justicar of your clan. If your clan is not one represented widely in the Camarilla, perhaps this appointment signals a sea change among the sect's clans.

●●●●● **New Traditions:** Your knowledge of the Convention of Thorns is such that you can compile enough evidence and support to propose a new Tradition, or an amendment to an existing one, to the Camarilla's Inner Circle. This Tradition may be accepted if it sounds sensible and helps the increasingly strict Camarilla in the world tonight, or it may mark you as a firebrand and danger to the sect. Importantly, your voice will be heard without prior judgment.

THE FIRST INQUISITION

You know what lit the fires of the First Inquisition that raged from the Middle Ages through to the Renaissance. Perhaps an ancestor spoke in fear of those nights. Maybe you own texts chronicling those terrible times or you have designs on recreating them by turning the church against your enemies.

Your knowledge of the Inquisition is such that you may have capacity to manipulate the Second Inquisition of tonight, though their methods and some beliefs have changed. You know how best to evade the group and how to turn them against your foes. Such actions do not come without risk, just as your ancestors who attempted the same feat discovered.

Lore

● **Mistakes of the Past:** You know Kindred history and can cite chapter and verse of the domains and Princes the Inquisition destroyed in its original incarnation. You can educate any vampire on the Inquisition's historic dangers. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for one piece of information regarding the original Inquisition.

●● **Names of the Guilty:** Your knowledge of vampire and Inquisition relations extends to include Kindred manipulators. Though most are dead by these nights, many of their descendants survive, and they are at risk of blackmail for their sires' treacheries. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for the name of one descendant of these traitors in your domain, if there is one.

●●● **The Sect of St. James:** You have contacts who consider themselves "old Inquisitors." The Sectus Sancti Iacomi harbors a deep resentment for their fancy modern counterparts, acting with greater fanaticism and suicidal zeal than the more controlled Second Inquisition. Their abbé is a four-dot Contact, whom you can contact once per story.

●●●● **The Second Act:** You have a Contact within the Second Inquisition or the local Catholic archdiocese: a file clerk, scout hunter, exorcist, armorer, etc. You have no power over them, but you know how to pump them for information – or prime them with disinformation – if need be.

●●●●● **Black Spot:** You have identified a location within your domain that the Second Inquisition fears to tread. Once per story, if you or anyone targeted by the Second Inquisition hides out at this location, the hunters call off the search. This anomaly seems to be a blessing, but it does throw up the question: What is so holy or unholy about this place that it deters the greatest threat to Kindred tonight?

GOLCONDA

Most vampires claim it's a mythical state of enlightenment, but some few claim to have reached the fabled state of *Golconda* or know of others who managed it. Supposedly discovered by an ancient vampire named Saulot, Golconda is a state of perfect equilibrium between Humanity and the Beast. A vampire walking Golconda's path can temper their Beast's outrage, subdue their Hunger, and even stand in the daylight, or so it is said. The gifts accompanying Golconda's achievement are great, and so many vampires make the pilgrimage. Few succeed on the journey.

The route to reaching the state of Golconda has never been accurately recorded. Indeed, Saulot's followers claim the journey is different for every vampire, dependent on their sins. What Golconda does to a vampire when they reach it is also disputed. Some claim it leads to a state of perfect serenity, while others say it makes a vampire into a cold-blooded shark of a predator, no longer susceptible to mindless rage, but just as hungry for blood.

You may be a disciple of Golconda, a follower of Saulot's words, or a Kindred who wishes to remove the misleading veil of Golconda from other vampires' eyes. An elusive vampire named the Master of Ravens seeks to quash the myth of Golconda once and for all, and you may serve him in this task.

Lore

● **Seeds of Golconda:** You have heard of Golconda and can educate others on its nature without seeming like a total amateur. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for guidance before taking an action, and they will tell you if that action will jeopardize the chance of pursuing Golconda.

●● **The One True Way:** You own a copy of the Master of Ravens-penned "One True Way:" a treatise on the supposed realities of Golconda. This piece of work tells you that Golconda is a method to become an apex predator, rather than a spiritually redeemed monster. Once per story, this pamphlet gives you three extra dice in any Social test involving the nature of Golconda.

●●● **Saulot's Disciple:** You cling to the ideals of Saulot: the vampire who traveled to Asia and returned bearing a third eye and the enlightenment of Golconda. You believe in Saulot's teachings that Golconda is the ultimate way in which a Kindred can overcome their curse. You practice a dual existence, allowing your Beast and Hunger off the reins occasionally, so you can achieve serenity at other times. Whenever you willingly succumb to frenzy, make a note; you can automatically succeed on your next frenzy test.

●●●● **Satisfy the Hunger:** You do not need to feed as often as other vampires. Your Golconda focus is to suppress your constant Hunger, potentially at the expense of other Traits. Your temperance acts as an inspiration to many other vampires. Once per session, you may lower your Hunger by one (but not below one) without feeding.

●●●●● **Greet the Sun:** You know Golconda's secrets. You may be incapable of walking the path forever, but for as long as you do, you can brave full daylight without suffering harm. However, the night after you walk in sunlight, you wake in a Hunger frenzy. You can do this once per story.

DESCENDANT OF HARDESTADT

(VENTRUE CHARACTERS ONLY)

To hear many Ventrue tell it, Hardestadt was the most important Ventrue for eight centuries, until his destruction by Brujah rebels led by the betrayer Theo Bell during the Convention of Prague in 2012. Hardestadt was the Ventrue founder of the Camarilla, alongside six peers from other clans, and Ventrue credit him with the sect's strength and survival since then.

Hardestadt did not Embrace many mortals, and oddly for a Ventrue, he never confirmed his lineage back to a Fourth Generation Methuselah. As far as Hardestadt was concerned, he was the be-all and end-all of the Ventrue. None who came before or after could hold a candle to his achievements.

Lore

● **Voice of Hardestadt:** Hardestadt shouted often, punctuating his remarks with fist blows to tables, walls, or unfortunate ghouls. Your Blood allows you to speak over any noise and draw attention, whether in a buzzing meeting room or at a rave. Something in your voice allows others to hear you. Whether they go on to pay attention depends on what you say.

●● **Supreme Leader:** Hardestadt's self-confidence as a leader was in many ways his undoing, but until his Final Death, it saw him rise to greatness. You can convince others to follow you into deadly situations or command from the rear, and you can send subjects to their doom to better your position. Once per story, you suffer no penalty to your dice pool for sending people into danger.

●●● **Ventrue Pillar:** Due to your prestigious lineage, other Ventrue look to you for guidance. Regardless of your Status with other groups, you always have three dots of Status (●●●) with Ventrue.

●●●● **Line to the Founders:** Hardestadt ensured his entire line could reach him when endangered. He rarely answered communications unless the situation was dire, and he punished misuse severely, but his method still holds despite his death. Once per chronicle, you can call, write to, or arrange a meeting with one of the Camarilla's founders in lieu of Hardestadt. Whether they deign to respond depends upon the importance of your request

●●●●● **Hardestadt's Heir:** You hold in your possession a signed document in which Hardestadt names you as his successor. You're not sure what you are a successor to: mere wealth and power, Ventrue kingship, or even the Inner Circle of the Camarilla. When you take the name of "Hardestadt," the document claims that the Camarilla shall march to the beat of your drum – and ensures that the Anarchs will swarm to take you down.

DESCENDANT OF HELENA

(TOREADOR CHARACTERS ONLY)

Some claim she dwells in the Americas, constantly at war with a rival. Others say she runs the most popular vampire nightclub in the world. A few believe she is the clan founder's lover, and that she is in the process of waking the Toreador Antediluvian.

Beautiful and gifted, it is said none can look away from Helena unless she wills it. Mortals have died to be the first to witness her artistic creations. Her descendants all display an immense level of talent, exemplifying the traditional Toreador role. It is a stereotype few Toreador resent; Helena is a clan icon. Toreador want to get to know you, so they can get a little closer to her.

Lore

● **Skin-Deep:** No matter your standing, dropping Helena's name in conversation with a Toreador or a vampire who knows of her effectively raises your Status by one dot. You can drop Helena's name once per story for this effect, or more often to make everyone sick of you.

●● **Real Talent:** Unlike other vapid Toreador relying on their faces and bodies alone, you were Embraced for your talent. Choose one Skill from Craft, Etiquette, or Performance. Increasing this Skill costs half the experience points (rounded down) that such an increase would typically cost.

●●● **Embrace the Stereotype:** When the time comes, you can play the role of shallow Toreador, surround yourself with an entourage of sycophants, and throw a party that becomes legend. Once per story, you may host a party to increase your Status and/or Influence by two dots with an invited group; the increase lasts as long as the party does.

●●●● **Divine Purity:** Unlike most within Helena's extended family, your perfection is more angelic than devilish. You can commit any sin, but you will always look innocent. Add two dice to your dice pools when making tests to avoid blame for your actions.

●●●●● **Succubus Club Franchise:** Helena succumbed to the Beckoning in recent years, leaving the Succubus Club in Chicago to a manager once again. She bestowed a license upon you to establish a franchised Succubus Club in your domain. This rare honor guarantees the city's Kindred respond to your call, as every vampire Embraced in the last 200 years has heard of the Succubus Club. As long as the club remains open, the Chasse rating of your coterie's Domain increases by two dots. You also have four dots to select among Resources, Fame, and Status among all Kindred.

SECT WAR VETERAN

The Sabbat and Camarilla have ever-existed at odds, but the war for North America in the 1990s and early 2000s cemented the sects as eternal blood enemies.

In a move to exterminate their foes and cement their rule over the continent, the Sabbat slaughtered their way through Camarilla and Anarch domains, mercilessly slaying Kindred and revealing their powers to the kine without hesitation. The Camarilla realized it needed to take action, and it formed a strong, militant defense led by such icons as Theo Bell.

Though more defensive than offensive, the Camarilla reclaimed several domains across the American South, though pockets of Sabbat control remain in major cities to this night. Every vampire participant has a story to tell of their involvement and the horrors they survived.

Lore

● **Survivor:** Your domain, or the domain of a vampire close to you, was scourged during the sect war. You can recount how the Sabbat and Camarilla strategized, how they warred in the city without alerting mortals, and the names of the fallen vampires caught in the middle. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for a piece of information relating to the sect war in your domain.

●● **Active Participant:** No matter the sect, the war pulled in many vampires. Even independents served as mercenaries or suppliers for one or both sides. many vampires were pulled into the sect war. You have the scars to show for your participation. Your own sect may regard you as a war hero; the other as a war criminal. Take three dots of Status or Mawla to reflect your position or that of one of your comrades.

●●● **Trophy Kill:** Many notable vampires fell in the sect war, and to the Archons and Templars participating in the war, taking down a "name" on either side became a matter of competitive pride. Whether by luck or design, you are responsible for one such vampire's death. You may wear this badge with pride or stifle the rumors, but either way, the vitae coats your hands. Once per story, you can use this legend to bypass a contest where it might assist, just as the Storyteller can always use it to send enemies after your head.

●●●● **No Vampire's Land:** Kindred hit-teams on either side of the sect war ranged from domain to domain and then back across old ground as the defenders rallied. This Great War-style push-and-pull of conflict led to some vampires obsessing over domains and their hidden sanctuaries, armories, tunnel networks, and side streets. You know all the best spots in your domain and two adjacent domains for launching an ambush, hiding from attackers, restocking a militia, or making contact with mercenaries. Add two dots to your Domain's Portillon, and add two dice to relevant Streetwise, Larceny, and Stealth pools in two neighboring domains.

●●●●● **Sect Agitator:** Some vampires exist only to cause bloodshed, and you count yourself among that number. Individuals such as Lucinda of the Camarilla and Francisco Domingo de Polonia of the Sabbat spoiled for war and were left hollow when it concluded. You know all the trigger points and the correct fuse to light in order to spark a new sect war. It may be localized to a single domain at first, but once the flames start, you can fan them to extend. Add two dice to all your pools for Social tests to inflame sectarian tension.

THE TRINITY

Vampires of a certain age remind their peers and descendants of the Golden Age of Constantinople, where the Trinity of Michael, the Dracon, and Antonius held sway. These three philosophers, a Toreador, Tzimisce, and Ventrue respectively, organized and upheld the vampire utopia of Constantinople. A combination of the Crusades, a Methuselah's mania, and Setite corruption tore the coterie apart. Ultimately, the Dream of Constantinople, in which all vampires of disparate beliefs and practices could exist in harmony, shattered.

Some still cling to the dream and hope for the Trinity's resurrection in some form. You may still believe the Dracon can be brought back to his former enlightenment or that one of the new trinities of Constantinople or Istanbul hold the key to the domain's growth and revitalization. Conversely, perhaps you study the disciples of the Trinity with wary eyes, preparing to take down a colossal threat to all Traditions.

Lore

● **Constantinople:** Outside the Ashirra, vampire tradition refers to Istanbul as "Constantinople." You are one of the few who know why. Constantinople represented everything possible in a city where vampires shared ideas and discussed philosophy without falling to carnage. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller a question about Constantinople's past and be given an accurate answer.

●● **Antonius' Architecture:** Renowned for his architectural skills, both political and physical, the Ventrue Antonius built the structure that held Constantinople together. To some, he fathered the Primogen ideal. You study Antonius' methods; you can add two dice to any Politics dice pool when making a test involving domain government. Once per story, you can mediate and calm any court debate, quashing violence with action or profundity.

●●● **The Dream:** For a millennium, the Trinity practiced Michael's Dream: a vision of vampire utopia. Michael encouraged all vampires in Constantinople to learn and seek enlightenment, grow distant from the Beast, and become something beyond mere predators. You are a modern exponent of the dream, recognized as a Speaker of the Dream in your city. You can add one die to any Insight dice pool when testing to gauge another's Beast. You inspire and calm souls; once per story, you can spend a Willpower point to allow another vampire to re-roll up to three dice when resisting frenzy.

●●●● **The Dracon:** Of the Trinity, only the Tzimisce known as the Dracon survived Constantinople's fall. Passionate and wise, the lover of both Antonius and Michael, and spiritual guide for the Trinity, the grieving Dracon fell silent for many centuries following Antonius' murder. Rumors whisper that the Dracon reemerges now, with unclear intent. You count yourself as one of his disciples, and likely know how to find him. He counts as a five-dot Mawla, assisting with spiritual and Discipline matters.

●●●●● **The New Trinity:** One night, Michael's Constantinople will be reborn, and you shall assist at the birth. You know this not from fragile ego, but from certain prophecy. You, along with two others who complement your skills without mirroring them, ***will*** rebuild Constantinople in a new city – no matter what you must do. If you earned them on the path to bringing about the New Trinity, you can remove up to five Stains per story before making a Remorse test (p. 239).

JEANETTE/THERESE VOERMAN

Since its revival, Chicago's Succubus Club has had only one rival for nightclub of the dead: The Asylum in Los Angeles. The Voerman sisters run the joint, or joints, as the Asylum franchise now appears in regnae across America, Asia, and Europe.

Famous for both their enterprising natures and combative personalities, the Voermans loathe each other despite their success. In L.A., to "do a Voerman" is to make a member of your own coterie a sworn enemy. Therese and Jeanette now run separate Asylums, one in Santa Monica, another in Hollywood. They never appear in the same club.

Only the Malkavians closest to the Voermans know Therese and Jeanette is the same vampire: two distinct personalities sharing the same body. Some say she bore this condition as a mortal, while others claim there *were* two sisters, but one killed the other. Other rumors whisper about *another* sister, who acts as an imprisoned thrall to the Malkavian. Highly volatile, the Voermans prove that Malkavians can be as inspired and prosperous as any Toreador or Ventrue, but many Anarchs anticipate the moment that Therese and Jeanette go to war with each other.

Lore

● **Asylum Membership:** You never need to wait in a queue for entry to the Asylum, you always have one of the best seats in the house, and as long as you don't fuck up, you may hunt there once or twice per session (Difficulty 2) without any ruffled feathers.

●● **Performing Monkey:** Jeanette and Therese know you as a reliable asset, and they frequently subject you to missions ranging from serious investigations to flights of insane fancy. Although dangerous, they are generous, and they repay any boons incurred.

●●● **Jeanette's Favorite:** Jeanette Voerman, the wild child of the Voerman family, adores you, pets you, and flirts with you. Though she arguably is the less stable of the sisters, she's also the more generous one. You may stay in the day chamber of any Asylum club if you require (if Jeanette is there, she insists you do), use the club to host your own parties, and ask for favors small and large from the Anarch Baron. Jeanette counts as a four-dot Mawla, but only for the purposes of Malkavian and Anarch dealings.

●●●● **Therese's Favorite:** Therese Voerman, the upright, strict member of the Voerman family, respects and values you. Her business-oriented mind does not allow her to expend the Asylum's resources on your luxury, but she speaks up for you in any regnum where an Asylum is present, and can school you in business and finance if you require it. She counts as a three-dot Mawla.

●●●●● **Asylum Operator:** Jeanette or Therese permit you to franchise an Asylum club in your domain. As long as the club remains open, you have four dots to spend on Haven, Herd, Resources, or the Chasse of your Domain; depending on your club's focus, which may be changed over time. Whether the club is an Elysium is up to you.

THE WEEK OF NIGHTMARES

Kindred debate when exactly the *Week of Nightmares* fell, with some claiming it landed just prior to the turn of the millennium, while others conflate it with the supposed commencement of Gehenna. In truth, the "Week" of Nightmares sprawled across years, sweeping up several thousand vampires in its wave. During the Week, an impossibly ancient vampire arose and purged its own clan: the Ravnos. Thin-blooded vampires emerged with omens and portents as the Red Star, Anthelios, blazed in the night sky.

You witnessed the mania of the Week of Nightmares and survived it, manipulated the chaos to your own advantage, or you studied the actions of those who did. Now you watch for signs of dooms to come.

Lore

● **Oral History:** You have heard and told the tale of the Week of Nightmares countless times, and you know exactly what to embellish and which parts to conceal. Your telling of the tale is popular in Elysia, where you are sometimes invited to speak as historian and entertainer. Important Kindred from all over come to hear your retelling. Add three dice to Performance dice pools to tests to tell the story.

●● **Ravnos Remains:** Prior to the Week of Nightmares, the Ravnos were a clan – now, they have little more than a bloodline. You know some Ravnos remnants and perhaps share their grudge against the Gangrel who left them to annihilation. You have three dots of Mawla representing this group of contacts. They carry news and warnings to you, and can perhaps be convinced to cast mighty illusions once per chronicle, but association with them is frowned upon, if discovered

●●● **I Was There:** You didn't just hear about it, you were on the front line. Your reputation as a survivor and on-the-spot veteran of the Week of Nightmares grants you Status among Kindred historians, occultists, Ravnos, and Gehenna cultists alike. Once per story, you can use this Status to earn a minor boon from one of those groups or from a prominent courtier in the domain with a sudden interest.

●●●● **The Red Star:** Anthelios (NASA designation 28978 IXION), called Wormwood, harbinger of Gehenna, still glows in the sky – to your eyes, at least. You believe it looks back at you, changing you somehow. Once per story, you can either reduce your Hunger to a rating of two or gain a die to the pools of one Discipline for a night by staring at the star for 10 minutes.

●●●●● **Blood of Zapathasura:** The Ravnos Antediluvian met Final Death in July 1999 at the hands of parties unknown, armed with advanced weaponry and the power of the sun.

Before he died, he drained vitae from all his clan, driving them to frenzy and cannibalism in his death throes. Thick, sentient ropes of his vitae stained the ground in Bangladesh where he fell. The noonday sun did not destroy it all. You own a small vial containing the Blood of the Ravnos Antediluvian. What you do with this vitae is up to you, and what it does to anyone who imbibes it is up to the Storyteller.

RUDI

A new player on the Kindred scene, Rudi commands an impressive following as an Anarch representative for the oppressed and repressed minorities in vampire society. Though his concerns extend to kine as well, his recent entry into Kindred existence has shown him that the fights mortals must undertake for equality are just as pressing for immortals.

Rudi's nightly life hasn't changed much since the Embrace. He still makes his haven in Copenhagen, still hangs with the same friends, and still attends the same clubs. He has only expanded his concerns; in addition to advocating for fellow mortal minorities, he now champions

Gangrel kept out of havens and feeding grounds by sprawl, stands up for female Kindred in cities run by traditionally misogynistic elders, and encourages the adoption of progressive norms over tradition wherever possible. Some might think Rudi's combination of practicing Islam and unabashed queerness contradictory, but few challenge the "Bear Gangrel" with this notion.

Fast becoming the *animale du jour*, Rudi wins fellow discontented Kindred over with his targeted approach against elitists and Camarilla hardliners. Some European Princes fear he will lead a crusade in years to come, in an attempt to level the establishment.

Lore

● **Newfound Rights:** Flush with the success of the Gangrel clan's independence from the Camarilla, like Rudi, you find this freedom energizing. Once per story, when striking out against or decrying the establishment, you can reroll any one Skill test dice pool.

●● **Them and Theirs:** When supporting the disenfranchised or persecuted, you are the resolute champion. Perhaps you believe vampires can only persist successfully when supporting each other, or you believe a pack is only as strong as its weakest member, but at great self-sacrifice, you defend others. When a Touchstone of any member of your coterie comes under threat, your ears prick up and your hair stands on end.

●●● **Gangrel Advocate:** As Rudi does in Northern Europe, many believe that you stand for Gangrel rights in your local domains, for good or ill. Gangrel react well to you; add one die to Social tests involving them. Although this reputation means that you speak for many, it also means that some hold you responsible for the actions of many. You can organize convocations and discreet truce meetings between Gangrel and Camarilla representatives with a successful Charisma + Politics test (Difficulty set by the Storyteller).

●●●● **The Bear Pack:** You are, or were, a member of the Bear Pack: hardcore Rudista Kindred who double as howling orators and fierce combatants. (Consider your fellow Bear Pack a three-dot Mawla group that actually likes getting in fights.) Once per story, these modern revolutionaries, including yourself, gain one automatic success whenever attempting to rouse Anarchs and disenfranchised mortals against the establishment. Members of the Bear Pack are feared throughout Camarilla domains, which might be both bane and boon, depending on who you talk to, and if they recognize you.

●●●●● **Rudi's Army:** Rudi's Army comprises outsiders of all clans, all mortal colors, and creeds. You hold sway over an arm of this "paramilitary" force. You can call them to act against mortal or immortal governments in many ways, from staging peaceful protests outside a governor's home to organizing rallies against the leaders of oppressive groups. Large, unwieldy, and potentially dangerous, your brigade of the army gives you six dots to split among Allies, Influence, and Contacts, that can be directed – but never controlled.

DESCENDANT OF TYLER

(BRUJAH CHARACTERS ONLY)

Every aspiring Brujah rebel worships Tyler – once known as Patricia of Bollingbroke – and going by many names since. Her revolutionary violence against tyrant elders and insidious Methuselahs irrevocably changed Kindred society and inspired the Anarch Movement. Tyler herself doubts that her actions led to effective praxis, but her childer and clanmates compare her to everyone from Robin Hood, to Malcolm X, to Che Guevara, to Gavrilo Princip.

Tyler still exists: a quiet, studious rebel in these nights. With centuries of reflection, she struggles to reconcile her actions with the results of modern nights. Her descendants continue the fight with the hopes of uplifting her to her destined greatness one night.

Lore

● **Instigator:** Once per story, whenever you attempt to persuade a mortal crowd into violent action, your hot-blooded nature adds two dice to your dice pool to do so.

●● **Champion of the Cause:** When vampires want a leader for a rebellion, large or small scale, they come to you for advice or leadership. They might even listen to your words, and providing your advice is not completely ridiculous, might even defer to your authority. You add two dots to your Status with them during such rebellions, but you might find the numerous contacts gained before a rebellion more valuable and certainly less dangerous.

●●● **Tyler's Mercy:** You know when to stop. Tyler recognized when the Sabbat went too far with her Anarch ideals, and you likewise recognize the limits of violent revolution. Once per story, when frenzying, you may at any point take a Brujah Compulsion (p. 210) to immediately cease the outburst. You do not suffer any confusion or tiredness after an interrupted frenzy, abruptly snapping back to Humanity.

●●●● **The Furores:** Tyler's philosophies first emerged among a historic vampire group known as the Furores, dedicated to the destruction of all Kindred tyrants. This group still exists in secret, and you claim membership. When the time is right (once per chronicle), the Furores arm you, provide you with sanctuary in a regnum where they have influence, and activate assets in the target domain as surprise Allies (available within one scene). The Allies add up to five dots of Effectiveness; the rest depends on your collaboration with the Storyteller. Furore assets can only be used when attempting to take down a Prince, unfit Baron, or vampire of higher station. Misuse makes you a target of the Furores and their unknown operatives.

●●●●● **Permanent Revolution:** You have already taken down one sect figurehead. You now lead an army of revolutionaries to sweep the board in the neighboring regnae. For as long as you keep fighting and are not found to be indulging in the luxuries of station, Anarchs stop to listen to your every word, and Brujah Anarchs do exactly as you say, including embarking on suicide missions. No rolls are required if your speech is strong and argument convincing enough.

DESCENDANT OF ZELIOS

(NOSFERATU CHARACTERS ONLY)

All of Clan Nosferatu knows their great architect Zelios as a master planner, mason, and scholar of geomantic power. Though he disappeared beneath New York in the 1990s, he left behind libraries of books, plans, and treatises on the power of location and sacred geometry.

Zelios' descendants continue his good work, instructing other vampires on the building of havens, dungeons, prisons, and labyrinths. They can supposedly sense ley lines and, for a price, advise Princes where to locate havens at these epicenters to ensure both armor and power from the earth and stars.

Lore

● **Sanctuary:** Your haven is a wonder of modern design, possessing security in the form of secret passages, electronic security, and even a self-destruct button, all while looking stylish and comfortable. Split two dots between either or both of the Haven Merits Postern and Security System, but someone, somewhere likely has all the details of the setup.

●● **Saboteur:** You instinctively know where a building's weaknesses are, and you don't even require explosives to destroy it. With maul, crowbar, cable, and cold chisel, and as many nights on site as the difficulty the Storyteller sets for the building (i.e. four for a family home, six for a bank, eight for a prison, nine for a skyscraper), you can collapse an edifice like a house of cards.

●●● **On Commission:** Other vampires know you descend from Zelios and ask for advice on how best to build their own havens. This business ensures you often have a boon or two to collect (roughly one minor boon per story) and that you know where a number of powerful vampires sleep – which, in the end, probably does you more harm than good.

●●●● **The Labyrinth:** You used Zelios' work to construct a labyrinth beneath your domain, made in part with sewers, disused drains, cellars, basements, and maintenance tunnels. You added your own chambers, dead ends, and connections to form a true underground maze. Only those you tell know of your labyrinth. You cannot treat the labyrinth as a Haven, as it terrifies you, but if you reach it when chased, no one can pursue you.

●●●●● **Sense the Ley Lines:** You occasionally glimpse throbbing red tendrils snaking through the earth: ley lines. Vampires who make their havens where these vessels converge find their Hunger grows more slowly (when making a Rouse check for awakening, roll two dice and pick the highest) if they sleep there by day. Ley lines have other powerful magical effects – secrets you can research along lines the Storyteller indicates – and your fellow Sewer Rats harshly punish disclosing anything about such secrets.

DESCENDANT OF VASANTASENA

(MALKAVIAN CHARACTERS ONLY)

Vasantasena and her Malkavian sire Unmada traveled the world throughout the Middle Ages, preaching against the Blood Bond. They rejected the vinculum, traditional Kindred hierarchy, and all loss of free will. Ultimately, they condemned the Antediluvians for their cruel tyranny through Jyhad, joining the Sabbat during its formation.

As the Camarilla had, the Sabbat rejected her cause, instituting both hierarchy and ritual enslavement through vitae. She eventually rejected them in turn, assembling a faction of Malkavians to embrace freedom from the Sabbat.

Vasantasena's descendants are many and varied, and all of them followed her from the Sabbat before the sect's recent, bestial devolution. Some joined the Camarilla, others the Anarchs. All possess the zeal and charm she wields like a knife. All fight for something.

Lore

● **Agent of Chaos:** You thrive while everything around you burns or spins into catastrophe. In turbulent situations, such as an unusually chaotic and unpredictable combat, a car chase through a crowded city, or when fleeing an exploding building, once per session, you may re-roll a single die without spending Willpower.

●● **Hear My Words:** You carry your ancestor's skills of persuasion, finding your voice speaks to the Blood of others before it reaches their minds. Once per story, if you attempt to counsel others in a chaotic environment and they actually stop to listen, they may re-roll one dice pool in one future test during the same situation.

●●● **Scent the Bond:** Vasantasena's loathing of Blood Bonds was part of the reason she targeted the Antediluvians and the ties they maintained with their offspring. Such was her power that she could smell the Bond on individual vampires and recognize the same odor on the vampire Bonded to, or Bonding, them. Once per story, on a successful Resolve + Awareness test (Difficulty 4), you can do the same.

●●●● **Destroy the Bond:** Vasantasena's greatest act is the destruction of the Blood Bond. Some say she performed this act many times in recent years among the Sabbat, in part leading to their rapid degeneration. Once per story, you too can remove the Blood Bond imposed on a victim, if you drink a mouthful of the thrall's vitae and then ride out a frenzy.

●●●●● **Sabbat Becomes Camarilla:** Vasantasena achieved the impossible and showed her descendants how it was done. Alien, inhuman philosophies locked most vampires into the Sabbat. Once per story, you can deprogram a vampire from their sect beliefs. To do so, you must completely isolate the subject and make an extended test (p. 293) of either Intelligence or Charisma + Insight in an atmosphere of specialized perfumes. Roll once per three nights of disputation; you win after achieving a number of successes equal to twice the subject's Willpower.

HIGH CLAN

Though formally abandoned with the rise of the Camarilla, some clans still consider themselves "High," compared to their peers among "Low Clans." You are a vampire from a High Clan, convincing you that you have certain rights to bully and order those of Low Clans. These rights can only be pushed so far, of course.

Historically, the High Clans were Lasombra, Toreador, Tzimisce, and Ventrue, though Brujah and some of the Clan of Death clung to the epithet. In various parts of the world, the members of the High Clans change to include the Banu Haqim and Ministry, and rarely, the Tremere.

As a High Clan vampire, your clan bane is, to your mind, less a curse than a blessing.

Lore

● **Peacock:** You are proud of your clan's status as High, and you carry yourself with all the pomp and circumstance befitting a vampire of noble station. Once per session, you may re-roll a single die when attempting to command deference from one non-titled vampire in your domain.

●● **Sway the Low:** The High Clans once sat upon thrones, ordering Low Clan vampires to die for them on battlefields and subjugate themselves in court. You still possess the ability to persuade vampires of Low Clans more easily than you do the vampires of High Clans. You have bullied the equivalent of three dots of Mawla into a loyal, abused retinue of Low Clan vampires. You gain three extra dice to pools using Intimidation or Leadership against those Kindred; if you ever roll a total failure on such a test or contest, you need to compensate them, or they turn on you.

●●● **Elevate the Low:** Some quirk of your bloodline or an ancient Princely decree allows you to proclaim the ascendancy of one Low Clan in your city to High Clan status. You can do this once per chronicle, but of course, you can promise to do it "eventually" for quite a while first. Until then, add one die to Social tests against Low Clan Kindred when you allude to this possibility.

●●●● **Embraced to Rule:** Vampires of the High Clans often opted to Embrace mortals of noble birth or powerful ancestry. Your ancestors may not be kings and queens, but you were Embraced to rule. Add one die to pools for Leadership tests involving High Clan vampires who know your lineage. Once per story, other vampires of the High Clans defer to voting for you, or they allow you to take high responsibility (and power), unless you have created a personal grievance between you.

●●●●● **Blessed, not Cursed:** Like many vampires of the High Clans, you have convinced yourself that you bear no Curse of Caine. Rather, your clan weakness is a blessing that reveals more to you about your nature, your position on God's Earth, and the areas in life you must strengthen. Once per session, you may spend one Willpower to ignore the burdens of your clan bane.

LOW CLAN

You come from one of the clans historically identified as "Low," though in your domain, it's less past than present-night fact. You labor under the weight of a heavy curse, heavier (you might argue) than those of High Clan vampires.

Your geographical region determines which clans the eldest vampires still consider Low, but uniformly, the Gangrel, Malkavians, and Nosferatu fill that bracket, with Brujah and Tremere also occupying that position in various domains.

Your status as a Low Clan Kindred marks you as less than your peers, but you are still a prominent source of rebellion and counter-culture. You have access to the bottom rungs of society, and all the benefits and drawbacks that come with it.

Lore

● **Thick Hide:** Often denigrated by those who name themselves "High," your ambition and independence do not falter with belittling words and snubs. You do not respond easily to base provocations. Once per story, you can shrug off verbal barbs for a scene without needing to make a test.

●● **Cursed with Pride:** In some cases, the Low Clans take great pride in the severity of their banes. For example, some Nosferatu believe their hideous appearances are a mark of glorious monstrosity, instead of something to be hidden. You have learned to use your clan bane as a weapon, gaining an automatic success on one roll per story when incorporating your bane into an action.

●●● **Uncanny Kinship:** Due to persistent persecution from the High Clans, vampires of Low Clans feel inclined to stick together. You often mediate between Low Clan disputants, and you see the merit of the underworld's Kindred banding together against the hegemony of the High. You can select three dots from among Mawla or Status from other Low Clans in the domain.

●●●● **Trade Among Equals:** For all their suffering, the Low Clans benefited from their adversity in one key way – they taught each other their powers. This collaboration may not be true in all domains, but this old tale still holds in yours. You may select one Low Clan's Discipline and buy dots of that Discipline, using experience points as if it was in-clan for you.

●●●●● **Criticality Incident:** Your influence among Low Clan vampires can let you tip the scales of power in your domain – if you choose. Add one die to all your pools for Projects undermining High Clans in your domain. Once per chronicle, you can sacrifice up to 10 of your own Background dots to bring down the same number of High Clan Kindred in a coup.

AMBRUS MAROPIS

Ambrus Maropis rarely leaves his opulent apartment in Cyprus to meet the public, yet his reputation as a trend-setter and Masquerade-protector spreads widely throughout Kindred society. The Toreador who know that Ambrus is a Nosferatu loathe the vampire's popularity. His disciples, akin to superfans, act as go-betweens to Princes and Barons while he remains forever hidden.

Ambrus has a reputation as a vampire on the cutting edge of technology and culture. Embraced in his late teens, Ambrus is, at heart, an introverted fan of anime, gaming, and online roleplaying, with an elaborate online persona. Ambrus uses this persona to sell software and information he hacks; advise on the best security methods stolen from governments and corporations for Kindred to utilize; inform Elysia about emerging musicians, entertainers, and trends; and make himself an invaluable resource to Camarilla and Anarchs who want to appear more human than human.

Lore

● **True Believer:** If Ambrus has taught you anything, it's that the Camarilla is right and the Masquerade is essential. You follow his edicts on security and subterfuge religiously, granting you knowledge of the best shared Kindred hiding places in a city, providing a one-die bonus to tests to find such a place. You may not have access to this bonus if the domain is typically opposed to your political or philosophical view.

●● **Clandestine Information:** You can use a digital dead drop to request a hack from Ambrus' fan community. Once per story, you can get one piece of information stored online about most mortals within two to 20 hours.

●●● **Taught by the Best:** As one of Ambrus' disciples, you are provided with a ready supply of intel on topics from Second Inquisition operations to the fashion in Harajuku tomorrow night. Ambrus can also time-lock information in the Dark Web or set you up with your own Ukrainian hacker at "friend prices." Consider Ambrus a three-dot Mawla (●●●).

●●●● **Back Door Panopticon:** Ambrus hooked you up with a back door into PRISM/NUCLEON surveillance software, tracking and sorting online communications (including cell phone calls) for keywords and names. Or perhaps you stole it from him or found it on a machine in a safe house an Ambrusite abandoned in a hurry. Either way, you can only log in once per story for security's sake, but it gets you two automatic successes on any Investigation test involving anyone's cell activity or online presence.

●●●●● **On Another Grid Entirely:** Ambrus went all out with your false identity. You have two two-dot Mask (●●) cover identities and have been Zeroed (p. 192). You get three extra dice to resist attempts to research you online or uncover your activities in the mortal world.

CARMELITA NEILLSON

Desperate elders seeking ways of staving off Gehenna and the Beckoning increasingly seek out the Brazilian-Irish Toreador archaeologist Carmelita Neillson. She unearths the past and interviews Kindred, chronicling a vast array of vampire history and conversations with vampires as old as two millennia. The Camarilla forbids her from archiving any of her findings electronically, so she has established several "Neillson Libraries" in discreet locations.

Her friendly manner, natural curiosity, and abilities as a polyglot make her a natural choice to debrief a Methuselah just awakening from torpor, investigate a ruined temple, or interpret a captured Sabbat scripture. Believing that art need not be in a frame or museum to be admired, Carmelita strongly feels the greatest art, one ignored by Kindred for so long, is the storytelling of their own kind. A gifted storyteller and writer, Carmelita's skills appeal to many Toreador who wish to break the "pretty and talentless" stereotype.

Lore

● **The Art of Story:** You and Carmelita share the belief that storytelling is one of the lost art forms. Whenever regaling other vampires with historic lore or tales of myth and legend, Toreador naturally gravitate to hear your words, regardless of your standing toward each other.

●● **The Art of Will:** A specific objet d'art or relic, entrusted to your safekeeping by Dr. Neillson, inspires and enthralls you. If you spend an hour meditating on this object (and make a Resolve + Academics test at Difficulty 5) before resting for the day, you awaken with one extra Willpower point. You can meditate in this way once per session.

●●● **Neillson Library:** Carmelita Neillson's small libraries dot the world in Camarilla domains, serving as hives of information used to prompt and support elder vampires' memories. You are the curator or warden for one of these libraries, which counts as a two-dot Haven (●●) with a two-dot Library (●●). Other vampires and Kindred historians meet there as well, which has both advantages and downsides.

●●●● **Interview With the Methuselah:** You have obtained a recording of Carmelita interviewing an impossibly old vampire who divulges secrets about one of the clans in your domain. Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller to provide you with such a secret. Whether Carmelita knew of this recording and gave it to you or someone made the recording in secret, the information in the interview gives you an advantage over the vampire in the clip and the clan discussed. Interestingly, the voice following Carmelita's at the end of the tape mentions further recordings.

●●●●● **Ancestor's Tomb:** Carmelita has entrusted you to guard the supposed resting place of one of your ancestors. As long as you keep it safe, you can call upon her for a major boon once per story. Should you fail to keep it safe, there will likely be… other consequences.

FIORENZA SAVONA

When the Lasombra reasserted control over their old religious power centers, the Ventrue responded by expanding their influence in the new nobility: government and multinational corporations. With global political pull, Fiorenza Savona keeps the clan relevant and dangerous – at the center of global power.

Hard-nosed and unafraid to tell another vampire to take a running jump, Fiorenza worked hard as a mortal and continues to do so as a Kindred to ensure that wealthy and powerful vampires remain in their positions. Moving up through NGOs and the UN, she knows everyone worth controlling in the Davos elite. Her sire targeted her for her contacts list and discovered her Machiavellian political and business acumen.

A fresh power player in the Camarilla, many elders and ancillae consider her a mere "new money" Ventrue. Their wiser clanmates know her actions sway councils, corporations, and individual mortals possessing real power. Where her predecessors focused on vampire politics, Fiorenza believes the key to Kindred longevity lies in the manipulation of the living.

Lore

● **On Fiorenza's List:** Fiorenza knows who you are, which either means she thinks you're an asset to the clan or a problem. Consequently, she has assigned a Gifted mortal (p. 185) Retainer – bodyguard, driver, butler, etc. – to you, though they remain in her employ. They make no secret of spying on you and reporting back to Fiorenza, and they never drift far, even if dismissed. If the mortal is harmed or killed, Fiorenza makes a note that you're not to be trusted, but if your conduct is good, you move further into her good graces.

●● **Breakfast with Fiorenza:** Despite her high-profile role, once per story Fiorenza will make a space in her busy schedule to meet with you. Maybe you have dirt on her or perhaps you are close friends. A meeting with Fiorenza can be lucrative and informative, if you ask her the right questions.

●●● **Friendly Benefits:** You were close to Fiorenza before she became "the next big thing" in Clan Ventrue, and this friendship pays dividends: she can smooth over ruffled Ventrue, provide you with insider trading tips, loan a Gulfstream equipped with polarized windows and pre-cleared flight plans, etc. If you overuse or misuse this connection, the equivalent of a three-dot Mawla (●●●), she cuts you off without hesitation.

●●●● **The Directorate:** The shadowy Ventrue Directorate approached you. Concerned about Fiorenza's meteoric rise, they chose you to approach her, suborn her, and break her to their will. If you accept, you submit to a Blood Bond and have your memories of the Directorate's identities erased – but you receive six dots to select from among Contacts, Mawla, and Resources. Of course, you could approach Fiorenza and offer to work as her double agent.

●●●●● **Government Motion:** Fiorenza owes you a favor – once per chronicle, she agrees to influence a mortal political leader as you request. Her suggestions equal five dice to distribute as you like among any roll involving government action. If you create a major political disturbance or otherwise act to reinforce Fiorenza's "suggestions," the Storyteller may add other dice based on your plan and on how well you succeed at it.

DESCENDANT OF KARL SCHREKT

(TREMERE CHARACTERS ONLY)

Clan Tremere is a hollow reflection of its former glories. With the Pyramid decapitated and its leadership scattered, Tremere traditionalists look to one vampire for authority: former Justicar, Karl Schrekt.

A legend within his own clan and the Camarilla, Schrekt hunted vampires before his Embrace in 1235. For centuries, he acted as the Camarilla's weapon against the Sabbat, Anarchs, and occult menaces. He suppressed or destroyed lore regarding Antediluvians, eliminated countless threats to the Masquerade, and did it all without mercy. He earned his share of disciples, but few enemies. Those he got, he killed.

Now he's one of the eldest Tremere remaining.

Schrekt's descendants largely follow their ancestor's hardline clan and sect views: enforce the Traditions, strengthen the clan, and hide the secrets of Blood magic from other vampires.

Lore

● **Remember the House:** Once per story, you can ask the Storyteller for one piece of information regarding the activities of House Tremere or the clan before its grievous injury.

●● **Hardliner:** Schrekt's way is the only way forward for your clan. You follow Schrekt's laws fanatically. With the Storyteller's agreement, add two dice to any dice pool when testing to resist attempts to sway you from Schrekt's goals.

●●● **Ritual Preparedness:** Allegedly, Karl Schreckt prepares all of his rituals in advance and keeps several such-pre prepared rituals about his person at all times. Once per story, you may perform one of your rituals in five minutes, without preparation, having done all the preparations beforehand.

●●●● **Archon's Bane:** You find Schrekt's targeting of supernatural entities deplorable, and you have formed a tight bond with a member of another supernatural background. You have a four-dot Ally: a mage, werewolf, wraith, changeling, or something even stranger. You must keep your friend safe, as they are being hunted. Once per story, they come to your aid within one to ten hours when called.

●●●●● **Know the World:** Karl Schrekt believes knowledge is power and that vampires who limit their learning to the study of fellow Kindred are fools. Whether Schrekt's puppet or nemesis, you agree with his assessment and keep archives on werewolves, magi, wraiths, fae, and other weird entities. This collection equates to a three-dot Haven Library (pick three suitable specialties of Occult), although you might not store your reference materials in your haven. Also once per story, you can ask the Storyteller to answer any simple question related to such creatures.

DESCENDANT OF XAVIAR

(GANGREL CHARACTERS ONLY)

Nobody, even fellow Gangrel, listened to Xaviar the first time he spoke. It took marching into a convocation of the Camarilla's biggest players for other Kindred to take notice of him. He spoke of interacting with one of the Antediluvians and seeing his entire coterie eaten alive by this mythological creature. He accused the Camarilla of perfidy against its members and cast aside his role of Gangrel Justicar.

News travels slowly among the Gangrel, as a clan with little hierarchy and lacking an effective communication network. Slowly, Gangrel followed Xaviar out of the Camarilla, some becoming Autarkis, while more ultimately joined the Anarchs.

Gangrel now share a communal guilt for their initial disbelief of Xaviar's claims and slow reaction to his proclamation, as he met Final Death soon after. Few know if the Camarilla or some other agency slew the mighty Gangrel, but all know their ancestor was wronged. Now they take up his torch and attempt to bring the Gangrel into truth's flickering light.

Lore

● **Martyred Ancestor:** Other Gangrel treat you with the respect they took too long to afford Xaviar. Despite any personal grievances, you can always find sanctuary with other Gangrel, if any are present in your current domain, at least until you insult them grievously. With them, you have two dots of Status (●●).

●● **Where the Bodies Are Buried:** Xaviar's experiences with melding through earth, blood, and vitae left a mark on his lineage. Gangrel of his line can make a Resolve + Awareness test to detect whether a vampire has merged with the earth or lays torpid beneath the soil. Difficulty depends on the area you have to search.

●●● **Loyal Hound:** You resisted the winds of change, remaining with the Camarilla despite your clan's actions. For your loyalty, the local Camarilla Prince awarded you status, feeding rights, and territory, amounting to four dots you can distribute among Domain, Herd, and Status. Non-Camarilla Gangrel despise you, and even Camarilla vampires of other clans pity your solitude, but you guarantee yourself a voice among the Primogen, should any rebel Gangrel pass through your domain.

●●●● **Monstrous Bat:** Xaviar's preferred bestial form was once that of a bat, but following his encounter with the Antediluvian, he found his form capable of changing into a hybrid between human and bat. Once per story when the moon is just right, you can take the same form. This man-sized bat has an extra dot in all Physical Attributes and can glide in the air from any height. Biting in this form adds +1 Aggravated damage to mortals and vampires alike.

●●●●● **Experienced the Antediluvian:** Xaviar was not the only Gangrel to sink into the ground and find himself inside his clan founder's vast, inhuman form. You have done the same, and the experience changed you. You are now a little mad, likely suffering from paranoia or claustrophobia. Whenever you call your encounter to mind, you feel your veins rooted to the ground, connecting to every other Gangrel in the world. Once per story, you can sense any Gangrel's location and drain a thimbleful of vitae from them to reset your Hunger level to 2. You must be touching open ground, not concrete, to use this ability.

Index

A

Abstracted scene 291
Academics 168
Addiction 180
Advance 296
Advanced Conflict 295
Advantages 179
Adversary 193
Aggravated Damage 126
Airborne Momentum 287
Alleycat 175
Allies 184
All-Out Attack 298
All-Out Defence 298
Amalgam Powers 244
Anarch 38
Anarch Comrades 183
Anarch Revolutionary 374
Ancestor Urn 381
Ancilla 140
Animal Dominion 247
Animalism 244
Animal Ken 164
Animals 373
Animal Succulence 246
Antagonist Expenditures 375
Antagonists 370
Antediluvians 47, 214
Archaic 180
Archon 49
Armor 304
Ashirra 51
A Taste For Blood 272
Athanor Corporis 284
Athletics 159
Auspex 248
Automatic Wins 120
Awakening 219
Awareness 168
Awe 267

B

Baal's Caress 274
Baby Teeth 182
Bagger 176
Bahari 382
Bat 373
Bear 373
Beautiful 179
Beckoning 37
Bestial Failure 207
Bestial Temper 182
Bird Of Prey 373
Bite 213
Blankbodies 363
Blink 253
Block 297
Blood Bag 212
Blood Bond 233
Blood Cult 197
Bloodhound 182
Blood Leech 176
Blood Of Potency 273
Blood Potency 215
Blood Sorcery 271
Blood Surge 218
Bloodthirsty Sheriff 375
Blood Walk 276
Blush Of Life 218
Bond Famulus 245
Bonding 180
Bond Junkie 181
Bond Resistance 181
Bondslave 180
Branded By The Camarilla 182
Brawl 160
Broken Social Scenes 324
Brujah 65
Brutal Feed 264

C

Caine 47
Cainite Heresy 384
Calcinatio 284
Called Shots 302
Camarilla 37
Camarilla Contact 183
Carna 385
Cascading Test 294
Catenating Blood 183
Cat's Grace 252
Cauldron Of Blood 274
Celerity 252
Cell 189
Cerberus 197
Champions 197
Chaoscopes 378
Chapter 116
Characters 133
Character Creation 135
Charisma 156
Chasse 195
Checks 123
Childer 140
Choleric 226
Chronicle 117, 139
Chronicle Tenets 172
Circulatory System 386
Clairvoyance 251
Clan Compulsions 210
Clan Curse 183
Cleaver 176
Clergy 371
Clinging Of The Insect 276
Cloak Of Shadows 261
Cloak The Gathering 263
Close Combat 301
Cloud Memory 256
Commando 197
Communicate With Kindred Sire 277
Compel 256
Competence 352
Composure 156
Compromised 189
Compulsions 208
Compulsion Severity 311
Conceal 262
Concessions 295
Conflicts 123
Consensualist 177
Contacts 185
Conventional Weapons 379
Convention Of Thorns 387
Convictions 172
Corrosive Vitae 272
Coterie 139, 195
Cover 302
Craft 160
Craft Bloodstone 276
Creepy 189
Crippling Injuries 303
Critical Success 120
Critical Win 120

D

Dagon's Call 278
Dark Secret 187
Daunt 267
Day Drinker 183
Day Watch 198
Dead Flesh 183
Decapitation 221
Defense Of The Sacred Haven 279
Deflection Of Wooden Doom 278
Defractionate 286
Defy Bane 259
Degeneration 239
Dementation 256
Descendant Of Hardestadt 390
Descendant Of Helena 391
Desire 174
Despised 187
Destitute 188
Dexterity 155
Diablerie 234
Dice Pool 118
Difficulty 118
Directed Freeform 291
Discipline Affinity 184
Disguised Weapons 379
Disliked 187
Distillation Methods 283
Distillation Roll 283
Dodging 125
Domain 195
Dominate 254
Dots 118
Downtime 291
Dragon's Breath Rounds: 380
Draught Of Elegance 254
Draught Of Endurance 259
Draught Of Might 265
Drawing Out The Beast 247
Dread Gaze 267
Drive 160
Dyscrasia 227

E

Earth Meld 270
Earthshock 265
Eat Food 182
Effectiveness 185
Elder 140
Elysium 51
Enduring Beasts 258
Enemies 184
Entrancement 268
Envelop 285
Escape To True Sanctuary 280
Essence Of Air 278
Etiquette 164
Experience 130
Extended Contests 294
Extended Tests 293
Extinguish Vitae 273
Extra Skills 145
Extreme Cold 221
Eyes Of Babel 277
Eyes Of The Beast 269
Eyes Of The Nighthawk 279

F

Faerie 377
Faith Hunter 371
Fame 186
Fang Gang 198
Farmer 177
Far Reach 284
Feral Weapons 270
Feral Whispers 245
Final Death 223
Finance 168
Fire 221
Firearms 160
Firewalker 279
First Inquisition 388
Fist Of Caine 266
Fixatio 284
Flamethrowers 380
Flaws 179
Fleetness 253
Flesh Of Marble 259
Folkloric Bane 182
Folkloric Block 182
Formula 283
Fortify The Inner Facade 259
Fortitude 258
Freeform 291
Frenzy 219
Fury Frenzy 220

G

Gangrel 69
Gangster 371
Gear 378
Generation 214
Ghost In The Machine 262
Ghoul 372
Ghouls 234
Golconda 389
Grappling 301
Guard Dog 373

H

Hafla 380
Hardestadt 390
Hard Extended Test 294
Harpy 374
Haunted 189
Haven 188
Haze 285
Healing 127
Health 119
Heart Of Stone 281
Heightened Senses 249
Helena 391
Herd 190
Hidden Armory 189
Hidden Compulsions 311
High-Functioning Addict 180
Hooks 351
Hopeless Addiction 179
Horse 373
Humanity 236
Humanity Track 239
Hunger 205
Hunger Dice 205
Hunger Frenzy 220
Hunting 306
Hunting Grounds 308
Hunting Party 198

I

Illiterate 179
Illuminate The Trail Of Prey 277
Impairment 126
Impostor's Guise 263
Incendiary Weapons 379
Incorporeal Passage 280
Infamy 187
Influence 187
Inquisitor Delta 372
Inquisitor
Investigator 372
Insight 165
Intelligence 156
Intensity 227

Intimidation 165
Investigation 169
Iron Gullet 182
Irresistible Voice 268
Items 378

J
Jeanette/Therese Voerman 394
Justicars 49
Jyhad 48

K
Kindred Intimacy 310
Known Blankbody 192
Known Corpse 192

L
Laboratory 189
Larceny 163
Leadership 165
Leisure Skills 145
Lethal Body 264
Library 189
Lien 196
Life Event Skills 145
Lifelike 184
Lightning Strike 254
Lingering Kiss 267
Linguistics 179
Living In The Past 180
Location 189
Long Bond 181
Long-Term Compulsions 311
Looks 179
Loresheet 151, 382-396
Luxury 189

M
Magician 377
Majesty 268
Malkavian 75
Maneuver 297
Manipulation 156
Maréchal 198
Margin 121
Marks 322
Mask 192
Mask Of A Thousand Faces 262
Mass Manipulation 257
Mawla 192
Medicine 169
Melancholy 226
Melee 163
Memoriam 311
Mending Damage 218
Mesmerize 256
Messy Critical 207
Metamorphosis 271
Methuselah's Thirst 181
Minor Actions 298
Mist Form 271
Modes Of Play 291
Modifiers 120
Molotov Cocktail 380
Mortal Frailty 183
Movement In Conflicts 298
Multiple Opponents 125
Mythic Merits And Flaws 182

N
Neonates 140
Net Gun 380
Noddist Bishop 375
No Haven 188
Nomads 198
Nosferatu 81
Notorious 194

O
Obfuscate 260
Obvious Predator 190
Occult 170
One Roll 296
One-Roll Conflicts 298
Organovore 181
Osiris 177

P
Performance 166
Persuasion 166
Phlegmatic 226
Plumaires 199
Police Detective 371
Politics 170
Portillon 196
Possession 251
Postern 189
Potence 263
Powers 244
Predator Types 175
Predator Pools 307
Premonition 249
Presence 266
Prestation 314
Prey Exclusion 181
Primogen 51
Prince 51
Profane Hieros Gamos 285
Professional Skills 145
Protean 269
Prowess 264
Prowess From Pain 260
Punctuated Freeform 293

Q
Quell The Beast 246
Questari 199

R
Ranged Combat 125, 301
Rat 373
Rationalize 257
Raufoss 380
Regency 199
Relationship Map 142
Reliability 185
Remorse 239
Repulsive 179
Resilience 258
Resolve 157
Resonance 226
Resources 193
Retainers 194
Riding The Wave 219
Ritual Roll 274
Rituals 274
Rouse Check 211
Rousing The Blood 211
Rudi 396

S
Sandman 177
Sanguine 226
Sbirri 199
Scene 116
Scene Queen 178
Science 171
Scorpion's Touch 273
Scry The Soul 249
Sect 140
Sect War Veteran 392
Security System 189
Sense The Beast 245
Sense The Unseen 249
Series Test 294
Session 116
Session Zero 135
Shaft Of Belated Dissolution 281
Shapechange 270
Share The Senses 250
Short Bond 181
Shunned 194
Shunned By The Anarchs 183
Silence Of Death 261
Simple Test 117
Siren 178
Sites 333
Skill Pool 118
Slaking Hunger 211
Soaring Leap 264
Social Combat 304
Spark Of Rage 265
SPC 40
Specialties 159
Spectre 377
Spending Willpower 158
Spirit's Touch 250
Split Second 254
Spotlight Scene 290
Spotlight Distribution 356
Stains 239
Stake Bait 182
Stake Launcher 381
Stakes 221
Stalkers 194
Stamina 155
Star Magnetism 269
Status 194
Stealth 164
Stigmata 182
Story 117
Storyteller 40
Streetwise 152
Strength 155
Stunning 179
Substance Use 179
Subsume The Spirit 247
Subterfuge 166
Success 118
Summon 268
Sunbag 378
Sunlight 221
Superficial Damage 126
Supernatural Equipment 381
Surgery 189
Surprise 300
Survival 164

T
Tainted Blood 310
Taking Half 123
Teamwork 122
Technology 171
Telepathy 252
Terminal Decree 257
Terror Frenzy 220
The Forgetful Mind 257
The Four Humors 226
Theft Of Vitae 274
Theo Bell 383
The Prelude 138
The Second Inquisition 39
The Unfettered Heart 271
Thin-Blood 109
Thin-Blood Alchemist 184
Thin-Blood Alchemy 282
Thin-Blood Flaws 182
Thin-Blood Merits 183
Thrown Weapons 301
Tick Words 292
Toreador 87
Torpor 223
Total Failure 122
Touchstones 173
Toughness 258
Trackers 119
Traditions 51
Traits 118
Traversal 253
Tremere 93
Trinity 393
True Faith 222
Truth Of Blood 277
Turn 115

U
Ugly 179
Unbondable 181
Uncanny Grip 265
Unerring Aim 254
Unliving Hive 246
Unseen Passage 261

V
Vampiric Mending 218
Vampiric Resilience 184
Vanish 262
Vegan 181
Vehme 199
Ventrue 99
Vitae Dependency 183

W
Wake With Evening's Freshness 276
Ward Against Cainites 280
Ward Against Ghouls 277
Ward Against Lupines 279
Ward Against Spirits 278
Warding 190
Warding Circle Against Cainites 282
Warding Circle Against Ghouls 278
Warding Circle Against Lupines 280
Warding Circle Against Spirits 279
Warding Circles 275
Wards 275
Watchmen 199
Watchmen (Haven) 189
Weapon Ratings 304
Week Of Nightmares 395
Weight Of The Feather 269
Werewolf 376
Werewolf Blood 376
Wight 375
Willpower 122, 157
Win At A Cost 121
Wits 156
Wolf 373

X
Xscopes 378

Appendix I: Standard Feats

Characters often attempt the following relatively common activities during play. The specific dice pools and rules provided here exist solely to guide the Storyteller. The Storyteller always determines which dice pool a player builds to attempt any feat or action, and they can always change it to better serve the narrative.

Mental Feats

These systems cover tasks involving the three Mental Attributes: Intelligence, Wits, and Resolve. Mental tests can provide you with information about things your character knows but you do not, and to determine if the character knows something that you do know.

ARTISTIC CREATION

Some vampires were artists, musicians, or poets in life, and desperately husband their creative spark through the endless nights. Others attempt to clothe their muse with inhuman glories. Camarilla courts compete in art as in all things, but even an Anarch street gang prides itself on MC skills or murals of occult graffiti.

Normally, players can have their characters create various pieces of art to their heart's content, but in some cases, when they wish to accomplish something with their art, such as impressing someone, it might be prudent to roll.

The Attribute in the pool varies: Intelligence is most common, but a clever satire might use Wits or Manipulation, or a delicate ivory carving might require Dexterity or Resolve. Plastic arts use Craft as the Skill; performing arts use Performance; architecture and literary arts use Academics.

Art conveying a secret message (e.g., forbidden love, political samizdat, occult codes) uses the "encoded" Skill (e.g., Insight, Politics, Occult) but requires a higher rating in the "surface" artistic Skill.

The quality of the work depends on the number of successes the artist achieves. A messy critical might betray vampiric origins to a knowledgeable onlooker or otherwise fails spectacularly; a clean critical might be worth a boon.

COMPUTER USE

Older Kindred have long thought computers spell nothing good, and with the Second Inquisition behind every screen, they have doubled down on their technophobia. That said, computers remain as essential as they are dangerous, and clever fledglings still know that better than their elders.

Many Skills simply require (or assume) basic computer use; Investigation, for example, hardly functions in these nights without a few database searches. Academics and Science likewise comprise at least a quick Google or JSTOR trawl. Other Skills function on a computer just like they might off it – lying in a bar and lying in a chat room both involve Subterfuge.

Hacking into a computer system by writing or deploying code script to subvert it uses Intelligence + Technology against a Difficulty dependent on the system's security (4 for decent corporate security, 6 for secure databases, 8+ for the NSA). If the character rolls a total failure, they alert security to their presence. In some chronicles, hacking may be resolved as a conflict.

Most hacking in the real world is social engineering: convincing an administrative assistant to re-enter their password online, sending phishing emails, or just buying a bunch of passwords from a Ukrainian malcontent. Those hacks use different pools (Manipulation + Subterfuge or Intelligence + Streetwise, for example) and total failure attracts a different sort of exposure.

At the end of the day, what exactly can be accomplished by hacking and how long it takes is up to the troupe and depends heavily on the level of realism in your games.

CONCEALMENT

Disguising one's haven, cleaning up blood stains, disposing of bodies, camouflaging Elysium – the Masquerade rests on concealment.

Camouflage in nature or burying a body outside undetectably uses Intelligence + Survival as its pool. Urban camouflage uses Intelligence + Streetwise, although some vampires get creative and use Academics (Architecture) or Craft (Interior Design) to make one building appear like another.

Building false compartments or secret chambers uses Intelligence + Craft (Carpentry) or Intelligence

+ Academics (Architecture), if you trust your workforce. Cleaning up a murder scene tests Resolve + Larceny; concentration and focus are essential, if you want to remove every drop of DNA.

The result of your concealment test becomes the Difficulty for anyone trying to spot what you have hidden.

EXPLOSIVES

From IEDs by a desolate roadside to an impromptu Primacord crypt opening, explosives can play a dramatic part in the unlife of the modern vampire.

Creating explosives uses Intelligence + Science. Building a bomb uses explosives (made or sourced) as well as Intelligence + Technology (or Craft, for old-school bombs made of clock parts and colored wires).

The pool for using a pre-made bomb or explosive depends on its purpose: blowing a safe or breaching a wall uses Intelligence + Larceny; controlled demolition uses Intelligence + Science (Engineering); setting a car bomb uses Intelligence + Technology. Just tossing a grenade or a stick of dynamite is a regular throwing action (see p. 301).

A total failure on any roll with explosives may cause an accident, ruin the materials, detonate the explosive prematurely, or result in something else at the Storyteller's discretion.

PERCEPTION

The vampire's senses may be keenly attuned to their surroundings, honed by long training, or fogged by rage and blood-scent.

Build most perception pools with Awareness as the Skill. The Attribute varies depending on whether the perceiver notices something in the moment (Wits), recognizes something (Intelligence), or picks something out of a cloud of distraction or detail (Resolve). "You hear a sound" uses Wits; "You hear the guard coming" uses Intelligence; "Despite the alarm going off, you hear soft footsteps behind you" uses Resolve.

Feeling a puff of air from a secret door likely uses Wits; spotting an ambusher in camouflage likely uses Intelligence; noticing a very small detail after long study likely uses Resolve. The Storyteller should ask how much the action depends on instinct or sensory acuity vs. memory or recognition vs. pure mental focus.

Resolve also applies in general to detecting supernatural signs amidst the mundane information surrounding them and to noticing qualities in blood (or Blood) despite the distractions of Hunger.

Tests to perceive a living target use the target's Stealth as the base Difficulty. For contests of perception vs. sneaking, see Sneaking (p. 415).

Specifically searching a crime scene for clues or evidence uses Intelligence + Investigation. Other Skills may encompass dedicated perception tests as well; spotting a disease symptom on a human uses Intelligence + Medicine, for instance.

PREPAREDNESS

Nothing slows the game down more than a lengthy inventory scene in which players list every conceivable item or object they may need for the night's activities. The preparedness test avoids this scenario by allowing players to test during the session to see if they remembered to bring something along or pick it up earlier.

Characters need not roll for signature items: the gun-happy Brujah brought their pistol, the sneaky Nosferatu brought their lockpicks, and so forth. Everybody has the normal sorts of things people might have in their pockets: cell phone, pocket knife, pencil, or what-have-you. This test covers slightly outré or unusual things: rope, a shovel or other larger tools, extra burner phones. The less likely the item, the higher the Difficulty the Storyteller should set.

The Attribute for a preparedness test is Intelligence; the Skill should relate to the item or its use in some way. Roll Intelligence + Firearms to have brought a silencer, Intelligence + Craft to remember a wrench, or Intelligence + Occult to produce a tarot deck from the folds of your trench coat.

RESEARCH

The pool for a research attempt, whether it's scouring an archive or paying a human grad student to look it up, is Intelligence + the relevant Skill (not just Academics or Science but anything from Finance to Occult). The character still has to direct the grad student, after all.

With the advent of the inter-

net, finding out basic facts or even fairly recondite information has never been easier; the Difficulty for almost any mundane research test is 3 or 4 at most. Very obscure, occult, or deliberately concealed information increases the Difficulty. That sort of research often requires an extended test; a clean critical uncovers the needed fact faster or leads to an unsuspected secret or trove of facts.

TRACKING

Unlike shadowing (p. 414), tracking requires you to follow physical evidence in the wild – footprints, blood smears, bent blades of grass – to find a target. The tracking dice pool is Wits + Survival; the base Difficulty equals the target's Survival. Inclement weather and elapsed time since the target's passage also modify the Difficulty upwards. Extra successes provide more information about the quarry: rate of speed, estimated weight, number of people followed, etc.

Physical Feats

These systems cover actions involving the three Physical Attributes (Strength, Dexterity, and Stamina). These feats typically require a test.

CLIMBING

Climbing usually requires a test of Dexterity + Athletics. If the climber rolls a total failure, they either get tangled and stuck or fall, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Vampires using the Uncanny Grip power (see p 265) to accomplish most climbing tasks without a test. Using ropes and mountaineering equipment lowers Difficulty by -2 or more.

Falling Damage

Falling characters sustain one level of Superficial damage per meter of uncontrolled fall. Landing on one's feet (negating the damage) requires a Dexterity + Athletics test at a Difficulty equal to meters fallen.

DRIVING

Nobody needs a Drive roll to operate a vehicle normally. The pool when you do need a test depends on the nature of the complication; driving at high speed, making complex maneuvers, or evading traffic requires Dexterity + Drive; weather that makes it hard to see the road is a job for Wits + Drive.

The Difficulty depends on all those conditions, alone or in combination. By and large, each possible complication (speed, maneuvers, traffic, weather) adds +1 to a standard Difficulty of 3 (with a light, responsive vehicle) or 4 (with a heavy, unwieldy one). An extreme version of any complication adds +2 to the Difficulty. Failing the roll slows or even stops the driver.

A complete failure under such adverse conditions might mean a crash or spinning out.

FEATS OF STRENGTH

Storytellers should feel free to set a Difficulty to perform any given feat of strength based on the character's Strength Attribute, and completely ignore the chart below.

STRENGTH	FEATS	DEADLIFT WEIGHT (kg)
1	Crush a beer can	20 (Christmas tree, stop sign)
2	Break a wooden chair	45 (toilet)
3	Break down a wooden door	115 (manhole cover, empty coffin, refrigerator)
4	Break a wooden plank; break down a standard interior door	180 (full coffin, empty dumpster)
5	Break open a metal fire door; tear open a chain link fence or chained gate	250 (motorcycle)
6	Throw a motorcycle; snap handcuffs	360 (tall steel street lamp)
7	Flip over a small car; snap a padlock	410 (horse)
8	Break a lead pipe; punch through a brick wall	455 (telephone pole, grand piano)
9	Punch through concrete; break chains; rip open a car door	545 (tree trunk, small plane)
10	Rip open a steel pipe; bend an I-beam	680 (speedboat)
11	Overturn a car; punch through 2.5 cm thick sheet metal	910 (Predator drone)
12	Break a metal lamp post; throw a wrecking ball	1.3 metric tons (police helicopter, sports car)
13	Overturn an SUV; toss a sports car	1.8 metric tons (police car)
14	Overturn a bus; rip open a vault door	2.25 metric tons (empty shipping container; SUV, pickup truck)
15	Overturn a truck; toss an SUV	2.75 metric tons (Humvee)

The usual pool for lifting or smashing things is Strength + Athletics; for throwing heavy things, the Storyteller might use the worst of Strength or Dexterity + Athletics. Prowess (Potence 2) generally adds to feats of strength.

For Storytellers who prefer hard-and-fast numbers (and slightly weaker vampires), this chart provides the minimum Strength needed to deadlift various weights or perform feats of strength without a test. Characters of lower Strength may use a Strength + Athletics Attribute test to affect heavier weights than their Strength ratings allow.

Lifting is all or nothing – if you fail the roll, nothing happens. At the Storyteller's discretion, dragging an object may be easier than lifting it; increase the character's effective Strength by 1 in such a case.

INTRUSION

Intrusion covers breaking and entering, evading physical security devices, picking locks, cracking safes – and preventing others from doing the same. Intrusion feat pools almost always use Larceny as the Skill.

The Attribute in an intrusion pool depends on the precise task in the spotlight; picking a lock or dodging a laser sensor uses Dexterity + Larceny, while cracking a safe or bypassing an alarm circuit uses Intelligence + Larceny. Noticing a hidden camera might require Wits + Larceny; breaking a lock cleanly might use Strength + Larceny (and maybe Potence).

Whatever the test, it needs to succeed on the first attempt against active security, or the intruder sets off the alarm. Most commercial buildings or large public facilities like museums, have Difficulty 4 or 5 security systems; bank vaults and secure facilities shelter behind higher Difficulties. A government building might have Difficulty 4 alarms and locks on the front door but a Difficulty 6 secure wing – with a Difficulty 8 hazardous materials vault inside that. Some systems simply can't be cracked with low Larceny ratings; for example, Larceny 1 lets you pick a Yale lock but not defeat a keypad or crack a safe.

Setting up a security system uses Intelligence + Larceny. Add the margin from that roll to the Difficulty to penetrate the system and to the the watchers' test to spot a sneaking attempt (p. 412).

Intrusion requires proper tools (lockpicks, circuit bridgers, etc.) to avoid a Difficulty increase of 1 (improvised tools) or 2 (credit card and a bobby pin). At the Storyteller's discretion, characters may be able to use Intelligence + Technology to penetrate purely electronic security systems at +1 to the Difficulty. An Intelligence + Technology test is a likely prerequisite for such heist staples as tapping into the closed-circuit camera feed or hacking into smart building software.

PURSUIT

Vampires may have to pursue their prey or flee from hunters or witnesses.

If the race pits two roughly equally matched characters (or vehicles) or the slower party has some countervailing advantage (helicopter overwatch, knowledge of the Cairo bazaar), resolve the pursuit as a basic contest.

A vehicle chase uses Wits + Drive for its dice pool, given the importance of keeping the quarry (or pursuer) in sight.

A foot pursuit contest uses Athletics for the Skill. The Attribute in a foot pursuit varies depending on the type of chase: a long marathon run might use Stamina, a sprint over a few blocks uses Strength, and a multi-level parkour pursuit over the rooftops of Mumbai uses Dexterity.

Depending on the nature of a chase, many pursuits can benefit from teamwork if more than one character is chasing a target (or can plausibly distract a pursuer).

Players that want more drama from a chase can run it as a conflict, where the combatants inflict damage on each other (representing things barged into or short, fleeting bursts of combat) using their pursuit pool. Any combatant may concede the chase at any time (allowing the quarry to escape, or the pursuer to catch up). Use the level of hazards in the environment as weapon damage.

SHADOWING

One character shadows another by keeping them in sight, ideally without being noticed themselves. The pools used vary considerably with who knows what – as long as the shadower isn't spotted, use Wits +

Awareness vs. the target's Resolve + Streetwise (representing normal precautions). If the quarry succeeds, the shadower(s) are spotted. If the shadower is discovered, but doesn't know it, use Wits + Stealth or Streetwise vs. Wits + Awareness to shake the surveillance. If everyone knows, the feat is no longer shadowing; it's now a pursuit!

Award bonus dice to the shadower in busy areas vs. an unaware target, but to the quarry instead if it knows and is trying to shake the tail off. Award one additional die in busy areas or two additional dice in crowded areas or areas with many potential exits and blind spots (e.g., wooded parks, train stations, department stores).

Unless potential helpers are masters of disguise (or can somehow shapeshift to resemble the target), only the shadower's side benefits from teamwork. Vampires using Obfuscate may not need to test at all to shadow mortals.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Picking pockets, making a brush pass with a contact, or just plain shoplifting are sleight of hand feats just like card tricks or palming an item. They use Dexterity + Larceny vs. any watcher's Wits + the greater of Larceny or Awareness.

Fortunately, diversions and distractions, as well as crowds or darkness, can give the light-fingered character bonus dice.

SNEAKING

A sneaking (or hiding) character pits their Dexterity + Stealth against a watching (or searching) character's Wits + Awareness in a basic contest. Darkness, background noise or other distractions, or being downwind may add a die to the sneaker's roll; security devices, scanners, or superior vantage points may add dice to that of the watcher.

Like shadowing, vampires using Obfuscate may not have to make tests to sneak.

SWIMMING

Characters with one dot or more in Athletics can swim. Vampires can't drown, but fresh corpses aren't very buoyant, which balances out.

To determine whether a character makes a long swim without being pulled off course by the current or drowning (or sinking, for vampires), roll Stamina + Athletics against a Difficulty set by the weather conditions.

Vampires caught in shallow water during the day take damage from sunlight as though they are under cloud cover.

Social Feats

These systems cover tasks involving the three Social Attributes Charisma, Manipulation, and Composure. In general, SPCs react to the characters based on their actions.

Some players don't like having the dice dictate their character's response to an SPC, and they often insist on at least playing a full social combat scene (p. 304) rather than rolling a basic contest. However, players and Storytellers who open themselves up to the dramatic possibilities of influence and persuasion may find the game less predictable and thus more interesting. After all, the Prince may have her own reasons for agreeing with the player characters or for concealing her distaste for them.

STANDARD SOCIAL FEAT MODIFIERS

ATTITUDE	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER
Loyal/Devoted	-1
Friendly/Weak	+/- 0
Indifferent	+1
Suspicious	+2
Aggressive/ Unfriendly	+3
Hostile/Violent	+5

Loyal/Devoted: Targets may risk their careers, and possibly their lives, for you. They will give any information they think will help you, whether requested or not, and may perform services such as watching prisoners, medical care, breaking down doors, or distracting the cops. They will follow your lead and agree to your plans with few questions asked, even when it seems risky.

Friendly/Weak: Targets will not readily harm you, and they may try to prevent others from doing so. They will answer any questions you ask, if they seem reasonable or safe. They will recommend reliable service providers, speak up on your behalf, or give the occasional helpful tip. They are willing to be convinced of your plans, and they

will sign on if the benefits are clear. Indifferent: Targets will not go out of their way to harm you without clear orders or benefit. They may answer some questions, if politeness or profit beckon. They will not bestir themselves to help you without clear reason. Your plans strike them as risky and foolish, but they are unlikely to actively prevent you from trying them as long as they can stay safely out of it.

Suspicious: Targets suspect your intentions might be unwholesome, illegal, or otherwise dangerous, but they have no reason to harm you – yet. They respond with minimal courtesy or professionalism. They are unlikely to listen to your plans, unless shown immediate reasons or benefits in doing so.

Aggressive/Unfriendly: Targets will harm you if they think they can get away with it, keep a wary eye on you, and will egg others on to harm you. They will clam up in your presence, or they offer misleading answers to questions. They will give bad advice, if they give advice at all. They will not help you, and they will oppose your plans, regardless of their merits, unless support is the only thing keeping them alive.

Hostile/Violent: Targets will risk their careers, and possibly their lives, to harm and possibly kill you. They will actively prevent others from giving you answers, help, or comfort of any kind. They may even help your enemies, and they will certainly do everything possible to sabotage your plans, even if they cannot immediately torpedo them.

You can also modify the Difficulty of a Social test depending on the power differential between the parties, incentives offered, and the type and manner of the request.

CIRCUMSTANCE	DIFFICULTY MODIFIER
Target is of higher rank or power	+1 or higher
Target is of lower rank or power	-1 or lower
Character offers valuable trade or favor payable in advance	-2
Character offers boon	-1 per level of boon
Target's Conviction, or personal or political agenda, agrees with request	-1 or -2
Request is easy, safe, or profitable	-1
Request is complex or risky	+2
Request is unknown, dangerous, or costly	+3 or more
Skill or specialty well chosen for the target (e.g. Subterfuge (Seduction) for someone on the make)	-1 or -2
Skill or specialty poorly chosen for the target (e.g., Intimidation for a werewolf)	+1 or +2

ARTISTIC PERFORMANCE

Vampires are egotistical monsters even when they weren't performers in life. When a character performs live before an audience, roll Charisma + Performance: the more successes, the greater the quality. Just as with artistic creation, always indicate the purpose behind the roll. On a total failure, the performance was a total disaster – and the performer may have new enemies among the Toreador they didn't have when they woke up this evening.

CAROUSING

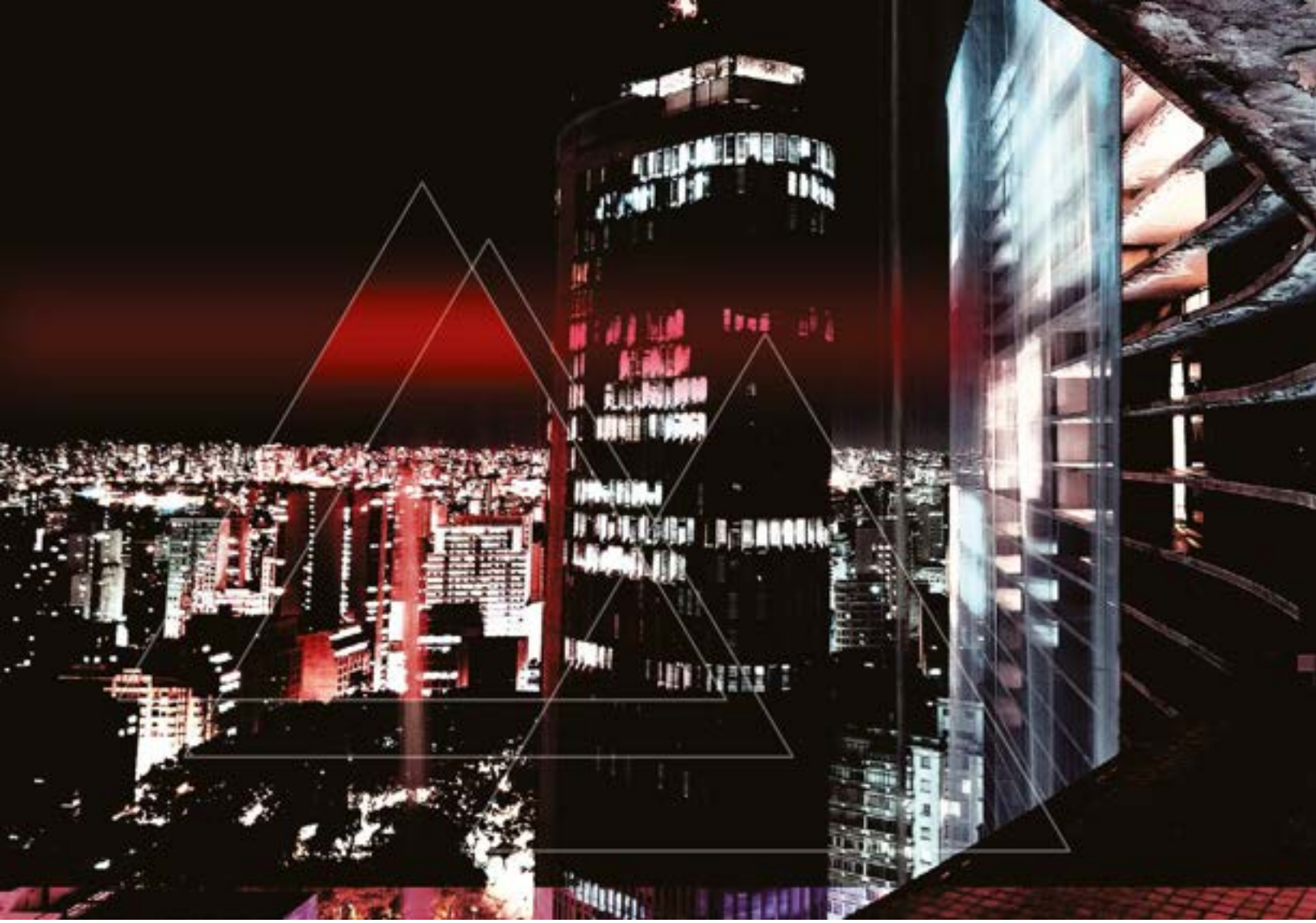
With a simple test of Charisma + Insight, you influence others (particularly potential vessels) to relax and have fun. Carousing encompasses showing a potential ally a good time, loosening an informant's tongue, and making instant drinking buddies who come to your aid when a brawl starts. Vampires who can't drink (most of them) may lose one or two dice from this roll (or have to make a sleight of hand test (p. 415) to fake it), depending on how important sharing a beer or the equivalent is to the subject.

CREDIBILITY

Flashing a phony ID and brushing past the rope line, perpetrating a scam or con, presenting false credentials to get a job, passing counterfeit artifacts, impersonating the authorities – tests of credibility take many forms. The scammer uses Manipulation + Subterfuge; the mark rolls Wits + Insight.

Storytellers and players interested in running a long con can set a suitably impressive Difficulty and play out an extended test.

Superior fake documents and other forgeries add dice (an addi-



tional one or two) to the scammer's pool; clever hacks might do the same thing if the scam requires online backup.

FAST-TALK

Less con artist and more snake-oil sales associate, the fast-talker tries to get agreement from a target by deploying a barrage of half-truths and engaging nonsense. Fast-talk pools use Charisma + Subterfuge vs. the target's Composure + Insight.

INTERROGATION

Anyone can ask questions, but getting answers is a different thing. With interrogation, you ask questions with leverage behind them.

Interrogating someone peacefully (Manipulation + Insight) involves asking strategic questions designed to reveal specific facts. Use a basic contest between the interrogator's pool and the victim's Wits + Composure.

Violent interrogation (Manipulation + Intimidation) involves torturing the victim's mind and/or body until they reveal what they know. The victim resists with Composure + Resolve. Regardless of the outcome of the contest or conflict round, torture damages the subject: they take one point of Aggravated damage for each point of their own Resolve. Physical torture damages Health; mental torture damages Willpower.

On a total failure by an interrogator using torture, the subject dies, enters torpor, or goes mad.

Two or more interrogators can use teamwork (p. 122); this partnership works even if one interrogator uses Insight while another uses Intimidation (the classic "good cop/bad cop" ploy).

The extent and relevance of shared information are up to the Storyteller. Especially after torture, a subject often skews the details or invents extra facts based on what they think the interrogator wants to hear.

In most chronicles, torture is often a fast-track to earning Stains.

INTIMIDATION

Intimidation has two effects. The passive effect doesn't involve a test; it simply gives a character plenty of space, whether on a bus or in a bar. The higher their Intimidation rating, the wider the berth that others give them. Active Intimidation works through subtle coercion or outright threat.

Subtle coercion (Manipulation + Intimidation) uses a perceived threat: losing one's job, being arrested, pain and agony a few minutes or days later. This action is usually a quick contest against the target's Composure + Resolve. The loser backs down.

Blatant threats (Strength + Intimidation) begin with words and can escalate to minor physical damage (biting off fingers, that sort of thing). This action is a contest against the target's Composure + Resolve or Strength + Intimidation (whichever is higher). The loser backs down; regardless of who loses, the character with the lower Strength takes the margin on the intimidation contest as Superficial damage to Health.

ORATION

From a general's rousing speeches to a politician's slick double-talk, the capacity to sway the masses creates and destroys empires. When your character speaks to an audience, from a small board meeting to a large crowd, roll Charisma + Performance.

If the character has time to prepare the oration beforehand, they may roll Intelligence + Insight to tailor the speech to the crowd. Success on this test reduces the subsequent oration Difficulty by 1; a critical reduces it by 2. Failure has no effect, while a total failure increases the oration Difficulty by 1 as the character inserts a gaffe into the speech.

SEDUCTION

Vampires are master seducers, for their very sustenance often depends on coaxing potential prey into an intimate liaison. The particular situation and style of a seduction determine the pool used: getting a prime dance at a formal cotillion involves Composure + Etiquette; picking someone up in a bar might start with Charisma + Insight; picking them up at the gym might depend on Manipulation + Athletics; a coffee shop meet-cute could be Wits + Subterfuge. Whatever the situation, the Looks Merit (p. 179) almost always adds dice to the pool, as does Presence in some cases.

Like any other test or contest in the game, the Storyteller can abstract a seduction into a simple test of Charisma + Subterfuge or turn it into an ongoing epic subplot throughout the chronicle. If the seduction means more than just a refueling stop for the character – gaining access to a Dyscrasia or to an office building at night – then running it as conflict provides plenty of dramatic possibility ■

Appendix II: Projects

The word project comes from the Latin ***proicere***, meaning "to throw forward," as in to throw the dice. And for the first half millennium or so, the word implied a gamble or mad scheme, not a sensible plan marked out with Gantt charts or PERT graphs. Vampires tend to remain conservative in their word usage, and the Camarilla's institutional inertia and conservatism keep much of the old skepticism when they refer to younger vampires' projects. Given the number of things that can go wrong when bloody-minded predators plan them, the Camarilla has a point.

However, players often want their characters to accomplish goals and affect the outside world, but don't want to focus every scene of the game on a scheme to undermine public housing policy (so many more tasty homeless to feed from) or bankrupt a chain of coffee shops run by a rival. For this sort of subplot or sub rosa activity, the Project system offers the Storyteller a way to ask the elders' recurring question: "Are you sure you want to do that?" and to monitor the action when the players inevitably answer "Of course! What could go wrong?"

Launching a Project

To launch a project, the player (or players) must first describe their goal in story terms: Win the heart of the chief harpy, destroy the credit of the biggest bank in the city, take over the vice squad, uncover the meaning of a mysterious glyph spray-painted on the wall of their haven.

Then, the player and Storyteller need to come up with the mechanical representation of their goal. This usually takes the form of one or more dots in a Background or other Trait. The harpy would become a Mawla, destroying the bank might add to their Resources (by selling short) or just subtract Resources from a hated rival, taking over the vice squad provides dots of Influence, and figuring out the glyph might provide dots on a Loresheet or allow the purchase of a Blood Sorcery Ritual.

Vampires often use projects to change a vessel's Resonance and intensify their temperament over the long term. One dot changes Resonance and increases it to Intense, while two dots changes a Resonance and adds a Dyscrasia.

The number of dots the project adds if successful is called the project's Scope.

PROJECT INCREMENT

Finally, the player and Storyteller decide on the increment for the project: days, weeks, fortnights, months, years, sevenals, decades, mortal generations, centuries, etc. One increment should roughly equal the project's likely time span divided by ten. Thus a project that culminates in a year has a roughly monthly increment.

A project less than ten days long should just be an extended test (p. 293).

LAUNCH ROLL

If the Storyteller expects that nurturing or protecting the project might take on a major role in the chronicle going forward, or that the scene can provide dramatic juice or relief, the troupe should play out a scene or even a chapter dedicated to stage one, laying the groundwork of their plot.

At the end of that period, the player makes the Launch roll to start the project. The Storyteller tells them which dice pool to use for the Launch roll: for most projects, the launch roll is Skill + Background. Courting the harpy might be Subterfuge + Status, destroying the bank requires Finance + Resources, taking over the vice squad uses Politics + Influence, figuring out the glyph calls for Occult + Loresheet (or Blood Sorcery, or a magician Ally). As with mortals, vampires need leverage to get leverage. Temporary dots from Boons, Memoriam, and other sources might also bolster the Launch roll.

The launch roll is a simple test against a Difficulty equal to the project's Scope + 2. The player cannot spend Willpower or use a Blood Surge on the launch roll. The Storyteller may allow the player to use Disciplines on the launch roll, especially if the player aims the project at mortals rather than fellow Kindred.

On a critical win, the player does not have to commit any of their current dots to the project.

On a regular win, the player must commit a number of dots equal to the project's Scope + 1,

minus their margin on the launch roll.

EXAMPLE

Istvan wishes to build a drug empire in Hamburg to get five dots in Resources. He already has Resources ••, so his project Scope is three dots. Given that he only has Resources ••, he asks the Storyteller if he can leverage his Influence ••• in the docks instead. The Storyteller agrees and sets the Launch die pool as Streetwise + Influence. Istvan calls in a boon from the Primogen to bump him up from seven (Streetwise 4 + Influence 3) to eight dice, against a Difficulty of 5 (2 + Scope 3). He rolls well, getting six successes. He can subtract one dot (his margin was 1 over the Difficulty) from the stake, for a net stake of three dots. Rather than play without any Influence, Istvan stakes one dot of Resources and two dots of his Influence on this plot. (The boon dot disappeared when he spent it on the Launch roll.) He'll have some lean times and have to live by his wits for a while, but it all pays off at the end.

The minimum commitment, or stake, on a regular win is one dot. Dots committed to a project stake cannot be used in play until the project ends one way or another – the player has those dots "tied up" in the project. As a rule of thumb, the dots in the stake should be the same type as dots in the goal, but it's easy to imagine gambling Resources to get Influence, or some other combination. Storytellers should be wary of players offering "empty dots" that don't come up in play or don't lose effectiveness at lower levels (like Mask, or some Loresheets) as stakes.

On a failure, the player can try again to start the project, with a launch roll Difficulty one higher. The time isn't right, someone talked who shouldn't, something went wrong.

On a total failure, the character has a new enemy, or an energized and motivated old enemy. The Storyteller may decide that these enemies destroy or estrange some part of the character's Background, costing them a dot or more.

If the Storyteller agrees, players can cooperate on a Launch roll, either by using a Coterie Background or by using regular Teamwork (p. 122). However, multiple players take multiple risks: the stakes and losses must come from every player involved in the launch roll, even if that means increasing their cost. If four characters helped, and the stake is three dots, all four vampires need to put up one dot.

GOAL ROLL

Assuming a win, the Storyteller sets a Project Die at 10. Rather than keep a loose die on the table when it's not being used, they can also just write the Project Die number for a given scheme down in their notes along with its Scope and intended mechanical effect. A Storyteller with multiple conspiracies to track likely keeps a master list on paper or in their phone, but nothing beats the visual and tactile sensation of clicking a die over to the next face when the time comes right.

Because indeed, the Project Die decrements by one after each increment, counting down from 10 to 9 to 8 … and eventually, to 1.

If the players (or characters) become impatient, they can make a Goal roll at any time. The Storyteller tells you your dice pool, which may or may not be the same as your Launch roll dice pool. (You can use "staked" dots in the Goal roll, since they're already dedicated to that goal.) However, the Goal roll is a conflict roll, against a dice pool equal to the current value of the Project Die: for example, if you try for success when the Project Die shows 6, you roll against a pool of six dice.

Again, you cannot spend Willpower, Blood Surges, or (usually) Disciplines on this roll. Also, the plotter gets no criticals on the Goal roll: each 10 only counts as one regular success. Worse yet, the opposition criticals do count – call it the house advantage for the status quo.

If the player wins, they do damage to the Project Die, decrementing it by the number of extra successes they rolled. If the Project Die decrements below 1, the project suddenly succeeds. The Storyteller comes up with an in-game reason for this dramatic shift of events, which they may or may not share with the player.

If the player loses, they take

damage as losses to their Background dots, starting with the stake. If the loss reduces their stake to 0, the project suddenly collapses. (The exception: a player who rolled a critical on their Launch roll can keep a project in play even after losing a Goal roll.) Again, the Storyteller comes up with an in-game reason for this failure, which they may or may not share with the player.

EXAMPLE:

Istvan makes a Goal roll when the Project Die shows 5. He rolls his Streetwise + Influence (plus his one staked Resource dot, for a total of eight dice) against the opposition pool of five dice. He rolls six successes, against four for the opposition. He decrements the Project Die by his margin of 2, lowering it to 3. If the opposition had rolled a critical, however, he would have lost four dots – his whole stake, plus one more dot (likely from Influence) – and the project would have collapsed.

Like stakes, damage must be shared among all the players who assisted with a project's Launch roll, or taken from the Coterie's Backgrounds.

Ending a Project

The initiator of a project can always end it, although they may not be able to call off any enemies they made with their plot so easily.

The Storyteller may still make the player pay Experience for dots gained through a Project – the Project system provides the in-game action component of an improvement only. Some Storytellers may allow a price break on the goal's Experience cost, depending on the degree of success, the quality of the players' planning and roleplaying surrounding the project, and the general looseness of the game's Experience economy.

The Longue Durée

To properly profit from a project lasting decades or centuries, the characters need to have already launched their plot decades or centuries ago.

To have already launched a Longue Durée project in the past, the characters need to play out a launch chapter in Memoriam (p. 311).

This uses the same rules as above, but the characters' Goal dots from Memoriam become part (or all) of the Launch roll die pool, and of the stake going forward. The Project Die can only be decremented in the present by the number of Goal dots achieved in Memoriam: if you want a Project Die at 4 in the present, you need to gain six Goal dots in Memoriam and spend them all on the project.

Damage done by a lost Goal roll in the present comes off present Backgrounds, not off the Memoriam stake.

Opposition Projects

Player characters are hardly the only Kindred with tangled knots of long-running schemes. They can detect, hamper, and even hijack their opponents' (or allies') projects nearly as easily as starting their own.

The Storyteller needs to determine the current Project die value for the project, and at least a rough dot value for its Scope. When in doubt, roll a die for the Project die value; roll again and divide the result in half (rounded up) for its Scope.

DETECTING AN OPPOSITION PROJECT

Discovering that a plot exists at all may require specific in-game actions from the characters. Determining how far it has progressed – getting the correct value of the Project die – definitely requires investigation, or at least an informant.

On screen, an enemy Project die decrements at least once during the story, because an intensifying conspiracy makes for better drama. Dramatic considerations also make it more likely that a noticeable project is dangerous or unfriendly to the player characters. Otherwise, why bring it on stage at all?

AFFECTING AN OPPOSITION PROJECT

Player character coteries can affect supporting characters' Project die by dedicating a chapter (or a story, for longer-term or larger-magnitude projects) to advancing or delaying its plot. Dramatic law means

the coterie turns out to be critical (or potentially critical) to whatever plot they focus the story on – and realistically, a group of vampires can indeed do an awful lot of damage if they work together. It's up to the Storyteller to help them decide a suitably powerful in-game action for the coterie to take, even if it's of the "for want of a nail the battle was lost" or "tiny pebble triggering the avalanche" sort of powerful action.

Successful interference increments (or decrements) the Project die by one or more, at the Storyteller's discretion. Critical wins on critical rolls might even short-circuit a project entirely, or (less plausibly) bring it to completion early.

Interfering with an ongoing project almost certainly invites reprisal from someone powerful: the target of the plot if the coterie tries to advance it, or the author of the plot if the coterie tries to derail it.

USING AN OPPOSITION PROJECT

Instead of derailing or accelerating a scheme, often a coterie prefers to hijack it for their own purposes. The specific systems in play vary with the coterie's wishes and the existing conspiracy's design: draining money from a financial conspiracy requires skills that false-flagging cultists from an underground church does not, and vice versa.

However, in general the characters must first be in a reasonable position to access or influence the conspiracy's elements. The Storyteller judges whether they meet this requirement just by discovering the plot, or must also maneuver themselves into such a position with a story action or a roll or both.

The Storyteller then sets the player character Goal roll dice pool; since the characters don't need to have laid any groundwork, this pool can be a normal Skill Pool such as Manipulation + Finance or Occult or Politics or Streetwise, or something else entirely, depending on the nature of the project.

Then, they need to make a (Difficulty 5) hard extended test (p. 294) with a Target Number equal to 15 minus the value of the Project Die. Failures during this extended test alert the owners of the project that someone is interfering with it; a total failure tells them specifically who dares to interfere.

Once successfully entwined with the project, the characters can either loot it or hijack it. Looting a project transfers half of its Scope in dots (rounded up) to the coterie, and requires no further roll: the extended test represents getting enough access to loot the project.

Hijacking a project requires an immediate Goal roll, just as if the characters had originated the project. (The Storyteller may change this dice pool up to put the player characters' Backgrounds into play, or to better suit the narrative.) If successful, they get the benefit of the project; if they fail, they lose the indicated number of Background dots.

Whatever the outcome, the characters now have another enemy to go along with their new hoard of dots. If their new enemy defeats them over the course of that story or the next, story, the characters lose their looted or hijacked dots ■

Appendix III: Advice for Considerate Play

Character and Player identity

One of the best things about tabletop roleplaying is that you can play someone different from yourself. No gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, disability, class, or position in society is off limits. But remember that this freedom comes with a responsibility to your fellow players. When portraying someone not like you, the good choice is to create a complex, nuanced and respectful portrayal. Incidentally this also makes for a better game. For instance, your table may include people who identify as trans and, whether they plan to transition or not, they will probably not feel comfortable if you portray the trans experience as a simple preference or a condition to be cured, or if you just assume that all their characters are also trans. Always respect your players' identities and remember that they do not necessarily align with the identities of their characters.

In a Storytelling game, where imagination runs riot and lines are made up on the fly in a split second, using the wrong pronoun for a character or player or accidentally dropping an offensive stereotype in a description are understandable mistakes. Still mistakes, but understandable. Rather than fearing representing different identities, (and thus excluding, for instance, the trans experience or the experience of growing up as an Arab kid in Northern Europe from your game) play with sexuality, gender, nationality, and so on. Who knows, you may even discover aspects of yourself you never suspected.

If you need help with making your portrayal respectful and true to life, ask someone who belongs to the group you are portraying for tips and insights.

Fascism in Play

Vampire: The Masquerade is not a fascist-friendly game. If you are a neo-Nazi, "alt-righter", or whatever you're calling yourself nowadays, we urge you to put this book down and call someone who you trust to talk about where you went so wrong in your life.

That said, Kindred culture is inherently monstrous. Part of the political horror of Vampire: The Masquerade is surviving in a culture that worships the Bad Old Ways. Large parts of Kindred society (especially the Camarilla and the Sabbat) adhere to cults of tradition, ascribes to the idea of humiliating their enemies with overwhelming wealth and force, and praises religious fundamentalism or even pre-modern ideals like feudal rule. Many Kindred are old enough to remember WWII in detail and are bound to have opinions on what's going on in the world right now. Even so, it's pretty easy to steer the game away from totalitarian perspectives. Emphasize the differences between individual vampires, and between factions as well as inside factions. Tell stories about infighting, surprising kindness, and new ideas. Play thin-bloods, Caitiff, Anarchs, or even Camarilla members in a Hellene city where most of the Ivory Tower's traditions have been adapted to suit the present. Another way is to play is to portray Kindred society in all its malicious (and fascist) glory, but let the player characters oppose the system, from the inside or from without.

What if someone wants to play a fascist, though, or a Storyteller wants to introduce a fascist SPC? There are plenty of those throughout the World of Darkness — monsters, but many with pretty faces. They can be a tragic villain, or a former friend who fell, or even someone who the player characters think of as an ally. They might be the Brujah neo-Nazi, the far-right Ventrue billionaire, or the Tzimisce eugenicist. Whatever face they present, the player characters should be given the satisfaction of redeeming or destroying them eventually. After all, the player characters are something unique and special — something fascists cannot abide.

Remember: playing a character whose opinions you oppose can be a great way to understand how supremacist ideas work and how to spot and fight them in the real world. Fictionally experiencing seductive perspectives like blaming the Other, conforming to norms and fighting for a grand purpose, can help you spot these tendencies in yourself and others and diminish their power over you.

This is all in character, of course. At the time of writing, the real world is currently inundated with far-right fascist ideologies being given free reign by well-meaning people who want to preserve civility. If you see people at your table opening up with alt-right talking points, we encourage you to shut that shit down. If you become uncomfortable with a storyline in game because of what's happening out of game, use one of the techniques listed here. You are not obligated to tolerate fascists in-game or out-of-game. This game is a way to tell stories about understanding and perhaps fixing some of the darkness in our own world. Use that to your advantage.

Sexual Violence in Games

Let's not mince words here — vampires, since John Polidori's story *The Vampyre* was published in 1819, have been used as a metaphor for human predation. They seduce, beguile, coerce, dominate, and sometimes outright force humans to perform their will. After all, they are apex predators and consider it their right. Vampires who embrace this perspective ignore or outright laugh at consent.

Consent in this case can be nonsexual, but the nature of the Kiss and the vampire as human predator carries with them an aura of sex. Polidori's original vampire was a sexual predator who drank the blood of virgins on their wedding nights. (Polidori was Lord Byron's friend and literary historians argue that *The Vampyre* was an attempt to depict the poet as a deviant and a sexual predator.) While your Vampire: The Masquerade game could strive to avoid sexual content at all costs, it's important to be aware of the potential for sexual violence as a theme. With that in mind, let's look at a few key points:

SOME FEEDING SCENES CAN RESEMBLE SEXUAL ASSAULT. This could be a huge deal for players at your table who have been assaulted. Unless the character has a willing Herd or is a dedicated Consensualist, Bagger, Farmer, or Blood Leech (core book, pp. 175-178), feeding scenes often involve using Disciplines, tricking, or forcing a human into a situation where you can attack them and steal some of their blood. Exploration into the depths of the human psyche can be intense and worthwhile, but only with the enthusiastic buy-in of your table. If your group wants to avoid the whole "vampire as sexual predator" theme, at least for their own characters, encourage them to try the more ethical Predator types (listed above) or let your players invest in a willing Herd. The game is designed to allow players to fight against the worst in their nature instead of just giving in to it.

CHRONICLE TENETS. None of the examples of Chronicle Tenets (core book, pp. 172-173) in V5 allow characters to use and abuse humans. Even the hard-boiled "Street Code" set includes the tenet "Respect others, and demand respect". Removing someone's consent is never respectful. This is intentional. Vampire becomes a stronger moral game it you choose a set of Chronicle Tenets that everyone around the table can agree with.

STAINS ARE YOUR FRIEND. If a player character (including your own) does something that feels vicious and breaks a Chronicle Tenet (like removing or ignoring a human's consent) feel free to suggest handing out one (or more) Stains. Either ask the Storyteller to add one, or if you are the Storyteller, have the player add a Stain. Some vampires don't have much compassion, and have Convictions to match, but nonetheless, every time they turn humans into slaves or playthings, their Beast gets stronger.

ALLOW FOR SELF-REFLECTION... As a vampire's Humanity degenerates, they should have the opportunity to look back and see what they have done. Part of the narrative of Vampire: The Masquerade is the potential for redemption,

and player characters should be faced with the consequences of what they have done and opportunities to make full and genuine restitution. If they don't take those opportunities, then continue piling on the consequences. This is covered in the rules for Remorse (core book, pp. 239).

...BUT REMEMBER THAT PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE GAME. If you or another player start feeling uncomfortable out of character, use one of the tools detailed in this Appendix to stop and check in to see if everyone is doing ok. Fellow players will thank you for it. Vampire is a game and it's meant to be horrible and thought-provoking fun. It's not supposed to just be horrible.

Calibration Techniques

Lines and Veils

A classic technique originally described by Ron Edwards in his book *Sex and Sorcery,* Lines and Veils allows players to pick and choose what they want to address in the campaign. Before game, the Storyteller should prepare two sheets of paper. Label one "Lines" and the other "Veils." Lines are things that will absolutely not be touched on in the course of play, not even mentioned in passing. Veils are things that can happen, but will not be played out, and instead addressed with a "fade to black." The Storyteller asks players what they'd like added to the lists, and notes that the lists can be edited at any time. Veils can be moved to Lines, Lines can be moved to Veils, new Veils or Lines can be added, or Veils or Lines can be taken away (with the consent of the other players). Veils and Lines cannot be used to cut out antagonists (i.e. "I don't want vampire to be a part of this game at all, not even mentioned in passing") but can be used to restrict antagonists' actions that might be uncomfortable for some players (i.e. "I do not want to explore sexual violence or the ramifications thereof in this game at all", which would cut out feeding scenes and explicit descriptions of certain Dominate and Presence powers, among other things, though they are still present in the metafiction).

COMMON LINES: sexual violence, explicit depiction of torture, force feeding, starvation, mutilation, racial slurs, gender-specific slurs, spiders, needles, bestiality, explicit depiction of bodily functions, animal suffering

COMMON VEILS: explicit depiction of consensual sexual activity, torture, emotional abuse, physical abuse, body horror, human experimentation, dream or nightmare sequences, childhood memories, prophetic visions, animal death

Fade to Black

In a movie, when the hero is just about to get into bed with her love interest or be "forcibly interrogated," sometimes the camera cuts away right before the action — occasionally with a moan or a scream included as appropriate. This technique is called "fade to black," and can be used in your chronicle as appropriate. If you don't want to narrate every caress of a love scene or the blood gushing out of a corpse you overfed on, simply fade to black and focus on another scene. A player can also request a fade to black if they are uncomfortable with what is happening at the table (see core book, Types of Scenes pp. 290-291).

The Stoplight System

This was pioneered by the group Games to Gather. The Storyteller lays out three different colored circles on the table: red, yellow, and green. Each color indicates a response to different levels of intensity. Green means "yes, I am okay with and encourage the scene getting more intense." Yellow means "the scene is fine at the intensity level it is now, and I would like it to stay here if possible." Red means "the scene is too intense for me in a bad way and I need it to decrease or I need to tap out." Players can tap the colored circles as appropriate to indicate to the Storyteller what they want or need at that moment.

The Storyteller can also use the stoplight system to ask the players if they'd like intensity increased or decreased as necessary without breaking the narrative flow. To do so, the Storyteller can repeatedly tap a color — green for "more

intense," yellow for "keep it here," and red for "do you need me to stop?" The players can then touch a color in response. Players can also respond by saying the color in question out loud.

The X Card

The X card was designed by John Stavropolous and is fairly self-explanatory. A card or sheet of paper with an "X" drawn on it is placed in the middle of the table. At any point, a player or the Storyteller may touch the X card to call a halt to any action currently making them uncomfortable in a bad way. If they would like to explain themselves, they may, but it is not necessary, and the Storyteller should continue play once everyone is settled back in.

The OK Check In

The OK Check In is a LARP technique that uses quick hand signals and no paper or props. If a player or Storyteller is in an intense scene and wants to check in on another player, they simply flash an OK symbol with their fingers. The person being checked in with should either give a thumbs up (good, continue), thumbs down (bad, stop), or a hand-wiggle (so-so, unsure). Anything other than a thumbs up stops play, so that the responder can take a moment to breathe.

The Door is Always Open

This is another technique that needs very little explanation. If a player needs to stop play for any reason, they are free to do so after giving the Storyteller a heads up. The session is then on pause until that player either returns or leaves the premises.

Some good reasons to leave a session early could be:

- Your Storyteller or other players deliberately ignore the techniques you all agreed to use
- You are having a family or other emergency
- You feel ill or panicky
- You are uncomfortable and have addressed that with others at the table
- Your Storyteller or other players are using out-of-game (or in-game that you're not comfortable with) name calling, threats, or extended arguments to force you into situations you don't want to be in
- You have a prior engagement or need to leave early
- You don't feel this is the experience you signed up for

Remember that you as a Storyteller also always have a right to stop the session. Being a Storyteller is a lot of emotional labor, often uncompensated, and if the group you are playing with refuses to acknowledge that, it may be better to take a break or stop running for that group entirely.

Debriefing

Debriefing is a post-game technique, used primarily by European and American freeform LARP groups, and can be used along with any and all of the suggestions above. After the session is finished, the Storyteller asks the players to put away their character sheets and take some deep breaths. Soft music or snacks can also be used to assist in debriefing. Debriefing is all about bringing the players back to the real world.

Use this time to talk about the game in a context other than first person. Players tend to refer to their characters as "I." During the debriefing the Storyteller should encourage them to use the character's names and use first person only for things that they felt as players, not as characters. What did they think was the highlight of this session? What was their favorite interaction they had with another player's character? An SPC? Is there anything the players think the Storyteller could be doing better? Are the techniques and story-building suggestions in this book working out for everyone at the table? Should anything be changed to make the game more fun and engaging for everyone involved? These are all questions that can be asked during debriefing, though they're not necessary. If there are other, more important topics that need to be covered, feel free to use debriefing time to cover those as well. Respect if some players don't want to take part in

debriefings. Like all other techniques in this Appendix it's meant to make the game more fun, not force players to do things they are uncomfortable with.

Debriefing does not need to last for a set amount of time (five minutes per player is usually enough). However, after a particularly intense session, it's probably a good idea to have a longer debriefing period than normal.

Further Reading:

- "Sexual Assault Myths" on the Minnesota State University website: https://www.mnsu.edu/varp/assault/myths.html
- "What do the terms Lines and Veils mean?" on RPGStackExchange: https://rpg.stackexchange.com/questions/30906/what-do-the-terms-lines-and-veils-mean
- *The Origins of Totalitarianism* by Hannah Arendt
- "Let's Play with Fire! Using Risk and its Power for Personal Transformation" by Bettina Beck: https://nordiclarp.org/2018/03/01/lets-play-fire-using-risk-power-personal-transformation/
- "Creating a Culture of Trust Through Safety and Calibration Mechanics" by Maury Brown: https://nordiclarp.org/2016/09/09/creating-culture-trust-safety-calibration-larp-mechanics/
- "Ur-Fascism" by Umberto Eco: https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1995/06/22/ur-fascism/
- *Sex and Sorcery* by Ron Edwards
- *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* by Judith Herman.
- *The Vampyr* by John Polidori
- "The X Card" by John Stavropolous: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SBojsx34bWHZWbnNIVVuMjhDkrdFGo1_hSC2BWPlI3A/mobilebasic

VAMPIRE
THE MASQUERADE

Name	Concept	Predator
Chronicle	Ambition	Clan
Sire	Desire	Generation

ATTRIBUTES

Physical		*Social*		*Mental*	
Strength	○○○○○	Charisma	○○○○○	Intelligence	○○○○○
Dexterity	○○○○○	Manipulation	○○○○○	Wits	○○○○○
Stamina	○○○○○	Composure	○○○○○	Resolve	○○○○○

Health □□□□□ □□□□□ **Willpower** □□□□□ □□□□□

SKILLS

Athletics ○○○○○	Animal Ken ○○○○○	Academics ○○○○○
Brawl ○○○○○	Etiquette ○○○○○	Awareness ○○○○○
Craft ○○○○○	Insight ○○○○○	Finance ○○○○○
Drive ○○○○○	Intimidation ○○○○○	Investigation ○○○○○
Firearms ○○○○○	Leadership ○○○○○	Medicine ○○○○○
Melee ○○○○○	Performance ○○○○○	Occult ○○○○○
Larceny ○○○○○	Persuasion ○○○○○	Politics ○○○○○
Stealth ○○○○○	Streetwise ○○○○○	Science ○○○○○
Survival ○○○○○	Subterfuge ○○○○○	Technology ○○○○○

DISCIPLINES

○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○
○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○

Resonance ..... **Hunger** □□□□□ **Humanity** □□□□□ □□□□□

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VAMPIRE
THE MASQUERADE

Chronicle Tenets	Touchstones & Convictions	Clan Bane

Advantages & Flaws

	○○○○○
	○○○○○
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	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Notes

Blood Potency ○○○○○ ○○○○○

Blood Surge	Mend Amount
Power Bonus	Rouse Re-Roll
Feeding Penalty	Bane Severity

Total Experience .....

Spent Experience .....

True age
Apparent age
Date of birth
Date of death
Appearance
Distinguishing features
History

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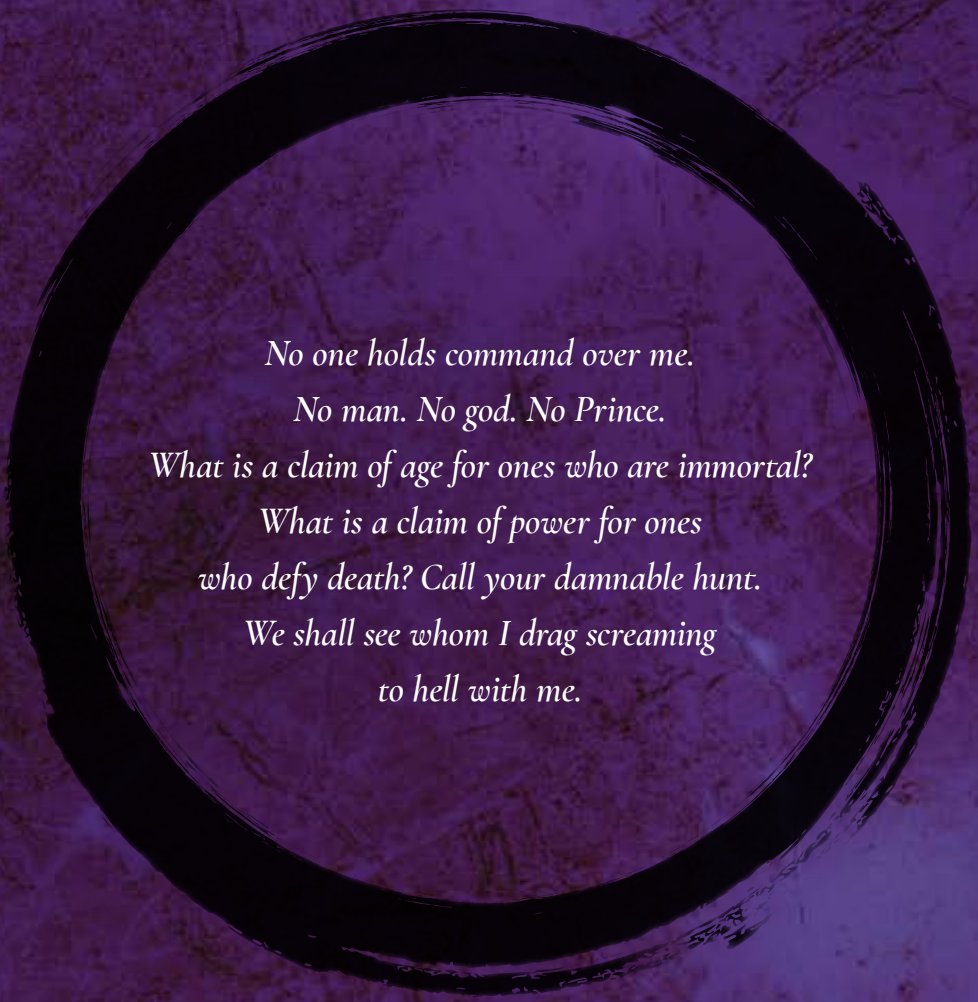

No one holds command over me.
No man. No god. No Prince.
What is a claim of age for ones who are immortal?
What is a claim of power for ones
who defy death? Call your damnable hunt.
We shall see whom I drag screaming
to hell with me.

A Storytelling game of personal and political horror.

FIFTH EDITION

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R 18+

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