Vampire: The Masquerade

A Storytelling Game of Personal Horror

By becoming a monster, one learns what it is to be human

By Mark Rein•Hagen

Vampire TM Game system

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A special thanks to:

Anne Köhlhofer and Andreas Wichter for that very first **Vampire** game session.

Attention: *Reader discretion is advised. The themes and issues described in this game may be disturbing to some and distasteful to others. Though our purpose is not to offend, our use of the vampire as a metaphor and as a channel for storytelling may be misconstrued. To be clear, vampires are not real. The extent to which they may be said to exist is revealed only in what they can teach us of the human condition and of the fragility and splendor which we call life.*

Dedication

This game is dedicated to Vaclav Havel poet, playwright and statesman who was its inspiration.

"We are still under the sway of the destructive and vain belief that man is the pinnacle of creation, and not just a part of it, and that, therefore, everything is permitted.... We are incapable of understanding that the only genuine backbone of our actions if they are to be moral is responsibility. Responsibility to something higher than my family, my country, my firm, my success. Responsibility to the order of Being, where all our actions are indelibly recorded and where, and only where, they will be properly judged."

Vaclav Havel, in a speech to the United States Congress

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Monsters, Monsters, Everywhere...

They crowd our imagination. They hide under our beds. They lurk within the dark recesses of our primal unconscious. You can't run, you can't hide - it's going to get you. The beast, the ravager, the *Lusus Natura*. What is it, and why do we fear it?

What is its name?

We have always had our Fiends. They have long fired the romantic imagination of priest and poet alike. At one time we called them Trolls; later they were named Demons, and then they were Witches who brewed evil potions. Still later, the Monster was said to be the hungry Wolf, the Bogeyman, or the Godzilla of Cold War terror. Finally, some called it human ignorance and intolerance. For a time, they tried to tell us that monsters don't exist at all, that everything about the universe was either known or would soon be known.

But now we know better. We have made our reacquaintance with the Beast. We have learned its true name.

Now we understand the expanse of eternity, its unimaginable infinitude, the chaos of its structure, and our own petty insignificance. Now we have admitted the magnitude of the problems we face and our seeming inability to affect change on the scale necessary to save us.

Today we have caught a glimpse of reality, and have seen the truth behind the veil. We have come full circle and rediscovered the Fiend. We have regained our ancient heritage. We have found that to which we have given so many names - the source of our mortal terror.

We have found the enemy...and it is us.

We are searchers, forever looking for the uncomfortable truth of our human condition, searching within ourselves for that which is unclean, uncertain or impure - for that which has no name. By looking at the monsters we create, we gain new insights into our "darker half." These fiends express what we are at the deepest and most inaccessible levels of our unconscious. Since time immemorial, they have given us a connection to our animal self, the fulfillment of an unadulterated emotional vitality, and the promise of a brutal justice.

The vampire is the quintessential fiend, for the vampire is so much our own reflection. Vampires feed as we feed, by killing, and through death can feel the same dread, guilt and longing for escape. They are trapped in the same cycle of fast, feast and purge. They, like us, seek redemption, purity and peace. The vampire is the poetic expression of our deepest fears, and the shadow of our most primal urges.

Just as the hero of legend must descend into the pit of Purgatory to face the tormentor, overcome personal weaknesses, and finally be cleansed in order to return home with the gift of fire, so must we descend into the depths of our own soul and return to life with the secrets we have won. That is the real journey of Prometheus. It is the meaning of the myth. Only by embarking on such a journey can we discover our true selves and thereby look into the mirror.

The lure of this promise of spiritual connection is well-nigh irresistible. But, in the end, it is a most disturbing undertaking. You must take heed and step carefully - for no journey is ever without its perils. Do not look into your own soul, unless you are willing to confront what you find there.

So remember:

There are no such things as monsters....

The Damned

Where to begin? So much ink has been spilled down the centuries. I am constantly amazed by the regularity with which you mortals stumble across truths and half-truths - sometimes very profound ones - by the most haphazard and fallacious thinking; and then, unaware of what you have uncovered, proceed to expound generalities of entirely the wrong order.

We are monsters to thee, yet heroes as well. We are the incarnations of dark metaphors and suppressed desires, yet we are also the nobility of fairy tales, beloved of children. We are a baseless superstition, an artistic genre, a psychological condition, a yearning made flesh, an externalization of a guilt-lust-violence complex, and many other things beside.

Our True Nature

Some two and a half centuries ago, a French churchman named Calmet sought to collect all the information *extant* on the nature of vampires. It is not surprising, then, that his treatise contains many contradictions and areas of uncertainty. Quoting from the reports of Papal Commissions sent out to deal with 'plagues' of vampires in Austria, Hungary, Moravia, and Silesia, he reports that a vampire may be destroyed by being transfixed with a wooden stake, followed by decapitation and the burning of the remains. This will indeed destroy a vampire, just as certainly as it would destroy a mortal. Such a clever man, Calmet.

Motion pictures have abbreviated this treatment somewhat, creating the fallacy that the stake is sufficient. Do not believe such tales. Transfixing its heart on a stake will immobilize a vampire, but some further treatment is

necessary *terminus sit*. Whether this be burning or sunlight, *ist egal*; but trust not the stake alone. Neither should you place your faith in weapons of metal, as did your American friend. Such things injure, but the wounds heal quickly - else I should not be writing now.

Sunlight, it is said, is infallible doom to my kind. Motion pictures show motley greasepaint vampires crumbling to dust at Sol's caress, or bursting into flames like those doused with Greek Fire. Sadly, this is true, if somewhat overstated. Sunlight burns our skin as does flame, and only the oldest and strongest can withstand it for long.

Thus we must sleep during the day and act only at night. During the day we are very sluggish, and find it difficult to do anything besides sleep. Only those of us who have not left our human nature very far behind are capable of taking action when the sun is in the sky. I myself have not seen the light of day in many centuries, and have nearly forgotten the gleam of the sun's golden rays. But I do not miss it.

Crosses, holy water, and the other trappings of religion may be ignored - the Church is the first refuge of mortals faced by things beyond their comprehension, especially in former times. *Ipso dicto*, however, I have seen rare occasions where such items were capable of causing considerable discomfort - their wielder almost glowed with faith in the Divinity, and I can only conclude that the religious items served somehow to channel the power of that faith. Ignore the tricks of the cinema, however, with their crossed candlesticks and shadows of windmills' sails.

The reputed properties of garlic, aconite and other herbs are likewise mere superstition. They repel vampires no more than they do mortals, for all the canting of the goodwives who peddle them. Like the Church, the village wisewoman was oft required to use her 'magic' against vampires, and was just as successful.

Film-makers have made other fallacious legends part of the common parlance. For instance, we can see our own reflections in the mirror, though some of us pretend otherwise in honor of the great cinematic tradition. Likewise, we can appear on film. Indeed, some of my kind have appeared in movies, and one was even a director of no little repute.

It is equally ludicrous to presume that a vampire would not be able to travel about as he would like. We Cainites (one of our race's terms for ourselves, the origin of which I shall later discuss) may enter any house and home we please at any time. It is likewise preposterous to think a vampire would not be able to cross running water. Indeed, water affects us not at all. We no longer breathe, hence we cannot drown. While being trapped underwater is unpleasant and may, if prolonged, result in some physical deterioration, no vampire has died of immersion alone, although some bloodlines are rumored to have a weakness *vis-a-vis* water. Belike this is how many of the rumors originated, for weaknesses have arisen in several bloodlines and have been passed down from Sire to Get.

The cinematic vampire, it seems, may take several forms if the human shape suits not his purpose: wolf, bat, mist - in some legends, cat and night-bird also. The powers of the Elders are considerable, and they are seldom found in those of later generation. I have seen many wonders during my brief and unwilling involvement in their game of Jyhad, and I no longer discount the stories of shape-shifting. But I tell you this - a vampire who has plural forms will either be of a rare breed, the Gangrel clan, or will be very old, very wise and very powerful. I pray that

such a one will never cross your path.

Many of us, however, have abilities which a mortal would consider supernatural. As predators, our senses are sharp, and some have developed other talents to aid in the hunt. One example - the ability to inspire fear, stillness, obedience and other emotional responses - is a useful one, although popular writers have embellished it somewhat in the interests of their stories.

The Ghouls

It occurs to me that some of the confusion about a vampire's supernatural powers and weaknesses may be due to mistaken identity. There exists a class of creature in between mortal and vampire, which the Kindred (another of our self-referential sobriquets, and the most popular) have named Ghoul. It is not the legendary corpse-eating *ghûl* of the Indies, although certain individuals may display similar behavior.

Mortals who drink the blood of the Kindred without first being drained will become Ghouls. These creatures may go abroad in daylight as other mortals do, but they do not suffer the Hunger, nor do they age as long as they feed on vampiric blood regularly. They may even have superhuman strength and reflexes. From time to time, it is advantageous to create such servants, commanding their loyalty through the promise of eternal life. They need not even be human - a hound that has drunk of one's blood becomes the most perfect and faithful guardian one could desire. Thus do tales of hell-hounds arise.

While Ghouls display some of the strengths of the vampire, they retain most of the weaknesses of the mortal. Impalement will slay Ghouls as effectively as mortals, and a lead bullet will kill as surely as a silver one. They may even develop a fear of religious trappings, or garlic, or what you will - a purely neurotic phenomenon, based on the fact that they *believe* these things can harm them. The existence of Ghouls in animal form may partially explain the widespread belief in shape-changing vampires.

Some Ghouls may well believe themselves full-fledged vampires, having been deceived to that end by their creators. They may even act according to their mistaken ideas - to the point of drinking blood - for they seldom understand the ways of the Kindred any better than mortals. Most are deranged to some extent by the experiences they have suffered - witness, *zum Beispiel*, your late husband's employer - and many are deliberately misinformed by their masters, the better to serve them.

The Embrace

Mortal superstitions deal at great length with the means by which a vampire may come into existence. These range from the predictably religious to the utterly bizarre, and can make an entertaining evening's reading if one is so inclined. Other than entertainment, however, they serve little purpose.

The first and most common of these myths is the legend that anyone bitten by a vampire will himself become a vampire. Thus, each time a vampire feeds, it creates another of its kind. One wonders how it is that any mortals are left in the world. Furthermore, a corpse may become a vampire if it was a suicide, an oathbreaker, a member of a

tainted bloodline, or *de tout* an evil person. Again, the globe would be peopled with nothing but vampires -and I tell you this, I have not seen this army of undead.

Indeed, to my understanding, there are not many of us upon this globe. To my knowledge, there is only one means through which a mortal may become a vampire. Shame fills me again when I recall that I intended this fate for you, and I rejoice that Providence denied me. Truly do I repent the eternity of sorrow which so nearly was your destiny.

There is a grain of truth in the legend *de gustando*. To become a vampire, one must lose all one's mortal blood - but that is only part of the horror. *Mortui exsanguinati mortui veri*, if nothing further is done; the fang will kill as everlastingly as the blade or the bullet.

As mortality stands on the brink of extinction, as the flesh slowly dies, the vampire assailant may choose to spare the victim from death or deny Heaven's grace, for all is one *his rebus*. By replacing the stolen mortal blood with a little of the vampire's own, a Progeny is created. But a single drop of blood upon the lips of the dying arouses him sufficiently to drink from the wrist of his Sire.

How can I express the horror of the Embrace? The fear and confusion? The revulsion and terror? The pain? Even the passing of centuries has not dulled the memory.

Understand that I am no coward. As a soldier, I endured the privations of the camp, the perils of battle, the savagery of the victor, of which I plead guilty to my share, for such was the *Zeitsmode*. But even those things I witnessed as a prisoner of the Turks could not have prepared me for the experience of being hurled into this cursed half-life.

I was, *de gratia potestates descriptis*, in a most peaceful state of mind as my blood was stolen. As deaths go -and I have seen many kinds - this was surely the least distressing. It was as though my experience was a strange and somewhat unsettling dream. Far off in the warm, soft darkness of my failing mind, I became aware of a light; I knew that this was where I must go, and I knew that, once I arrived there, all would be well with me. I began to drift toward it.

Abruptly the welcoming light was extinguished. My face felt an impact like a musket-ball, and as I tried to scream, my mouth filled with liquid fire. The vitriol seared my throat and stomach; consciousness returned as though it would rend me limb from limb. A thousand fishhooks tore my flesh in every direction.

I prayed for death - anything to stop the pain -but I could not even lapse from consciousness. *Nec Turcos, nec Inquaesitores* ever commanded such torment. Magnify a thousandfold the sting of vinegar on a cut finger, and flood the feeling through every limb and every vein. Add to this the gnawing, starving ache of five days' forced march without food or water. Deny sleep, swooning or any other surcease from the all-consuming *dolor*. But no. My meager wordsmithing can convey nothing of it.

I knew only that I must drink, and as I did so the pain abated a little. My eyes cleared, and I saw what it was that I drank.

My first reaction was denial. This could not possibly be happening. Even in the fifteenth century, men of education and breeding scoffed at the superstitions of the peasant. As a child, my nurses had frightened me to sleep with stories of the terrible *vrolok*, but I had outgrown such tales long before. This was a nightmare, an hallucination

of some kind. I tried to focus on thoughts of meat, fruit, wine - but to no avail. Blood was all. Blood was reality. All else was discarded.

I can only be thankful that I was in a remote place. Had I been Embraced in a city, with people all around, there is no telling what havoc might have ensued. The Hunger blotted out reason entirely. Had my own son appeared before me then, he would have died to feed the Hunger, for I was utterly enslaved to it. No opium fiend in a Limehouse or Shanghai den was ever so helplessly, so wretchedly dependent.

I cry for mercy. The memory - and the recollection of what followed - distresses me, and I shall not continue the narrative. Instead, I shall address another, but related, topic.

Anatomia Vampirica

Though our external appearance remains much like that of the living, there are those among us who insist that the Change transforms its subject into another species *Homo Sapiens Sanguineus*, *Homo Sapientissimus*, and *Homo Vampiricus* have all been advanced as names for this new race, following the Swedish classification.

Be that as it may, it seems beyond dispute that the body undergoes as much of a change as the psyche. As will become apparent, much of what follows is - and can only be - conjecture, unsupported by dissection.

The gross physical changes are a matter of common knowledge, so much so that we have allowed them to remain in popular fiction. The canine teeth are indeed long and pointed, the better to draw blood. However, they are only fully extended at the time of the kill, being at other times withdrawn into their sockets by the contraction of a flexible tissue at their base. Both speech and secrecy would be most difficult otherwise. Some lack the means to withdraw their teeth, but they are easily discovered and are a dying clan.

To feed, we merely need to bite, retract the teeth from the wound, and begin to drink. If we lick the wound after we drink, then no trace of out feeding will remain. Indeed, if we lick any wound which we have caused with our claws or fangs, we can heal it completely.

Our own skin, as with the cinematic vampire, is invariably pale. Partly, it seems, this stems from our aversion to sunlight, but it is also due to our arrested state of death. *Darüber noch später.*

Our Hunger is a drive for sustenance, of that there can be no doubt. From this, and from bitter experiences with the foods I most enjoyed in my breathing days, it appears that the inward parts of the vampire have lost their facility for digestion. One seldom sees a stout vampire, and nearly all remark on a newfound slenderness after the Change. Being no longer required, the organs presumably wither.

The vampire's body remains as it was at the time of death. Hair and nails continue to grow for a few days, as they do on a fresh cadaver, but that is all. If I wish my hair or nails to be shorter, I must cut them each evening after I rise. It is my conjecture that the body of the vampire is actually dead, and is only arrested from the natural process of decay by the power of the Change. The skin becomes a little tighter over the bones, much as it does in the newly dead.

The lungs of a vampire no longer breathe - though many have learned to feign breathing while among the living - for the fresh blood of the prey provides the small amount of oxygen needed to sustain the dead tissues in their stasis. Only a young or foolish vampire takes blood from the jugular vein, where it is near the end of its journey and full of impurities; the blood of the carotid artery is clean and wholesome, and much to be preferred.

Just as the lungs no longer breathe, so the heart no longer beats. The blood of prey somehow suffuses through the body by a process of osmosis, rather than flowing along veins and arteries. This can be seen in the fact that when a vampire weeps - which indeed we do, and more often than a mortal might suppose - the tears themselves are of blood. Cut a vampire's throat, and you will find the vessels empty. The closure and atrophy of those blood vessels nearest the skin is another reason for the pallid complexion which marks the vampire, although a rosy hue is noticeable after feeding.

The blood of the prey, coupled with the blood of the Sire, does appear to have some remarkable properties. We are able to heal ourselves of most wounds with remarkable quickness. We still feel pain, and a reflex sends blood to the afflicted area - just as in life, blood will suffuse bruised tissue and colour it purple. The one exception to this rule is the stake so beloved of writers and film-makers. This will induce a kind of paralysis or trance, although it will not kill in its own right. Quite why this is so is unknown to me, for the heart no longer beats and so is not necessary to pump the flow of blood. I have heard various mystical explanations of this phenomenon, but must confess myself at a loss to explain it rationally.

The body no longer makes and replenishes its own blood, and relies entirely on prey for fresh blood and the nutrients which Science has found blood to carry. Something in the blood of the Sire, passed down through the Change, fans the spark of Life and arrests decay, but regular infusions of fresh blood are needed lest decay begin again. And when a vampire is destroyed, that decay is fantastically swift, as though Time were recalling the debt of decades or centuries. Nothing remains but dust, which is why anatomical study is impossible and so much must be guessed.

We are able to heal our wounds using this blood upon which we feed. We are able to use it to regenerate whole limbs and organs, given time and need. Regeneration always restores us to the physical state we possessed when we died, including hair length, face shape, body weight - everything. When the body is injured, it will reform itself in the same mold again and again. We are already dead, and so cannot die except through the forces of life - the eternal sun and the primordial flame.

One last question remains *in re corporis* - a somewhat prurient one, which I shall answer with as much delicacy as I may. Through the popular entertainments, the vampire has become established as a highly potent figure of romance - and betimes of more than romance. While the act of love is physically possible for a vampire of either sex, the associated impulses, drives and responses have died along with the flesh - which, incidentally, is cold to the touch rather than warm. By effort of will we may go through the motions, forcing blood to the relevant areas in the same way as healing a wound, but that is all. The ecstasy of the Kiss replaces all such needs within us. Blood is the only object of our desire.

The Hunger

To live as a vampire is to live with horror. Always squatting on one's shoulder like a warlock's fiend is the knowledge of the Hunger. And always, always, does it approach - sometimes slowly and surreptitiously, sometimes with great haste, but always ravenously. The Hunger can never fully be satiated.

Hunger, we call it, but the term is woefully inadequate. Mortals know hunger, even starvation, but this is as nothing. The Hunger replaces almost every need, every drive known to the living - food, drink, reproduction, ambition, security - and it is more compelling than all of them combined.

More than a drive, it is a drug, one to which we are born with a hopeless addiction. In the taking of blood lies not only our survival, but also a pleasure beyond description. The Hunger is a physical, mental and spiritual ecstasy which throws all the pleasures of mortal life into shadow.

To be a vampire is to be trapped by the Hunger. The Beast may only be kept subdued by the greatest effort of will; to deny the Hunger enrages the Beast, until nothing may keep it in check. Thus we must commit monstrous acts to stop ourselves from becoming monsters - that is the Riddle. *Monsters we are, lest monsters we become.*

That is the paradox of our life. It is the curse of my own.

The Beast

The Beast rages constantly for release, and only the strongest will may hold it back. Sometimes it break its bonds, and runs riotous until it is recaptured. The strain of self-control, and the shameful memories of failed control, are hard enough to bear. Worse still is the knowledge, constant as the Hunger, that these things will surely happen again. Over the decades and centuries, this awareness gnaws at the mind like a rat at a ship's cable.

To be a vampire is to live on the edge of madness. Obsessive devotion to some self-appointed task can help keep despair from the mind, and if the task is one of great goodness, it is possible to reason that the end justifies the means. Some deliberately cultivate addictions, such as gambling or collecting art. Others shut themselves away and confine their hunting to a small, sparsely-populated area, telling themselves that they are protecting the rest of the world. These things can perhaps delay the onset of madness, but they can also provide it with its first foothold.

Ultimately, hard as we may strive against it, madness awaits us. The flame of Humanity ebbs and sputters until finally it is extinguished. Then the Beast is victorious, and monsters we become in truth. The Beast resides within the heart, and directs us towards evil, but when it overtakes the halls of the soul, then shall we *be* evil.

Some speak of *Golconda*, the vampire's Salvation. Both mortal and Kindred lore deny us Heaven's grace, but in Golconda we look for surcease from the Riddle. It is a stasis, where an individual may balance the Man and the Beast against each other so that striving is no longer needful. The descent into madness is halted, and although the individual is no longer recognizable as human in his thoughts and deeds, what remains of *Humanitas* is safe. In almost five centuries, I have met a meager few Kindred

who have reached this blessed state, but all desire it as mortals desire Heaven.

The Burdens of Immortality

We are, as the most cursory student of folklore knows, ageless and immortal. In this case, lore and tradition have the right of it. Once made, a vampire lives until actively destroyed, or until the Beast wins over the Man, or until, after countless millennia, the Blood is exhausted.

Down the centuries, mortals have hungered for the secret of immortality, thinking it would give them great power. From the priests of heathen times through the alchemists of my own breathing days and down to the physicians of the present, mortals have expended more wealth and effort in the war against aging and death than in the cause of any religion or trade.

Many newly made Kindred - myself included - rejoice in the thought of immortality when they first overcome the shock of the Change and begin to reconcile themselves to their new situation. Yet it is a barbed gift, and another door by which madness may enter in.

Consider, for example, having to watch your loved ones - even your children and grandchildren - grow old and die, while you remain strong and vigorous. There is a necessity to live completely outside mortal society, or at least to move on every decade or so, lest it be noticed that you do not age. The tide of history flows over you like a stream, leaving you unchanged.

The longer one lives as a vampire, the greater the sense of detachment from mortal affairs. It can be an advantage at first, helping to deaden the guilt of killing and the pain of losing one's mortal family to remorseless Time. But as detachment grows, Humanitas wanes, and the Beast grows stronger. The most terrible of mortal serial killers often are detached from their kind, *atrocitates tranquilliter gestandae*. It is the same face on a different coin, as the Turks would say.

Even if one can fight off this dehumanizing *verschiedenskeit*, Time lends madness other weapons. For without detachment, guilt and remorse may work unchecked, eating at the feelings like acid eating metal. Mortal soldiers return from foreign wars wounded by the violence they have seen and done, yet they have only to live with their memories for a few brief decades. A vampire's guilt is eternal, and time can sap the strongest will. Another face of the Riddle: we may lose our Humanity to avoid losing our minds, yet what is madness but lost Humanity? *Sooner or later,* grins the Beast, *you shall be mine.*

A further paradox - we grow stronger as we grow weaker. The older a vampire, the more powerful - the more cunning to have lived so long, the better versed and practiced in certain arts and powers, the better able to withstand those things that are anathema to us. And, perhaps, the stronger of will, not to have become a monster. Yet the weaker, for the Beast tries the bars of its prison ceaselessly, and in time they must yield. The oldest shut themselves away from the rest of their kind, fearing the day when they shall become monsters and distracting themselves with paranoid games of cat's-paw using younger Kindred as playing-pieces.

Vita Sub Tenebras

There are other reasons for our nocturnal life besides the need to avoid the sun's rays. It is so much easier to stalk and hunt in the hours of darkness. *Imprimis*, the prey is usually dulled by fatigue - and betimes drink - and can see little in the poor light. The hunter, on the other hand, is normally fresh and fully rested, and can often see as well as a mortal does at noonday. *Secundus*, the hours of darkness are less populous, and promise fewer interruptions. Feeding is a vulnerable time; the Beast is near the surface, and may stand at bay rather than leave a kill. This has been the undoing of more than one Neonate.

The Origins of the Kindred

Like mortals, we have our own history and lore, by which we seek to explain our existence and understand our place in the world. Just as the veracity of your legends is lost in the shrouds of history, so is the truth of our lore uncertain. However, over the years I have unearthed a number of different sources, and through painstaking study, I believe I have arrived at some semblance of fact and truth.

Most of our lore is contained within an ancient text known as the *Book of Nod*. Neither any of my acquaintances nor I has ever seen or heard of a complete copy, although fragments have been unearthed over the centuries, *multis linguis, multis causis*. There is much confusion and contradiction, and some versions appear to have been deliberately falsified.

Over the centuries, I have been fortunate to peruse fragments in Greek, Turkish, Aramaic, Latin and *Hebraica Quabalistica*, as well as translations from Old Kingdom hieroglyphics and Assyrian cuneiform. Inconsistencies are rife, but the main body of the tale states that my kind is descended from Caine, whom some call The Third Mortal.

Outcast from mortal society for the killing of his brother, Caine was cursed with eternal life and a craving for blood. We, his children, are the heirs to that curse, condemned to repeat his crime endlessly.

Caine wandered in the wilderness until his name was all but forgotten. He returned to the world of mortals and was able to establish himself as the ruler of a city, by the name of Enoch, Uniech, Enkil or what you will. Many Kindred call it the First City. Here, Caine created three Progeny - those whom we call the Second Generation. They in turn begot the Third Generation, who are numbered at nine, twenty-seven, one hundred or none at all, according to the source one reads. Caine forbade the creation of any further Kindred, perhaps having gained some understanding of what he had unleashed upon the world. There is no word of any Kindred establishing Caine's rule elsewhere, and if they all remained in the First City, their increasing numbers must have strained the mortal population.

All was tranquil in Caine's domain until a great flood destroyed the city. Caine saw this as divine punishment for returning to the world of mortals, and resumed his wanderings, leaving his Progeny to their own devices. Though he forbade them to create more, they ignored his imperative as each of his Progeny desired a Brood of its own.

No more is heard of our ancestor, although from time to time, a vampire calling himself Caine will appear in some part of the world or another. Occasionally, he is revealed as an impostor, but more often he vanishes as suddenly as he appeared. Some believe that Caine still lives, while others - myself included - think it more likely to be some subterfuge of the Elders. It is said that Caine is rent with sorrow for having unleashed such misery and suffering upon the world.

Once free of Caine's restrictions, the Second and Third Generations created a great multitude of Progeny. They ruled together briefly, but all was not calm between them. Eventually, the youngest Generations rose and slew their Sires, drinking their blood. This Fourth Generation built another great city (some sources hint that it might have been Babylon, while others suggest that it rests somewhere beneath the sands of Egypt) which we know only as the Second City.

The rule of these new vampires was not untroubled, for certain Kindred of the Third Generation still lived. Indeed, some say they were secretly behind the slayings of their Elders. It was decreed that they alone reserved the right to beget Progeny, and that any of the Fourth Generation who disobeyed them were to be hunted down and killed along with their Sires. Though the Fourth Generation lived in public, the Third Generation, whom we know today as the Antediluvians, lived in secret and revealed to no one the location of their havens. For nearly two millennia (some say 23 centuries), the Fourth Generation ruled the city, while the Third Generation ruled them. Eventually, the culture grew decadent and the city died. In a great uprising, the people rose up and killed all the Kindred they could find.

When the Second City fell, its rulers fled. Scattered far and wide, they were too numerous and too widespread for the hidden Elders of the Third Generation to threaten them, and thus was begot the Fifth Generation. The Kindred grew in numbers and settled in all parts of the world.

Mortal history records a time, beginning over two thousand years ago, of burgeoning empires locked in combat with one another - the time of the Persians, the Greeks and the Tartars. Thus did the Fifth Generation establish its own order. Meanwhile, the Antediluvians lay hidden and pursued their own mad schemes. This age of wars may even have been of their making, the beginning of their great Jyhad. Whatever the truth, almost none remain to speak of it. I myself have met only one of the Fifth Generation, and at the time I did not know it.

It is said by some that near the end of this period, the Antediluvians emerged from their hiding places and sucked the blood of all my kind, each leaving but one new Progeny of their line. This legend has it that this was the close of the Second Cycle, that the Antediluvians' lust for blood was so great that they needed all of my race as their Vessels.

Those who believe in the Cycle legends predict an Armageddon in the near future. They say that the Antediluvians are asleep now, but someday they will awaken and then they will feed. The Third Cycle is coming to a close, and none but the Third Generation will remain alive at its conclusion. The true believers say that each Cycle lasts 2300 years, and soon, very soon, the time approaches. They call it Gehenna, and some prepare for it fervently. As a man of science, these beliefs seem extreme to me, but they cannot be entirely discounted.

Whatever the truth of the matter, I know that the Elders of the Fifth and older Generations exist in complete seclusion. Those of the Inconnu fear one another that much. To have lived this long, they must be cunning and powerful, and they may be expected to cover their tracks well. This leaves my own Sixth Generation and its descendants as the bulk of the visible Kindred. I have heard claims of a Thirteenth or Fourteenth Generation, but prefer to dismiss them. Such creatures must be very weak and close to mortality, for it is said that the Blood thins as it is passed from one generation to the next.

The Masquerade

In 1435, there was founded an organization, a cause, an obsession, a war. Call it what you will; history knows it as the Inquisition. Besides burning harmless old women and excommunicating French field mice for eating farmers' wheat, this Inquisition did betimes achieve its aim, and cleansed the world of no few true witches, warlocks and monsters. Many such monsters were Kindred, and the diligent Inquisitors traced whole bloodlines and put all to the flame.

For the first time, our kind stood in real danger of extinction. Superstitious belief coupled with scientific thoroughness placed in mortal hands the wherewithal to rid the world of monsters forever. It was a terrifying time - as insane to us as the Holocaust which mortals visited on one another earlier in this century. Those Kindred who survived bear the mental scars of the Inquisition to this day, and many live a life of paranoid seclusion, dealing with the breathing world as little as possible.

Before this time, we had lived more or less openly, relying on our power and position to preserve us. Though we did not announce our presence, we did not struggle to hide it either. We had grown proud in our power, and the fall which followed was terrible indeed.

The survivors quickly learned the wisdom of stealth and secrecy, and networks sprang up as they do among mortals in times of crisis, conveying information and individuals *sub rosa* for the safety of all. This was the birth of what may be called a Vampiric society.

The name *Camarilla* arose for this organization, reflecting the small, secret rooms used for meeting and concealment. Groups made contact with one another, united for the first time by this adversity.

The first global convocation took place in 1486. Many chose to absent themselves, but this meeting gave itself the power to speak for all Kindred existing or yet to be made, and to pass laws governing all. The founders of the Camarilla made themselves its lawmakers. The first such law, and the most sacred, is that of the Masquerade. It is this law which I willingly violate by laying these pages before you.

The horrors of the preceding decades had taught us the need for secrecy and shown us that, after all, we were vulnerable. It was vital, therefore, that the breathing world be convinced it had killed the last of us, or, better yet, that we had never existed at all. We must match organization with organization and cause with cause if we hoped to survive.

The Masquerade had two faces, each with a number of contingencies and lesser objectives. *Imprimis simplicissimusque,* reasonable secrecy and care was required of all Kindred.

Nothing must betray our continued existence, and any individual who broke this secrecy would be outcast and hunted down as a danger to all.

Secundus, active steps must be taken to change the character of mortal society, and direct minds away from superstitious thoughts. Many of the Kindred had turned to scholarship to beguile the lonely decades, and certain matters were made available to the *Taggänger* in the fields of alchemy, literature, art, geography, cosmology *und so weiter*. Many mortals were already turning their steps in this direction, so the task was not unduly arduous. Names spring to mind such as Bacon, Dee, Galileo, Copernicus, Ariosto, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Cellini, and Columbus. It was a brave Age we made.

With so many fresh discoveries clamouring for attention, the mortals lost their single-mindedness in chasing monsters. A little later - principally due to an alliance of French Methuselahs - material and political philosophies were influenced. Science had bred Reason, and Reason denied monsters. Over the following centuries, we were able to crush superstition almost completely. No one of any education seriously believed we had ever existed.

Adjustments continued over the decades a war here, a discovery there to keep breathing minds focused away from us. We have had a hand in some of the most significant events in history. Do not, however, think that all your history is our work, for marionettes you are not and have never been. Marx was of your kind, and no vampire could have formulated his thoughts. Brief decades later, monstrous deeds were performed in Europe, but none of my kind were involved. Those monsters were entirely your own.

Not long ago, mortal minds turned once more to the mystical - though the greatest mystery to me is the appeal of the music which was born in those days - and superstition briefly waxed ascendant. The knowledge of certain chemical substances was made available, and many inquisitive minds were distracted or forever silenced. Throughout this last century, steps have been taken to preserve the image of the vampire in popular entertainments, for thus it may be seen more clearly as a fiction. The Masquerade is unraveling, as the mysticism of the mortals increases. The Camarilla struggles to turn back the tide - the evidence of that is all around you.

Childer

Comical as it may seem, there is a generation gap among vampires just as there is in mortal society. The younger vampires - primarily those Embraced in the latter half of this century and those of the most recent generations - include an element which chafes at the restrictions of Kindred society and laws. Like rebellious adolescents, these "anarchs," as they call themselves, demand their freedom and ignore the effects on the rest of their kind. They would create their own Broods without restraint, deny the authority of Princes, break the laws of the Masquerade, and do a hundred other things which would force the knowledge of our existence upon the mortal world.

The Elders, and many other Kindred, do not take kindly to this attitude, and in some places a virtual state of war exists between them. Some see this as a sign of the end of the current Cycle, and speak of our imminent extinction.

These anarchs do not believe that they are being told the truth by the Elders, and they know that they are not being told all about their situation. The Elders do not trust the anarchs, fearing that they seek to slay them.

The World of the Undead

On one level, the world of the vampire is the world of mortals. A vampire moves in the world of mortals much as a nobleman moves in the forest of beasts while hunting. Just as the noble has his castles and courts, however, so the vampire has a world of his own, where he may consort with his own kind.

Some vampires shun the society of their Kindred, but such society exists, paralleling mortal society in both function and form. Just as there are mortal rulers and mortal societies in the world's great cities, so too there are vampire Clans and Princes.

Most Kindred seek Princedom, for it is the only means by which to create a Brood of one's own. Princes do not often allow others to create Progeny, and even if they do, they are allowed to create only one. A Prince may create as many Progeny as he wishes and their loyalty adds to his strength.

It would be fatuous to list and describe every Clan, Prince and Fief in the world. Suffice it to say that every mortal city of any size supports a vampire population, and these populations are organized in a number of different ways. Some rule collectively, others autocratically, but all rule and all resent intrusion. Like organized criminals and law enforcement agencies, they have structured their Domain to

their liking and suppress anything which threatens to disturb their peace.

Accordingly, a vampire who enters a new city is required by *höflichkeit* to make himself known to its rulers and satisfy them that their rule is not threatened or challenged. To fail in this courtesy is to invite war. No witch-hunter ever pursues his prey so diligently as a Clan or Prince seeks out a stranger *nouveau arrivé*.

Most rulers, I have said, are content to keep the peace in their Fief and pursue their own arcane ends. But there are exceptions. One is the league of Clans which calls itself the Sabbat, or the Black Hand. Their Fief extends across the eastern half of North America, and they are everything that mortals expect of monstrous vampires. Reveling in the violent, the perverse and the bestial, they are shunned by their own kind, and woe betide the incautious vampire whom they find in their territory.

Above the Clans stands the Camarilla. All vampires are aware of this league, and all are invited to join. To take an analogy *ex mundo vivantis* - if a Fief is a regional or national government, then the Camarilla is the League of Nations. To my mind, it is equally effective, but some set great store by its infrequent convocations. Certainly the Elders of the Council are not to be underestimated as individual powers - most are very old and all are very powerful. Primarily it enforces the ancient Traditions, most important among them the Masquerade, so soon enough I may have cause to test its resolve and strength.

The Clans all have their various alliances and oppositions, which shift as often and widely as those of the small countries of the mortal world. I have mentioned the protocols which must be observed when entering a Fief as

an outsider. These obligations and structures are no more than protocols, and may be broken from time to time; but there is a stronger bond - stronger even than the ties of blood kinship - whose *auctoritas* is absolute. It is the mystic tie we call the Oath, or the Blood Bond.

I have touched upon the power of Blood to create new Kindred and Ghouls. Its effect on Kindred is no less powerful. It is said to be the sweetest blood in the world, but it creates a potent bond between donor and drinker. A vampire who drinks another vampire's blood on three separate occasions becomes trapped in a blood kinship as strong as that between Sire and Get; in fact, many Sires force this bond upon their unknowing Get at the time of creation, the better to command their loyalty. Among the Kindred, the Oath is a most potent bond; to take the Oath is to give over one's mind and heart to another, and a willing Oath is never undertaken lightly. If all else fails and you have no other means of defence against a vampire, use my name - the chance is slender, but if your attacker happens to be Blood Bound to me, then you shall be safe.

Diablerie

By now, if my labours have been equal to my intent, it will be apparent to you that the society of the Kindred is as diverse as that of the living. We have our princes and paupers, our dreamers and men of action, our heroes and criminals, our idealists and our perverts. The matter I am about to disclose is little more than speculation, but increasingly I am inclined to believe the rumours.

I have said how the blood of the Sire empowers the blood of the prey, so that the body is sustained in its unlife. According to rumour, the blood of the Sire loses this power with the passing of centuries and millennia, and an exceptionally aged vampire must needs drink the blood of Kindred to survive. Although the decay of a mortal cadaver is spared us, time still takes a toll, and the Blood is not absolutely immortal. A young vampire of an early generation is able to subsist on the blood of animals, but as the centuries pass - or as the blood thins with transmission - first animal and then mortal blood loses its ability to sustain.

The Antediluvians are said to prey on the Kindred as we do on mortals, and there is no end to the stories of their depravity. Increasingly, though, rumours spread of younger Kindred doing likewise. The reason for this is unclear. Perhaps the youngest generations bear so little of the Blood that it serves them only for a few centuries, or perhaps they seek the powers of the Antediluvians by imitating their ways. I have long wondered if this is the cause of the war among my kind, the Jyhad which has lasted so long. The Antediluvians hide, for they fear that they will be killed by those seeking their blood and thus their power. The Elders fear the anarchs, for they fear that they shall be eaten by them as well. The anarchs fear all those who are older than they, for they know that they are prey to a most deadly predator. The conflict between my kind is a cannibalistic and horrific war indeed.

I have already mentioned the Oath, which is undertaken by drinking the blood of another vampire (usually one's Sire or Prince). It is known that taking the blood of one's own Get carries no such bond, and it seems also that the Antediluvians - and those others who habitually prey on their own kind - are able to do so without creating any kind of bond or obligation. This fact, more than anything,

makes the practice of Diablerie (as it has come to be known) a shocking and perverted thing to the Kindred, and any vampire who is a known Diabolist may be killed out of hand by any who find him. The Diabolist must hunt with care, for he stalks the most

dangerous game in the world. Doubtless some find a great exhilaration in this existence.

The Elders, needless to say, deny these rumours absolutely. To admit to such things would incite a revolution as terrible as the rising of the Fourth Generation. Yet there is evidence, which the diligent can find though the Antediluvians cover their tracks ever so carefully.

Last Plea

My discourse is at an end; my treachery complete. By now, I hope you will understand in some measure what impelled me to those acts I shall always rue and why I felt it necessary now to place this document before you. I cannot ask for your forgiveness - my crimes are too great. But if there be pity in your heart, pray for me.

You now know more about my kind than any mortal living - aye, even more than your friend the professor when he sought to destroy me. The use to which you put this knowledge I leave to your own conscience.

I have changed a great deal since we last met. For many years thereafter, I sought within myself for something inexpressible. Now, I believe I have found it, or am about to. If Golconda be truly within my reach, I may endure, for in the depths of introspection which prompted my writing, I have found a desire for *quietus* at any price. That was a partial reason for my discourse. I know full well that the knowledge I have imparted could lead to the destruction of myself and my kind. The will to live - if life this be - is too strong in any vampire to allow for a more direct suicide.

Whatever you decide, I wish you and yours well. I have followed the career of your son Quincy with great interest, and the lives of his children also. I rejoice that Fate stayed my beastly hand and ensured the welfare of your fine family. What a great comfort they must be to you.

In parting, may I presume to render my condolences on the regrettable death of your husband, of which I read in the *Times* of London. Your love for him is only too well-known to me. If the prayers of such a creature may be of any comfort, know that you have mine.

You shall hear no more from me unless you wish it. I say again, my service is yours to command. I can be reached through the personal columns of any major European newspaper; merely mention my name, and your own, and my retainers shall pass on your message to me.

Adieu.

Your most devoted and penitent servant,

Now, reader, I have told my dream to thee;

See if thou canst interpret it to me

Or to thyself, or neighbor. But take heed

Of misinterpreting; for that, instead

Of doing good, will but thyself abuse

By misinterpreting evil issues.

- John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

THE RIDDLE

Those eyes. Like the pits of damnation. Like orbs of black steel. I stare into them and I am lost. My mind screams for release. Fear - panic - flight! But my body does not respond. I cannot move.

His caress lingers on my face for a heartbeat and then his fingers drift around my neck. His eyes, so gentle - they offer me no mercy.

Why can't I scream?

Like a wolf he pounces. His fangs rake across my throat and pierce my skin. A blaze of heat: rapture. He licks at my essence as it pours from my gullet, then begins to suck. I cling to him like a drowning sailor, like a lover. My rock. My lust.

My senses spin into the night, reaching out for solid ground. I clutch at the lapel of his cloak. If there be a Heaven, I pray I go there soon. If there be a Hell, I know I am there now.

I feel my life slipping away. My eyes are blurring; I let out one last moan. Shutting out the world of darkness and pain, I rise up, leaving my twisting and heaving body. The last sand falls through the hourglass. It is calm here; I am at peace.

This be death, the unmaking

Heat! Pain! Confusion! I smell bitterness. The cold fragrance wrenches my soul from its rest. He holds his wrist toward me. Oozing life, its red gleam beckons to me. I know but one thing: I must drink to live.

Oh Lord pity me!

Like an animal, I lunge. Greedily I suck at his skin. The hot liquor caresses my mouth. I welcome its warmth. Nerves given up for dead return to painful vitality. I try to scream. The life flow continues unabated, filling me. The pain becomes ecstasy. Such exquisite, living agony. We become one.

What have I become?

With a cry, I grasp wildly for the source of life. It is gone. I collapse to the floor. The crash of broken glass resounds somewhere nearby. I am alone.

With the gift of life still heavy in my stomach, I sink into the realm of nightmares.

Chapter One: Introduction

Therefore with the same necessity with which the stone falls to earth, the hungry wolf buries its fangs in the flesh of its prey without the possibility of the knowledge that it itself is the destroyed as well as the destroyer.

- Schopenhauer

Vampire is a game of make-believe, of pretend, of storytelling. Although **Vampire** is a game, it is more about storytelling than it is about winning. If you've never done this kind of thing before, you may be confused by the whole premise of a storytelling game. Once you catch on to the basic concepts, however, you'll find that it isn't all that strange, and is, in fact, eerily familiar.

You, along with some of your friends, are going to tell stories of madness and lust. Tales of things that go bump in the night. Tales of peril, paranoia, and sinister, shadowy evil. Tales from the darkest recesses of our unconscious minds. And at the heart of these stories are vampires.

These stories will capture your imagination far more readily than any play or movie; likewise, they are of a darker nature than the children's fairy tales you might remember (although those too were rather grim if you think back). This is because you are *inside* the story and not just watching it. You are creating it as you go along, and the outcome is always uncertain.

This game provides a way to experience a horror of an all too immediate nature, for you experience the terror from the *other* side of the mirror. The horror of **Vampire** is the legacy of being half a beast, trapped in a world of no absolutes, where morality is chosen, not ordained. The horror of **Vampire** is the evil within, and the all-consuming lust for warm blood.

Perhaps the greatest danger of playing **Vampire** is that of seeing yourself in the mirror. To play this game you must face the madness within you, that which you strive to master and overcome, but cannot bear to face.

Unless you are willing to face the reflection of your *own* imperfections then go no further. Madness as well as wisdom rewards those who dare to gaze into eternity.

Storytelling

Long ago, before movies, TV, radio and books, people used to tell each other stories: tales of the hunt, legends of the gods and the great heroes, or gossip about the neighbors.

They would tell these stories aloud, as part of an oral tradition of storytelling, a tradition which, tragically, has been cast aside.

We no longer tell stories - we listen to them. We sit passively and wait to be picked up and carried to the world they describe, to the unique perception of reality they embrace. We have become slaves to our TVs, permitting an oligarchy of artists to describe to us our lives, our culture and our reality. Through the stories constantly being broadcast, our imaginations are being manipulated for better and, all too often, for worse.

However, there is another way. Storytelling on a personal level is becoming a part of our culture once again. That is what this game is all about: not stories told to you, but stories you will tell yourself. **Vampire** is about bringing stories home and making the ancient myths and legends a more substantial part of your life.

Storytelling allows us to understand ourselves by giving us a tool with which to explain our triumphs and defeats. By looking at our culture, our family and ourselves in new contexts, we can understand things we never realized before. It is entertaining because it is so revealing, and exhilarating because it is so true. Storytelling plays such an enormous role in our culture that it can't be accidental. Stories are somehow basic to our psychology. Our obsession with them has a purpose to it: of that there is no doubt. Storytelling is integral to our nature, and has an influence which cannot be denied.

Roleplaying

Vampire is not only a storytelling game, but a roleplaying game as well. You not only tell stories, but actually act through them by taking on the roles of the central characters. It's a lot like acting, only you make up the lines.

To understand roleplaying, you only have to go back to your childhood and those wonderful afternoons spent playing Cops 'n' Robbers, Cowboys and Indians, and Dress-up. What you were doing was roleplaying, a sort of spontaneous and natural acting that completely occupied your imagination. This play-acting helped you learn about

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life and what it meant to be a grown-up. It was an essential part of childhood, but just because you have grown up doesn't mean you have to stop.

In **Vampire**, unlike pretend, there are a few rules to help you roleplay. They are used mainly to avoid arguments - "Bang! Bang! You're dead!" "No I'm not!" - and to add a deeper sense of realism to the story. Rules direct and guide the progress of the story, and help define the capacities and weaknesses of the characters. The essential rules for **Vampire** are described in Chapter Four.

It is best to play **Vampire** with only a few players -five at the very most. It is far too personal a game to make it very enjoyable with a large group. Much of its mystery and flavor is lost when players must compete for attention. Indeed, we have found **Vampire** works best with a Storyteller and a troupe of only three players.

The Storyteller

Childhood is the place where nobody dies,

Nobody that matters, that is.

- Edna St. Vincent Millay

Vampire is structured a little differently than the games you might be used to. In the first place, there is no board or cards. Second, one player needs to be the Storyteller - the person who creates and guides the stories.

Being the Storyteller is something like being the Banker in *Monopoly*, except it is even more important. The Storyteller describes what happens as a result of what the players say and do, and must decide if the characters succeed or fail, suffer or prosper, live or die. It is a very demanding task, but is also most rewarding, for the Storyteller is a weaver of dreams.

The Storyteller's primary duty is to make sure the other players have a good time. The way to do that is to tell a good tale. Unlike traditional Storytellers, however, she doesn't simply tell the story; instead, she must create the skeleton of a story and then let the players flesh it out by living the roles of its leading characters. It is a careful balance between narration and adjudication, between story and game. Sometimes she must set the scene or describe what occurs (such as when the characters are asleep), but mostly she must decide what occurs in reaction to the words and actions of the characters - as realistically, impartially and creatively as she possibly can.

As the Storyteller, you are in charge of interpreting and enforcing the rules, yet you are also an entertainer -you must struggle to balance your two roles. Most of this book was written to help you do just that. It won't make being a Storyteller easy, because it never will be, but it will make you better at it.

The role of the Storyteller is explained in much more detail in Chapter Three.

The Players

Most of the people who play this game will not be Storytellers, but rather players, who assume the roles of the central characters in the story. Being a player does not require as much responsibility as being a Storyteller, but just as much effort and concentration.

As a player in a **Vampire** chronicle, you will take on the persona and role of a vampire, whom you invent and then roleplay over the course of a story. The life of your character is in your hands, for it is you who decides what the character says and does. You decide what risks to accept or decline. Everything you say and do when you play your character has an effect on the world.

You must be both an actor and a player. As an actor, you speak for your character and act out whatever you wish your character to do or say. Whatever you say, your character says, unless you are specifically asking a question of the Storyteller or are describing your actions. By announcing and describing to the other players what you are doing, you become a part of the ongoing story.

As a player, you try to do things which allow your character to succeed, so as to "win the game." This strategic element of the game is essential, for it is what so often creates the thrill and excitement of a dramatic moment.

Often after describing the actions "you" want to take, you will need to make dice rolls to see if you succeed in doing what you have illustrated with words. Your Character Traits, descriptions of your strengths and weaknesses, dictate how well you can do certain things. Actions are a basic element of **Vampire**, for they describe how characters change the world and affect the course of the story.

Characters are central to a story, for they create and direct the plot; without characters you can't have a story. As the story flows, the characters direct and energize the progress of the plot, not the decisions of the Storyteller.

To some extent, you are a Storyteller as well as a player, and should feel free to add ideas and elements to the story, though the Storyteller may accept or reject them as she sees fit. In the end, it is the story, not your character, which is the most important. The character is a tool for telling a good story, not the other way around.

Characters

There are many different elements which make up what we like to think of as the "self": too many, in fact, to truly separate or identify. In truth, we really don't know who or what we are. We know only that we contain multitudes - that we are both human and beast, angel and demon. We wear many masks. It is from this essential diversity of self that our desire and ability to pretend to be someone else originate.

We must recreate ourselves every morning and compose our identity from a number of different sources - from what our friends think of us, what our parents or children expect of us, and how we think our experiences should affect us - all in conjunction with the habits developed over a lifetime. Each day we balance all of our disparate selves and unite them into one working, talking, thinking whole. We pretend to be whole, and in the act of make-believe, we create the reality.

This is why it is impossible to fully leave yourself behind when you roleplay. Part of your character will certainly be different from yourself - in fact, quite frequently you will play someone with traits entirely different from your own - but always, in some essential way, that character will reflect some aspect of yourself.

Characters are the literary versions of a real person - they are not real, but they do capture some aspect of reality. Only when you enter the world that is woven by the story

can your characters become complete. They are real only with you as the animating force - the soul if you wish. Never treat

your characters as projections of yourself (even if that's all they are). Treat them as unique individuals, as works of art, or as fragile expressions of your poetic sensitivity. You must treasure the characters that you create.

Vampire characters are easy to create. It takes only a few minutes to work out all the traits and your character's basic personality, to get down all the numbers. However it will take some effort to make this collection of numbers into a living, breathing character. You must reach deep inside yourself to find enough that is real and true to produce a complete character. The Frankenstein monster was easily assembled from available body parts. It was the breath of life that proved difficult.

Character creation is discussed in greater detail in later chapters.

Broods

It is assumed that all of the characters will be allies, and that during the game they will operate as a group. This is not to say that they will always get along, but they will watch each other's backs and will share a few common ambitions. Such groups of vampires are not uncommon, and there are names for such gangs. Though the term "brood" once only meant the progeny of a single sire, it has also come to mean any group of young vampires who have banded together for mutual protection. The elders call broods "coteries," but this archaic term is no longer as commonly used as it once was. Whatever the name, it is this group that each and every character will come to depend upon. It is the brood that unites the characters and enables the players to work together throughout the story.

Winner and Losers

The dynamic principle of fantasy is play

- C.G. Jung

There is no single "winner" of **Vampire**, since the object is not to defeat the other players. To win at all, you need to cooperate with the other players. Because this is a storytelling game, there is no way for one person to claim victory. In fact, **Vampire** is a game in which you are likely to lose, for it is difficult to do anything to slow your character's inexorable slide into madness. The whole idea is to hang on as long as possible and eke out the most drama from the ongoing tragedy.

The only true measure of success in **Vampire** is survival. However, if the character has some overwhelming motivation, such as a need for vengeance, accomplishing it is also a measure of success. Additionally, stories have conclusions that either benefit or harm the characters. If the characters learn that a presumed serial killer is really a vampire and manage to halt her rampage, then they "win." If they never even find out who was behind the murders (much less manage to stop her), then they lose, though they may not know it until too late.

In order to achieve even a partial victory, the characters must usually become friends. They look out for one another and have a modicum of trust in each other. The

world of darkness is so dangerous that trustworthy allies are essential. It is an evolutionary adaptation.

Playing Aids

For the most part, **Vampire** was designed to be played around a table. Though it does not require a board, there are a number of props which require a table to use properly. You will need dice, pencils and paper, and photocopies of the character sheets. The dice required are 10-sided, which you can procure in any game store. The Storyteller may also want to have paper on hand in order to sketch out a setting (so as to more easily describe it to the players), as well as a few other props to show the players what the characters are seeing (photographs, matches, scarves - anything to make the experience more vivid).

Live-Action

Vampire was designed to include Live-Action roleplaying. Instructions and hints are given on how to run parts of the game using Live-Action roleplaying, where players physically play out the actions of their characters as an actor would (though without weapons or combat of any sort). These periodic episodes will be played when the characters are at a "home base" or in situations where inter-character roleplaying is at a premium.

Essentially, instead of sitting down and telling everyone what your character says and does, you stand up and act it out, actually saying what your character says and doing (for the most part) what your character does. Advice is given to the Storyteller on how to stage and guide these episodes, with particular emphasis on how to introduce plot elements that provoke roleplaying between the players (distrust, debate, intrigue and acrimony).

The Meaning of the Myth

I forget how to move

When my mouth is this dry

And my eyes are bursting hearts

In a bloodstained sky

Oh, it was sweet and wild.

- The Cure, "Homesick"

To understand **Vampire**, you must be able to savor its mood. It is stark and brooding, but with an underlying sensuality. It is an exotic and sonorous nightmare, in which reason does not always play a role. It is a neo-gothic vision of romance laid atop today's hyper-kinetic MTV world.

This romance is evoked by the pathos of it all. In **Vampire**, characters are almost certainly doomed from the moment they are Embraced. Though they are powerful beyond imagination, they are also cursed. No matter what they do, they remain monsters, with a horrible, unquenchable thirst. The stories in **Vampire** are unique because they all have this element of tragedy. The traditional tragedy of the theater, the tragedy of Aeschylus and Shakespeare, involves a hero coming to a great and horrible demise, as he was fated to from the very

beginning. Because of who and what the hero is, because of the very virtues of the hero, the tragedy is inevitable from the very first act - and the audience knows it. The characters in **Vampire** are almost certainly doomed from the first moment they drink from their first victim - and the players should know it.

Paradoxically, these characters, who are the paragons of tragic evil, have the potential to become heroes of uncommon valor. They are evil, not because of who they are but because of what they are. As drinkers of blood, they possess the taint of evil. They are tragic because they care about their evil but can ultimately do nothing about it.

The characters in **Vampire** are expected to be heroes - they must care about what they have become and about what they may soon be.

Justice is only served if the good overcomes the evil - the monsters must lose. Thus, for the vampire characters to find some way to "win," they must somehow become heroic. They must defeat the monster within by exerting self-restraint, nurturing the impulses of human virtue, and displaying genuine courage. Sometimes the tragedy of Final Death is a vampire's only hope of heroic escape.

There is a slim possibility that the characters may find a way to escape the curse and become mortal once again. Not all characters will seek this, but for a majority it will be their overwhelming motivation, their all-consuming drive, especially as the steady loss of Humanity takes its toll.

Other vampires will seek Golconda, the plateau of control that some of the Kindred manage to reach, where their basic drives and instincts do not control them so strongly. This is even more difficult to attain than the escape from the curse of undeath, but it is sought after at least as much.

The characters spend much of their time combating evil, but instead of fighting diabolists or evil scientists or monsters, they are combating that which is inside of themselves, the bestial impulses which make them evil. These conflicts in **Vampire** are ultimately internal; they are about *you*.

Fledglings

I was early to finish, I was late to start

I must be an adult -I'm a minor at heart.

- Minor Threat, "Minor Threat"

The Beast is strong within you. Though you will regret what you are and the things you must do, you cannot deny them or excise them from your soul. But resist you must, lest you slip away into complete degeneration and chaos.

It is difficult to be good when so many of your urges drive you toward sin, but if you falter, you will lose your humanity all the more quickly. You will become overwhelmed by the Beast within if you do not constantly strive to maintain some veneer of culture and civilization. You must master the Beast, lest the Beast master you. Evil tends to provide its own reward.

You are a fledgling, only recently released by your sire. You must struggle to survive, and begin to understand the strange world into which you have been thrust - most likely against your will. In the end, you may persevere, but only a lucky few are able to escape the curse and return to their human life. You seek Golconda in order to find stability and power as a vampire, but most never realize that it even exists.

The Becoming

Stood by the gate at the foot of the garden

Watching them pass like clouds in the sky

Try to cry out in the heat of the moment

Possessed by a fury that burns from inside.

- Joy Division, "The Eternal"

The moment a human becomes a vampire is never forgotten, for the transformation is usually painful and traumatic. A vampire is created when an existing vampire drains all the blood from a mortal, killing him. However, just before final and absolute death sets in, the sire pierces open her own skin and releases a small amount of blood into the victim's mouth. This rouses him somewhat, and he begins to drink from the sire's open wound. All it takes for the transformation to occur is the absence of one's own blood and the tiniest bit of vampiric blood.

The character takes on the lineage of his sire and is therefore of the same clan. The clan membership affects which powers the character can have at the beginning of the game; it also delineates a special weakness of the character. Often characters of the same clan will be allies and will strive to support one another, though this is not always the case.

For the next few months, years, or decades, the newly created childe remains with his sire. He may be taught nothing or everything, nurtured or abused, restricted or granted full freedom. But until he is released by his sire and presented to the prince of the city, he is not accepted in vampire society.

The Hunger

Vampires must feed; this fact is the lowest common denominator of their existence. Hunger is not merely a need, it is an all-consuming passion. The thirst for blood is a primal instinct for survival, for only through blood may the vampire survive. The blood need not be human, and even if it is mortal vitae, the death of the vessel is not required; however, the bloodlust often causes older vampires to lose their restraint when they begin to feed, and thus drain all life from their victims. Vampire teeth leave only a small wound, and even this disappears if the vampire licks the wound.

Because the sire never returns to the childe *all of the blood* which she withdrew, the young vampire is soon consumed by a ravenous hunger for blood. As the childe has no experience with this overwhelming urge, it is as total as it is immediate. The fledgling cannot fight the urge except through a constant exertion of willpower, and even then a frenzy might overcome him if fresh blood comes within smelling distance. Vampires need to feed regularly, usually once or twice a week.

Nature of the Beast

I tell myself I will not go

Even as I drive there.

- Big Black, "Bad Houses"

What does it mean to be a vampire? Kindred are not,

despite their appearance, human - they have an alien nature and differ from mortals in many fundamental ways. One may start with the picture of a human, but it is a lethal mistake to think vampires are like us.

Yet they are similar enough to us that they can be compared and contrasted to humanity. By comparing vampires to humans, it is possible to discover what their capabilities and limitations are.

It is important to keep in mind that, because a vampire's basic needs differ so completely, other desires vary as well. Food other than blood is no longer necessary but unfortunately, one can't just purchase blood in the local grocery store either. Mortal power is likewise an empty pleasure. While power-mongering is a favored hobby, particularly among the Ventrue clan, it can never truly hold a Kindred's interest for long. Vampires are predators, and they seek to prove themselves as hunters, not as rulers.

Chapter Two: Setting

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

- Bible, Genesis 4: 15

The world of **Vampire** is not our world - at least not quite. It is a Gothic-Punk vision of our world, a place of extremes - monolithic, majestic and altogether twisted. The government is corrupt, the culture is bankrupt, and the decadent mortals revel in the flames of the final days. It is a world where the forces of evil and entropy are even more powerful than they are in our world. It is a world of darkness.

Externally, not much differs from our world - CDs are in, vinyl is out, the ozone layer is being depleted, and the same soap operas are being broadcast. The same faces are on Mount Rushmore and the Lady still stands proudly in New York Harbor. In this world, however, vampires exist, and they have directed and influenced the course of human affairs for some time. Indeed the differences between the Gothic-Punk world and our own are largely the doing of the vampires.

This chapter describes the setting of **Vampire** in detail: the culture and society of both the mortal masses and the vampire lords who prey upon them.

Gothic-Punk

Gothic-Punk is a way of describing the setting in brief. It is a metaphor for our own world, a warning of what we might become and a shadow of the sickness that infects us now. It is a world with problems like our own, but where vampires are to blame for much of the misery.

The Gothic aspect describes the ambiance and institutions of mortal society. The Church is stronger because people always turn to the Church in times of crisis, and enough people have been touched by the Kindred to make a difference. The institutions which they control tend to be even more conservative and resistant to change than those of our world. Architecture has a menacing gothic flavor to it; in fact, some skyscrapers in this world might be girded with gargoyles.

The Punk describes the way people live - the gangs rule the streets and organized crime dominates the underworld (and is in turn dominated by the Kindred). Rock, punk and rap are even more of an escape and release, and rebellion

is codified in styles of dress and speech. All in all, the world is more corrupt, more decadent and less humane than any suburbanite would like to believe.

In the end, you will decide what the Gothic-Punk world is like. The differences are so numerous, yet so subtle, that they are impossible to describe fully in this book. It is your job to convey the mood of the Gothic-Punk world in the stories you tell. You can do this through your descriptions, the characters you play and the stories that you tell. Everything and anything can add to the flavor that is Gothic-Punk.

Streets of Blood

But first, on earth as vampire sent,

Thy corpse shall from its tomb be rent;

Then ghastly haunt thy native place,

And suck the blood of all thy race.

- Lord Byron

What is it like to live in a world of perpetual night? To dance under the blood-red moon? To lust for the blood of living, intelligent prey?

City life is as quicksilver as the Cainite itself. Long periods of peace can explode without warning into spasms of great strife and turmoil. The vampire is an animal of twisted emotion and instinct. One Kindred's obsessions and perversions can suddenly bring her into conflict with another. Though the Kindred can live with one another in peace for years, eventually the truce ends and the cannibalistic war begins anew. The Jyhad never truly ends - it only casts a smaller shadow for a time.

Normally, a balance is reached among the Kindred of a city, whether by formal or tacit agreement. Efforts are made to minimize conflict, though strife is often unavoidable. When conflict does occur, it is almost always hidden beneath the veil of the Masquerade, and rarely noticed by the mortals of the city. Thus may a war be waged without the elders fearing the return of the Inquisition.

Some Kindred take no part in the society of the Damned,

and maintain no connection with others of their kind. They are known as the Clanless, or the Caitiff. Cities are extremely large places and it is not difficult to isolate oneself from one's peers; indeed, it is said that the only Kindred who ever meet are the ones who wish to meet. However, sometimes even the most solitary vampires can be thrust into the politics of the day - in times of need, the Caitiff are mercilessly rooted out and questioned. The Justicars, enforcers of Kindred law, have been known to use solitary vampires as scapegoats for the crimes of others.

Creatures of the City

By agreement, though some say by nature, the vampire is a creature of the city. The wilds of the countryside are left to the werewolves and their ilk. This suits most Kindred. Why roam far and wide in search of sustenance when a few square blocks of even the smallest city provide more than enough vessels?

Younger Kindred sometimes feel the need to roam, but that desire usually fades as they age. Older Cainites are more likely to have become comfortable in one location and made their haven at that spot. Those who do choose to wander the countryside will almost invariably come into contact with the Lupines, and the hatred between werewolves and Kindred runs deep.

Thus the city has become a gilded prison for the Kindred. Though the cities are the center of civilization, and in this day and age often cover enormous expanses of terrain, they are still cells from which the Kindred are unable to escape. They are trapped in both body and spirit. Imprisonment only increases the tension between the vampires, and eventually caged animals always turn on one another.

Overpopulation

Let's have a war - we need the space

Let's have a war - clean up this place.

- Fear, "Let's Have a War"

Vampires are a unique species of animal just as humans are. They must obey the laws of evolution as well as the dictates of their environment. They have a place in the food chain; indeed, one could even speculate that they fill an ecological niche. There are definite limits to how many of their kind can be supported in a given area. When they cross over the limit, natural phenomena reduce the vampiric population back within its limits, just as with any other predators.

Kindred are unique among the creatures of the world in that they are not held in check by any other species. They are their own prey and predators, and control their numbers through intense competition. The elders remember only too well that if their numbers grow too great they will attract the attention of the mortals. Although individual vampires are many times more powerful than their mortal prey, the sheer numbers of a humanity aware of their presence would quickly overwhelm them.

Only so many hunters can be supported by one herd. In years past only one Kindred lived within each city and each could claim it as her own domain. When cities were small, being a race of loners was an effective survival tactic. However, as cities have grown, so has the population of hunters. Now it is no longer rare for many to live within the same domain.

A large city, such as San Francisco or Hamburg, normally supports a vampire population of anywhere from 15 to 30 undead. Larger cities like New York or greater London hold a proportionately larger population, and less reside in smaller cities.

As a rule of thumb, assume that there is one vampire for every 100,000 mortals. Thus, the greater Chicago metropolitan area, a region of seven million mortals, can reasonably support nearly 70 vampires. Often a prince will artificially regulate how many Kindred reside within the city, thus ensuring the sanctity of the Masquerade.

The cities could certainly hold more Kindred, but there are legitimate fears of discovery. The Masquerade is the preeminent concern of the elders - better that some anarchs die than all be extinguished in another Inquisition. Every care is taken to insure that the existence of vampires is kept secret from the mortal population. Strict controls are kept over the creation of neonates, for a surplus of vampires increases the probability of discovery dramatically. The population is also restricted by the simple fact that few potential vampires survive their Becoming; many are driven mad by it and put down by their sires.

Despite this, however, there are currently far too many Kindred for the mortal population to support; the ranks of the anarchs have swelled to unprecedented proportions. Gradually the time of the "grazing" approaches - the time fearfully whispered of in Kindred legend as Gehenna.

Normality

He don't give a hoot of warning

Wrapped in a black cat coat.

He don't go in the light of the morning,

He's split, the time the cock'rel crows.

- The Rolling Stones, "Midnight Rambler"

Most vampires desperately struggle to develop a semblance of normality in their lives and in so doing, escape the sordid truth of their existences. They create an artificial world around themselves, one that is bound to slip away with the passing years, but is pleasurable for the here and now. Some scholars among the Kindred postulate that a vampire needs this facade of life to retain his sanity. Falling into the "vampire-schtick" of the cinema and literature inevitably results in despair and eventual mental disintegration, but for the duration of the play-pretend solace can be garnered.

It has been put forth by those with learning that much of the mortal psyche survives the Becoming. That psyche, however, becomes overburdened by the supernatural drives, desires, and obsessions of the Beast. A certain amount of self-deception is necessary to retain one's sanity.

Social Distinctions

People try to put us down

Just because we get around.

Things they do look awful cold

I hope I die before I get old.

Talkin' 'bout my generation.

- The Who, "My Generation"

There are a number of different social castes among the Kindred. For the most part, Cainites are distinguished by a combination of age and generation (how many steps one is removed from Caine, the first vampire, in terms of ancestry). Although there is a degree of social mobility, the elders only trust those who have proven themselves, and the best way to prove oneself is to survive a few hundred years. The elders

hold the power, so the elders determine who is accorded respect and status. Of course it is always possible to engage in diablerie and thereby lower one's generation, but such kinslayers are seldom welcomed among the elders.

The highest status is that accorded to the Antediluvians - Cainites of the third generation. The lowest is that accorded to the childer and the Clanless, who are generally of the 13th or later generations and have only recently been Embraced.

•Caitiff: Even though many Caitiff are Clanless but otherwise "normal" vampires, others have become so degenerate that they feed only off the weak and the dying. Some Caitiff live apart from vampire society on purpose, but many have been cast out. Some Caitiff were once a part of Kindred society, but have lost so much Humanity that they are unable to maintain relations with any other creatures. They know only survival, and live from night to night in search of food. Eventually they will die, but it may take many years.

•Childe: Vampires of this class have not yet been introduced to the prince, nor have they been released by their sires. They are not considered to be full members of vampire society and are thus shown no respect. They are, in short, treated as children. The term is sometimes used out of contempt. Kindred who have committed especially stupid acts may be called and considered childer.

•Neonate: These vampires have been recently released and presented to the prince, though they have not yet made their mark in their society. The neonate is the caste of youngest vampires who have been released by their sires. If they behave themselves and do not join the anarchs, they eventually will become ancillæ, usually after 50 to 100 years.

•Anarch: The anarchs have status because they are noticed and respected for what little power they have achieved. They are recognized for their energy, drive, and consistency. Though they are the enemies of the elders and especially the prince, they are still respected, if not openly, for by rebelling they have given themselves an identity.

•Ancilla: These Kindred are still young, but have proven themselves to the elders. The ancillæ are the up-and-coming Cainites, the ones who play by the rules (mostly) in order to achieve greater power. This is the rank between neonate and elder, where the vampire is given increasing respect and power. Most have existed for one or two centuries in their vampiric form.

•Elder: When vampires reach a certain age, there are few above them who still hold power in vampire society. The elders are the Kindred who are in control and who seek to dominate all the others. The elders are normally between 200 and 1000 years old, but like all things undead, this can vary immensely. In Europe, a vampire has to be much older and more powerful to be considered an elder than she does in the New World.

•Methuselah: When a vampire reaches a particular age, somewhere between 1000 and 2000 immortal years, a profound change invariably overtakes him. It has long been argued whether this change is mystical, biological, or is in fact a social change brought about through changing needs and desires. Certainly, by the time a vampire reaches this age, a boredom and melancholy sets in, as well as an increased paranoia. Those who are weak, take risks, or unconsciously desire suicide do not survive to this age - only the very strongest attain the station of Methuselah.

As a means of self-preservation, Methuselahs retreat from the world and those younger than them. The constant struggle of facing the young reckless ones, who seek power through the blood of their elders, grows numbing. Eventually one of the anarchs will get lucky and dispatch the ancient. Thus the only option is to retreat fully from society, and go into torpor. Some Methuselahs remain involved in power struggles and the Jyhad of the Kindred, but do so from complete anonymity.

•Antediluvian: These are most ancient vampires, and they are likely the most powerful creatures in the world. For the most part they are considered to be the grandchilder of Caine, and are of the third generation. When they do involve themselves in the affairs of Kindred, they seldom leave things untarnished by their touch. The mere word of an Antediluvian is enough to provoke enormous strife and conflict among the Kindred. Their eternal struggle, the Jyhad, affects all the Kindred.

The Prince

The modern age (the last millennium by Kindred reckoning) has produced a new social order among the undead. At one time Cainites lived alone or with their broods; each was lord of its own city, and it is from that era that the Traditions came. Some gave themselves titles and honors, but this practice was unimportant as there were none but mortals to impress.

But when cities grew into metropolises, and there were enough vessels to support many Kindred, vampire society began to change. The age of the princes began.

The term prince, though sometimes used with contempt, is used to refer to the elder who holds domain over a specific metropolitan area. In formal terms, a prince holds the power of domain; he or she makes the laws and is responsible for keeping order. In practical terms, the prince is merely the one who is dominant and best able to keep the anarchs in their place. In the beginning, the strongest vampire in each city simply claimed domain. Over time, however, traditions have grown around the making and keeping of that claim. The Camarilla has codified and enforced these traditions.

After the Inquisition, the importance of the Masquerade was imprinted in the minds of the elders, and they increasingly distrusted the younger vampires, whom they called anarchs. The revolt of the sect known as the Sabbat was the source of much of their distrust, for they feared that it could happen again. The neonates created during the 18th century were the children of a modern age, and alien to the mindset

of the elders. After an incident in London in 1743 where the Masquerade was broken by an anarch, the Camarilla decided to formally acknowledge what had already been fact for many centuries - the power of the prince.

The term "prince" is simply that: a term. It is not a titular holding, nor a hereditary position of any kind. In fact, many Kindred object to the use of the term "prince" for those very reasons. It is simply the name and the assumption of rights that a powerful vampire might achieve. Not all cities even have princes; indeed, some are ruled by councils, while others are not ruled at all. The modern usage of "prince" is a reference to the age when each Kindred was the secret ruler over the city in which she lived, a practice most common in medieval Italy. In some places, titles such as Duke, Baron or Count (in their culturally correct forms) are used.

The prince does not truly reign over a city; rather, the position is akin to that of an overseer. Above all else, the prince is the final arbiter of disputes between the Kindred in her city and is responsible for ensuring that the Masquerade is preserved. The elders generally interpret this to mean that the prince must suppress and persecute the anarchs.

The Kindred in the city owe the prince no oath of fealty and must obey only as much as their cowardice demands. When the rule of a prince is questioned or thwarted, the prince must use force to maintain control. If he does not have enough power, then his rule is at an end. There are some princes who do not understand the informality of their position; they believe themselves kings and their reigns involve much protocol and regal ritual. They hold court, and demand that all Cainites within their domain attend them while they pass judgment on those brought before them. The arrogance of these princes is often more than can be tolerated, but it is understandable - who but the insane or the truly egotistical would want such a dangerous position?

Many Kindred ignore the prince, just as they ignore all others of their own kind. The powerful beings who together comprise the Inconnu, and many of the elders, are not impressed by such idle pronouncements of power. They see the title as representative of the arrogance of one still young enough to lust for power. The prince is not an authority to whom they would bow. When they visit a city, it is to them that the prince would bow, if the prince is wise.

Taking Charge

The prince is traditionally the eldest of a city's Kindred, though this is no longer universal. The method of "coronation" varies from city to city and prince to prince. It is normally a violent usurpation of power, for only those with power and ambition are able to hold their claims unchallenged. Typically the support of the elders of the city is required. The most powerful of these elders are known as the primogen, and they often form a council of advisors to the prince. The prince needs their sanction in order to rule.

Anyone can make the claim of princedom, but only when none opposes the would-be prince may she hold domain over the city. If there is a challenge, the contenders must battle one another until sovereignty is determined.

This warfare is not as simple as a duel, or even any sort of direct combat. It is, like all conflicts between vampires, a part of the great Jyhad in that it is a progression of games and maneuvers, tricks and threats, violence and bloodshed. The various elders, broods and coteries ally themselves to one side or the other - either out of strong personal beliefs, promises of great reward, or threats of retaliation. Frequently, mortal institutions that are under the control of the vampire, such as the police, banks or the media, may be employed in the war. Almost always, the process ends with the death of one combatant or the other. It is rare that the winner is magnanimous, and even if she were, the far-sighted primogen would not allow it.

Coups are difficult due to the fact that the prince is personally very powerful and nearly always creates a brood to protect him. Another consideration for a would-be insurgent is that taking on the prince usually means taking on the elders of the city. The elders, when united, have enough power to defeat all comers.

An attempt to usurp the princedom means a period of great instability, as the warfare can spill over into the mortal realm and threaten the Masquerade. Fear of this stays many elders from changing sides or dividing their support among two or more contenders.

Most elders support the prince because they do not wish to risk turmoil. They have grown protective of their long lives, and do all that they can to provide themselves with a stable environment. They are extremely conservative in all that they do, for they seek only to survive, not to promote change.

With the support of the primogen, it is nearly impossible to successfully challenge a prince, for these elders will direct their influence, followers and even personal powers to benefit the prince. Though many try to challenge the prince, most are destroyed before they even begin.

Thus, is it possible to rule the Damned. Princes have been known to voluntarily abdicate their position, though this rarely occurs.

Advantages of Princedom

El Presidente smokes cigars

Anyone he does not like

He shoots or puts behind bars.

- Circle Jerks, "Coup D'Etat"

Many vampires seek the position of prince simply for the glory. There are, however, a number of advantages to the title which might not be readily apparent.

•Right to progeny: The prince is the only vampire who is able to freely create progeny. No others have this freedom unless the prince grants it to them. The prince thus maintains a powerful control over other vampires, for most, at some point, wish to create a childe.

• Protection of the elders: The primogen will generally support the prince as long as she maintains the Masquerade and suppresses the wilder stirrings of the anarchs.

•Political power within the Camarilla: The prince has greatly increased status and is listened to by most elders.

• Mastery over those who enter one's domain: It is the prince's traditional right to exert controls over all Kindred who enter his area of influence, and newcomers must report to the prince when they first arrive in the area. If they do not, it is considered within the prince's rights to punish them.

• Freedom to feed: The prince is also able to limit (for the

good of the city) the feeding of others. In the name of protecting the Masquerade, she may place restrictions on some or all of the Kindred who live within the city. Usually this affects where and from whom they may feed. If they disobey, she may accuse them of violating the Masquerade and punish them accordingly.

•Power over one's enemies: The prince has the authority to call a Blood Hunt, and thus possesses the power of life and death over those who cross him. He is not allowed to kill at will, but if the prince determines that any have broken the Traditions, he may punish them accordingly. This is subject to much abuse, and thus provides a great deal of power.

Intrigue

The power-politics around the prince can be quite dynamic, especially when more than one elder is present and attempting to sway the decisions of the prince. Each may attempt to threaten, cajole and even trick the prince into doing things a certain way, all the while feigning disinterest in the whole sickly affair of politics. The elders do not dare push things to the point where the prince is overthrown, but they will play the game very close to the edge. The Jyhad exists on more than one level, and many different generations play this game.

By dwelling within a city overseen by a prince, a vampire must accept certain obligations. The city provides a certain security that all within benefit from, and to maintain that security, certain rules of behavior must be followed. In one form or another, most of these rules are nearly universal. They are known as the Six Traditions, and they are the oldest laws known to the Kindred - it is the prince who enforces them. Kindred relocating from San Francisco to Moscow can rightfully assume that these Traditions apply. Ignorance is no defense.

The anarchs rebel against all the strictures of the elders, their hated enemies, which are represented by the prince's power. These fledglings believe that there is little to fear in the modern world, and that the old superstitions and Traditions should be thrown away. Some believe that the Masquerade is but an embodiment of the terror of Kindred grown too old and too fearful. The prince must constantly work to keep the anarchs in line, and prevent them from creating any disruption in the Masquerade. Sometimes threats are not enough.

Most anarchs do not believe that Gehenna is a threat, and many doubt that the original vampire was Caine. They simply do not believe these legends, and treat them as they do the stories of a Garden of Eden or a Tower of Babel. They suspect that the elders use such stories to put fear into ancillæ and thereby control them all the better. Among the anarchs, it is considered bad form to admit to any faith in such myths. They chafe against the restrictions placed by the elders, and have not yet learned the wisdom of age. The fledglings are largely powerless within vampire society, so it is no great surprise that they rebel.

The modern age has wrought much change in the soul of humanity, and it is from these humans that the new vampires are created. With the increasingly rapid changes in modern culture, many Kindred expect a wave of increasingly rebellious anarchs. Some within the Camarilla have called for a halt to the creation of all new vampires, but it is unlikely that any sort of ban could ever be enforced. Most elders simply trust that natural factors will take their course and that the most radical of the anarchs will be wiped out before they can give the vampire community away.

Primogen

Most princes are "advised" by a group of elders who are collectively known as the primogen. Collectively, these elders can be considered to be the most powerful Kindred in the city; individually, they either are not quite as powerful as the prince, or do not care to endanger or bore themselves with the duties of such.

The primogen is extremely influential, and serves as an important check on the dictatorial powers of the prince. At the same time, its members usually have their own agendas, and it is not uncommon for their bickering and infighting to cause as much trouble as any prince's high-handed commandments.

Elysium

A prince often declares certain portions of his domain to be free from the taint of violence. Such locations are known as the Elysium, and they tend to be the places where the elders of the city spend most of their time. Much intrigue and debate occurs at these locations, and it is in the Elysium that the business of the city takes place. Though on rare occasions the sanctity of the Elysium is violated, usually the "Pax Vampirica" is upheld.

Normally certain buildings are designated to be a part of the Elysium, most commonly places devoted to the fine arts or places which are in some way artistically or intellectually stimulating. Thus the Elysium tends to be such places as the opera, theaters, art museums and art galleries. Sometimes the havens of certain Cainites or even nightclubs are so designated, however.

The rules for Elysium are typically quite simple. First and foremost, no violence is permitted on the premises against Kindred, kine or physical objects. On pain of Final Death no art is to be destroyed (thus making the Toreador among the strongest supporters of the custom of Elysium). Elysium is considered neutral ground, with no conflicts between Kindred allowed upon its premises. Thus, while intrigue and verbal sparring can be quite fierce, rarely does the conflict escalate to violence. Finally, most consider it very bad manners to attract attention entering or leaving Elysium. Some areas are closed at night, and thus special arrangements have been made for Kindred to leave and enter.

The First Tradition: The Masquerade

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

The Second Tradition: The Domain

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

The Third Tradition: The Progeny

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

The Fourth Tradition: The Accounting

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

The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

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

The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

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

The Traditions

Now this is the Law of the Jungle -

as old and as true as the sky;

And the Wolf that shall keep it may prosper,

but the Wolf that shall break it must die.

- Rudyard Kipling, "The Law of the Jungle"

The Six Traditions form the age-old code of laws of the Kindred, passed down from the early days following the kin-slaying that begat the second cycle. The Traditions are not formal, written laws, but they are nevertheless known by all Kindred. There are many variations, but though the words may vary, the intent endures.

It has become something of a ritual for them to be recited by a sire to his progeny just before presentation to the prince. Though the fledgling may know of the Traditions already, the words are still spoken. It is a vital element of the Becoming.

Some Kindred maintain that these codes were originally conceived by Caine himself when he sired the second generation of Kindred. Thus, it is possible that these words are those of the ancient one himself, as he spoke them to his own progeny. However, it is far more likely that the Traditions were created by the Antediluvians in their attempt to restrict their own progeny. The tradition of the Masquerade is likely to have existed for some time, though in much more diluted form. It was not until the Inquisition that it was reaffirmed and its wording and intent strengthened.

Many of the laws below are couched in fairly formal terms. These are the words and phrases of the elders, and not necessarily how they would be expressed by the anarchs. Many younger Kindred see the Traditions in an entirely different light.

The opposite page shows the most common wording of the Traditions known.

The Tradition of The Masquerade

The First Tradition is the heart of what has become known as the Masquerade. Age-old law demands that the knowledge of the existence of true vampires be kept from mortal man. To reveal such to them would place the Kindred in dire jeopardy.

Violation of this tradition is the most serious offense a vampire can commit. The strengths and resources of humanity in the modern age are such that were human and Kindred to war, the survival of the Kindred would be in question. In more superstitious times, this tradition was less revered.

To violate this tradition is to risk one's own destruction and the destruction of all the Kindred.

The Tradition of Domain

This tradition has faded in importance as the population of the cities has risen so dramatically. Individual vampires no longer claim domain, but leave the rights of such to the prince.

Now, only the most powerful vampires in a city can claim domain over it. They do so according to the tradition, and pretend that all others live there only at the pleasure of the prince. Princes claim they possess the cities, and in most ways, they do. This tradition is used by them to support their claims. This tradition is what gives a vampire the right to claim princedom.

There is a prevalent misconception among anarchs that princes give different portions of their domain to favored associates as "turf." Though a prince only allows certain trusted Kindred to watch over portions of the city, this has only increased the cry for the rights of domain. Increasing numbers of Kindred are claiming "turf" within the city and treating it as their own private hunting grounds. Broods or even solitary Kindred stake claim to certain prime areas of the city (such as slum areas) and attempt to prevent other Kindred from feeding there. Though the city is vast enough that such claims have little value, they seem to have a special worth to these downtrodden anarchs. Few if any princes actually grant territory, but that is not enough to prevent the anarchs from taking it for themselves.

Some of the younger Kindred have made attempts to revive the tradition of domain, seeing in it a similarity to some of the mechanics of organized crime. Small gangs will often attempt to establish turf within a city, often in opposition to the other Kindred of the city. This often becomes a difficult situation, with the fear of strife looming over

everyone's heads. Because of this, gang problems within a city can easily endanger the Masquerade. If the gang supports the prince, its members may be tolerated, or they may have the power to resist all attempts to dislodge them. Elders do not like to confront gangs of anarchs. Though the elders possess superior power, there is still too much risk of death.

The anarchs primarily fight among themselves over turf, and usually do not attempt to prevent elders from feeding on their turf. Their activities are frowned upon by the prince, but as long as they do not threaten the Masquerade and do not get out of control, the anarchs are allowed to continue their battles. Indeed, many princes view it as a means of using the anarchs to suppress themselves, and will seek to provoke internicine conflict.

In cities where the prince does not have a firm grasp on power, certain elders may claim domain on an area within the city. Their power may be respected by other primogen, and they may be tolerated by the prince if they in turn support the prince. The establishment of one or more domains within a city can create powerful political dynamics, as those domains, intentionally or not, create rival power bases. In fact, occasionally a prince is only the first among a group of equals, the chairman of a committee of elders who each stake their own claim to a domain within the city.

Regardless of whether he has claimed domain or not, each Kindred is to some degree responsible for the area around his haven or the area which he frequents. Although the Kindred rarely involve themselves in mortal concerns, the affairs of the supernatural are another story. Kindred are expected to report details of strange events that occur in the vicinity of their territory to the prince.

The Tradition of The Progeny

Throughout most of vampiric history, the "elder" of this tradition was one's sire, though a looser interpretation has

evolved in recent times. Many princes have stipulated that they are the elder referred to in this tradition and refuse all who dwell within their domain the right of creation without permission. They insist on their approval before any mortal is Embraced and often kill those who disobey. Most Kindred obey, but more out of fear than respect. In situations where a neonate has already been created, the prince may claim the individual as her own, may declare said neonate and her sire outcast, or may even put them both to death. The Camarilla officially supports the right of a prince to restrict the creation of new vampires, understanding that it is the only way to control the population of anarchs.

Those of the Old World, the Europeans, are even stricter on this point than the upstart Americans. One's own sire must be consulted, and if a prince has claimed domain over the area where one has one's haven, permission must be sought from her as well. No amount of tolerance is given to those who do not do so.

The Tradition of The Accounting

One who sires a childe assumes responsibility for that childe's existence. If the childe is unable to endure the burden of its new existence, it is the sire's responsibility to take care of the matter. If the childe attempts to betray the Kindred and threaten the Masquerade, it is up to the sire to prevent him. While still a childe, under the direct care of one's sire, a vampire has no rights.

If a childe takes actions which threaten the security of other Kindred, they hold the sire responsible. The sire must carefully weigh the maturity of the childe he has spawned. He does not want to remain responsible for the childe forever (though extremely long childehoods are not unknown), but at the same time he does not want to release the childe before it is ready.

Long ago, release involved introducing the childe to one's own sire, but that has since changed; now, the sire introduces the childe to the prince in whose domain sire and childe dwell. Until that time, the prince is under no obligation, unless he chooses otherwise, to recognize the childe as one of the Blood. Unless the sire protects the childe, any may kill or feed from it.

Following the release, the childe-no-more is allowed to dwell in the city with full rights. This introduction process is similar to that of the Tradition of Hospitality mentioned below. If the prince does not accept the childe, it must leave and find some other city in which to live.

The release is a great rite of passage, for the sire no longer retains any responsibility for the childe. It is the activity of the childe-no-more that determines if he is accepted as a full member of the community and considered a neonate. If he continues to be rash and foolish, he remains a childe in the eyes of all. If he shows the wisdom his new existence demands, others will accord him the respect given to an "adult."

The Tradition of Hospitality

Though vampires are loath to travel (the risks are tremendous), they occasionally do. Ancient custom dictates that when entering a new domain, a city claimed by an elder, the newcomers must present themselves to the elder. This was so even before there were princes, in a time where there was only one Kindred in each city. It was simply a tradition of politeness; one knocks before entering.

The procedure varies in formality from location to location, and even from prince to prince. Some require formal presentation and the recital of one's lineage, such as it is known. Others are happy if simple contact is made with an underling. Those who do not bother to present themselves had better have the power to withstand the prince's anger.

The prince has the right to refuse acceptance in his domain to any he chooses. This rarely occurs, except when the newcomer has a poor reputation or many enemies. Even those who do not present themselves at all, but are later discovered are not often chased from the city. They are roughly presented to the prince, shown their place, and released into the streets once again.

Over time, this tradition has become a primary means for the prince to maintain power, for it gives her the right to question all who enter her domain. She may not have the power to expel the more formidable interlopers, but her right to examine all is unquestioned.

Some Kindred bristle at the thought of having to 'present' themselves for acceptance. Many are too proud and have a strong independent streak. The anarchs have too little respect for the traditions, while the Methuselahs have too little respect for the princes. The Methuselahs see themselves as demigods towering above mortal and Kindred alike and needing to bow to none. To them, abasing oneself before another is unthinkable. They existed long before the princes ruled, and can see beyond the prince, knowing who pulls the strings.

Many Kindred never present themselves, choosing instead to live in darkest obscurity. They hide in the cold, quiet places and rarely venture forth. They are tolerated as long as they remain unobtrusive. The Nosferatu are the best at this, for their powers augment such activities. These reclusive Kindred are known as the autarkis, for they refuse to become a part of vampire society.

The Tradition of Destruction

This tradition has caused more controversy than any other, and reinterpretations are continually being discussed. It seems to imply that the right of destruction is limited to one's own bloodline. Only the sire has the right to destroy his progeny.

However, the shift in meaning of the word "elder" has resulted in most princes claiming this right over all those who dwell within their domains. They claim that only they have the power of life and death, and for the most part this interpretation has been supported by the Camarilla. The veracity of this claim is the source of much of the conflict between many of the older and younger vampires.

Most princes strictly enforce their monopoly on the tradition of extinguishment. All others are forbidden to destroy other Kindred. If a vampire is ever caught in such an act of "murder," then no punishment may be considered too severe. Often the perpetrator of such a deed will be destroyed herself. The prince will usually investigate the deaths of those who have been destroyed in order to find the killer. Of course, the higher the status of the destroyed vampire, the more thorough the search for his murderer will be.

Only in times of great strife do younger vampires dare slay each other, though the elders are said to do so all the time. A would-be kinslayer had best step carefully.

Most often, the prince enforces his right of destruction by calling a Blood Hunt, which is discussed below. Only if a

prince openly calls a Blood Hunt is he allowed to slay one of the Kindred.

Lextalionis

Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky

With hideous ruin and combustion down

To bottomless perdition, there to dwell

In adamantine chains and penal fire.

- John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

The Traditions do not stand alone, for there is and always has been a system of punishment for those who transgress them. The system is simple: a vampire who breaks the rules is slain. Those who violate the Traditions and thereby anger the elders are hunted down and extinguished by all those who hear the call. This credo of "just retribution" is known formally as the Lextalionis, and more commonly as the Blood Hunt.

Tradition demands that the Lextalionis can only be called by the eldest Cainite in a city. In modern times, this individual is considered to be the prince. Other elders or even ancillæ could call for a Hunt, but most Kindred would not respond, for they risk the wrath of the prince in so doing. Normally, a prince will only call a Hunt over a breach of one of the Six Traditions. If a prince calls a Hunt purely for his own purposes, few will aid him in the Hunt, and the prince will lose considerable status.

Assisting one upon whom the Hunt has been called is a serious insult to the prince. Betraying the offender is often the only recourse to having the Lextalionis called upon oneself as well. Sometimes a prince will be insulted if a particular Cainite does not participate in the Hunt. If the prince is powerful enough, and the crime great enough, he may have the authority to insist that all Kindred who live within the city participate.

Before the imagery becomes too ingrained, it should be pointed out that the Blood Hunt is not truly a formal hunt. The vampires do not gather in a convenient park with their packs of frothing hellhounds, and then set off across the city once the prince blows a horn. It is both more informal and more serious than that. The hunters spread out over the city and scour the streets for the individual whom they pursue, calling in others once they track him down. In true Kindred tradition, it is a secretive and stealthy hunt. Mortals rarely realize anything is amiss; they usually notice only that it is a strange night, full of bizarre happenings. If the police are controlled by the prince or one of her minions, they will either be pulled back from the streets or mustered to assist in the search (without truly realizing for whom it is they search).

The Hunt can be viewed as a violent form of excommunication. Sometimes the subject is not killed, but is merely maimed and then released outside the perimeter of the city. The Kindred against whom the Hunt is called becomes *persona non grata*. Any who find the offender have the right, in the Prince's name, to conduct summary justice upon the

outcast. They may also partake of the offender's blood. This is why the youngest Kindred are often the most avid pursuers in the Hunt.

The Lextalionis is not called lightly. Most Kindred can count on one hand the number of Blood Hunts they have heard of, let alone participated in. The Camarilla reserves the right to an informal tribunal of sorts, most often after the fact. Evidence is presented to the Conclave for and against the offender, and the prince's decision is either ratified or dismissed. The prince who has his decision reversed suffers no formal punishment, but often loses considerable status.

Sometimes the offender survives the hunt (perhaps under the protection of an enemy of the prince) and may actually plead his case. Often, the threat of the Conclave, and the beginning of its proceedings, are enough to dissuade a prince from calling a Hunt. Tradition dictates, however, that once a Blood Hunt has been called, it cannot be stopped.

An outcast may attempt to flee the city she is in and find refuge elsewhere. Many princes will offer this alternative to the offender instead of calling the Hunt. Though the outcast may flee, the Hunt remains permanently in effect in that city, regardless of who ascends to power in the future.

The Hunt is usually the business of the Kindred of that city alone, and word of it rarely travels far. In some cases, however, the crimes of the outcast are so heinous that emissaries are sent to the princes of other cities so that a Hunt may be called there as well. The most famous example of this was the outcry in the aftermath of the Whitechapel, England slayings during the latter half of the 19th century. A Hunt was called against the offender throughout Europe and much of North America. The culprit, however (the self-proclaimed Lord Fianna), remains at large.

Sects

See, over there red don't go-

Some places, red's all they know.

- Ice-T, "Midnight"

Over the past few centuries groups known as sects have appeared among Kindred society. Many ancients deride the existence and concept of sects as " *modern foolishness. The blood is all that matters,"* but still the power and influence of these organizations grow. Well over half of the Kindred in existence belong to one sect or another; the rest either maintain their independence or are attached exclusively to their bloodlines. The largest and most dominant sect is the Camarilla, though the smaller Sabbat contends with it on every front. Though the Inconnu claim they are not a sect, they appear to have some sort of organization and stay well clear of the other sects.

Camarilla

The Camarilla is the largest single sect of vampires as well as the most open; theoretically any vampire may claim membership, regardless of lineage. In fact, the Camarilla assumes that all vampires are members of their sect - whether they want to be or not. The founders of the sect view it as the Great Society of undead, and take offense at any suggestion otherwise.

The Camarilla's primary concern is the maintenance and preservation of the Masquerade. The sect was organized in the 14th century in response to the growing influence of the Inquisition. Historically, there have been many

attempts by the leaders of the Camarilla to assert more authority over other aspects of vampiric existence. Each time, the attempt has failed in a wave of bloodshed. The princes do not brook interference into what they consider to be their historical rights and privileges, nor do the Methuselahs desire a competitor who could thwart their aims. Therefore, the Camarilla remains a divided sect of only moderate influence. The elders who control it use it as yet another means to oppress and manipulate the anarchs.

It is thought the Ventrue played a primary role in bringing together the seven founding clans of the Camarilla. Their efforts and imagination certainly lie behind its improbable origin. Though the Camarilla holds itself open to all bloodlines, those that choose to participate represent only slightly more than half of the known clans. Only seven of the 13 clans were among its founders, and only these clans regularly attend meetings of the Inner Circle. Individuals from other clans may be a part of the Camarilla, but no other clan as a whole is.

The Camarilla does not openly recognize the existence of the Antediluvians. Statements about them are publicly derided. As far as the Camarilla is concerned, they are but myths.

Conclave

Conclaves are important and potentially dangerous political events in the Camarilla. Open to any and all, they are the means through which the Camarilla functions as a sect. Much care is taken to insure the secrecy of the Conclave site before the meeting as well as its physical security while the meeting is in progress; an enemy of the Camarilla could take such an event as an opportunity for mass assassination. The Conclave may last anywhere from a few hours to many weeks.

Usually, Conclaves are only called when they are needed and are held in the geographic region most concerned with the problem at hand. Tradition holds that Conclaves may only be called by a Justicar. Those who gather to witness a Conclave are part of what is known as an Assembly. Members of the Assembly have the right to address the Conclave if supported by at least two members of the Conclave. Each vampire who attends the Conclave gets one vote - a Justicar serves as chairman.

The primary function of the Conclave is to make recommendations on matters brought before it. Any Kindred may bring a matter before the Conclave, and most concern the adjudication of grievances between Kindred. Often complaints against princes are brought up at Conclaves, as are petitions by princes to deal especially harshly with the anarchs in a city. Essentially, any action that would be considered a breach of tradition must be discussed and agreed upon by a Conclave in order to avoid future punishment by the Camarilla.

The Conclave interprets the Six Traditions and, in some instances, may even establish new ones. It may also call Blood Hunts, even against princes, who are otherwise safe from them. In times past, Conclaves have been convened for the sole purpose of removing a prince from power. The Camarilla has always vigorously maintained its right to depose the rulers of the cities. The Justicars themselves do not have this power, though they may call a Conclave to achieve this end.

Decisions made by the Conclave may be challenged by undergoing an ordeal. This can be nearly any sort of exacting trial, mission or quest, which is given by the Conclave to test the suspect. Such ordeals may last only a minute or may take many years, and if not completed satisfactorily, the officiating Justicar is free to assign any penalty. If the crime is considered too great to allow the vampire to complete an ordeal, the offending Kindred may face a challenge by one of her accusers. The two antagonists battle one another in ritual combat. This may be a duel fought without weapons but with each opponent blindfolded, or a contest where each sucks the other's blood until one of the two is extinguished.

There is usually something of a population explosion after a Conclave, as princes reward those who voted in their favor by allowing them to produce progeny. Many times an orgy of destruction counterbalances this growth as the losers pay the ultimate price.

Conclaves can only be called by a Justicar, who may do so at any time. However, most Justicars have arranged for regular Conclaves to be held at which all Kindred are welcome. For instance, every three years a Conclave meets in New Orleans; this Conclave is overseen by Xaviar, a Justicar of Clan Gangrel.

The Inner Circle

Every 13 years there is a meeting of the Elders of each clan. This is the true hub of the Camarilla. Compared to this assembly, all other Conclaves are but puppet shows. The Inner Circle always meets in Venice, just it has done for the past 500 years.

Each bloodline is allowed one representative to sit on the Inner Circle. Only this individual may vote, though all those who attend may speak. The eldest member of each clan present places the vote for that clan. It is a majority of age. This is a primary reason why the anarchs are so frustrated.

The primary function of the Inner Circle is to appoint the Justicars, the judges of the sect. One Justicar is chosen from each of the seven clans. They act of their own accord, but are required to take the decisions of the Inner Circle under consideration. By decree of the Inner Circle, Justicars hold the power to deal with members of the Camarilla who transgress the Traditions. The seven Justicars hold the true power in the Camarilla.

The appointment of a Justicar is a long, drawn-out political battle, for while the major bloodlines would each like to select the representative of their choice, it is difficult to obtain the majority needed. The losers in the intrigue end up with a Justicar of young years or weak powers who will be ignored for 13 years. Thus, those finally appointed tend to be compromise candidates or chosen from the lower rungs of a line. Sometimes, even obscure Kindred are chosen by elders who believe they will be easy to manipulate once appointed.

Justicars

Got a black uniform and a silver badge

We're playing cops for real, we're playing cops for pay.

- Dead Kennedys, "Police Truck"

It is at first difficult to grasp the relationship of the Conclave and the Justicar. The Conclave is forbidden by tradition to pass any judgment directly upon any member of the Camarilla. This tradition limits the possibility of any abuse of power. The Conclave's only avenue of control lies in these judges, whom they appoint to pass sentence for them.

Justicars have the only true authority, which they hold over all the Camarilla, and indeed all Kindred, *except those who sit on the Inner Circle*. They have the ultimate decision-making and adjudication power over matters involving violation of the Six Traditions. No member of the Camarilla is considered above them in this area. If one of the Blood is found to have violated the Traditions, it is a Justicar who decides the punishment. There are no guidelines concerning the punishment; it is left to the discretion of each Justicar. Their decisions are often harsh. They are supposed to hold a Conclave each time they wish to pass judgment, but over the years the Justicars have assumed more and more power and no longer feel the need to do so. Justicars can call a Conclave at any time, either to confirm a ruling or to make a momentous decision a Justicar does not care to make himself.

The decision or action of a Justicar can only be challenged by another Justicar. If a major point of contention arises between Justicars, a Conclave is held where the Justicars come together and resolve the dispute. The resolution usually comes in the form of a vote, but sometimes, depending on the dispute, personal challenges can arise.

Many elders resent the authority of the Justicars, and some among them are very outspoken in their opposition. Most accept it, however, for fear of opposing the Justicars, who are frequently of considerable age.

Justicars often have coteries of other vampires who do their bidding; these Kindred are known as Archons. These are often the brood of the Justicar and are always willingly Blood Bound to them. They enforce the Justicars' will and report breaches of the Traditions. The Archons are the eyes and ears of the Justicars.

The Sabbat

Known to many as the Black Hand, the Sabbat is rumored to have evolved from a medieval death cult. Little of its nature has changed since then. It is the largest sect next to the Camarilla, and is aggressively attempting to increase its domain.

The Black Hand rules through fear, hatred, anger and physical violence. In North America, it holds undisputed control over Detroit, Toronto, Montreal, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Portland, and is close to gaining supremacy in Boston and Baltimore. Until recently, Miami was also under Sabbat control, but recent events have caused a swing in the power balance there.

The Sabbat is organized in units known as "packs" which are strongly loyal to one another, feeding and traveling as one group. Indeed, in the Camarilla, it has become a derogatory term to call a coterie a "pack."

Members of the Sabbat come from many different bloodlines, though two clans dominate the organization: the Lasombra and Tzimisces. Though it may be possible to join the Sabbat, almost all members are created. The Black Hand requires strict devotion and adherence to the will of the group.

The Sabbat initiation procedure is designed to destroy any of the vestigial will in a new vampire. Initiates are slain, slowly and painfully, and then given the Blood. This blood doesn't come from one member of the Sabbat, but from as many as are present at the initiation, combined into a chalice. Once the Initiate has been given the Blood, he is buried alive, and must crawl out in order to live. Those who do not spend eternity buried under the earth. The process of digging oneself from a grave tears the Initiate's

humanity from him and opens him to the subjugation and brainwashing of the Sabbat.

Once the Initiate breaks free, he is Blood Bound to the pack that Embraced him. In a strange ritual, which occurs over two more nights, the Initiate is given more blood.

The Black Hand is concerned solely with power in all its forms. It is actively engaged in diablerie and has a fanatical opposition to life and its trappings. The Sabbat views mortals as lesser beasts to be dominated and used as the need requires. The Sabbat worships at the places of the dead - cemeteries, tombs and charnel houses. The members of the Sabbat understand themselves to be undead, and behave accordingly. Any who oppose them are burnt; indeed, the Sabbat packs seem to have a fascination with fire, though they are no more immune to it than any other Kindred.

The members of the Sabbat revel in being vampires and living out their instincts. They find other Kindred contemptible because they try so hard to retain their humanity. For the Sabbat, this is the greatest blasphemy.

The Sabbat often sends packs into cities held by the Camarilla, either to scout out the opposition or to hunt for those who have fled from the covens. Camarilla politics are invariably complicated by the presence of Sabbat Kindred.

The Sabbat is said to engage in a strange sort of diablerie, wherein its members ritually butcher the elders of their kind so that stronger, more aggressive and younger Kindred may take their place. However, like so much else spoken of among Kindred outside the Sabbat, this is unconfirmed. The princes of the major cities worldwide would give much to gain hard facts about the workings of the Sabbat. All of them fear the danger of its steady growth.

In the end, nothing certain can be said of the Sabbat. Indeed, all that the Camarilla believes about it could be false, rumors spread by Antediluvians who wish the two sects to fight. It is unlikely, but all too possible.

The Inconnu

"Inconnu" is the term used to describe those vampires who have distanced themselves from the others of their kind. It is not so much a sect as it is a classification. The Inconnu are old, powerful, and as such have little need, and less desire, for the company of their brethren. They tend to live in the wild among the animals and sleep within the earth when the sun is in the sky. (It is unknown how they manage to live in peace with the shape-changers who rule the wild areas.) Certain Inconnu still live within the cities, and may even be interested in the Jyhad, but by the rules of their sect may not become involved in it. Some have attended Camarilla Conclave meetings, creating great awe in the other Kindred. The Inconnu, like all Kindred, are always invited.

Most of the Inconnu have grown so old that they may sleep for months or years before awakening. They are like the Antediluvians in that they are no longer completely of this world, but have grown apart from it. Most of them are several millennia old and are the most powerful vampires most Kindred will ever encounter.

Many of the Inconnu are members of the fourth and fifth generations who were at one point or another involved in the Jyhad. They have won their places in the hierarchy of Kindred by dint of age or through the devouring of their own elders. They have gone into hiding out of fear for their

existence and out of distaste for the modern world. They believe that only by removing themselves from the world can they escape the Jyhad. Despite the best efforts of the sect, some of its members still become involved in the Jyhad. As a whole, the Inconnu punish all of their order who continue to take part in the Jyhad or meddle in the affairs of lesser Kindred. This is their only law.

A sizable minority of the Inconnu have actually achieved Golconda. This may explain their distaste of the Jyhad and their rational approach to many problems among the Kindred.

The Inconnu will allow no Kindred to harm or injure any of its members, no matter what those members have done. All rights to punishment are reserved solely for themselves, but it is very difficult to contact them to petition for such. In the end, the Inconnu are a most enigmatic and mysterious sect. Their organization and priorities are unknown, if indeed it can even be said that they have such.

Bloodlines

In the blood is light, in the light is life

For the love of life, for the love of life.

- Swans, "Love of Life"

Many modern philosophers argue that the present age has caused an apathy and disinterest ties of faith, nation, and blood. Certainly for the Kindred, the concerns of faith and nation are as dead as ever, but none care more dearly for the ties of blood.

While those of the Blood seem to be loners by nature and necessity, the need of society and structure seems to tug at them as strongly as it does mortals. This is most evident in the importance of lineage to the Kindred. Much of the respect one is due is based on the identity of one's sire, and the sire's sire, and so on. Even the most moronic of Kindred is entitled to some respect if his lineage is of regard.

At one time each vampire could name her sire, and her sire's sire, and so on all the way back to Caine. The importance of bloodlines has diminished of late, as Kindred became more and more removed from Caine. Their connections to the elders of import are lessened by the many generations between them. The relative peace offered by the Camarilla has made them soft and self-satisfied, and they have lost respect for the elders. As might be expected, this is deeply resented by the conservative elders. Most Kindred created in this century know little of their lineage and seem to care even less.

Even so, within the world of the vampire the bloodright of one's clan is still of crucial consequence. Most vampires can trace their general lineage, if not the precise bloodline, back to an Antediluvian of the third generation. While the founder of the bloodline may no longer exist, or at least have dropped from sight, all of his progeny still hold many traits in common. Each clan possesses certain gifts and curses associated with it that others do not share; more importantly, members of the same clan hold similar values and virtues.

Represented within the Camarilla are seven major clans, though Kindred of any bloodline are welcome. There are allegedly 13 distinct clans, as well as innumerable minor bloodlines. Two of the clans are said to be of the Sabbat, while the remaining four clans owe allegiance to neither sect.

There are likely many more unknown bloodlines, especially when one considers the mysterious eastern Kindred, who undoubtedly have their own unique divisions.

Brujah

The Brujah can trace their roots back to ancient Babylon, and the clay tablet libraries of the first scholars. They were the lovers and guardians of knowledge, and the founder of their line was the inventor of written language. However, in their quest for freedom, they slew their founder and were banished from the First City. Today the Brujah are scorned as riffraff who have lost their heritage and are without pride. For over a millennium they have been the rebels among the Kindred, forever questioning and testing the Traditions.

The clan is very poorly organized; its members meet only irregularly, and share little in common besides their love of rebellion. They are among the only supporters of the anarchs, and aiding them is one of the only matters upon which they ever agree. They are often underestimated, as much by themselves as anyone.

Gangrel

Clan Gangrel is said to be the only clan whose founder is still involved in and concerned with the welfare of her progeny. Her concern for them is matched only by her concern for her mortal descendants - the Gypsies. Though many Antediluvians use their progeny as pawns in the Jyhad, the Gangrel pride themselves on their freedom from such manipulation. There is a close bond between the clan and the Gypsies. In recent years, as Gehenna approaches, their interaction has been considerable.

Malkavian

The history of the Malkavian clan is completely shrouded in the past. The Malkavians themselves have many tales about their origin, but even they do not believe most of them. A favored legend among the Kindred is that the founder of the house was cursed by Caine, and his descendants have lived with the madness since. The Malkavians have always existed on the periphery of the vampire culture, watching, but never truly involving themselves in it. Long ago, before the curse and the madness, their founder was said to be the greatest among the third generation. Now it is his machinations that keep the weakest of those involved in the Jyhad "alive."

Nosferatu

It is the unfortunate plight of the members of this clan to display the Beast within their hearts upon their countenances. Though their founder was known for his rabid predilections and monstrous impulses, the Nosferatu of today are known for being cool-headed. Though they tend to choose only the most depraved individuals as progeny, some-

how the members of this clan seem to retain their sanity better than most vampires.

The founder is said to have been a man of regal visage who incurred the wrath of Caine for his barbaric activities and was thereby cursed with the face of a hag. The savagery of his soul is reflected upon his face and that of all his progeny.

Of course, many clans have legends in which an all-powerful Caine curses their founder just as God cursed Caine. It is not likely that all of these stories are true, but some, such as this, might be. Presently, the Nosferatu clan is estranged from their founder, and do not serve him - at least to their knowledge.

Toreador

Throughout history, the Toreador have been involved in the arts. This tradition is said to have begun with the first progeny of the founder, a pair of beautiful and artistically gifted twins. Their sire was a leader of the cabal of third generation vampires who slew their own sires. Though ruthless, he was very doting upon his progeny, proffering them far more independence than any other fourth generation vampires were given. They used their freedom to nurture the full panorama of the arts, and their sire protected them through war and famine. To this day, the Toreador claim that they are watched over by Arikel, their founder. Though the Toreador are not as formally organized as some other clans, they are furiously loyal to one another and to the art they claim to serve.

Tremere

The Tremere are unique and no other clan has a history as rich, yet as short, as theirs. Long ago, there were others of their line who were not warlocks, nor did the clan have mastery over the discipline of Thaumaturgy. Less than 1,000 years ago, a metamorphosis occurred. Deep in the Romanian mountains, in the district known as Transylvania, a group of magi from an ancient order were Embraced by a foolish clan leader. Combining their new powers with their ancient lore, the magi were quickly able to assume control of the clan. They Embraced many others from their arcane order, and drank the blood of all the elders of their clan. It is even hinted that the most powerful among them managed to hunt down and slay the founder of the line. The Tremere have adopted the most rigid hierarchical system among all the clans, and this has allowed them to achieve great power within Kindred society. The other clans distrust the Tremere, both out of fear and a sense that something is not quite right with them. The political center of the Tremere clan is in Vienna.

Ventrue

The Ventrue suspect their founder has been slain by one of the Brujah clan. Though this is a blow to their pride, it has given them some distance and protection from the chaos and strife of the Jyhad. Without the intrigues and demands of a god-like founder, the Ventrue have achieved a remarkable independence from the Antediluvians. They do not know how much truth is contained in this legend, but it is nonetheless one of the basic tenets of their clan, no matter how much other Kindred scoff at it.

Much of the respect accorded to the Ventrue is due to the independence they are perceived to have from the Antediluvians. It is out of pride for this respect they are given that they conceal their persecution of the Brujah clan. More princes and Justicars come from the Ventrue

clan than from any other; they are clearly the leaders of the Camarilla. The Ventrue have regular clan meetings in various parts of the world, including a Grand Council in London every seven years.

Caitiff

Some Kindred do not have a clan at all, but are of bastard blood. This is sometimes because they were abandoned by their sire, or were Embraced by an outcast vampire. A combination of a thinness of blood and a lack of social training has made them Clanless. This is a fairly recent phenomenon, and thus they are disdained by many of the other Kindred. Though many Caitiff are considered to be pariahs or anarchs, not all of them are outcasts. Some are accepted among the Damned, but none have yet reached an age where they have achieved any real power. Indeed, it seems as though the greatest explosion of the Clanless has occurred in the last 50 years.

Other Clans

There are many clans besides the ones described above. These clans do not claim membership in the Camarilla, though individual members of such lines may do so. Some clans are members of the Sabbat, while others are truly independent of any sect.

These independent clans include the feared Assamite assassins, the loathsome Followers of Set, the mercenary Giovanni family and the rakish Ravnos.

Witch Hunters

Sundown

You'd better take care

When I find you've been creeping

'Round my back stair.

- Gordon Lightfoot, "Sundown"

It is an ancient truism among the Kindred that they are their own greatest foes. Certainly no other beings are so adept at killing, and nothing is as capable of such hate as another of their own kind. However this is no longer as true as it once was. With the advent of modern technology, old superstitions and fears have fallen away. Humanity no longer fears the dark; it no longer realizes that it should.

The Kindred have many enemies among the mortal kind. They are generally referred to as witch hunters, though not all of them wish to do the Kindred harm. The name is simply a legacy of a darker time.

The Government

How much do the world governments suspect? How much do they know? It is hard to say. Many governments have agencies or departments devoted to the investigation of paranormal occurrences, but many, especially within the military, seem to be devoted to extra-sensory phenomena, like ESP, clairvoyance and telekinesis. In general, it seems clear that the Masquerade has been successful and that they know quite little.

In the United States, interest in Kindred activity can be traced to two agencies: the Federal Bureau of Investigation

and the National Security Agency.

The FBI is believed to contain several individuals who may suspect the truth. It is believed that some of the investigations into paranormal phenomena in the '50s and '60s may have turned up some Kindred-related information. Originally formed to counter the impact of suspected "Communist Thought Control" research, this department, commonly referred to as Special Affairs (though its members rarely identify themselves as such) is involved in ongoing investigations. However, it has dwindled significantly in power and membership over the years. Proof of suspected activities is demanded by the FBI before action can be taken, and proof is what has thus far eluded it. Circumstantial evidence no doubt abounds, but that last, necessary piece of tangible evidence has escaped the agency. So far.

Some believe the NSA keeps an active file on vampire-related events, but treats it as a subclassification of mass murders. It has certainly not made the connections that would reveal the whole picture. The NSA is a giant fact-sifting agency. Concerned with national security from an internal perspective, police and news reports that contain "interesting or anomalous" facts are routinely flagged. Investigation only occurs after the computer, or a reviewer, notices undue occurrences that may be related. Should those connections be made, the resources that could be brought to bear are truly frightening. In recent years, much of the attention of the Camarilla has been focused on this agency, and word has been spread that no one should engage in activities that would be flagged by these computers. As of yet, no vampire has been able to infiltrate retainers into the agency.

Recently, the Center for Disease Control, based in Atlanta, has become deeply concerned over the increasing incidents of AIDS being transmitted without apparent intimacies of any sort. The CDC has begun to worry that the virus no longer requires sexual contact to be spread. Before news begins to spread, it has begun an enormous investigation.

Britain has such an organization, but it is very difficult to trace. There is some suspicion that this organization is actually of a quasi-mystical nature, possibly with ties to similar organizations which date back hundreds of years. British Kindred have reported instances of unnerving accuracy in the investigations of Scotland Yard following unfortunate Kindred-related occurrences. Some even suspect that the authorities there have knowingly brought about the deaths of at least two deranged vampires within the last 75 years. There are rumors that this group is actually controlled by a Methuselah who uses it to eliminate enemies.

The old KGB was reportedly familiar with some aspects of Kindred society, and had even begun to use neonates in some of their operations. Though the USSR is now no more, the KGB still operates largely unchecked, most especially the cell based out of Gornovski Gulag, located in Siberia. It is generally thought, however, that the KGB is the pawn, not the manipulator. Though little information is available, it is widely believed that the Soviet state was the domain of a group of Kindred who were the controllers and instigators of communism, and that some colossal mishap has recently changed the power structure of the area.

The Inquisition

It is generally acknowledged that the Roman Catholic Church learned of the Kindred during the years of the Inquisition. Instituted in 1229, the Inquisition concerned itself with the suppression of various heresies spreading through Europe. Partially in response to the rise of the Catharist heresy in the south of France and northern Italy, Pope Innocent IV approved the use of torture in 1252.

There are tales that the Catharist beliefs were supported by many Kindred in the south of France, and that some of them fell into the hands of the Inquisition when their brethren were forced to confess their heresy. If this is so, it could explain much concerning the rapid escalation in the tyrannical practices of certain leaders of the Inquisition. Perhaps they had seen proof, with their own eyes, of evil incarnate in the world.

Whatever the truth of those events during the 13th century, all indications are that certain factions within the Church remains aware of, and concerned about, the existence of vampires. Indeed, the Inquisition continues still, albeit in a different form and with a different name.

Today the Inquisition is an organization of scholars and researchers of the occult, as well as a clearing house for many of the greatest vampire hunters. While originally only an investigative committee for heresy, it became a ruthless organization devoted to the elimination and torture of undesirables, a tradition which it has not entirely renounced. Though the Inquisition is no longer supported or sanctioned by the Church, most of its members are from the Catholic Church. Though they have taken a new name, "The Society of Leopold," and say they are only interested in research, they are preeminent among the witch hunters. They are well aware of the best ways to immobilize and kill vampires, and keep most of the oldest records.

However, they still do not know very much about the Kindred of today. Mainly they study old records and engage in endless speculations, and at times they embark on hunts and hold trials. They rarely kill their suspects, at least not right away, but hold elaborate trials first. Their eventual aim is to rid the world of the supernatural.

The Inner Circle of the Camarilla has decreed that they are to be avoided and left alone at all costs - better to give them nothing to study rather than give the whole world something to focus its attention upon. A collection of crackpots is much easier to deal with than a band of martyrs. The Inquisition has retained much of its old reputation and is widely despised and feared. None but the most naive believe that they have truly "reformed," especially those vampires who lived through the first period of persecution. Many anarchs take every chance they can to torment, lure and embarrass members of the Inquisition, despite the decrees made by the Inner Circle.

However, the members of the Society of Leopold possess several protections against vampires. They are learning to use various holy objects to weave protections against vampiric powers. Additionally, they can call upon the aid of many different groups when they seek "witches."

Among the most influential members of the Society are the Dominicans, who can trace their involvement back to the first Inquisition, which they partially oversaw. Many Kindred fear continued Dominican involvement, forgetting the circumstances and climate that contributed to the Inquisition. They also forget the fact that St. Thomas Aquinas, the renowned philosopher and theologian, was a Dominican during that period. The exact interest and concerns of the Dominicans remain unclear today.

There are also reports of a radical splinter group within

the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, who are in the midst of a controversy with the Holy Office. Rumors persist that this may have some connection to the destruction of some Kindred in Algeria about five years ago. A former Jesuit brother by the name of Sullivan Dane is believed to have been responsible. Dane may have been able to use the Algerian incident as proof to some of his former Jesuit brothers that the Kindred threat was real, not imagined by him. He and some of his brethren are reputedly at odds with their superiors and the Holy Office over the matter.

The Arcanum

The formation of the Arcanum can be traced to the mystical "War Of The Roses" centered around Paris in the late 1800s (a conflict unrelated to the English Baronial wars). A war of words, as well as (if their words are to be believed) mystic forces, arose between two orders of Rosicrucians. The struggle between the orders became such a public scandal (and entertainment, hence the Parisian newspapers' "War

Of The Roses" brand) that many of both groups' most brilliant scholars and practitioners left their respective orders. After constructing a great charter, these dissidents came together to form the Arcanum. The order persists to this day.

Though the Arcanum has been in existence for less than 300 years, its history drifts back even further. The core of the Arcanum consists of a group that has branded itself the "White Monks." It is believed that these so-called White Monks were somehow involved in the Inquisition, and learned of the Kindred then. However, they maintain no formal connections with the Inquisition, and do not engage in witch hunts. The Arcanum studies, but does not destroy.

The Arcanum has three known Foundation houses - one in Boston, one in Paris, and the third in Vienna. Its members, recruited from the cream of intellectual society, are concerned more with theory than practice. They seem solely devoted to the gathering and studying of occult-related information, and are focused primarily on the past rather than the modern world. There are some members who have shown a degree of interest in the here and now, but it is believed that these members, and the Arcanum itself, think the Kindred long dead. They seem to be more interested in phenomena of a less tangible nature: magic, miracles, hauntings and such.

The existence of the Arcanum does cause the Kindred some concern, since evidence of Kindred activity can and often does appear as signs of more nebulous supernatural activity. A miscalculation could lead the Arcanum right to their doorstep.

A general edict has been proclaimed by the Inner Circle of the Camarilla, and is backed by the Justicar from Clan Brujah, that the members of the Arcanum are not to be interfered with by the Kindred. Their activity should be monitored, if encountered, and reported, but no action is to be taken against them. The concern among the Kindred is that any confrontation could prove disastrous by providing the proof that the group has been waiting for.

The Lupines

Werewolves, or Lupines, are the mortal enemies of vampires, and have been since the dawn of time. They tend to live in tightly knit tribes connected by family ties, and can be somewhat rustic in outlook and brusque in manner. The tribes are highly secretive and insular, despising outsiders. Any vampire who intrudes on their land is hunted down and summarily executed. Lupines are ferocious fighters and it is almost impossible to sway them from their aims. It is most dangerous to gain their enmity. Only the Gangrel have any contact with the Lupines, and even they do not often reveal their true nature to their werewolf "acquaintances." On most

nights of the full moon, whole tribes of Lupines go on mad rampages, and all those caught in their path, mortal or otherwise, are slain.

The Magi

These practitioners of arcane lore are not to be trifled with. These are magicians of great power, and most of them follow the traditions of the ancient Order of Hermes. Though they are not active enemies of the Kindred, they will eliminate any who get in their way. However, it is said that they despise members of the Tremere clan, and brand them as traitors. They maintain a Masquerade as vigorously as do the Kindred. This alone serves to minimize conflicts.

Ghouls

Many Kindred create ghouls. This is accomplished by giving mortals or animals a drink of Kindred blood without first draining all their blood. Ghouls make excellent retainers, for after they drink the blood of their master three times, they are Blood Bound to the vampire. Ghouls also gain a number of special powers due to the blood.

Kindred create such creatures regularly, as a means of creating loyal servants who are able to protect them during the day. Permission is required from the prince in order to create a ghoul, or so the Council of the Camarilla has ruled, for it technically breaks the restrictions of the Masquerade. Ghouls are generally told very little and are too fearful of their masters to relay much information.

A ghoul can become Blood Bound to her creator just as a vampire can. Thus, after three feedings, the ghoul is inexorably Bound to her master. However, if the ghoul spends more than a year without receiving blood from her master, she ceases to be Blood Bound. If she spends more than a month without being fed vampire blood she becomes fully mortal once again. Once the point of her natural lifespan has passed, the ghoul must always have vampire blood in her; otherwise she will die very quickly- within a few days, or in a few rare instances, a few hours.

Generations

Kindred produce progeny, much as mortals do, and different generations exist among them in much the same manner. There exist more than 13 generations of Kindred, and the more distant a Kindred is from Caine, the first vampire, the weaker that Kindred is as well. Kindred are commonly identified by what generation they belong to. Player characters will always be of the 13th generation (unless they have chosen the Generation Background Trait).

It is important to understand that generation does not necessarily indicate age. A vampire of the 10th generation could be twice as old as a vampire of the sixth generation.

Remember, if characters engage in the practice of diablerie, the slaying and drinking the blood of Kindred of

earlier generations, they may raise their effective generations. For example, if an eighth generation vampire slays and drinks the remaining vitæ of a seventh generation vampire, her effective generation will now be seventh, not eighth (See Chapter Eight for more details).

The Generations chart in Chapter Seven describes the special powers of vampires of different generations. These differences are quite major, and give the Kindred of earlier generations considerably more raw power than the characters.

Caine

Tradition holds that Caine, the Biblical slayer of his brother Abel, is the Sire Of All Kindred. There is much controversy ov er this within the Kindred community, as there are none still existing who can claim with utter certainty to have met Caine. Certainly, those of the second generation would know, but they're not talking. Some of the third generation who yet exist claim to have met a being who may have been Caine, or simply a powerful Kindred of the second generation.

It is an unresolved question - a mystery of heritage.

Second Generation

The existing translations of the *Book of Nod* place the number of second generation Kindred at three. Caine in his sorrow created them to live with him in his great city of Enoch. Nothing is known about these three.

One can assume, based on the *Book of Nod*, that they were slain either during the Deluge or in the First War following the Flood. As one might expect, all those of age are reluctant to speak of their sires and the great strife that overcame them all. Undoubtedly, some know more than they are revealing.

Were any of the second generation still in existence today, they would be powerful beings: akin to demigods, perhaps.

Third Generation

It is believed that seven members of the third generation exist, though the names of only two, Lucian and Mekhet, are widely known. In common argot, they are referred to as the Antediluvians, and they are the founders of the 13 vampire clans. All remain hidden, lost in the workings of the Jyhad, the war that has lasted nearly as long as recorded history. They continue their struggle, but now instead of openly warring on the battlefield, they use subterfuge, guile and outright deceit. Their primary activities seem to be tracing the activities of each other and thwarting whatever moves their opponents make.

These moves seem to range from something as petty as the acquisition of a piece of artwork or property, to grand schemes involving nations. Those of the third generation see themselves as manipulators and dominators, split between those who would live within the mortal world and those who would live without. It is unclear if this reflects the origins of the Jyhad, or is just what it has degenerated into. There are other suspicions, based on the origins of the word *Jyhad*. Some among the third generation may indeed have reached Golconda and are attempting to assist others of their kind attain this state. They must war with the other Ancients who do not wish this to come to pass.

Those of the third generation are powerful beings, with abilities and powers only guessed at by their lessers. Some say they are the last generation to have true mastery over the powers of life and death, and can only die the Final Death if they choose or are slain by one of equal power. Is this, perhaps, the Jyhad? A maneuvering to see who shall be the last of their kind?

Fourth and Fifth Generations

These vampires are known as the Methuselahs, for they are nearly as powerful and secretive as the Antediluvians. Those of the fourth and fifth generations are most often the pawns of choice in the Jyhad, as they may have political power among the other Kindred. As a result, their numbers have dwindled significantly with the actions of the Antediluvians. Few of this generation remain active, and many have become Inconnu out of fear of the Jyhad and diablerie. The Inner Circle of the Camarilla is said to be composed of members of the fourth generation. There are even rumors that the true purpose of the Camarilla is to blunt the efforts of the third generation to manipulate the younger generations.

Though the blood of Caine begins to dilute somewhat at this distance, those of the fourth generation are still extremely powerful. It can be assumed they have reached their maximum potential in two or three Disciplines.

Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Generations

Vampires of these generations are powerful enough to think they can resist the workings of their elders, and so remain deeply involved in Kindred society. They control the Camarilla (at least they think so), comprise the majority of the princes, and are the primogen of many cities. Those who remain in positions of visibility tend to be important figures: leaders of clans or bloodlines, or princes of great cities. Most of the princes of European cities tend to be of the sixth generation. Princes of American cities tend to be of the seventh or eighth generations.

Members of these generations have most commonly reached their maximum potential in one or two Disciplines.

Interestingly, the members of the eighth generation seem to be the last Kindred viewed as "elders." Perhaps it is because the majority of them were created before the modern age, and that is evident in their manner and bearing.

Ninth and Tenth Generations

Though they are sometimes called elders, these Kindred often associate themselves with members of the younger generations. Members of these generations are frequently called ancillæ, thou gh of course this is based on age more than generation. Most were created in the modern era, and thus are somewhat alien in temperament to the older Kindred. In more ways than one, they bridge the gap between the anarchs and the elders.

Eleventh, Twelfth, and Thirteenth Generations

The most recent generations of Kindred are often called neonates. Most characters belong to these generations. They are still powerful creatures, but the special gifts of Caine's blood (the unique powers and abilities) are rarely found here. Born within recent memory, the Kindred of these generations are products of societies that have received the benefits of, and been victims of, rapid change.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth Generations

There are exceedingly few Kindred of these generations, and none beyond. Indeed, those of the 15th generation have failed to sire any progeny. Their blood is far too thin, and they are too removed from Caine, to be able to pass on the curse.

What's the meaning of words

When they cease to function

When there's nothing to say?

- Killing Joke, "Requiem"

Lexicon

There exists among the Kindred a distinct *patois*, drawing on many tongues and giving new shades of meaning to certain mortal words. One can often tell what generation a vampire is by listening to the parlance that she employs. There is a sharp distinction between the words used by the anarchs and those employed by elders. Using the wrong word in the wrong circumstances is often considered a serious breach of etiquette.

Common Parlance

These are the terms that are most commonly used among the Kindred.

Anarch - A rebel among the Kindred, one with no respect for the elders. Most fledglings are automatically assumed to be anarchs by the elders, and are despised as products of the 20th century.

Barrens, The - The areas of a city that are devoid of life graveyards, abandoned buildings and parks.

Becoming, The - The moment one becomes a vampire; the metamorphosis from mortal to Kindred. Also called *The Change.*

Book of Nod - The "sacred" book of the Kindred, tracing the race's origins and early history. It has never been published in its entirety, although fragments are known to exist in various languages.

Beast, The - The drives and urges which prompt a vampire to become entirely a monster, forsaking all Humanity. Vide *Man* infra.

Blood - The vampire's heritage. That which makes a vampire a vampire, or simply the actual blood of the vampire.

Blood Kindred - The relationship between vampires of the same *lineage* and *clan*. The idea is much the same among mortals; only the means of transmission are different.

Blood Oath - The most potent bond which can exist between vampires; the receiving of blood in an acknowledgement of mastery. This grants a mystical power over the one who is bound. Vide *Blood Bond* infra.

Brood - A group of vampires gathered around a leader (usually their sire). A brood may in time become a *clan* (qv).

Caitiff - A vampire with no clan; frequently used in a derogatory fashion. To be clanless is not a virtue among the Kindred.

Camarilla, The - A global sect of vampires in which all Kindred may hold membership. Its rule is far from absolute, and it serves as a debating chamber more than a government.

Childe - A derogatory term for a young, inexperienced, or foolish vampire. The plural form is *Childer.*

Clan - A group of vampires who share certain mystic and physical characteristics. Vide *lineage, bloodline.*

Diablerie - The cannibalistic behavior common among Kindred, involving the consumption of the blood of another vampire. The elders do so out of need, whereas the anarchs do so out of desire for power.

Domain - The fiefdom claimed by a vampire, most often a prince. Invariably a city.

Elder - A vampire who is 300 years of age or older. Elders consider themselves the most powerful Kindred, and usually engage in their own Jyhad.

Elysium - The name given for the places where the elders meet and gather, commonly operas, theaters or other public places of high culture.

Embrace, The - The act of transforming a mortal into a vampire by draining the mortal's blood and replacing it with a small amount of the vampire's own blood.

Fledgling - A young, newly created vampire. Vide *Neonate, Whelp* .

Generation - The number of steps between a vampire and the mythical Caine. Caine's Get were the second generation, their brood the third, and so on.

Gehenna - The end of the Third Cycle; the impending Armageddon when the Antediluvians shall awaken and devour all vampires.

Ghoul - A servant created by allowing a mortal to drink Kindred blood without the draining that would give rise to a *progeny.*

Haven - The home of a vampire or the place where it sleeps during the day.

Hunger, The - As with mortals and other animals, the drive to feed. For vampires, though, it is much more intense, and takes the place of every other drive, urge and pleasure.

Inconnu - A sect of vampires, mostly Methuselahs, who have removed themselves from both mortal and Kindred affairs. They state that they have nothing to do with the Jyhad.

Jyhad, The - The secret war being waged between the few surviving vampires of the third generation, using younger vampires as pawns. Also used to describe any sort of conflict or warfare between vampires.

Kindred - A vampire. Many elders consider even this term to be vulgar, and prefer to use a more poetic word such as *Cainite* .

Kiss - To take the blood of a mortal, or the act of taking blood in general.

Lupine - A werewolf, the mortal enemy of the vampires.

Lush - A vampire who habitually feeds upon prey who are under the influence of drink or drugs in order to experience the sensations thereof. Vide *Head.*

Life, The - A euphemistic term for mortal blood taken as sustenance. Many Kindred regard the term as affected and prissy.

Man, The - The element of humanity which remains in a vampire, and which strives against the base urgings of the

Beast (qv).

Masquerade, The - The effort begun after the end of the great wars to hide Kindred society from the mortal world. A policy reaffirmed after the time of the Inquisition.

Prince - A vampire who has established a claim to rulership over a city, and is able to support that claim *nil disputandum*. A prince often has a *brood* (qv) to aid him. The feminine form is still prince.

Riddle, The - The essential dilemma of a vampire's existence - to prevent the occurrence of greater atrocities, one must commit evil deeds of a lesser nature. The proverb is: *monsters we are lest monsters we become*.

Rogue - A vampire who feeds upon other vampires, either out of need or perversion. Vide *Diablerie*.

Sabbat, The - A sect of vampires controlling much of eastern North America. They are violent and bestial, reveling in needless cruelty.

Sect - General name for one of the three primary groups among the Kindred - the Camarilla, Sabbat or Inconnu.

Sire - The parent-creator of a vampire, used both as the female and male form.

Vessel - A potential or past source of blood, typically a human.

Old Form

These are the words used by the elders and other vampires of antiquity. Though these terms are rarely used by the newly created, they are still the fashionable vernacular among the more sophisticated Kindred. Elders may often be identified simply by the words they use.

Amaranth - The act of drinking the blood of other Kindred. *Vide Diablerie.*

Ancilla - An "adolescent" vampire; one who is no longer a neonate, but is not an elder either.

Antediluvian - One of the eldest Kindred, a member of the third generation. A warlord of the Jyhad.

Archon - A powerful vampire who wanders from city to city, usually serving a Justicar. Archons are frequently used to track down Kindred who have fled a city.

Autarkis - A vampire who refuses to be a part of Kindred society, and does not recognize the domain of a prince.

Cainite - A vampire. Vide *Kindred*.

Canaille - The mortal herd, especially that element of it which is the most unsavory and lacking in culture (whom the Kindred largely feed upon).

Cauchemar - A vampire who feeds only on sleeping victims and prevents their awakening.

Cunctator - A vampire who avoids killing by drinking shallowly and taking too little blood to kill the prey; *faut plus chasser, peut mieux dormir*. Compare *Casanova* .

Coterie - A group of Kindred who protect and support one another against all outsiders. Vide *Brood*.

Consanguineus - One of the same lineage (usually a younger member).

Footpad - One who feeds off the derelicts and the homeless, and who frequently does not have a haven of her own. Vide *Alleycat* .

Gentry - A Kindred who hunts the nightclubs, districts of ill repute, and other places of entertainment where mortals seek to pair off. Vide *Rake*.

Golconda - The state of being to which many vampires aspire, in which a balance is found between opposing urges and scruples. The slide into bestiality is halted, and the individual reaches a kind of stasis. Like the mortals' Nirvana, it is often spoken of, but seldom achieved.

Humanitas - The degree to which a Kindred still retains some humanity.

Kine - A contemptuous term for mortals, often used in opposition to *Kindred*. The expression *Kindred and Kine* means "all the world."

Leech - A human who drinks a vampire's blood, yet retains free will. Often he keeps the vampire as a prisoner, or offers great rewards for the blood.

Lextalionis - The code of the Kindred, allegedly created by Caine. It suggests biblical justice - an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. Vide *Traditions*.

Lineage - The bloodline of a vampire, traced by Embrace.

Methuselah - An elder who no longer lives among the other Kindred. Many Methuselahs belong to the *Inconnu*.

Neonate - A young, newly created Kindred. Vide *Fledgling, Whelp*.

Osiris - A vampire who surrounds himself with mortal or ghoul followers in a cult or coven to better obtain sustenance. The practice is less common than it once was.

Papillon - The red-light district; the area of the city made up of nightclubs, gambling houses and brothels. The prime hunting ground of the city.

Progeny - A collective term for all the vampires created by one sire. Less formal, and less flattering, is *Get*.

Praxis - The right of princes to rule, as well as the rules, laws and customs enforced by a particular prince.

Primogen - The leaders in a city or the ruling council of elders. Those who support the prince and make her rule possible.

Regnant - One who has a Blood Bond over another Kindred, through giving said Kindred blood three times. Vide *Blood Bond*.

Retainers - Humans who serve a vampire master. They are generally either ghouls or mentally dominated by their vampire master. This control is sometimes so complete that the mortals are unable to take any action of their own volition.

Siren - A vampire who seduces mortals, but does not kill them and takes only a little blood after putting the mortal into a deep sleep. Vide *Tease* .

Suspire - The dream dance during the final stage of the quest for Golconda.

Third Mortal - Caine, the progenitor of all vampires, according to the *Book of Nod* (qv).

Thrall - A vampire who is held under a Blood Bond, and thus under the control of another Kindred.

Vitæ - Blood.

Wassail - The final release and the last frenzy. Wassail occurs when the last vestiges of Humanity are lost and a vampire plunges into madness.

Whelp - A contemptuous term for any young vampire; originally used only in reference to one's own progeny.

Wight - Human, mortal.

Witch-hunter - A human who searches for vampires in order to kill them.

Whig - Name for a Cainite who possesses an obsessive interest in mortal fashion and current events.

Vulgar Argot

These are the words used most frequently by the anarchs, the younger vampires who disdain and/or ignore the traditions of the elders. They seek to establish their own culture, and inventing their own slang is part of the process. Of course, they will use Old Form when they do not have another word for the same thing, and some elders have even begun to use the vulgar form of a word so as to create a greater effect when they speak.

Alleycat - A vampire who does not have a haven of any kind, but instead resides in a different place each night. Also used to refer to those Kindred who feed off the homeless and other street people.

Banking - The practice, most widespread among younger Kindred, of taking blood from blood banks. Chilled blood so long removed from the body is less satisfying, but some neonates delight in entering a blood bank and drinking to excess. This is seen by many princes as a breach of the Masquerade.

Banker - A Kindred who engages in the practice of Banking.

Black Hand - A sect that involves itself in diablerie. Vide *Sabbat*.

Blister - A vampire who contracts an infectious disease, and subsequently spreads it to each donor from whom she feeds.

Bloodline - The vampire's heritage. Vide *Lineage*.

Blood Bond - A mystic servitude to another vampire as a result of taking the *Blood Oath*. Vide *Regnant*.

Blood Doll - A Kindred who is held in Regnant by another. The doll is Blood Bound and no longer free.

Butterfly - One who mingles among the high society of mortals, and only feeds upon the wealthy and famous.

Casanova - A vampire who delights in seducing mortals but not killing them, and who takes only a little blood, erasing the victim's memory of the event when she is finished. There are rumors that the original Casanova was or is a vampire, but this is not generally believed. Vide *Cauchemar*.

Change, The - The moment and the process of becoming a vampire. Vide *Becoming*.

Damned, The - The immortal, undead race. All the vampires as a whole.

Donor - A potential or past source of blood, typically a human.

Farmer - A derogatory term for a vampire who keeps animals for the purpose of feeding the Hunger. Vide *Vegetary*.

Fief - A sarcastic term for the domain of a clan or prince.

Head - A vampire who feeds upon those under the influence of a drug, so as to feel the effect. The term *Head* is used with a suitable prefix if the vampire prefers a particular drug. Vide *Lush*.

Headhunter - An elder who hunts other Kindred for their blood. Vide *Rogue, Diablerie*.

Lick - A vampire. Vide *Kindred*.

Rack, The - The hunting ground represented by nightclubs, bars, and other places of entertainment where mortals seek to dance, drink and pair off.

Rake One - who habitually uses the *Rack* is a *Rake* in Vulgar argot; *Papillon* and *Gentry* are progressively older terms for the same.

Sandman - A vampire who feeds only upon sleeping victims. Vide *Cauchemar*.

Slumming - The act of feeding from the homeless and derelicts. A vampire who does so exclusively is a *Slummer*.

Stalker - A mortal who hunts the Kindred. Vide *Witch-hunter*.

Tease - A term sometimes used for a female *Casanova* (qv).

Turf - The city or section of a city that vampires might try to claim for themselves. Vide *Fief, domain*.

Vegetary - A sarcastic term for a vampire who refuses to take the blood of humans, but relies instead on that of animals. Vide *Farmer*.

Chapter Three: Storytelling

The hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man - universal man - he has been reborn.

- Joseph Campbell

Running a **Vampire** story is not always easy, but it is usually completely engaging. Though being a player has its own unique rewards, there is something about being a Storyteller that transcends even that experience, allowing you to reach an entirely different level. It has something to do with the fact that, as a Storyteller, you are creating an entire world out of your imagination - in effect, conjuring it out of thin air. In some small but significant way you play the role of a god - in the same way that a poet, novelist or inventor does. You are a creator of a universe, and that role supplies its own rarefied reward.

If you aren't ready for it, being a Storyteller can be a disaster. Besides roleplaying all the characters that the players don't play, you must wear about six other hats: stage manager, director, prop coordinator, social director, script writer and even publicist. However, you shouldn't let your fear of something new keep you from trying it out. You'll be nervous, afraid of your players' reactions and far too cautious, but after just one time as the Storyteller, you'll discover a whole new side to yourself.

Most of this chapter describes the basics of how to construct and tell a story. Even if you have run other storytelling or roleplaying games before, you will still find this chapter to be of interest, for it denotes the particulars of telling a **Vampire** story. All the information here is simply advice. Use what you want, and throw away everything that doesn't fit your storytelling style.

A Job Description

The stage but echoes back the public voice,

The drama's laws the drama's patrons give

For we that live to please, must please to live.

- Samuel Clemens

The players have it easy. They only have to worry about a single character, one single alter ego. They can focus their imaginative powers on one unique individual, and spend all their effort bringing that character alive. As the Storyteller, your job is much more demanding. You are everything the players are not - you are the rest of the universe.

First of all you must roleplay every character in the story who is not controlled by a player. If you think of the story as a movie, the players are the stars, while you control all the supporting cast, walk-ons and extras.

The setting is yours alone to create and relate. If the characters decide to turn down a certain alley, or enter a certain building, you must either know what they will find or be able to invent it at a moment's notice. You are their eyes and ears. If they treat an antagonist in an insulting manner, you must decide how she will react. If they tell a news reporter about the Kindred, you will need to decide what happens.

Additionally, you are the final arbiter of the rules as they apply during the game. If any questions or disputes arise about any of the rules during play, you have the final say. Even though we've designed these rules carefully and tested them thoroughly, the nature of storytelling games is such that situations always arise which are not covered by the letter of the rules. Part of the Storyteller's job is to resolve these situations, sticking to the *spirit* of the rules as much as possible.

You are also in charge of the story itself. The players will start off knowing nothing about the story they are experiencing, and will learn about it as they go along. You, on the other hand, must be able to jump-start things from a dead stop. You must always keep an eye on the progress of the story and make sure that all of the players are enjoying themselves.

Indeed, your foremost duty is to invent a story, or at least the beginning of a story, and to simultaneously entrance and entertain both your players and yourself. However, you cannot simply create a story and tell it to an audience: it is your interaction with the players that creates a plot. A story is invented moment by moment, through the dynamics between player and Storyteller.

Telling a Story

The foremost responsibility of a Storyteller is to make sure that a good story is being told; however, the Storyteller should never simply *tell* a story. The events and flow of the story are as much the responsibility of the players as the Storyteller. The primary duty of the Storyteller is to lead the story and to keep it moving briskly in the desired direction - or at least stop it from breaking down completely. Telling a story is more a matter of keeping up with the players, commenting and elaborating upon what their characters do and say, than it is of relating a narrative.

The most important thing when telling a story is to be ready to abandon your expectations. Never force the

players to follow your premade plot; you must be willing to work with them. Try to anticipate what the characters will do and how this will affect the course of the story - you can't foresee everything, of course, but have a few contingency plans worked out in advance.

Before you begin to tell a story, be prepared. Don't have a plot already set, but have story hooks ready, and create as elaborate a setting as possible. This may sound obvious, but it can't be stressed enough. If you are using a premade story, read through the text of the story very thoroughly at least once before you present it to the players. Make sure you know when and where everything happens, who is where at what time, and so on. In particular, study the major antagonists, their personalities and motivations, and be sure that you can present them convincingly to the players.

The Storyteller must make sure the game element doesn't slow down or interfere with the story element. Storytelling is always a perpetual balance between game and story.

Laying Down The Law

The core rules of **Vampire** have been designed for simplicity and flexibility. They are simple so that the basic principles of the rules can be grasped very easily, and flexible so that they can cover most if not all of the infinite possibilities presented by a storytelling game.

You will quickly come to develop your own personal style. Part of this style will arise from your own personality and inclinations, while part of it will reflect the tastes of your players. The range of different styles is best illustrated by referring to two storytelling archetypes, representing opposite ends of the scale. Both styles are exaggerated, and you will probably end up somewhere in between.

At one end of the scale is the Rules Lawyer. This type of Storyteller insists on dice rolls for everything, and applies the letter of the rules to the fullest extent. The world which this Storyteller evokes is self-consistent and the players will feel as if their characters have the power to change the world.

At the other end of the scale is the Freeformer. To this type of Storyteller, the story is everything. Dice are rolled only occasionally; in fact, the Storyteller usually decides exactly what is going to happen without dice, and follows the players as they create the story. Character actions may direct the story, but it is the Storyteller who decides the results of these actions.

Vampire tends to be more freeform than rules-oriented. The rules are there to help, not to govern - freedom of action is the key. The players should possess maximum freedom of action, and should *never* feel that their decisions and actions do not make a difference.

Breaking the Rules

One of the biggest decisions a Storyteller ever makes is when she first decides to ignore the rules. This is completely legitimate, provided it's done for the right reasons and in the right way. In fact, we encourage you to break the rules; it is your prerogative as a Storyteller.

From time to time, situations will arise where applying the full letter of the rules would cause the story to slow or even collapse. For example, imagine the climax of a story in which the characters have just spent several weeks finding and recovering a medieval tome which contains vital

information about the Sabbat who have entered the city.

A freak botch (a disastrous dice roll) sends the character carrying the tome falling from a rooftop into a huge fire created by a witch-hunter. The tome is lost forever, the characters are doomed to die at the hands of the Sabbat (or the hunter), and the whole chronicle comes to an end.

As well as being a crushing and probably undeserved defeat for the characters, this single bad roll means that the story cannot proceed. That can be very frustrating if you've spent your hard-earned cash on buying it or devoted several

weeks of spare time to designing it. Several different repairs are possible, though, so don't despair.

One way is simply to discount the botch - reduce its severity so that the book is saved (or simply have the player try again). This works fine once, but eventually, the players will rely on this kind of aid from you every time they get themselves into trouble.

Another option is to amend the story. The book is lost, but somewhere there is another source of information which can replace it. Perhaps one of the Sabbat is sickened by the excesses of her fellows, or moved by ambition or revenge to turn against them. She seeks out the characters and arms them with the knowledge they need. Again, this will work, but you may find players blatantly sitting around, waiting for you to spoon-feed them in future situations.

Finally, you might allow the falling character a superhuman (or super-vampiric) effort to throw the book to one of his comrades so that the story can continue. This is the best option for most chronicles, but some players may be too selfish to do this.

There are other ways out of this situation as well; your job, and privilege, is to decide which means you will use. Sometimes simply letting the chronicle come to an end is the best way to teach the players that their actions, and the vagaries of the dice, really do have an effect upon your world.

That's Entertainment

As well as being a referee, gamemaster, roleplayer, and overseer, the Storyteller has another duty - to make sure everyone has fun. Above all else, you, as the Storyteller, must be an entertainer. For the most part, this consists of knowing your players and catering to their tastes, but eventually you will be faced with a problem arising from one or more players themselves.

In the excitement of the moment, even the most mild-mannered players become agitated and try to drown out the others. You may find that players with strong personalities are dominating the quieter ones, and in extreme cases the loudest player in the group may end up determining the actions of the entire coterie. This is highly undesirable, as players who feel themselves to be overshadowed or ignored will become bored or resentful, and eventually they will drop out of the game.

Take care to listen to all of your players equally. If one player states that another player's character is doing something, check with that character's player first. If one or more players are dominating the action and not letting the others participate as fully as their characters deserve, take them aside and point out the problem as diplomatically as possible. Remind everyone that this is not a competitive game, and

that those players who seek to dominate others are gaining nothing but resentment. As a final sanction, you may decide not to invite an unrepentantly troublesome player to future games.

Give 'Em What they Want

There are a variety of reasons why people enjoy roleplaying. Understanding the motivations of your players will enable you to better entertain them. Described below are some of the reasons why your players might want to spend time in the world you create:

•**To tell a story** - A story can be a beautiful creation, a work of art worthy of the human imagination. Telling stories can be an invigorating and illuminating experience, and being directly involved in its creation is as fundamentally exciting as any human activity.

•**To be someone completely different** - Like a kid playing dress-up, putting on a new role and trying it out, this person loves to see what it is like to be someone else, and thereby vicariously have experiences normally closed to her.

•**Problem solving** - Many people enjoy being faced with puzzles, riddles and other mental dilemmas. They enjoy both the process of deducing the solution and the elation of the achievement. This sort of player treats roleplaying as a puzzle to be solved.

•**Sense of accomplishment** - The player enjoys the satisfying feeling of completing a difficult task by stretching all of his creative faculties. To achieve success in a game can sometimes make up for a lack of success in the real world.

•**To gain power** - Many people feel powerless in today's impersonal, hypertechnological society. The desire for power is common among players who do not possess power in real life. Those who are motivated by this urge are known as "power-gamers," and can sometimes be quite disruptive if this motivation is not properly channeled.

•**To be with friends**- Many roleplay because it is a social occasion, a chance for them to be with their friends in a relaxed atmosphere. Sometimes they come just to be with one particular friend (such as a girlfriend or boyfriend). The social aspect of storytelling cannot be underrated.

•**To experience strong emotions**- Fear, hate, grief and other emotions are often in short supply in our sheltered world, but at some fundamental level we need them. A bland life without emotion is a life without meaning. Many players use roleplaying to experience a depth of emotion that would otherwise be lost to them.

•**Catharsis** - Our lives are often highly stressful, and everyone needs ways of blowing off steam. Storytelling can sometimes provide an intensely cathartic experience, one unrivaled by any other form of entertainment.

The Art of Storytelling

I stood,

Among them, but not of them; in a shroud

Of thoughts which were not their thoughts.

- Lord Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

An important part of your job as Storyteller is to encourage the players to roleplay and to provide them with opportunities to do so. Players need to associate closely with their characters, but this only happens if they are comfortable and familiar with them. Your roleplaying of the bit parts is your primary means of getting the players to roleplay. The better you do so, the more they will roleplay and the more they will get into the story. This is not the only means of encouraging roleplaying, however.

One of the reasons people are attracted to roleplaying in the first place is because they are able to employ and see the results of their active use of free will. They decide to do something and almost immediately they get results, unlike the real world where it is all too easy to feel like a very small cog in a very large machine. You need to be aware of this, and show your players that free will plays a role in your chronicle.

You'll want to make your stories as open-ended as possible, with as many different ways to get to the conclusion (of which there might be many) as there are ways to drive home from work. There might be many quick ways to get through the story, but how often is a story a race to the finish line?

Most of our published supplements are far more linear that you will want to make your own. Though we try to allow as much room for character decisions as we can, the nature of the beast (i.e., the limited size of the book) prohibits us from delineating a comprehensive spectrum of conclusions and plots. This is a weakness you will not want to repeat in your own stories, and even when you do use a supplement, let the players go off the track a little bit and explore their own alternative to the basic plot.

Suspense

Fear is more than simply essential in horror - it is quintessential. Anxiety is the emotion you want to be coursing through every player's heart for much of the story. Fear is best created through suspense. Suspense, however, is much more than simply fear; it is anticipation and dread as well.

Suspense is a key element of **Vampire**, and it is one of the things which differentiates it from other varieties of horror. This is not splatterpunk or slasher horror - it is suspense in the

Hitchcock tradition. The players should never be sure of what will happen next in a **Vampire** chronicle. They portray characters who have been thrust into a world of fantastic proportions and kaleidoscopic reality, and who are trapped in a situation which is carnivalesque in its strangeness. They have become vampires. Can you think of anything more strange?

At first, they are not sure what is happening, and when they find out, they must find ways to adjust. It will take an enormous amount of effort just to discover the most elementary facts about the new world they have been thrust into. The whole chronicle is often a never-ending process of discovering more and more about the Gothic-Punk world.

The suspense in **Vampire** is energized by the fear that plagues the lives of the characters, for there is so much that they do not know, and so much danger that awaits them, unknown and ever-lurking.

There are a number of different techniques for creating

and maintaining suspense; some of the more important are described below.

Timing

Timing is one of the most important elements in building and sustaining suspense. Timing, however, is something so personal and subtle that it is impossible to teach. You've got to already have it, or somehow learn it if you want to build the effects that create a great story. In a general sense, timing usually means that you start with mystery and drama, and slowly spiral into the real horror. Things move slowly during investigations, but much more quickly when the real actions starts - mimicking real life. Gun battles often take only a few seconds. The game systems described in the Drama chapter take this into account, playing out some dramatic moments and shortening others.

Pace events quickly enough that the players feel that they are actually in the moment, and don't have the freedom to dawdle all day. Whenever the players spend too much time deciding what to do, create an event that interrupts their discussion. Let the action come to them if they don't go to it. Don't let the story stall just because the characters can't decide what they want to do (though be careful that you don't take away their free will either - it's a delicate balance). Create a sense of the real flow of time, but be careful you don't push them too much.

Description

Give the players a staggeringly complete description of what they sense, down to the blood on their noses and the catch in their voices. The pace at which you describe things and the length of time it takes you, as well as what you are actually describing, can serve to build the tension. Thus, you can lavishly detail the exterior of an old, rotting mansion before the players attempt to break into it. The time you spend and the words you use can slowly build up a feeling of anticipation and dread.

Imagination

Sometimes the opposite technique is equally effective -if you don't describe something, the players' imaginations go wild. This is the ancient Chinese ideal of the vacuum - used in music, art, and all aspects of life - in which the blank slate is filled with the constructs of the imagination. You want to direct the players' imaginations in certain directions, but you do not want to tell them what to imagine. For instance, you can have one of the characters' retainers, who is guarding over them while they sleep in an abandoned cellar, simply disappear without a trace. This is guaranteed to drive them nuts.

Changes of Pace

Altering the pace of the story is an interesting technique, but one that is often difficult to employ. Don't make the players face horrifying situations every single moment of every single game session. Horror doesn't work that way. The horror will be all the more tangible after they've had a little break from it (the technique of contrast cannot be underrated).

Keep the suspense constant when you want the players to be on the edge of their seats, but make sure you manufacture moments where they can relax and sit back - then bring on even more suspense later on. Make sure that somehow this period of calm serves as a potent contrast to what is coming ahead - the eye of the hurricane, so to speak. The way in which you build and relieve tension, and the sharpness of your timing, are basic to the drama of your story. Tension is the one thing you should always have absolute command over. Be aware of it in your players.

Changes of pace can often be achieved by switching between mortal and immortal opponents for the characters. Perhaps at one moment they are opposed merely with a petty hindrance, such as the police, while the next moment they must face a power even greater than their own, like a ravenous Methuselah.

Deadline

Give the characters a deadline. If they don't do such and such within a given time frame, then a certain result occurs (usually something really, really bad). The players are aware of the deadline, and usually become frantic near the end of their attempt to complete the mission. Of course, you may need to manipulate things to ensure that the mission still needs to be completed as the deadline approaches, so the deadline technique will not be ruined by overly successful players. If they do well enough, however, you may want to simply let them win to allow the continuity and reality of the story to continue. This is one of the best ways to build suspense in a story - a deadline creates a powerful climax.

Delay Success

Because of the structure of the rules system, partial or marginal successes are common, and it often takes several turns to complete a given action. Therefore, you can plan dramatic scenes in which a character's friends must hold off a horde of enemies while he struggles to repair a malfunctioning vehicle or disarm a bomb. A race across a railroad bridge, where the characters need 18 successes to get all the way across, can be equally dramatic. The fewer turns it takes, the fewer chances the characters' opponents will have to shoot them as they run across.

Secrecy

Many elements of a story must be kept hidden from the players. When you use this technique, you try to heighten the importance of these elements (so that players really want to find out the truth) and you try to establish even more secrets. In short, the idea is to populate the story with so many secrets that the characters are surrounded by them. The story will be a great deal more fun if the players do not realize what is going on, but must deduce the truth behind everything (problem solvers love this sort of thing). Mystery is essential to **Vampire**, for it adds that extra layer of detail that transforms the game into an engaging way to tell stories. Always keep the players guessing.

Intrigue

Plotting and intrigue are the meat and drink of vampiric existence; they are constant elements in their strange society. There are mysteries within mysteries within mysteries, most of which involve the plots of the Antediluvians against one another. Many of your stories should contain some aspect of intrigue. The characters should try to figure out what is going on as they pursue their goals. They should be constantly confronted and confused by this intrigue. Their lives can be twisted and manipulated, their sanity damaged, and their safety imperiled. Eventually, they should be given the chance to

figure out what is going on, but not until the tension and suspense have gotten very thick.

Safe Haven

The best way to keep the players scared is to make sure they never feel completely safe. Simply never give the players a safe haven or a home to retreat to. Better yet, give them a place where they can feel secure, a place which they can call home. Over time, get them to place more and more trust in it, until they believe deep down inside that nothing can happen to them while they are there. Then trick them somehow so that they invite some form of danger in (it has to be their mistake). Don't destroy this safe haven through physical danger; do it psychologically.

Scope

Begin a story on a small scale and then slowly increase the parameters of the tale, or alternately, start big and then slowly focus, becoming more and more detailed and involved. Both of these techniques are very effective storytelling tools. By changing the scope in your stories, you can create an unfolding panorama before the eyes of the players. One of the best examples of this technique is in *Star Wars*, where the sheer size of the Death Star makes the human drama of the story seem insignificant at first.

Dependents

Encourage the characters to develop friendships with mortals. This gives them a chance to regain some Humanity. However, once the players develop an affection for these unique personalities (you've got to roleplay them well), kill them off one by one. Nothing makes a player as mad and as scared at the same time. A really fun thing to do is to create a dependent who becomes an integral and trusted part of the characters' lives; then, reveal the person as a villain. A word of warning, however: don't create a dependent and then decide to make him a villain whenever it suits you. Players will catch on and will think less of the chronicle when they find out. You've got to be very subtle about how you go about this, putting in hints and clues that the players only pick up on after the fact.

Advanced Storytelling

The secret thoughts of man run over all things, holy, profane, clean, obscene, grave and light ,without shame or blame.

- Thomas Hobbes

Below are a number of techniques you can use to create special effects in your stories. You need experienced players, who are as focused on high-quality roleplaying as they are good at it, to even consider using any of these techniques. As the Storyteller, you should have at least some experience under your belt before you try any of the following. These techniques are extremely difficult to play properly and they must be carefully planned and executed with grace and finesse to work effectively. If you employ them correctly, however, you will create a story your players will never forget.

Flashbacks

Flashbacks are a way to roleplay scenes in a character's past in order to present a new perspective on the current story. The flashback is a second story which is told alongside the basic story about the characters. You can either tell the second story outright, or you can have the players create characters and roleplay through it. You design a second story

which will be played alternately with the current **Vampire** story as a type of interlude between the major scenes. However, though the stories may be unconnected by time and space, they must be connected in theme, mood or subject. Each story must somehow illustrate the salient features of the other. The best way to do this is to have something happen in the second story that somehow reflects the original story.

A flashback could be a short story concerning the early childhood (mortal) of one of the characters. The player of that character plays himself; another player might play his best friend, another his sister, and still others his mother and father. In the original story, the players are searching for that character's sire, and may thus be confused by why you are having them play out a flashback. But soon they realize that the sire is in the flashback as well, and is watching the character. You can reveal clues about the sire, and make him a more realistic character by having him be a part of the child's early life. Anything the characters learn can be explained by the fact that the character has suddenly "remembered" that portion of his childhood, so long forgotten. The players might have so much fun with the flashback that they'll want to play it out as a chronicle in its own right.

Parallel Story

A parallel story, much like a flashback, is played out as a second story alongside the first. However, the second story is taking place at the same time as the original story. Thus, the two stories could start out as separate and seemingly unconnected events, but eventually they relate to one another.

The parallel story might concern a vacationing family driving through the mountains, a group of high school students whose car breaks down, forcing them to sleep overnight in an old abandoned mansion, or even a group of Sabbat vampires weaving a plot to kill the player characters. Just have the players make up the secondary characters at the beginning of the story, and then switch off from story to story over the whole game session, always cutting to the other story after a cliffhanger.

You will not want to conclude the parallel story until near the end of the game session - delay having the high school students meet their fate until the primary characters are about to walk into the house themselves (only it's not abandoned anymore). Somehow the parallel story has to focus on the central story, adding to its theme and power.

Foreshadowing

By using the discipline of Auspex as a rationalization, you can foreshadow the future. Make up little playlets and act them out for the players, perhaps having one or two of them help you out. If you have time, write up a script and photocopy it ahead of time so it can be even more dramatic. To do foreshadowing right is very difficult, but it can have great effect. The simplest way to use it is to describe

something really nasty - the players will get so worried about what is ahead that they may inadvertently lead themselves into it.

Dream Sequence

Have the players roleplay through a dream of one of the characters, or perhaps of the coterie's major antagonist. The players don't necessarily need to know whose dream they are in. This can be done in the same way you acted out the parallel story or flashback. There are many reasons why you want to roleplay out dreams, but foremost among them is the opportunity to get the players to focus on the essential personalities of their characters. The dreamworld has very different rules and laws from the real world. Nothing quite makes sense or has any solid reality. Yet the images and themes of the conflict found inside the dreams are important.

In a dream sequence, you can have the characters play out their greatest failure - over and over again until they succeed. Or you can have them search for the "Talisman," an object which does not really exist, as a way to get them to focus on and decide what they are truly looking for in the real world.

Characters with appropriate powers (such as Auspex 4+) may be capable of entering the dreams of other characters; in this way they might even be able to enter the demented psyches of their worst enemies. Imagine being trapped in the mind of a madman! Dreams become very important in the quest for Golconda, and the final ritual known as Suspire involves a great dream dance that requires the extraordinary from the character.

Symbolism

Having something actually represent something else is an ancient literary technique, and it's amazing how great an impact symbolism can have on a story. Symbolism is particularly important in horror literature, as monsters (such as vampires) are often symbols for human fears. Try to figure out what concerns the players personally. What are their fears, needs and loves? Then represent these symbolically in the story. This is almost always an overpowering (and occasionally unpleasant) experience in a story. However, if done right, it can help create the very best stories possible.

Live-Action

Living in the limelight, the universal dream,

For those who wish to seem, those who wish to be,

Must put aside the alienation, get on with the fascination,

The real relation, the underlying theme.

- Rush, "Limelight"

Live-Action roleplaying is one of the more dynamic and innovative aspects of **Vampire**. It is integral to the way **Vampire** stories are told. Live-Action roleplaying is similar to improvisational theater, wherein the actors (the characters) act through the scenes created and introduced by the Storyteller. This makes a much more intense and immediate roleplaying experience.

Usually in roleplaying, the players describe what their characters do, and even say - but in Live-Action roleplaying, they do what their characters do and say what their characters say (within limits). They can stand up,

walk around, hold up a letter, shake hands or rush to a window to see what is going on. Of course, the imagination still needs to be employed, and the Storyteller may still interrupt the action to describe objects and special situations.

No dice are normally rolled during Live-Action. Instead, everything is roleplayed. The new tools will be candles, capes and canes. The Storyteller simply decides how the other characters react to the players, and how well the characters manage to perform certain mechanical actions such as picking a lock, based on a general idea of the characters' Traits.

Often, you, as the Storyteller, will want to have a First Mate, someone to help roleplay the non-player characters. Because Live-Action is so direct and immediate, it can be hard for you to switch roles. The First Mate option means that you won't have to switch as often. Live-Action offers many opportunities for roleplaying that will be greatly improved if two people can interact with each other as non-player characters (try talking to yourself when playing two roles - it isn't easy). This dynamic interaction lets those characters be seen as separate individuals, rather than as variations of a single voice.

The First Mate must be familiar with the story to keep from making mistakes while ad-libbing a character's actions. A First Mate can be a player whose character is no longer a part of the coterie, or a friend of the Storyteller brought in just for this chapter, or a member of the troupe for whom it is a permanent position.

For a particularly important Live-Action scene, you will sometimes want to have a number of First Mates assisting, to play all of the other characters who are involved in the scene. At times, you may have more First Mates than actual players - this makes for an exquisite gaming session.

When you choose characters to play for yourself or your First Mates, try to arrange it so that they and you are playing characters that suit their and your respective gaming styles and tastes. For instance, if a First Mate is good at roleplaying pompous buffoons, make up a character that lets her show off her skills. You should usually play the most powerful, central character, so that you can easily affect the tempo of the game and redirect the plot when it needs shifting.

Rules

There are a few basic rules which you **must** follow to make sure that the roleplaying progresses smoothly and safely in Live-Action. These must be followed if you intend to do any Live-Action at all. Safety is always a primary concern.

•**Don't Touch**: A player may never actually strike or grapple another member of the troupe. No sort of combat may ever be performed - that is one thing that you should leave for the dice to decide. Live-Action in **Vampire** involves talking, not fighting.

•**No Weapons**: No props can be used if they must touch another player to be effective. No real weapons of any sort can ever be handled at any time during Live-Action roleplaying. Only those toy guns that can be easily detected as being toys can be used (like squirt guns), but the no-touch rules must still apply.

•**Play Inside**: Play inside your own home, or whatever private place the game normally takes place in. Make sure

that anyone else in the area understands what you are doing. Never perform Live-Action where people may be confused or frightened by the event.

• **Know When to Stop**: When the Storyteller calls for a time-out, all action must immediately stop. Even during Live-Action (especially during Live-Action), the Storyteller's word is final.

Atmosphere

Before the players arrive, think about the atmosphere of the area where you are going to game.

• If at all possible, play only in the evenings. The daytime is all wrong for **Vampire**.

• Try to eliminate all overhead lighting; it is too reminiscent of the sun. Use only table lamps or candles, and make the light as indirect as you can.

• Candles are ideal for **Vampire**; no game session should be without them, but be careful with open flames.

•Hang black lace, or some other kind of dark fabric, up on the walls to try and change the look of what might be an all too familiar room. You want to make people feel as if they are somewhere else.

• Try to play music that will add to the setting. Try classical when you're trying to convey a sophisticated setting, or loud punk when the characters visit a club, or maybe country when they're with a real hick. Creepy music is nearly always appropriate. The contrast in musical styles can be a great way to build up a feeling of discordance.

Props

Props are real objects that are used to represent similar objects which the characters use or discover. The most common examples are what are conventionally called "player handouts." These are things like letters, pictures, scrawled maps and other objects which are generally included in a published adventure; these are cut out and handed to the players when their characters find the "real" counterpart in the story. Other things might include objects such as cloaks, silver-tipped canes or anything else you like. Props can add to

the reality of the story quite a bit, as players present not only the speech but also the actions of their characters. Props are most often used during Live-Action roleplaying, but are useful any time.

Props are very much a matter of personal taste. Each gaming group has its own preferred style, and there's no right way or wrong way - as long as everyone is having a good time, you're doing just fine. Props are, however, a great way to get people involved in the story. Here are some ideas for props you can use:

• Skull-shaped candle

• Fake ancient map

• Fake scroll

• Books, especially ones with a musty smell to them

• Hats

• Cloak

•Wooden stake

•Walking cane

• Cigars

Do's and Don'ts

Life has confided so many stories to me, I shall have to retell them to people who cannot read the book of life itself.

-Elly Hillesum

Being a Storyteller is as much a challenge and a delight as being a player. There are some specific responsibilities to keep in mind when you run **Vampire**.

Do's

• **Keep all the characters in mind**: Provide something for everyone to do, no matter what the scene. Even if one character is the hub of the story on whom everything rests, cut off your roleplaying with that player after a bit and do something with the other players. It may not make any difference to the plot, but it will let everyone have some fun, keep them from being bored, and will make them a part of the scene. Let every player have an equal chance to take an action or interact with one of your characters. Though you may naturally give more time to the more creative and inventive roleplayers in your group, never ignore the others.

• **Go beyond the rules**: The rules are for keeping characters in line. If your imagination is superior to the rules, then go beyond the rules. Especially for non-player vampire powers, you should let your imagination roam free. There are werewolves and wizards and even ghosts in this world, yet in this game they are not carefully detailed. You'll have to make up their powers on your own. You may make them as mysterious and enigmatic as you desire. Future products in the Storyteller series will detail these beings more completely.

•**Encourage the players to roleplay among themselves**: Vivid interaction between the players is vital. If they don't roleplay unless they're talking to you, something is wrong.

• **Take breaks:** Sometimes you need to take a break. At such times, simply stand back from the table and take a short walk, or open this book and pretend you are reading. Don't feel embarrassed about this; everyone needs these rests. The players get them all the time, but the Storyteller almost never does. It's almost impossible to sustain a high level of dynamic storytelling without breaks. It is a good idea is to start the players roleplaying with one another before you rest, since this ensures that they aren't bored while you're not involved.

•**Encourage player input**: Don't run the game without being aware of what your players like and don't like. Balance the desire of the players to achieve the objectives of their characters with their desire to roleplay- let them accomplish their goals while remaining in character.

Don'ts

The following are things which you should never do:

•**Don't take away the characters' free will**: Players are invariably protective of what they consider to be the free will of their characters. They want real choices, and the freedom to choose their characters' actions. While they need to feel that if they do something stupid they will be punished, you don't want them to feel as if you will

punish them if they come up with a clever idea because it wasn't what you had anticipated.

•**Don't force the characters into a predetermined plot**: In **Vampire** the characters need to be self-motivated. You cannot simply stick them into your story. You have to weave the story around them and let them become involved in it at their own pace. Often this means you must create the story as you go, making up each scene and doing a great deal of impromptu roleplaying. It is difficult, but fulfilling.

•**Don't let luck rule the plot**: Characters should get to win on the basis of their own skill and ingenuity, not on unrelated dice rolls. Try to give the players every chance to have the experience and Traits of their characters make the difference. Automatic successes are an excellent way to emphasize how important their ratings are.

•**Don't cater to stereotypes**: Though you will use stereotypes regularly, you should always try to twist or change them. Stereotypes are excellent tools for the Storyteller, since they allow you to quickly present a character or a situation. Put a stereotype into a story, play it like a stereotype for most of the story (outraging the players in the process), and then, near the conclusion, suddenly flip everything upside down by breaking apart the stereotype. As an extreme example, the evil snarling villain can turn out to be a simple-minded Nosferatu who is as terrified of the characters as they are of him. It can be very effective and pleasantly educational.

• **Don't ignore the characters' Traits**: It is important to be aware of the characters' Traits, especially those flaws which the players so often "forget" such as Derangements. Some Traits that you are unaware of can sometimes become relevant to the story and make your planned resolution inconsistent or unrealistic. It is vital that you have a good grasp of who and what the characters are.

For instance, you might spring a trap on the characters, roll the damage dice, and start describing wounds, only to have one of the players say, "My character has Auspex. I get to see if he sensed danger." Even if he misses the roll, it ruins the momentum you had established and damages the story that you were weaving. Look over the characters before the game and make notes of things you should remember.

The Book of Nod

The earliest history of the Kindred is said to be recorded in the legendary **Book Of Nod**. *Named for the land east of Eden where Caine first traveled, it chronicles the tumultuous birth of the bloodlines and the origins of the Jyhad.*

In the beginning there was only Caine.

Caine who murdered his brother out of anger.

Caine who was cast out.

Caine who was cursed forever with immortality

Caine who was cursed with the lust for blood.

It is Caine from whom we all come,

Our Sire's Sire.

For the passing of an age he lived in solitude,

In loneliness and suffering.

For an eon he remained alone.

But the passing of memory drowned his sorrow.

And so he returned to the world of mortals,

To the world his brother and his brother's children had created.

He returned and was made welcome.

The people saw his power and worshipped him,

Making him King of their great City,

The First City, a place by the name of Enoch.

Though he became ruler of a mighty nation, he was still alone,

For none were as he. His sorrow grew once again.

Then he committed another great sin, for he begat Progeny,

Of which there were only three.

But from them came more Progeny, his grandchildren,

And then Caine said "An end to this crime. There shall be no more."

And as Caine's word was the law, his Brood obeyed him.

The city stood for many ages,
And become the center of a mighty Empire.
But then came the Deluge, a great Flood that washed over the world.
The City was destroyed,
And its people along with it.

Again Caine fell into great sorrow and went into solitude,
Becoming as a dog amidst the wastes,
And leaving his Progeny to their own ends.
They came to him and begged him to return,
To help them rebuild the City.
But he would not come with them,
Saying the Flood had been sent as punishment
For his having returned to the world of life
And subverting the true law.

So they returned alone to what mortals were left
And announced that they were the new rulers.
Each created a Brood,
In order to claim the glory of Caine,
Yet they did not have his wisdom or restraint.
A great war was waged, the Elders against their Children,
And the Children slew their parents.

The rebels then built a new city
And brought to it 13 tribes.
It was a beautiful city and its people worshipped them as gods.
They created new Progeny of their own,
The Fourth Generation of Cainites.
But they feared the Jyhad,
And it was forbidden for those Children
To create others of their kind.
This power their Elders kept for themselves.
When a Childe was created, it was hunted down and killed,
And its Sire with it.

Though this city was as great as Caine's, eventually it grew old.
As do all living things, it slowly began to die.
The gods at first did not see the truth,
And when they at last looked about them it was too late.
Their city was destroyed and their power extinguished,
And they were forced to flee, their Progeny along with them.
But many were killed in the flight, for they had grown weak.
With their authority gone, all were free to create their own Broods,
And soon there were many new Kindred,
Who ruled across the face of the Earth.

But this could not last.
Over time, there came to be too many of the Kindred,
And then there was war once again.

The Elders were already deep in hiding,
For they had learned caution.
But their Children had founded their own cities and Broods,
And it is they who were killed in the great wave of war.
There was war so total, that there are none of that Generation
To speak of themselves any longer.
Waves of mortal flesh were sent across continents
In order to crush and burn the cities of the Kindred.
Mortals thought they were fighting their own wars,
But it is for us that they spilt their blood.

Once this war was over,
All of the Kindred hid from one another
And from the humans that surrounded them.
In hiding we remain today,
For the Jyhad continues still.

THE BECOMING

The aroma, yes. The succulent savor. Its weight and marrow. I imagine the cooling flames of the elixir cascading down my throat, nourishing me. But I am parched and barren. A husk. My need envelops every painful step I take.

Soon. I will need blood soon.

The click of heels on cement rouses me. I move into the darkness of the alley. The growing cadence is maddening as the vessel draws near.

Thereahhh. A whiff of cheap perfume. The odor of nervous tension. The fragrance of pumping blood. I can almost taste the sweet nectar.

The pale light of a streetlamp brings my prey into focus. Her long hair bounces lightly off her shoulder. A face, rosy with exertion: a beauty only I can appreciate. Her anxious eyes scan the doorways, doubtless envisioning rapists and muggers.

She passes by, quickly glancing into the alley. I break away from the shadows. An arm's length away, I can hear her heart throbbing.

I have become death, the destroyer of souls.

Gliding toward her, the smell of her lifeblood wafts over me, arousing me. She is only inches from my caress. My mind screams with lust.

NO!

I pull back, my arm shaking. I cannot do it. A low moan escapes my lips. She whirls, staring into the darkness, eyes wide with terror. But she is blind to my presence, and with a low sigh turns away. I taste my own blood as it seeps between my clenched teeth, and watch her fade into the night.

I am alone.

Chapter Four:

Rules

Mythology is a rendition of forms, through which the formless form of forms can be known.

- Joseph Campbell

Every game has rules. Some have only a few and are fairly simple, such as Chutes and Ladders, while others have many and are extremely complicated, such as bridge. **Vampire** has something in common with both - it has only a few simple rules, but these few rules have a large number of permutations. You need only learn the basic rules, but their permutations evoke the flavor of the game to reflect the true complexity of real life. This chapter provides the basic rules of **Vampire**; the permutations are what Book Three is about.

Rules are like the myths which shape and describe a culture. They define what is important and delineate the possibilities of existence. Though these rules may seem somewhat strange and exotic, they really aren't all that complicated. Once you understand them, you'll understand how to play this game. Just concentrate on learning these basics and everything else will come naturally.

Time

Time is the moving image of reality

- Plato

The first thing you need to learn is how time passes in **Vampire**. There are five different ways to describe time, going from the smallest unit to the all-encompassing one.

•**Turn** - One unit of time within a scene, anywhere from three seconds to three minutes in length. A turn is enough time to take one action (discussed below).

•**Scene** - One compact period of action and roleplaying which takes place in a single location. A scene is made up of a variable number of turns (as many as it takes to complete it); it can also be completed with straight-up roleplaying, which requires no use of turns.

•**Chapter** - One independent part of a story, almost always played in one game session. It is made up of a number of scenes connected by periods of downtime.

Story - A complete tale, with an introduction, buildup and climax, which often takes several chapters to complete.

•**Chronicle** - A whole series of stories connected together by the lives of the characters and perhaps a broadly conceived theme and plot. It is simply the ongoing story told by you and the players.

Actions

Besides acting out their characters' speeches and conversations, players will want their characters to attempt to perform actions they have described to the Storyteller. Actions can be anything from jumping over a gorge to glancing

behind oneself to see if one is being followed. The player tells the Storyteller what her character is doing and details the procedure she uses.

Many actions are automatic, such as when a player tells the Storyteller that her character walks across the street toward the warehouse, for instance. All the Storyteller needs to do is keep track of where the character is and what she is doing. However, certain actions require a dice roll to determine success or failure.

Rolling Dice

And the game never ends when your whole world depends

On the turn of a friendly card.

- The Alan Parsons Project, "Turn of a Friendly Card"

There is always chance in life. There's a chance you'll win the lottery, a chance you'll be audited, and a chance you'll die in a plane crash. Chance plays a role in **Vampire** as well. However, we use dice to simulate the duplicity of Lady Luck.

The game system in **Vampire** consists of rolling 10-sided dice, which you can buy in any game store. If you are the Storyteller, you will want a lot of dice, at least 10, all to yourself. As a player, you'll want dice as well, but sharing dice with other players will work.

Whenever the success of an action is in doubt or the Storyteller thinks that there is a chance you might fail, you will have to roll dice. This gives your character an opportunity to let both weaknesses and strengths exhibit themselves, thereby revealing something of the character's true nature to both you and the other players.

Ratings

A character is described by her Traits - the innate and learned abilities and aptitudes she possesses. Traits are defined by numbers; each Trait has a rating from 1 -5, which describes how good the character is in that particular Trait. One is lousy and five is superb. This scale of one to five is the "star" rating system made famous by movie and restaurant critics.

You should consider the normal human range to be from one to three, with two being average. However, exceptional people can have Traits of four (exceptional) or five

(superb), or even have a zero in a Trait (which is extremely rare, but not unheard of).

x Abysmal

• Poor

•• Average

••• Good

•••• Exceptional

••••• Superb

For every dot your character has in a particular Trait, you get to roll one die. Thus, if you had four dots on Strength, you would get to roll four dice. If you had a one Perception, you would get to roll only one die. However, you almost never simply roll the number of dice you have in an Attribute, which defines your intrinsic capabilities. Usually you get to add the number of dice you have in an Attribute with the number of dice you have in an Ability- things which you know and have learned.

So if the Storyteller wanted the players to roll to see if they notice the patrol car creeping up behind them, he would have them roll their Perception + Alertness -an Attribute + an Ability. They would take as many dice as they had points of Perception, put them in their hands, and then they would take as many dice as they had points of Alertness, and put those in their hands also. They get to roll as many dice as they have total points in their Ability and Attribute.

These dice are called the Dice Pool, which is a description of the total number of dice you roll in a single turn - usually for a single action, though you can divide up your Dice Pool in order to be able to perform more than one action. You almost always roll the number of dice equal to a Trait's permanent rating (the circles), not its current score (the squares).

There are many actions that don't require or even have an appropriate Ability, such as when you want to break down a door. In such cases, you would only use an Attribute, rolling the number of dice you have listed for that Attribute - in this case, Strength.

There is absolutely no situation where more than two Traits can add to a Dice Pool. Only one Trait can be used if it has a potential value of 10 (such as Humanity or Willpower). It is generally impossible for a normal human being to have more than 10 dice in a Dice Pool (though vampires are a different story).

Difficulties

Oftentimes, to win us to our harm,

The instruments of darkness tell us truths;

Win us with honest trifles, to betray's

In deepest Consequence.

- Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

Now you've got to figure out what you need to look for when you roll the dice. The Storyteller will give you a difficulty number, which is the number that you need to obtain in order to succeed in whatever you are attempting. A difficulty is always a number between two and 10. You need to get that number or higher on at least one of the dice you roll in order to succeed. Every time you do so, it's called a success. If the difficulty is a six and you roll a 2, 3, 6, 5 and 9, you have scored two successes. Though you

need only one success to actually succeed, the more successes you get, the better you do. Getting only one success is considered a marginal success, while getting three is considered a complete success, and getting five is a momentous event.

Difficulties

Three - Easy

Four - Routine

Five - Straightforward

Six - *Standard*

Seven - Challenging

Eight - Difficult

Nine - Extremely Difficult

Degrees of Success

One Success - Marginal

Two Successes - Moderate

Three Successes - *Complete*

Four Successes - Exceptional

Five Successes - Phenomenal

You can see that if the difficulty is lower, it becomes easier to get a success, and if it is higher, it is more difficult. The Storyteller will assign high difficulties whenever the action you have decided to take is difficult, and will either let you do something automatically (because your Attributes and Abilities are so high) or give you a low difficulty if it is particularly easy.

Though they are not on the list above, you, as the Storyteller, can also assign a difficulty of two or 10. However, these should almost never be used. Difficulty two is so pathetically easy that you might as well let the player succeed without wasting time on a roll. Difficulty 10 is so difficult that there is an equal chance to botch (described below) as there is to succeed, no matter how many dice the player is rolling. A 10 is pretty near impossible. On the rare occasions when you do announce a difficulty of 10, be sure you realize how impossible you are making the chance of success. If a player ever rolls a 10, it is automatically a success, no matter what.

Unless the Storyteller says otherwise, the difficulty for a particular task is always a six. This is the standard, assumed difficulty.

Rule of One

There is one last thing about rolling dice, and that is the "rule of one." Whenever you roll a one, it cancels out a success. It completely takes it away. You remove both the "success" die and the "one" die and pay them no more heed. If you roll more ones than you do successes, a disaster occurs; something called a botch takes place. Don't count the ones that canceled out successes, but if even a single one is left after all the successes have been canceled, a botch occurs. Getting a single one or five ones is about the same; the circumstances

surrounding the botch determine if it is catastrophic or a minor mishap. If there aren't any ones or successes left, you've simply failed.

Automatic Success

You don't want to be rolling dice all the time as it can get in the way of the roleplaying. **Vampire** employs a very simple system for automatic successes so players do not have to make rolls for actions characters could perform in their sleep.

It works like this: if the number of dice you have in your Dice Pool is equal to or greater than the difficulty, then you succeed automatically. It is considered the equivalent of only getting one success, so sometimes a player will want to roll anyway in an attempt to gain even more successes. But for very simple and often-repeated actions, automatic successes can eliminate a lot of wasted time.

The automatic success rules can be used to completely eliminate dice rolling, something you will want to do during Live-Action roleplaying. In such situations, automatic successes aren't a matter of choice. Either you are good enough to succeed or you are not. It is simple, but so was Cops 'n' Robbers and we liked it just fine. The story was what was important and the rules didn't matter.

This simple system even has a twist, making it not quite so black and white. A Willpower point can be used to earn an automatic success. You won't want to do this often, but on certain actions it can be very advantageous to do so. Of course, the Willpower only counts for one success if multiple successes are required.

When we play, we usually use a combination of dice rolling and automatic successes. During most scenes - especially when we're deep into the story - we don't even roll dice, preferring to roleplay through them without interruptions. However, when we get in the mood for *playing-a-game*, rather then *telling-a-story* , we make lots of dice rolls and add many complications to the rules.

Complications

You may have already realized that it is quite easy to get a single success, even when you roll only one or two dice. You have a 75% chance for a marginal success when you roll only two dice and the difficulty is a six. While that may sound too easy, there are various ways to complicate matters, some of which are discussed below. For troupes heavily into roleplaying, simple rolls and automatic successes are enough. Generally, you will use a complication if the players or you want a break from the roleplaying, if you want a realistic result or if you want to make a game out of the scene. Complications can add drama to the story and create a depth of passion and focus.

Specific systems of complications have been developed completely in the Drama Chapter. However, below are the basic complications that can be employed in **Vampire**.

Extended Actions

In order to fully succeed, you will sometimes need more than one success - you will need to accumulate three, or seven, or even 20 successes (on rare occasions). When you only need to get one success to accomplish an action, it's called a simple action. When you need to get more than one success to get a marginal success, it's called an extended action. Extended actions are not uncommon, but simple actions are the ones most frequently made.

In an extended action, you will roll over and over on subsequent turns in an attempt to collect enough successes to succeed. For instance, your character is climbing a tree and the Storyteller announces that when you get a total of seven successes, she has climbed to the top. She'll get there eventually, but of course the more times you roll, the more chances your character has to botch and injure herself. If she is attempting to climb down the tree because it is on fire, the amount of time it takes becomes exceedingly important.

During an extended action, you can keep trying to obtain successes for as long as you want, or at least until you fail to get even one success. If you botch, your character may have to start over from scratch, with no accumulated successes. The Storyteller may decide to not let the character try again at all.

Because of the dramatic effect that extended actions provide in the story, they are used frequently in the systems described in the Drama chapter. However, this type of action is more complicated than a simple action and should not often be employed in the middle of intense roleplaying. As the Storyteller, it will be your decision as to what type of action is called for. A little bit of experience will serve you well when employing these rules.

Resisted Actions

Sometimes you will make an action in opposition to one made by another character. Both of you will make rolls, with a difficulty often indicated by a Trait of the other player, and the person who gets the most successes succeeds. However, you are considered to get only as many successes as the amount by which you exceed your opponent's successes. The opponent's successes eliminate your own, just as ones do. Therefore, it is very difficult, and rare, to get an outstanding success on a resisted action. Even if your opponent cannot beat you, she can diminish the effect of your efforts. On actions that are both extended and resisted, one of the opponents must collect a certain number of success in order to completely succeed. Each success above the opponent's total number of successes in a single turn is added to a success total. The first to collect the designated number of successes wins the contest.

Teamwork

Sometimes characters can work together to collect successes, most often during an extended action. At the discretion of the Storyteller, two or more characters can make rolls

separately and add together their successes. They may never add together their separate Traits into one roll, though. Teamwork is effective in some circumstances, such as in combat, shadowing prey, collecting information, and repairing devices. In others it can actually be a hindrance, such as in many social actions (where it can confuse the subject).

The chart below may serve to clear up your confusion on some of the different types of rolls that can be made.

Action	Example	Description
Simple	Firearms,Alertness	Task is completed with one roll. The Storyteller announces the difficulty and the players roll their dice. Automatic success is possible.
Extended	Running, Research, Track	Task is completed when a given number of successes are obtained, which may require more than one roll (thus providing more chances to botch).
Resisted	Shadowing	A contest of skill between two individuals. They compare their number of su ccesses and the one with the highest number succeeds.
Extended & Resisted	Arm Wrestling	Two individuals compete as in the resisted action, but before one can claim success he must accumulate a certain number of successes.

The Golden Rule

Remember that in the end there is only one real rule in **Vampire**: there are no rules. You should fashion this game into whatever you need it to be - if the rules get in your way, then ignore or change them. In the end, the true complexity and beauty of the real world cannot be captured by rules; it takes storytelling and imagination to do that. Indeed, these rules are not so much rules as they are guidelines, and you are free to use, abuse, ignore and change them as you wish.

Try it Out

Well, that's it. Those are the rules. This system for dice is all you really need to know to play this game. All the other rules are just clarifications and exceptions to these ones. As long as you understand what's been discussed here, you won't

The Character Sheet

On this page we have provided you with an example of a complete **Vampire** character sheet. The character is a newly Embraced vampire named Malcom, and the examples throughout the book will use him as their subject. The followingis a quick look at the Traits that describe him.

have any difficulty understanding anything else. If you don't think you've caught everything, just read it over again and you'll find it will make more sense the second time around.

Now go ahead and make a few rolls, using the example character from the other page. Malcolm is attempting to jump from the roof of one building to the roof of another, a distance of 15 feet. The Storyteller decides the action has a difficulty of seven. Take four dice because of Malcolm's Dexterity of four, and two dice because of his Athletics rating of two. You should now have six dice in your hand - that's a lot. You don't have much chance of failing, but go ahead and roll; you never know. Look to see how many successes you have, making sure to take away a success for every "one" you roll. Did you make it, or did you botch? The more successes you get, the better you land. Only one success might mean that you jumped to the other roof, but are hanging on by your fingers (which would require more rolls to see if Malcolm managed to keep hanging on and

climb up to the roof).

Next, try out an example of an extended and resisted action. An example of this is an arm wrestling match. It requires an indefinite series of rolls, each using a different Trait and requiring different difficulties. You need to accumulate five successes more than your opponent in order to finally win. A botch eliminates all of your accumulated successes.

•First roll: Each player rolls Strength; the difficulty is the opponent's Dexterity + 3 (speed is important at first).

•Second and third rolls: Each player rolls Strength; the difficulty is the opponent's Strength +3.

•Fourth roll (and all subsequent ones): Each player rolls Strength; the difficulty is the opponent's Willpower.

Examples of Rolls

Following are some examples of rolls, to provide you with some ideas on how to incorporate these rules into your roleplaying. Please note that each Attribute can work with each Ability, so there are 270 potential types of simple rolls that can be made. Admittedly, you will not often roll Stamina + Computer, but it might come up.

•You threaten the young man by trying to lift him up by his collar. Roll Strength + Intimidation (difficulty 8).

•You want to break down the metal door that was just slammed in your face. You need to roll Strength (difficulty 8). You need to collect six successes in order to break it open enough to slip through.

•How flawlessly do you conduct yourself at the formal dinner at La Omini (even though you can't actually eat anything...)? Roll Dexterity + Etiquette (difficulty 8).

•You try to slip out of your handcuffs (good luck!). Roll Dexterity + Streetwise (difficulty 10).

•After being questioned for hours, you roll Stamina + Acting to see if you can maintain your story successfully (difficulty 8). Five successes will completely convince your interrogators.

• The ritual takes three days to complete. Can you stay awake for 72 hours? Roll Stamina + Occult (difficulty 9).

• How long can you remain motionless in the bushes as the two guards chat for hours on end? Roll Stamina + Stealth (difficulty 7). Each success is an hour.

• Yelling and screaming at the taxi driver, you try to get him to drive even faster. Roll Charisma + Intimidation

(difficulty 6).

• You go out on the street and try to gather some information about the new gang moving into the projects. Roll Charisma + Streetwise (difficulty 8). The more successes you get, the more you know. It takes a whole evening to get the information.

• By showing off your moves, you try to convince your opponent to back off. Roll Manipulation + Brawl (difficulty 6). Three successes will cause him to pause a turn, but you can try this action only once...

• You attempt to convince the clerk of the court that you really are the EPA inspector, and that you need to see the court records. Roll Manipulation + Bureaucracy (difficulty 8).

• You want to make a good impression at Modius' party. Roll Appearance + Etiquette (difficulty 4).

• You attempt to entice the young woman to join you in your limo parked outside the club. Roll Appearance + Subterfuge (difficulty 7).

• An initiate of the Sabbat is creeping up behind you. Roll Perception + Alertness to see if you notice his approach (difficulty 9).

• Do you notice the old lady pulling the gun out of her purse in time to dodge out of the way? Roll Perception + Dodge (difficulty 6).

• You try to analyze what's wrong with the car engine from the strange sounds it is making. Roll Perception + Repair (difficulty 6).

• What language is she speaking? Roll Intelligence + Linguistics to figure it out (difficulty 6).

• Why are the ravens crying so loudly? Roll Intelligence + Animal Ken (difficulty 9).

• Suddenly, a man pushes a crate out of the van you have been chasing - roll Wits + Drive to see if you can avoid hitting it (difficulty 6).

Game Terms

Words used by the players:

Ability: A Trait that describes what a character knows and has learned, rather than what she is. Abilities are Traits such as Intimidation, Firearms and Bureaucracy.

Action: An action is the performance of a deed, which is a consciously-willed, physical, social or mental activity. When a player announces that his character is doing something, he is taking an action.

Advantage: This is a catch-all category which describes the mystical Disciplines and Backgrounds of a character.

Attribute: A Traits that describes what a character inherently is. Attributes are such things as Strength, Charisma and Intelligence.

Botch: A disastrous failure, indicated by rolling more ones than successes on the 10-sided dice rolled for an action.

Character: Each player creates a character, an individual she roleplays over the course of the chronicle.

Though "character" could imply any individual, in **Vampire** it is always used to describe the players' characters.

Dice Pool: This describes the dice you have in your hand after adding together your different Traits. It is the maximum number of dice you can roll in one turn, though you can divide them among different actions.

Difficulty: This is a number from 2-10 measuring the difficulty of an action a character takes. The player needs to roll that number or higher on at least one of the dice rolled.

Downtime: The time spent between scenes, where no roleplaying is done and turns are not used. Actions might be made, and the Storyteller might give some descriptions, but generally time passes quickly.

Extended Action: An action that requires a certain number of successes for the character to actually succeed.

Health: This is a measure of the degree to which a character is wounded or injured.

Points: The temporary score of a primary trait such as Willpower, Humanity and Health - the squares, not the circles.

Refresh: When points are regained in a Dice Pool, it is said that they are being "refreshed". The number of points regained is the refresh rate.

Rating: A number describing the permanent value of a Trait, most often a number from 1-5, though sometimes a number from 1-10.

Resisted Action: An action that two different characters take against each other. Both compare their number of successes and the character with the most wins.

Scene: A single episode of the story; a time and place where actions and events take place moment by moment. A scene is often a dramatic high point of the story.

Score: The temporary value of a Trait or combination of Traits used in a single roll.

Simple Action: An action that requires the player to get only one success to succeed, though more successes indicate a better job or result.

Storyteller: The person who creates and guides the story by assuming the roles of all characters not taken by the players and determining all events beyond the control of the players.

System: A specific set of complications used in a certain situation; rules to help guide the rolling of dice to create dramatic action.

Trait: A Trait is any Attribute, Ability, Advantage or other character index that can be described as a number (in terms of dots).

Troupe: The group of players, including the Storyteller, who play **Vampire** - usually on a regular basis.

Willpower: One of the most important Traits is Willpower. It measures the self-confidence and internal control of a character. However, Willpower works differently than most Traits - it is usually used up, rather than rolled.

Chapter Five: Character

All the world's a stage
And all men and women merely players
They have their exits and entrances
And one man in his time plays many parts.
- Shakespeare, *As You Like It*

Before you can begin to play **Vampire**, you must create a character. However, unlike make-believe, you don't just make up a character as you go along (though the Storyteller is faced with this challenge regularly). Instead, you've got to create a character *before* you begin to play. There is a certain amount of work involved - characters are built, not born. Building a compelling, yet honest, character is a creative struggle even for the most experienced of us.

This chapter describes how to create a unique character, beginning with a general concept and translating this concept into numbers that can be used in the game. It provides guidelines for the players when they create their characters. This process is very simple and the players can easily figure it out for themselves. However, the Storyteller should have a good grasp of the process in order to answer their questions accurately and succinctly.

These numbers may not seem particularly evocative. It is hard to imagine a novelist describing a character by saying "Her silver tongue must have meant she had a Charisma of four." However, these ratings make it simple to describe the strengths and weaknesses of a character. More importantly, it means the random factor created by dice can be employed in relation to the character's Traits. A strong character has *more* of a chance to break the door down than a weak one.

Character creation always follows a pattern from the general to the specific. First, you develop a general concept of who and what your character is - is she more socially or mentally developed? - and then get specific by selecting the ratings of your Traits - how strong are your Charisma, Manipulation and Appearance? Do not use this process as a chance to create the "best" possible character; that defeats the whole purpose of making up a really interesting individual. These numbers are intended to enhance roleplaying, not open an avenue to some mythical Hall of Fame.

Character creation is not unlike cooking: you've got to gather the ingredients, stir and whip them together, and then let the mixture bake for a few hours. You start by deciding what kind of character you want. Are you going to be a street-hardened punk or a rich and somewhat spoiled ex-debutante? Are you a college graduate or were you tutored in life somewhere in the Appalachian Mountains? The background and personality of your character are the essential ingredients of his persona. From your basic concepts, you can then start to work out the details, such as Attributes and Advantages.

Getting Started

There are five basic concepts you need to be aware of before you begin to create your character:

• You can create a character of any age from any culture or nation; however, she begins the game as a fairly young and unsophisticated vampire who has only recently left the tutelage of her sire. Your character knows little about vampire society or Kindred life, except what she has been told by her sire. In any case, she has been a vampire for 50 years or less. Your character's apparent age is the age when she "died."

• This character creation process was designed as much to help you define your character as it was to provide you with a means to interact with the rules. The process of creating the character is meant to help you better focus the concept of your character. Remember that a character cannot exist only as numbers; it is your roleplaying which will shape and define an alter ego.

• This character creation system is a purchase system with only one die roll involved. By choosing Traits from a variety of lists, you decide who your character will be. You will get extra points called "freebies" at the end of the process, which you can then use to add dots to any Trait, so do not agonize over all your choices.

• A Trait of one is poor and a trait of five is superb, so if you only have one dot on something, you are either not very good or only a beginner. Traits are based on the human range, as a vampire's special powers are defined by Disciplines and the use of Blood Points.

• It is your responsibility to create a character who fits into the group. If you fail to get along with the others and disrupt the story because of it, you will have to create a new character. Life as a vampire is far too dangerous for animosity to exist within a brood; in order to survive, you

need to work together.

Role of the Storyteller

As the Storyteller, you must guide the players through the character generation process. After your players arrive for the game session, you need to introduce them to the basic premise of the game and describe the rules system. Your main goal should be to make it as easy for the players as possible. If they are beginners, keep things as simple as you can; let them discover the intricacies of the system on their own.

Start by passing out the character sheets, and then give the players a minute to look them over and ask questions about them. You may also photocopy the "Character Creation" sheet from the back of the book (for personal use only) to use as a reference aid throughout the process. If the players can refer to this sheet and listen to your explanations at the same time, character generation will be much easier to understand. Then go through the character creation process step by step, filling in all the details of the character Traits.

It is usually advisable to spend an entire game session creating characters. This ensures that the players don't feel rushed and that they take the time to make complete, flesh-and-blood characters, not paper-thin stooges. Once you are finished with the practical details of the character creation, you can spend the rest of the game session conducting a prelude for each character. A prelude is a form of abbreviated storytelling in which you tell the story of the character's life up to the Embrace. This will be their introduction to the chronicle as well as their character, so make it memorable. The prelude is described at the end of this chapter.

Step 1: Character Concept

Each person is many persons: a multitude made into one person; a corporate body; incorporated, a corporationthe unity of a person is as real, or unreal, as the unity of the corporation.

-N.O. Brown

Before you write a single thing down, you need to develop a concept for your character. It only needs to be a general idea of what your character will be like, something unique and interesting that will be enjoyable to play over the long term. This involves choosing a clan (the bloodline of vampires from which the character descends) as well as the personality of the character, which is described by choosing her Nature and Demeanor.

The better you can interrelate these three aspects of your character, the more intricate and complete she will be. Often the Demeanor of a character will be completely different than her actual Nature, and the stereotypical image of a clan can be contradicted with great effect by choosing the Nature and Demeanor carefully.

Though short lists are given in this chapter, complete descriptions of the clans and the archetypes can be found in Chapter Seven, Traits.

Concept

Many Kindred find it difficult to abandon their concept of themselves as humans and cling tenaciously to the trappings of their former lives. Thus the first thing you need to do is to come up with an overall concept of who the character

was before he was Embraced: what he did, how he lived, and what was unique about him. This concept may describe his profession, how he saw himself, or what others felt about him.

Some concepts, such as knight or hermit, indicate that the character was Embraced hundreds of years ago, while others, such as trucker or movie star, indicate that the character is a product of the modern era. Regardless of when the character was Embraced, he has spent only 50 years or less as a vampire; all years of undead existence beyond that are assumed to have been spent in torpor, sleeping the long sleep of the Damned.

See the "Concepts" chart for ideas on the concepts available to you.

The Clan

The next step, and arguably the most important element of character conception, is to choose your character's clan. The clan describes the essential lineage of the character - you are always of the same clan as your sire. The seven clans from which the players can choose are all members of the Camarilla. There are others, but they exist either in their own sects or on the outskirts of Kindred society.

A player does not necessarily need to choose a clan, for some younger vampires are of such diluted blood that the characteristics of any single clan have not been imprinted upon them. These clanless vampires, known as Caitiff, are increasingly common among the Kindred, but they are outcasts - accepted by none, scorned by all. If you wish to play such a character, simply list "Caitiff" as the character's clan.

Nature and Demeanor (Optional)

At this point you can, if you wish, choose personality archetypes that fit your conception of both the internal nature and outward disposition of your character.

Your Nature is the most dominant aspect of your character's true personality, but not necessarily the only archetype that may apply. The archetype you choose for your character's Nature describes the character's most deep-rooted feelings and beliefs about herself and the world; it also provides the primary way in which she can regain Willpower into her Willpower pool. Choosing a Nature helps you describe who your character really is, on the inside.

You should also choose a Demeanor to describe the personality your character pretends to possess. This is the role she plays to the world, the facade she presents to it. It should probably be different from the archetype you have already chosen as the character's Nature, but not necessarily. Whatever you choose is only the character's typical pose; people can change Demeanor as quickly as they change mood. You may change your character's Demeanor at any time, allowing her to adapt to different people and different situations. Demeanor has no practical effect on the rules.

Some examples of personality archetypes you can choose are listed on the next page.

Character Creation Process

• **Step One: Character Concept** - who are you?

    Choose **Concept**, **Clan**, **Nature** and **Demeanor**

• **Step Two: Choose Attributes** - what are your basic capabilities?

    Choose **Physical**, **Social** and **Mental** Traits

• **Step Three: Choose Abilities** - what do you know?

    Choose **Talents**, **Skills** and **Knowledges**

• **Step Four: Choose Advantages** - in what ways are you unique?

    Choose **Disciplines**, **Backgrounds** and **Virtues**

• **Step Five: Last Touches** - filling in the details.

    Choose **Willpower**, **Humanity** and **Blood Pool** (and spend **"freebie"** points)

Concepts

· **Criminal** - jailbird, mafioso, cat burglar, drug dealer, bandit
· **Dilettante** - artist, writer, intellectual, gambler, student
· **Drifter** - hobo, cowboy, prostitute, hermit, pilgrim
· **Entertainer** - comic, musician, movie star, clown
· **Investigator** - detective, cop, government agent, Inquisitor
· **Kid** - child, runaway, nerd, gang member, street urchin
· **Outsider** - aborigine, Third World resident, homosexual
· **Politician** - judge, mayor, senator, public official, governor
· **Professional** - engineer, doctor, mortician, scholar
· **Punk** - club crawler, mosher, skinhead, classic '70s punk
· **Reporter** - anchorperson, newspaper, paparazzo, town crier
· **Soldier** - bodyguard, mercenary, Green Beret, knight
· **Worker** - trucker, farmer, wage slave, servant, serf

Clans

(Complete descriptions can be found on pgs. 126-139)

• **Brujah:** Respecting no authority and acknowledging no leaders, the "rabble" consider themselves free.

• **Gangrel:** Loners and rustics, the "outlanders" are the only Kindred who dare venture outside the cities.

• **Malkavian:** Commonly (and correctly) believed to be insane, the "kooks" nonetheless possess an uncanny vision and wisdom.

• **Nosferatu:** Ostracized and misunderstood by others, the hideous "sewer rats" live out their sordid existences in hiding.

• **Toreador:** Known for their hedonistic ways, the "degenerates" prefer to think of themselves as artists.

• **Tremere:** Wizards descended from an ancient legacy, the "warlocks" work together to increase their influence and power.

• **Ventrue:** Aristocrats of rarefied taste and manner, the "blue bloods" are leaders of cool cunning.

• **Caitiff:** Those with no clan - the outcasts and the disgraced.

Personality Archetypes

(Complete descriptions can be found on pg: 140)

•**Architect:** You are unhappy unless you are creating something of lasting value.

•**Bon Vivant**: Life is meaningless, so enjoy it as long as it lasts.

•**Bravo**: You are something of a bully; you like to be feared.

•**Caregiver:** Many need your love and protection, and you need them to need you.

•**Child**: You never really grew up, and want someone to take care of you.

•**Conformist:** A follower at heart, you find it easy to adapt, adjust and comply.

•**Conniver**: There's always an easier way - which usually involves someone else doing your work.

•**Curmudgeon:** You are a real sourpuss and cynic of the Nth degree.

•**Deviant**: You're just not like everyone else.

•**Director:** You hate chaos and are forever taking charge to set things right.

•**Fanatic**: You have a cause and it gives your life meaning.

•**Gallant**: You are as flamboyant as you are amoral.

•**Jester**: Always the clown, you can't take life, or death, seriously.

•**Judge**: You seek justice and reconciliation.

•**Loner**: You are forever alone, even in a crowd.

•**Martyr**: You need to be needed, and enjoy being morally superior.

•**Rebel**: No need for a cause; you rebel out of habit and passion.

•**Survivor**: You struggle to survive, no matter what the odds.

•**Traditionalist**: You prefer the orthodox and conservative ways.

•**Visionary**: Wisdom is your quest, insight your key.

Step 2: Choosing Attributes

His ardor smolders • Phosphorus flies

He radiates with urgency to hypnotize

Stoke the furnace •Feed his need

This thirst for fire is all he sees.

- Siouxsie and the Banshees, "Burn Up"

Now you get to start assigning numbers. The first step in this process is to determine your character's basic Attributes. The Attributes are everything which a character naturally,

intrinsically is. How strong is she? How quick are her reflexes? How persuasive can she be? Questions such as these are answered by the character's Attributes.

First, you must prioritize the three different categories of your character's Attributes - Physical, Mental and Social. You must decide in which your character is best (primary), in which he is average (secondary), and in which category he is poor (tertiary). Is your character more physical than social - is he smarter than he is brawny?

• Physical Attributes are everything that has anything to do with physical effort. They describe how strong, nimble and sturdy your character is, and are the primary Attributes of an action-oriented character - the Physical Attributes concern only the strengths and weaknesses of the body. Is your character powerful, quick-footed or hardy?

• Social Attributes describe your character's ability to relate to (and sometimes use) others. Social Attributes are vital in determining first impressions, the character's ability to inspire and motivate people, and the nature of her interactions with others. Is your character charming, well-spoken or good-looking?

• The Mental Attributes represent your character's mental capacity, and include such things as memory, perception and the ability to learn and think. Is your character insightful, astute or clever?

The concept and clan of your character may suggest to you what your priorities should be, but feel free to pick any scheme you please. For now, your character conception should be very general - it is necessary to paint a broad, sweeping outline before filling in the details.

All characters start with one dot in each Attribute. Your priority selection determines how many "dots" you get to spend in each category - which category of Attributes you get to add seven dots to, which you get to add five extra dots to, and which one you only get to add three extra dots to. Thus you may choose to add seven dots to your character's Physical Attributes, five to her Mental Attributes, and only three dots to her Social Attributes. The dots may be divided among the Attributes of a category as you see fit - you could assign all three of your Social Attribute dots to Charisma, one dot to each of the three Social Attributes, or two dots to one and one dot to another.

Later in the character creation process it is possible to increase these ratings, so don't worry too much. Let your intuition guide you.

Attributes

Primary: 7 dots

Secondary: 5 dots

Tertiary: 3 dots

Note: The space after each Attribute (and Ability) is for you to fill in a specialty, a subcategory of the Trait in which the character excels. Specialties will be fully explained in the Traits chapter; for now, concentrate on choosing your ratings.

Abilities

Primary: 13 dots

Secondary: 9 dots

Tertiary: 5 dots

Step 3: Choosing Abilities

Between two worlds life hovers like a star,

'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge

How little do we know that which we are!

How less what we may be!

-Lord Byron, "Don Juan"

Abilities delineate what the character knows rather than what he is; they describe the things he has learned rather than the things he can do naturally. All Talents, Skills and Knowledges are Abilities.

Each Ability the character possesses is assigned a rating representing how good the character is in that particular Ability. This number is used to help determine how many dice you roll when your character attempts to use an Ability. This section of the rules guides you in determining what Abilities you may choose and how high or low each Ability is rated.

Abilities are divided into three different categories: Talents, Skills and Knowledges. Each type of Ability has different characteristics.

• Talents describe all the intuitive Abilities. Talents do not need to be practiced *per se* and cannot be studied or learned from a book; they are most often gained through direct experience. Is your character self-taught or does she possess a lot of common sense?

• Skills are the Abilities learned through rigorous training of any sort. This category includes any Ability that must be learned step by step through actual practice, but can be taught and studied (unlike Talents). Is your character good at picking up things from daily (or nightly) practice?

• Knowledges include all the Abilities requiring the rigorous application of the mind. These are the Abilities generally learned through school, classes, books and teachers, but can also be picked up through experience. Is your character educated or does he have a good memory?

You must categorize these Abilities in the same way you categorized the Attributes. You must decide how to rank your Talents, Skills and Knowledges, choosing in which category your character will be above average (primary), in which she will be average (secondary), and in which she will be below average (tertiary).

You get 13 dots to spend on your character's primary category, nine for the secondary category, and only five dots for the tertiary category.

Advantages

Disciplines 3 dots

Backgrounds 5 dots

Virtues 7 dots

However, there is one additional restriction: you cannot give your character more than three dots in any one ability (later, however, you can use your "freebie" points to gain four or even five dots in an Ability).

Step 4: Advantages

You do not prioritize or rank the character's three categories of Advantages. Instead you have a designated number of dots to assign within each one. Though this number is fixed, you can purchase additional dots later on using your "freebie" points.

Disciplines

After characters first become vampires, they gain various Disciplines, which are the mystic arts of the vampires and do much to describe their powers. You have only three points to spend, and may only choose Disciplines that your character's clan is especially proficient with (Clan Disciplines). See the Clans section of the Traits chapter to find out what your character's Clan Disciplines are. If you are a Caitiff and have no clan, you can put your three points on any Disciplines you would like.

Players are urged to be cautious when they choose Disciplines, for these powers are central to a vampire charac-

Disciplines

(Complete descriptions can be found on pgs. 156-171)

•**Animalism:** Supernatural affinity with, and control of, animals.

•**Auspex:** Extrasensory perception, awareness and premonitions.

•**Celerity:** Supernatural quickness and reflexes.

• **Dominate:** Mind control practiced through the 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 crowds.

•**Protean:** Shapechanging - from growing claws to melding with the earth.

•**Thaumaturgy:** The study and practice of sorcery.

Backgrounds

(Complete descriptions can be found on pg. 171)

• **Allies:** Human confederates, usually family or friends.

• **Contacts:** The number of information sources the character possesses.

• **Fame:** The character's renown in the mortal world.

• **Generation:** How far removed from Caine the character is.

• **Herd:** The vessels to which the character has free and safe access.

• **Influence:** The character's political power within mortal society.

• **Mentor:** The Cainite patron who advises and supports the character.

• **Resources:** Wealth, belongings, and monthly income.

• **Retainers:** Followers, guards and servants.

• **Status:** The character's standing in undead society. ter. Three points isn't a whole lot, but characters should start out weak, and Disciplines can be raised (or new ones added) during the chronicle.

Backgrounds

Every character also gets five points to allocate among the various Background Traits. You have only five points to allot, and in some chronicles your choice may be restricted to certain Backgrounds; the Storyteller will let you know the ground rules. Your Background Traits should fit into the general scheme of the concept originally chosen.

Virtues

Virtues are fundamental to a **Vampire** character, for they describe the moral strengths and weakness that play such an essential role in the vampire myth. Each of the three Virtues are rolled in different circumstances to determine the emotional reactions of the character. Self-Control is rolled to see if a character can resist the urge to frenzy, Courage is rolled to see if the character can avoid panic at the sight of open flames or the sun, and Conscience is rolled to see if remorse is felt and Humanity loss thus averted when a character commits acts of evil.

Every character automatically starts with one dot in each of the three Virtue Traits, and you may then assign seven additional dots as you see fit. The Virtues are a primary factor in determining what your character's Humanity and Willpower will be, so you will want to be especially careful. Later you may wish to use "freebie" points to boost your character's ratings.

Point Pool Costs

Disciplines (any): 7 points per dot

Attributes: 5 points per dot

Abilities: 2 points per dot

Virtues: 2 points per dot

Willpower: 2 points per dot

Humanity: 1 point per dot

Backgrounds: 1 point per dot

Step 5: Finishing Touches

What is the worst of woes that wait on age?

What stamps the wrinkle deeper on the brow?

To view each loved one blotted from life's page,

To be alone on earth as I am now.

- Lord Byron, "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage"

Often the most important stage of character creation is applying the last touches - the little details and flourishes that complete the character. In this step you gain your 15 "freebie" points, enabling you to add more dots to any of the Traits on the character sheet. Before you start on the

"freebies," however, you must determine what the base scores are for your character's Willpower, Humanity and Blood Pool.

Willpower

Your character's beginning Willpower is equal to his Courage rating, and will thus range from 1 to 5. You should probably raise it even higher by using "freebie" points. Willpower is essential for controlling the actions of your character, especially in times of stress when your predatory instincts emerge. Willpower is also vital for resisting Domination and employing the Discipline of Thaumaturgy.

Humanity

Your character's initial Humanity is equal to her Conscience + Self-Control ratings, ranging from 2 to 9. However, it is generally a good idea to purchase a higher Humanity by spending "freebie" points. Humanity is critical for determining how far your character has degenerated into bestiality. A character with no Humanity has completely succumbed to the Beast and can no longer be used as a player character.

Blood Pool

The crowning touch of character generation is determining how large a Blood Pool the character has at the beginning of the game. The Blood Pool indicates how much "energy" the character has - blood is the life force of a vampire. Simply roll a 10-sided die to determine the number of Blood Points possessed. This is the only die roll that will

be made during the character creation process. The irony of a vampire's existence should not be confined to the story alone.

Freebie Points

You now get 15 points to buy Traits anywhere on the character sheet. However, it's not as straightforward as it might seem. If you want to add a dot to an Attribute, each one costs five freebie points, while a Background dot only costs one point. Costs are listed in the chart below. You can buy any Discipline (even ones that are not listed as Clan Disciplines).

Spark of Life

There are other aspects of a character that can be detailed 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 her Traits visible to the other characters. You should turn the relevant Traits of you r character - such as the Social Attributes and concept - into aspects of her appearance. High Intelligence can become a clear, piercing gaze. A Dilettante concept could mean the character wears stylish and expensive clothes. In this way, the players can make their characters' Traits more tangible and interesting. It is much more evocative to say, "There always seems to be a sneer of disdain on my face," than to say, "You can tell I'm very disdainful."

Contacts

Make a list of your character's Major and Minor Contacts (if any) on the back of your character sheet. Remember, you gain one Major Contact for each rating point of Contacts. All you need are the names of the Contacts, details on where and how they can be reached, and what kind of assistance they might be good for. See Chapter Seven for more details.

Retainers

Detail what kind of Retainers your character possesses, if you have selected this Background Trait. Each Retainer is a loyal servant who will steadfastly serve your character. Ask yourself these questions about your Retainers: How do you secure their loyalty? Do you Dominate them? Does your Presence overpower them? Have you befriended them? Do they owe you for something? What are their special skills? What do they do during the day? Are they ghouls or do you feed from them? See Chapter Seven for more details.

Specialties

You may wish to give your character specialties from the outset. Though most players select specialties for their Traits during play, you can pick them immediately. Specialties are particular aspects of larger Traits that your character is especially good at. Simply fill in the space next to the Trait with an appropriate specialty; suggestions are made with each Trait in the Traits chapter. Though primarily used for roleplaying, specialties can give the character a bonus to dice rolls when performing certain feats or can assist in other ways. What effect they have on play is up to the Storyteller. See page 125 for more details.

Equipment

If you want to spend money right away to buy equipment, you may do so now. You may buy weapons, clothing, homes, condos, cars, anything - use an appropriate catalog for prices. As the Storyteller, let those who have the time do as much work as they want, but don't punish those who don't - just have them make a Resources or Influence roll 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 a great deal of depth and interest to him. Write a few sentences on the back of your character sheet 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 grunting when answering yes to a question.

Example of Character Creation

Lisa decides to create a **Vampire** character. Mark, the Storyteller, hands her a copy of a character sheet and the Character Creation Outline sheet. Using the outline, Lisa begins the process that will turn an idea into a full-fledged character.

First, she must come up with a character concept. Lisa wants to play a male character, since her last character was female, so she uses that to limit her concept choices. A recent TV show on undercover narcotics agents has intrigued her, so she makes her character a narcotics agent. The name Malcolm springs into her mind at this point, so the character suddenly has a name.

After looking through the list of vampire clans, Lisa decides on the Gangrel clan - she's always been fascinated by wolves!

Lisa ponders for a moment about Malcolm's Nature and Demeanor. These two Traits will help her to nail down Malcolm's personality more easily. The Nature is Malcolm's deep-rooted self, the part of him which affects all his thoughts and actions. Lisa decides that he is a Loner, which is the reason he got into the narcotics part of police work - he liked working undercover, alone. To the world, Malcolm pretends to be a Fanatic - i.e. his Demeanor. He figures that most people shy away from Fanatics and leave them alone, thus facilitating his Nature. His vendetta against the drug kingpins of Chicago has given him quite a reputation in the police force and is the focus of his fanaticism. Lisa will decide in the prelude what exactly caused Malcolm to become so fanatical over the drug issue. At this point, Lisa also adds a quirk to Malcolm, deciding that he only feeds off of drug pushers, addicts or other drug-related people.

Now Lisa must choose Malcolm's Attributes. She prioritizes his categories in the following way:

Mental is Malcolm's primary category, since his job requires a keen Wits and Perception in order to survive in the inner city.

Physical is Malcolm's secondary category, since being a cop requires a certain degree of physical fitness.

Social is Malcolm's tertiary category. This is because he is a loner and also because his undercover work makes him seem like a lowlife.

Dividing up Malcolm's seven Mental points, Lisa assigns him a 3 Perception (two points + the one point that is free in each Attribute), a 3 Intelligence, and a 4 Wits (all of which are vital for his job as an undercover cop).

Three of Malcolm's five Physical points are spent on Dexterity, giving him a very high rating of 4, while the two remaining points are split between Strength and Stamina, leaving him with ratings of 2 in each.

Finally, of the three Social points, two are spent on Manipulation, giving him a 3 (handy in the streets) and the remaining point is spent on Charisma, giving him an average score of 2. His Appearance remains at the base 1 (he's not very handsome).

Next, Lisa has to prioritize and pick Malcolm's Abilities. She decides Malcolm relies more on his innate Talents to survive on the street (this becomes his primary Ability category). Skills are also important to police officers, so this becomes his secondary category, while Knowledges become tertiary by default (scholastic subjects don't amount to much in the face of a revolver).

Lisa has 13 points to spend in Talents. She spends her first six points to give Malcolm ratings of 3 in both Streetwise and Brawl (important Talents for urban survival). She then spends two points each in Alertness (a cop has to watch his back), Subterfuge (a must for undercover work),

and Athletics (a police officer has to be in good shape). She assigns the last point to Dodge (to avoid those lethal blows).

For the nine points Lisa has to spend in Skills, she gives Malcolm a 3 in Firearms (a must for a cop). Then, she spends the next four points to gain ratings of 2 in both Drive and Stealth (again, essential for his work), and finally assigns ratings of 1 each in Melee and Survival with her last two points (she may need to spend some of her freebie points here).

Finally, Lisa puts three of her five Knowledge points into Investigation (Malcolm's main line of work), while the remaining two points are put into Law (he knows just enough about the law to get by as a cop) and Linguistics (he speaks Spanish, the language of the narcotics world) respectively.

Now comes the vampiric aspect. Lisa has to figure out Malcolm's Advantages, starting with the Disciplines - those powers which make a vampire different from a human. She has only three points to spend on Disciplines; she must choose from Animalism, Fortitude or Protean because of Malcolm's Gangrel lineage. Lisa puts all three points into Protean (she

wants to get that ability to change into a wolf, but that will be somewhere down the line).

Lisa decides to spend most of Malcolm's Background points on things connected with his past (i.e., before he became a vampire). Therefore, she spends two points each for Influence and Contacts (with the police department and the drug underworld). The remaining point is spent on Resources (probably equipment from his previous life, with a little dirty money included).

Lisa must now assign points to Malcolm's Virtues. She has seven points to spend (there is already one dot in each Virtue). Malcolm is gutsy and unshakable under pressure, so Lisa expends three points each in Courage and Self-Control, bringing both ratings to 4. The remaining point is spent on Conscience, raising it to 2 (Malcolm has a cynical view of human nature after spending a good portion of the last 10 years in the cesspool of human existence - the world of drugs).

Now Lisa has to put the finishing touches on her character. First she must calculate Malcolm's starting Willpower, Humanity and Blood Pool. Malcolm's Willpower is the same as his Courage rating; i.e. 4. She marks off that many dots on his character sheet. His Humanity is the sum of his Conscience and Self-Control; i.e. 4+2 or 6, which she marks on her sheet. Malcolm's starting Blood Pool is determined by a die roll, which comes up 6 for Lisa, so she marks off six boxes on the character sheet.

Finally, Lisa gets to spend 15 "freebie" points on Malcolm. She really wants Malcolm to be lightning-quick, so she spends seven of the points to give Malcolm one point of Celerity (a Discipline that Malcolm couldn't get from his clan). Lisa also wants Malcolm's Melee to be a little higher, so she spends two points to raise it to 2. She decides that Malcolm should be almost inhumanly cool under fire, so she spends two more points to raise his Self-Control to 5 (which adds a point of Humanity in the process). Finally, she puts the remaining four points into Willpower, since Malcolm is very strong-willed.

While this officially ends the character generation process,

Lisa decides that she wants to fill in a few more little details in order to fully bring Malcolm to life. These details may change during the prelude, but they provide both her and the Storyteller with a base to expand upon when they enact the prelude.

Malcolm has two Major Contacts - Sgt. Grabowski in the Homicide Division and "Softshoe," his informant on the street. Lisa doesn't want to specialize too much yet, but she decides Malcolm's Investigation Knowledge will be concentrated in narcotics, and she writes this in the spot provided on the sheet. Malcolm still rents the apartment he had as a human, using it as a haven and financing the place with money stolen from the drug dealers he kills.

Malcolm's prey are all the derelicts and rejects who sink themselves into the drug subculture - and there is a never-ending supply of them.

The only possessions of note for Malcolm are his service revolver and badge, both of which he still carries even though he has been relieved of his duty due to a poor attendance record (those daytime meetings can be lethal). He also has an old, rusty cop car which he bought at a police auction. In order to picture Malcolm, think of a very unsavory member of a motorcycle gang - unkempt, unshaven and dirty.

Lisa has already established the quirk that Malcolm will only feed on people connected with the drug culture. At this time, Lisa also decides that Malcolm has developed a drug problem of his own from drinking the blood of drug users. Malcolm's main motivation is to continue his life as if nothing had happened. He's content to use his newfound powers to bring the drug community to justice, but he refuses to accept that his life as a human is at an end. Therefore, he still hangs on to his badge, gun and car as the last vestiges of his former life and occupation. At this point, Lisa doesn't have a clear idea about Malcolm's sire, except that he was one vagabond too many in Malcolm's fanatical desire to rid Chicago of drugs.

Voila! A completed character. Now Mark will take Lisa and Malcolm through a prelude to further flesh out some of Lisa's ideas about her character.

Looking Ahead

Looked in the mirror and saw what was wrong

Got to get back to where I belong - where I belong.

- Joy Division, "Something Must Break"

In the process of creating a character, you have hopefully become ready to roleplay that character as well. An important part of the character creation process is the attachment that develops between you and your character, enabling you to play the role creatively and with purpose. Nurture your empathy for your character - if she is at all different from you, it might not come naturally.

The process of character creation does not end with the beginning of the first story, for a character never stops growing, changing, developing and maturing. As the chronicle progresses, create new personality traits and historical details. Use your experience wisely to develop your abilities. Seek to build your character's Willpower and maintain her Humanity, and always, always add more and more flesh to the bare bones listed on the character sheet. The true essence of the character can only be captured in your roleplaying; it can never be listed upon the character sheet.

Most importantly, you should think of ways in which the personality of your character might change because of the things that occur in her life and then guide her in that direction. Let her determine her own fate. Never force her to fall into your earlier conceptions of who and what she should be. An angry Deviant who learns to control his rage, or an aimless Loner who gains a sense of hope can be a beautiful thing - especially if the Storyteller catches on to what you are doing and builds a subplot around it. Even characters who only get "worse" can develop deeper and more fully realized personas.

If your character ever bores you, it's probably because you have not developed and changed her enough over time. Ideally, the character simply grows more real as you play in the chronicle, developing as a character and as a person. The way in which a character changes reveals as much about that character as the way she is described. A character in a short story is rarely as real and complete as one in a novel - there simply is not enough time for proper development. Make your characters as complete, vital and interesting as you possibly can throughout the course of the chronicle.

Novelists often speak of characters in their books coming to life, refusing to be manipulated or directed by the writer. This type of character stands out from the page and says "Leave me alone, I'm real"; he then does as he will, regardless of the author's original intent. We can learn much from this experience - it is the epitome of what makes a great character.

The Prelude

I remember, before, my mother dragged me out to the shops with her. She often did. I'd been a good boy, for a change, and she'd take me to the sweet shop for a couple of candied sticks, or some such. My reward, as it were. We were only there a moment when my mother spied a friend of hers in the shop too. She went over to talk, and left me standing there. It took me a moment, but I realized that I was alone. Me and the metal scoops of candy piled high. A lifetime of dreams, and no one to see me. No one to stop me.

When my mother returned, she found me standing there, shaking, my face red and hands clenched until they nearly bled. Oh, how I'd wanted to just grab and take and stuff my pockets until they overflowed and then fill myself up, stuffing the sweets inside me until I couldn't fit anymore. Only then would I stop.

But I was afraid. Frightened of being discovered, terrified of never being allowed into the sweet shop again, of not being able to stuff enough inside me to be happy forever. I was afraid.

I am not afraid anymore.

- Johann

It is our past that defines us most clearly, for it is the best indication of what we might become. The purpose of the prelude is to give each character a past so the future might be told. It is, in fact, a form of one-on-one storytelling in which the story of a character's life (and death) is told.

The prelude is a way to create character biographies before

the chronicle actually begins, allowing the characters to live out their lives prior to the moment when the first story starts. It is quite similar to normal play, except that many years are compressed into a series of rapid-fire decisions.

The prelude provides a frame of reference for everything else that happens in the chronicle. Without it, a character will not make as much sense or be as complete. It's a way of doing some quick and dirty roleplaying to get a character ready for play, much like the page or so of character description a novelist gives major characters when they enter the story. It is essential for the story, but it doesn't need to go on for 100 pages.

A vital part of a character's background is the creation of a personal history, which is one of the things the prelude does best. It helps you create a sense of where your character grew up and what her life was like. The personal biography a player creates in the prelude will be relevant throughout the chronicle, and you may well refer to it frequently as a storytelling technique.

The Right Technique

Each player undergoes the prelude alone. It is one-on-one unless two or more characters were friends and spent a lot of time together before the Embrace. While you, as the Storyteller, spend time with each player separately, the rest

of them can socialize and start to get excited about what lies ahead. Remember, it's anticipation which can make a story blossom.

You will need to direct the player much more than you usually will. Give him lots of decisions to make, but rush everything and don't give him much time to think. You need to play through things quickly, unless you are willing and able to spend more time (which can enable the creation of very detailed characters). Characters almost never engage in combat during the prelude. If they do, you simply describe the results of any fights (you can't have the characters die before the game even begins!)

During the time you set aside for the prelude, be sure to let the player have a chance to interact with both the setting and the rules. You need to give him a chance to explore both. If the player wants to change a few Traits during the prelude, you should let him, as long as it is done for a rational reason and not as an attempt to create a super-character.

There are many ways to progress through a character's life; any way that helps mold a complete character is fine. During the course of the prelude, you will want to explain the full background of the character, including the origin of her Resources and the identity of her Contacts. The player should have a firm idea of the details of her Background Traits.

You should play through one or more typical scenes from the character's life to give the player a sense of how the character lived as a mortal. You can get the player into her vampire role by showing her the bland tedium of the character's mortal existence. This scene can be something so mundane and common that it will radically juxtapose with the horror of becoming a vampire (which occurs next). Remember, it is the mundane that gives scope to the magnificent.

It can proceed something like this: "You're coming home from work on a Friday and the traffic is especially foul. You've had a bad day at the agency, and find it hard to hold back your temper. You climb up the three flights of stairs to your apartment and try to unlock the door, but your key won't work. What do you do?"

As you describe things, let the player interrupt with her own ideas and details concerning what is going on. You are telling a story together, so treat the player more like a partner. You can also include details that provoke the player into feeling the emotions of her character - "Your father is in a coma in the hospital." Of course, once the character becomes a vampire, she can't freely visit anymore. The father may awaken or may die, but the character may never see him again. The player needs to feel a profound and overwhelming sense of loss in order for the true horror of the game to come across.

Questions and Answers

Described below are some questions which should be answered by the end of the prelude. If there is no time for a full prelude, you should at least make an effort to answer these questions. It often helps to write out the answers, even if you have undergone the full prelude.

With each question we list what sorts of things the player should ask himself, as well as some advice to the Storyteller on how to run the prelude in relationship to the question.

• How old are you?

How old were you when you "died"? What year were you born? How many years has it been since the Embrace? How old do you look?

If the current game year (the year when you intend to begin the chronicle) is 1993, and the character is about 37 years old (19 years as a human, 18 years as a vampire), then you could start the prelude out in 1965, when the character was only nine years old. Since one of the objects of the prelude is to give the player as much freedom as possible when determining the course of her character's life, starting so young is not completely out of line. Sometimes it is easier to assign dates and such *after* the prelude is over.

• What was unique about your childhood?

How did you spend your early years -the period when your basic motivations and attitudes were forged? Where did you go to school? Who were your parents? Did you travel very much? What was high school like? Did you go to college? Did you run away from home? What sports, if any, did you play?

You should try to give each player a sense of his character's childhood, and provide something special to remember it by. Concentrate especially on things that will affect the character's future life - perhaps you can even bury some story leads as you progress through his childhood.

You might include subtle clues in the prelude concerning how the character was being watched over by his sire, even in childhood. Sometimes a vampire is especially taken by a child and spends years watching him grow up, Embracing him only when he is fully grown.

• What kind of person were you?

Were you a good person? Were you popular? Did you have a family or live alone?

Once the character is fully grown, you've got to establish

the setting just as you would do at the beginning of a scene. Briefly describe to the player what the character's adult life was like, perhaps letting her invent a lot of the basic details. You need to give her the chance to roleplay the character as a mortal, interacting with other humans.

• When did you first meet a vampire?

When did you first realize that you were being stalked? What made you first believe in vampires? Were you afraid? Incredulous? Angry?

There are countless different circumstances surrounding the Embrace; however, much like sharks, vampires usually spend a considerable amount of time stalking their prey prior to the actual attack. Evoke and describe the sensation of being watched; slowly build up the tension and suspense. The player knows what's coming, especially if she's read the title of the game, but sometimes that can make the tension all the more palpable. A character may notice a person constantly watching her; whenever she turns around, however, the person is gone. Though the character may try to lose her stalker, somehow she never can.

• How did the Embrace change you?

Was the Embrace painful? Did you get a kinky pleasure out of it? Did the hunger tear at you? Did it frighten you? Did it feel right?

You should play through the transformation in detail, allowing the player to actually feel the trauma of being changed. If the player is attacked by the vampire, then make it horrific and let the player make rolls to push the vampire away. However, such attempts are all ineffective. Depending on the type of chronicle you want to run, you can add in details that make the personal horror overwhelming. The sire might throw the character's spouse into a cell with her, as the new vampire begins to grow hungry. Try to lure the character into committing that first horrible act, but encourage temperance as well. You might want to roleplay this part out in detail, making the feeding rolls as described in the Drama Chapter.

• Who was your sire?

Was your sire brutal, arrogant, or wise? What did you know about her? Did you get along with your sire? Did you know your sire at all?

Many neonates know nothing about vampire society, for they have been kept in the dark by their sire. Most sires consider themselves the princes of their progeny, ruling over them and treating them like slaves. They are reluctant to introduce them to other Kindred.

• How did your sire treat you?

How long did you stay with your sire? What was your sire like? Did she aid or hinder you? How long was your "apprenticeship?" Where did you live? Where did you go? Why did you sire Embrace you?

The sire is the most important person in a neonate's first few years. The treatment the character receives from his sire will make a big difference in the character's personality. It will be the primary indication of how he will interact with

other Kindred. Most sires keep their progeny with them for many years, training and tutoring them, and keeping them as companions. Many such fledglings are told

nothing of vampire society at large, and are even prevented from interacting with it. Sires do this because they are intensely jealous and wish to forge the personality of their childe without interference.

There are many reasons why a vampire will create progeny. You must determine why the sire of the character created him. Maybe she will use the progeny to regain her humanity, or perhaps she simply wants company. Does want a slave, or is her blood so thinned with age that she needs progeny as vessels?

• Were you presented to the prince?

Did the prince welcome you to the city with open arms, or was he reluctant to accept you? Did he need to be bribed or threatened? Are you on the run from the prince? Is he your enemy?

Eventually, the character is released into the world and given her freedom. The sire relinquishes all hold, and in so doing, no longer has responsibility for the neonate. This moment is marked by the age-old tradition of presenting the neonate to the prince.

The prince may accept the character reluctantly, angrily, with good grace, or (on rare occasions) with great kindness. Normally this depends on the sire's relationship with the prince. The most important consideration, however, is whether the sire asked for permission before or after the Embrace. A surprising number of vampires do not bother to gain permission from the prince first, but insist upon it later (most likely because they probably wouldn't be given permission before).

The character might be released because she has become too dangerous to keep. In some cases, a neonate only conclusively learns that there are others of her kind after she has been released.

In terms of roleplaying, make sure the sire explains the Six Traditions handed down from Caine. It starts out with the neonate being told of her clan and generation: "You are of the Eleventh Generation from Caine, of the Clan Tremere, and so his words are not so distant from you, for they were spoken by him to his Fledgling and so unto you." These Traditions are described in the Chapter Two: Setting on page 37.

• How did you meet the others in your brood?

Were you brought together through chance or design? Do you get along with the others? Are you united in purpose and attitude? How long have you been together in the city?

Before the chronicle begins, the characters need to trust each other; otherwise your stories will self-destruct. If the Storyteller is the glue holding the coterie together, then their

relationship won't last very long. Let the characters forge their own ties and give them the responsibility for maintaining them.

Each character needs to meet the others at some point, and it is best if this is some sort of unique meeting. It can be done two at a time, so that each character has a unique relationship with one or two other characters, or you can have everyone meet all at once and get it over with. It is not suggested that you wait until the game begins before you introduce the characters. It is generally best to solidify a relationship between them before the action gets hot and

heavy.

• Where is your haven?

Where does your character live? Where does she hide during the day?

Some Kindred have an actual home in which they reside, while others have a particular part of the sewers where they like to lie. Others, particularly the more paranoid Kindred, have many secret places where they might spend the day.

• What are your habitual feeding grounds?

Whom do you feed upon, and where? Do you have a domain you seek to protect? Is your favorite hunting ground used by others? Do you compete with others for the same vessels? Do you ever kill when you feed?

It is likely that a character maintains regular sources of food near his haven. As long as a character is near his haven, he can feed without requiring a roll or any roleplaying. But you need to detail this source of blood -

does he feed from the inmates of an asylum? Go club-hopping every night? Or do children come over to his house each evening for piano lessons?

• What motivates you?

Do you have any enemies, anyone you wish to seek vengeance against? Do you have any desire to return to your old life? What is it that you search for most avidly?

Your characters' primary motivations are central to understanding who and what they are. After they cease being human, vampires' priorities and standards often change, usually drastically. Things that were once important no longer are, and new values become central in their lives. If you want to have a real and complete character, you must first have an understanding of what drives her and keeps her from depression and total aimlessness (which can be interesting to play as well - simply decide that your character has no motivations at all). Your Nature and Demeanor can be of great assistance in determining your motivations.

Chapter Six: Chronicle

No one commands me. No man. No god. No Elder. 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.

- Günter Dörn, *Das Ungeheuer Darin*

This chapter describes how to establish and develop a **Vampire** chronicle. It serves the same function for the Storyteller and the chronicle that the previous chapter does for the player and the character. It not only describes how to design a chronicle, but includes advice on how to keep the level of player interest high throughout its course. The process of designing stories as well as chronicles is explained in detail, and examples are provided. This chapter provides you with the tools to create a compelling and complete **Vampire** chronicle, not only at its genesis, but at all stages of its development.

Creating a chronicle is not unlike creating a character, and involves at least as much work and creativity. A chronicle is not always easy to create, simply because of the scope of the story which it describes. Indeed, a chronicle is never truly designed, but evolves through a series of stories. Stories are the blood and sinew of a chronicle, and are almost as important, in their own way, as the characters.

However, this chapter is not intended to be an all-inclusive description of the stories you can tell in **Vampire**. That would be impossible in this limited space (it would take an encyclopedia). We will, however, try to present some of the best story archetypes, along with some of the most interesting chronicle archetypes as well.

Regardless of their undeniable import, a chronicle is more than the sum of its constituent stories - it is in fact a story itself. The chronicle is the saga told by the characters' lives. It has a beginning and an ending. It has obstacles for the characters to overcome and it has a consistent style and motif. More than likely, the same antagonists will appear again and again to terrorize the characters. A chronicle is not simply a string of stories slapped together - not unless you are willing to settle for something mediocre. A chronicle must be created with as much patience, creativity and grace as a model plane or an oil painting. It must be treated as the central character in the game.

Creating a Chronicle

Her lips were red, her looks were free

Her locks were as yellow as gold,

Her skin was white as leprosy.

The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,

Who thicks man's blood with cold.

- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

You need to begin designing the chronicle long before the players create their characters. Hopefully, you will have already spent several hours of work, at least, in determining the substance and texture of the chronicle you want to run.

Everything else depends on what you come up with initially. The sharper your ideas and overall concept, the better everything else will work later on. It can be time-consuming to create a **Vampire** chronicle, but the work you do at the beginning will pay off in spades later on.

While the players create their characters, you shouldn't sit around idly. Before the chronicle can begin, you need an idea of what it will be like - its setting, antagonists and central issues. You must create a setting that will excite the players, antagonists that will provoke them, and issues that will involve them. Creating the chronicle is like creating the most important character of the game.

You have a number of decisions to make as you create the chronicle. First, you need to decide the setting - what city is it set in and what is that city like? Second, you need to determine what connects the characters and binds them together, and what you can do to help describe their motivations. Third, the primary antagonists of the players need to be delineated - what are their motivations and powers? Fourth, a plan of the progression of the chronicle should be constructed, to detail where you want to take it and where you must start. Finally, you need to determine the motif of the chronicle, which describes the recurring images, subjects, moods and special rules you will include in it. Making these decisions wisely will ensure that your chronicle runs smoothly.

Elements of a Chronicle

- Motif
- Setting
- Characters
- Antagonists

•Scheme

Motif

A motif is a recurring subject, theme or idea that comes up again and again in an artistic work, and in some ephemeral way unites the work. For your chronicle to be truly complete, it needs a motif.

You need to decide what will be the dominant idea or feature of the chronicle. What are you trying to say? What issues galvanize and connect every story? What is the theme of the chronicle and how will it be presented?

The motif even incorporates such things as your style as a Storyteller. Will you be abrasive, understated, gory or combative? What effect do you hope to gain by using that style? You can use your style to direct the players' attention to the things you want them to be aware of, or the motif itself.

Will there be special rules in the chronicle that cause it to work differently than most **Vampire** chronicles? Will you make the frenzy rolls uncommon, or perhaps make Humanity even more precious? Will you call for a lot of dice rolls, or none at all?

Many chronicle concepts restrict which Backgrounds the players may choose, as well as how high a rating the

players can take on them in general. Before the players get to Step 5 in the character creation process, you must have a firm idea of what restrictions you will place, and that means you have to do some planning. Will the cost of Generation (a Background Trait) be double normal, or will you restrict the score to only 3?

You can invent a unique feature that the characters can encounter or interact with repeatedly. A distinctive and recurring character, theme, mood, place or object can bond the players to what is going on. This can be anything from a club which they frequent to a bum they keep meeting whose drunken ramblings contain an uncanny wisdom. Perhaps you keep mentioning a tarnished statue of Achilles on the street, never directly explaining its significance. These recurring features can do a great deal to add a mood and a sense of significance to your chronicle. Invent something that will add depth, and then weave it into your stories.

Setting

In **Vampire**, it is not necessary to create an entire world from scratch, for the world is so much like our own. However, the counterpart to it is creating the city. The city is the locus of the **Vampire** game. It is where vampires live and feed, and it is where they are often trapped.

You need to present your city in a realistic and consistent manner if you want the players to believe in it. The setting must live and breathe for the players; until it does the characters cannot themselves fully exist. The setting is where the plot of the story takes place - the more interesting and exotic it seems the more everything will come to life. With each story you run, define the city a bit better, but don't give away everything at once. As the chronicle progresses, add details of geography, custom, plot, and so on. Build it bit by bit and at whatever pace you choose.

The mortal structure of the city is fairly easy to determine. Though the setting is Gothic-Punk, much of it is identical

to our world. Get a travel book for that city, or write the Chamber of Commerce. If you live in the city where you are setting the chronicle, details shouldn't be a problem at all. You will want to change a few details here and there to suit the mood of the game, but the basic structure is in place.

Creating the vampiric aspect of the city is a little more difficult. You need to decide how the power structure functions and who controls it. The prince is likely to be the most important individual in a city, but that is not always the case. The prince might be the actual ruler, or she could simply be a figurehead, with some elder manipulating things from the shadows.

The intrigues among the Kindred of a city are often quite ferocious, so decide how they work in your city. How many different "sides" are there? Why are they opposed to one another? Members of various clans could be antagonistic, or the classic elder versus anarch conflict could be the major source of division. Are there Methuselahs behind the scenes manipulating the various sides, or are most of the Kindred slaves only to their own passions?

You need to decide what groups oppose the group or individual who controls the city, and which groups support the status quo. How do the Kindred of the city interact with the mortal rulers? Are the police becoming suspicious, or do ruling Kindred control the mortal authorities?

Some cities, especially the smaller ones, might have very few or no conflicts between the Kindred who live there. But how interesting would that be? Don't make your city one of those peaceful, and boring, ones. Fill it with enough intrigue and iniquity to power a hundred stories, or at least plan future strife to devastate the peaceful city you create now.

Last, but not least, you should make sure the design of the city meshes well with the motif of the overall chronicle. If the chronicle is going to be about corruption, then the city ought to be corrupt as well, both the mortal and Kindred elements of it.

Characters

The characters are the basis of the chronicle, as it is for their sake that the chronicle is told in the first place. The characters are always the focus of events, and the decisions of the players determine the course of the plot. A great chronicle requires equally great characters.

One thing you must determine as the chronicle begins is why the characters are together - why they form a brood. Of course, the players will have a lot to say about this, perhaps even the primary say, but it is up to you to make sure the characters fit together. Does each character in the group have a reason for being a part of the group? Ask yourself what kind of relationship the characters have with one another. Why are they friends? Why do they work together? In short, will the characters make sense in terms of the chronicle?

Ask the players to decide how their characters will relate to one another and what roles each will play in the group. Make sure that at least one of the players with leadership skills plays a character who is a leader. If you have any players who tend to be disruptive, gently direct them toward characters who strongly share the same aims as the brood. If your players are incorrigible anarchists, select a chronicle concept that gives them strong and forceful allies, provides them with significant responsibilities, or

which allows them to be exactly what they want to be: anarchs rebelling against the establishment.

You must be sure that character conflicts won't become the focus of the chronicle (unless that's what you are looking for). All too often, players will create their characters in isolation from one another and worry about meshing into a group once the game starts. Often what results is a group of anarchists, with no system for working together or getting anything done. A lot of time is wasted with endless, meandering debates on what to do next.

If nothing else works, you may want all the players to have a personal history in common. You can presume that the characters have been friends for some time, perhaps since even before they were transformed into vampires. At the extreme, you can say they are from the same clan, or even share the same sire.

If the characters still are not cooperating after the chronicle begins, you need to find ways to make them do so. A system of rewards and punishments (experience points, Humanity) can work wonders on the attitudes of the players. Alternately, you can allow the characters to break apart into groups, continuing the chronicle with each separately. Eventually adopt the most interesting group as the primary one, and have the other players create characters to fit.

The prelude is a great way to get characters prepared for the chronicle. It can explain the nature of the setting to them, give them contacts to go to in times of need, and enable them to better understand what will be required of them. Motivations can often be created and expanded during the prelude as well, making a complete character out of one that was paper-thin. Use the prelude to prepare your players, so that when the action begins, they will be ready with the right sort of character.

Antagonists

The characters will need someone or something to struggle with, a "monster" to fight. For the characters to have something to do, they must face obstacles. When you need the characters' goals to be thwarted, bring in the bad guy. An antagonist, at base, is an obstacle for the characters to defeat. An antagonist can be nearly any sort of adversary - Kindred or kine, animate or inanimate, cunning or brutal.

Most often, antagonists are villains, individuals who oppose the characters and are nasty enough to hate. But for them to work at their sinister best, you need to make them malevolent. Over time, you want to build your players' hate for the villains - it will make their defeat much more palpable. You need to start early, however, by developing both the hate and the villains from story to story.

An entire chronicle can be based around a single archenemy who has the influence and status to command many minions. The object might be to defeat this enemy, or merely survive his attacks. The characters may even need to discover his identity. This enemy could be anyone from the Prince of the city to the Methuselah who secretly controls the city, from a mundane witch-hunter to a powerful voodoo mage. The single arch-enemy concept is the simplest form of creating antagonists. If you have multiple enemies, you can complicate matters immensely (perhaps the enemies are enemies of each other).

It is often fun to make antagonists many times more powerful than the characters so they will not be able to successfully act against their foe directly - at least, not at first. Certainly they will be able to combat the lesser minions of the enemy, but the characters would not survive if faced with a direct confrontation. The characters must move against powerful enemies indirectly by gathering clues and allies, engaging in guerrilla warfare, and probing the defenses of their antagonists. Only after great effort will they be able to act against their enemy.

On the other hand, a team of antagonists who are individually roughly equal to the characters provides wonderful opportunities for various personal rivalries and grudges to spring up, and allows you to present frightening "funhouse mirror" images of the characters. An example is a Sabbat pack where each member is a twisted reflection of one of the player characters, and which serves as a reminder of what the characters could become if they step too far over the line.

See the appendix for descriptions of a number of different types of antagonists, as well as examples and rules for creating your own.

Scheme

Finally, you need to create a plan for how you want the chronicle to progress. Where should the stories take the characters, and how will the chronicle eventually end (if ever)? The initial plan is a blueprint for creating not only the beginning of a good chronicle, but the entire thing.

This scheme details where you want the chronicle to go and what you want the characters to be doing. More than likely, the chronicle will end up very differently than what you intended. Indeed, if it does end up exactly as you thought it would, it might mean you aren't allowing the characters enough free will.

The scheme is intended to be a guide to help you understand what you want the chronicle to be - it's a means of forcing yourself to make it dynamic, with changes in tempo, mood and content. It should have a beginning, a middle and an end, and should progress relentlessly towards a resolution.

Always try to stage a great ending to the chronicle. Never let it slowly decline into an obscure death. Will the chronicle end with the death of the characters as part of a heroic sacrifice, or will one of them manage to become mortal once again?

A chronicle shares many of the same characteristics that a series of movies or novels does, only it can be even longer and broader in scope. It can last for many years (player years) because it is based upon the lives of vampires, who are immortal. Thus, it is possible for a single chronicle to cover several hundred years in time, particularly if you begin it at some point in the past. However, if you set the chronicle in the present, it is likely that your chronicle will take place over years or decades, not centuries. After all, Gehenna is fast approaching, and there is not much time left.

In a typical chronicle, individual stories occur within weeks of one another, though sometimes they will be separated by months or even years of downtime, which are described by the Storyteller and not roleplayed through. You should think of stories as the exciting but infrequent events that punctuate months or even years of quieter pursuits.

Naming Your Creation

At some point before the chronicle begins, you will need to name it. A name can be, strangely enough, quite important, for it sets the tone from which everything else follows. Every character is described by the chronicle in which she belongs, so the players are likely to be pestering you for a name. The name should be suggestive of the theme and potential of the chronicle without giving too much away. A chronicle name can be very simple: for example, the name of the city in which it is set, or the prince who controls it.

Chronicle Archetypes

It is precisely the soul that is the traveler; it is of the soul and of the soul alone that we can say with supreme truth that 'being' necessarily means 'being on the way.'

- Gabriel Marcel

Below are a number of descriptions of different types of chronicles you could create. They are described according to the type of group they require. There are three different categories of chronicle concepts: Classic, Roleplaying and Bizarre. You should have some idea of the mood and gaming style of your players, so choose accordingly.

The Classics

These are the classic examples of a **Vampire** chronicle - the best examples of what it should all be about. They should be very familiar to you, because they are the ideas which are most often depicted in the movies and in books.

•**Gang:** The characters are a group of anarchs (or even elder-sponsored "counterterrorists") in a major city, who have formed a brood molded in the pattern of a street gang. They live death as exuberantly as they can, eking as much pleasure and enjoyment out of their existences as possible. Proud and often haughty, they hold in scorn all those who are not members of their brood. To the mortals, they may seem little more than a gang of hoodlums, but their image belies their power.

The characters must constantly protect their "turf" (hunting ground) from other gangs, as well as from Kindred who might encroach upon it. Elders are loath to acknowledge that it is the characters' domain, for it was not awarded to them by the prince. But since the "turf" is all they have, the characters protect it fiercely.

Like all anarchs, they scorn the power of the prince and pretend that he has no power - but they understand the Traditions and fear the power of the Justicars. Much like mortal gangs, they rebel against the establishment - only in their case, the establishment is less restricted by the law.

Typically, such Kindred are affiliated with mortal gangs, and may control them (treat mortal gangs as either Allies or Herd). In fact, each member of the vampire gang may be the leader of a mortal gang, which each character should create and develop.

•**Wanderers:** The characters travel around the country on motorcycles (or perhaps in an RV or stolen car), finding a safe place to sleep every night. They are focused on survival, and are bound to run into the Lupines at one point or another. There is much that they will discover on their journey.

You and the players will need to decide why they are wanderers. Are they hunted, continuing their headlong flight out of terror and a strong sense of self-preservation? Or do they simply have nowhere to go? The characters must rely upon one another to survive in a hostile and constantly changing world.

Each story could begin with the characters arriving in a new city, attempting to adjust and make themselves at home, and each time their efforts result only in their flight once again. Keep 'em scared, and keep 'em running -and don't let them stop.

Whatever type of wanderers the characters are, the focus needs to be on survival. Accentuate the side effects of life as a fugitive. Because the characters are wanderers, they will not have Contacts or Influence. The setting, of course, will vary wildly from story to story, so you must always be on your toes and will need to do more preparation work than with most chronicles.

•**Rock Band**: Another possibility is to let the characters form the nucleus of a rock band (or even a classical, folk, jazz or country ensemble). They are trying to make it as musicians. Perhaps they were a band in their mortal existence and were all taken by the same sire, or perhaps they have decided to do this after being vampires for some time. Whatever the case, they are bound to get in considerable trouble as the Camarilla and most of the elders vigorously suppress any activities that threaten the Masquerade.

Each character will need a rating in Music (unless that character is the manager), and each will have to choose a specific instrument. Who will be the lead vocalist? Who is steady enough to be the drummer? Mellow enough to be the bassist? Creative enough to break those stereotypes? What kind of music do they play - jazz, pop, punk, metal, rap? They start in the local clubs of their native city, but success may bring a concert tour. How do they handle this?

•**Refugees:** The characters are castoffs from another city; perhaps they are even from a clan which does not belong to the Camarilla. They have run away from their prince, sire or clan. The city in which the chronicle is based is the place where they have fled for refuge. They must spend much of their energy and time hiding both from mortals and other Kindred.

The chronicle begins as the characters arrive in town, without a clue as to the power structure. Don't give the characters any Background points, to reflect this and to drive the point home. Because they are new to the city, detail more of the mundane aspects than normal, including the things only a newcomer might notice.

They get a rats-eye view of the underside of a city. They will probably not reveal themselves to the prince at first, so later they may get in big trouble for violating the First Tradition. Make the players truly afraid, and try to convince them that the other Kindred will kill them if they are found, even if it is not true.

•**Historical:** You can play **Vampire** in many other periods besides the present day. Any era, from the ancient world of the Nile to the Victorian age, can be fascinating when you add the vampire myth. Choose any time period and set your chronicle there. Just make sure you know a little history before you start, or at least more than your players.

Imagine roleplaying **Vampire** in the age from which many of the legends stem - the Middle Ages of historical Europe. The vampire is most frequently a member of the

nobility, the ruling class of the time. It is a time of decadence and romance, of cruelty and honor. Entire regions may be under the control of the undead. However, the populace grows gradually restless, and when the envoys from Rome learn what is going on, the vampires may face a Crusade. Though the characters may not be truly evil vampires, they can be trapped in the same situation as the evil ones.

The chronicle could go something like this: Embraced against their will, the characters find themselves vassals to those whom they despise. Ultimately, they must choose between survival and morality - or chart a careful course between the two poles.

Roleplaying

These are chronicles that emphasize roleplaying, and thus have little combat or dice rolling. These sort of chronicles are intended for advanced roleplayers, though they are challenging for any group.

•**Primogen:** The characters are the primary Kindred of a medium-sized city (less than one million) - about the size of Charleston, North Carolina or Madison, Wisconsin. In some sense, they "own" it; they certainly rule it. Because of the size of the city, the characters might even be the only vampires living there.

When danger or peril arrives, it is up to them to protect their "turf." Any elders who do exist are likely to be mentors of the characters, capable of providing much assistance but demanding aid in return.

You will need to create some sort of crisis for the characters to deal with. It could be anything from a powerful coterie of elders seeking a new city to control after being exiled from the one they once ruled, to a Methuselah who simply wants peace. Play up the travails of being responsible.

The characters might even be anarchs who have taken the city from the elders who once ruled it. Now they must maintain control of it, as well as survive the arrival of a Justicar and her Archons. Other elders may come in order to punish the characters, or simply to take over the city for themselves.

Player intrigue will be high, and you should encourage it. Limit the Resources and Influence available, and make them fight among themselves for it. A different style of play might be called for, with players interacting with you separately much of the time.

•**Brood of a Prince:** The characters are the brood of the city's prince. Their sire is either a vampire of great nobility or a total bastard. The characters thus support the elders of the city, and work to control and restrain the wilder impulses of the anarchs. Making sure that the mortal authorities of the city don't discover the Kindred can be a full-time job - one has to suppress evidence, intimidate officials and cover up deaths.

You might want to make the characters a little more powerful than normal, giving them more freebie points (20 or so). Most of the chronicle will be centered around the haven of the sire, but the city needs to be detailed as well. You must create may different areas of potential conflict and aggravation - who is out there to give the characters trouble? Remember that their sire is a prince as well, and thus has many demands made upon her as well as innumerable constraints. Does she take things out on the characters? Can the characters trust the prince, or are they only pawns in the end?

•**Mortal Politics:** For some reason, the characters wish to manipulate politics, either in their city or on a national level - probably because other vampires are attempting to manipulate it in an opposite way. Vampires control many of the institutions in the mortal world, especially those which are centrally located and controlled by one city. Those institutions might be employed by vampires who control them as pieces in the Jyhad. This means the characters might get involved in campaigning, political espionage, and even electoral cheating (or preventing the other group from doing the same). Such intrigue-oriented activities are rare but not unheard of among the Kindred, and frequently can be traced to a maneuver of the Jyhad.

Influence and Resources would be very appropriate Background Traits for the characters. You need to detail the participants in the political race and their importance to the Kindred. This can make for a very intrigue-ridden and bloody chronicle. Play up the plot twists and the intensity of what is going on.

•**High Society:** The characters mingle in the high society of the upper class, and become embroiled in its politics and affairs. Though it is only a game for them, it is a most intriguing one and it may be a means for the characters to compete with one another (e.g. who can seduce Vladimir the Russian pianist first?). However, by being involved with the elite of a city, the characters may be able to manipulate

events and decisions in times of crisis. If the police are about to launch a major investigation, such contacts can be essential. Mingling with the high society could be the "duty" assigned them by the prince or another elder. Play up the elegance and beauty of the setting, so as to make the stain of blood even more vivid.

Before the game starts, give each character an automatic Resources of 3, and encourage them to purchase that Background Trait even higher. You will need to decide who are the leaders, gossips, hosts, wannabes and outcasts of this high society.

Bizarre

This type of chronicle is for those who like things that are truly different. These concepts describe some very unique ways to play **Vampire**. Try them out only if you have a taste for the strange.

•**Archons:** The characters are among the most feared and respected Kindred in the Camarilla. They are the enforcers who travel from city to city, assisting the Justicars (and sometimes the princes) in maintaining the status quo. The characters will become heavily involved in Camarilla politics. They are united by ambition or by shared views on political affairs.

Either selected and trained by or created as the brood of a Justicar, it might be wise to let the characters begin the game with five or more Discipline points (if they ever have to venture into Sabbat territory, they will need them). Give the characters 25 Freebie points each, so that their characters will be capable of combating more powerful Kindred. Teamwork will be essential regardless. They might have Mentor or Status as backgrounds. They will travel, but will likely be based in a single city.

Present the players with moral conflicts like Duty vs. Justice. Do they search for truth or do they continue to mindlessly serve their masters? Play up the intrigue -the characters should not know what is going on, and should be able to trust no one. Ask yourself what is going on: what

is the nature of the greater conflict?

•**Fanatics:** The characters can play IRA partisans, Moslem fundamentalists or eco-anarchists. They are members of some sort of extremist group who will go to nearly any lengths to carry out their cause. The characters are dogmatic, idealistic and totally committed to their group. Though they have become vampires, they have not given up their mortal beliefs (not yet at least) and they use their powers to do whatever they can for the cause. Can the characters gain the wisdom of restraint in time to preserve their own humanity? Start the chronicle with the characters carrying out their missions, but gradually bring in other issues and themes. Eventually, they must leave the cause in order to preserve their Humanity or to have any hope of rebirth or Golconda.

The characters should all be from the same fanatic group. They probably volunteered as a unit for some sort of hazardous duty which brought them into contact with their eventual sire. Define the nature of the extremist group to which they belong, and have their opponents fully worked out as well.

•**The Cult:** The characters have created a cult around themselves, which offers them security and easy access to vitæ. They could be the objects of devotion for the cult, or simply the figures who manipulate it from behind the scenes. It could be a mixture of the two, with one character serving as the charismatic leader, while the others are manipulators and organizers. The characters are cheating these people, and they are using them for evil purposes. You need to work the effects of such an attitude into the stories. It could certainly lead to a loss of Humanity. Also, something will eventually happen to threaten their idealistic existence.

Each character will likely have a Herd rating to reflect the members of the cult, and perhaps Resources as well. Unless the players wish to establish the cult on their own, starting from nothing, you will have to detail what it is and how it works - more than likely with the participation of the players.

•**Patrons:** The characters are patrons to some human institution, such as an orphanage, a small business, a church or even a baseball team. The characters are do-gooders, but the more good they do, the more they are expected to do.

They seek to promote their institution in every way they can. Protecting and serving it is the focus of their existence. All you have to do is figure out why they are oriented in this manner.

You need to decide what type of institution the characters are protecting, and what problems are facing it. It is a good idea to let the players decide, so that they feel the urge to protect and nurture it. If you simply tell them they must protect it, they will feel like you have taken away their free will.

•**Other World:** Though **Vampire** is already set in a Gothic-Punk world, you can elect to place it in a setting even more removed from our own reality. A chronicle can be forged from the fantasy, post-holocaust, science fiction or even cyberpunk genres. You can twist and change the setting to nearly anything your fervid imagination can invoke, though it can help your players visualize your setting if it is taken from a movie or a novel.

You can even craft your chronicle around a fictional setting, such as the horrific worlds of H. P. Lovecraft and Edgar Allan Poe, or J.R.R Tolkien's Middle-Earth.

Vampire can work well in nearly any kind of medieval fantasy campaign, especially when undead comprise much or all of the nobility.

Depending on what type of setting you use, you can create a radically different mood for your chronicle than what is described in this book. If you have the creativity and the time, you might as well make use of it.

Creating a Story

So fair; so sweet; withal so sensitive

All vain desires, all lawless wishes quelled

Be thou to love and praise alike impelled

Whatever boon is granted or withheld.

- William Wordsworth

A **Vampire** story is more complex than other story forms because it is interactive. The players take a very active role in its creation; you, as the Storyteller, do not have complete control over the form that the story will take. In fact, you are more of a guide than a teller of tales.

A story is almost always built around a series of conflicts or problems that the characters attempt to overcome to achieve their aims. Your primary job is to present the characters with a problem, and then let them run with it. You shouldn't try to predict what the characters will do; just invent a conflict and leave the players to deal with what you give them.

If you have problems coming up with ideas, just look in a newspaper for story concepts. Nearly any article can be the genesis of a story; just twist and mold what you read until it fits the dictates of the world of darkness. Remember, vampires are behind many major disruptions in the world, so the repercussions of their conflicts are sure to end up in the news.

Designing a story is very similar to designing a chronicle, only you need to do so on a regular basis. It is a difficult task, because you should not "over-design." In fact, sometimes the less you do, the better the story is.

While you do not always have to design a story ahead of time, make sure that some sort of consistent story is told. If your chronicle becomes rich enough in detail, the characters will be able to find something interesting to do without any prior planning on your part. They will guide themselves through their stories. Until that point, however, you will need to devise stories for their amusement. Even if they do direct themselves, you should try to get an idea of what they want to do in the next session so you can plan for it.

Preparation is often the most important part of a good story. While stories can often be conducted with just a few notes and some good ideas, a story is usually much better if you have time to think it out at your leisure. If you plan your stories carefully, they will seem more real than stories for which you have not prepared at all. However, prepared stories tend to give the players less free choice. This can make things a lot less fun for them.

Though the players may go where they will and do what they want, it doesn't mean you don't have to do any work. On the contrary, it means you have to work even harder to come up with appropriate things to interest them, such as characters, plot twists, traps and obscure items. The best way to ensure a good story is simply to have a firm and detailed grasp of the setting. Your efforts to design the city

are essential to give stories the depth they truly require.

Just as a character is an amalgamation of many parts - Attributes, Abilities and Advantages - so is a story made up of several things. Though some literature professor s might not agree with us, we have divided the story into five different aspects to give you a better insight into what stories incorporate as well as to make it easier for you to design them. These aspects are Theme, Conflict, Drama, Plot and Mood.

Theme

Every story needs a theme - a way you can fit everything together. Furthermore, a theme focuses the players' attention upon the story and makes it easier for them to learn something from it. Stories with depth are stories which have something to say.

The theme is more than the moral of an Aesop's fable - it is the tangible embodiment of the direction, flavor and purpose of a story. While it is not necessary to pay attention to the theme while playing the game, this information will at least provide a foundation for your story. If you are ever unsure on what to do or how to react, then you can always fall back on the theme for guidance.

Stories almost always have a theme. However, in good stories, the lesson learned is subtle rather than overt. You shouldn't have a prepackaged lesson ready; rather, the story should present a situation and let the players make of it what they will.

The central purpose of your story should be the exploration of the theme. It is what ties everything together and makes sense of the disparate elements of the story. Focusing on the theme can add a new dimension to your roleplaying by making it a more artistic, fulfilling and thoughtful process.

A story becomes larger than life when is not only an adventure but a moral lesson as well. Fairy tales, passion plays and even *Star Trek* use this technique. This is a key reason why we tell stories in the first place.

The theme is not meant to make the story more serious or highbrow. Neither is it intended to give you the opportunity to lecture the players with a diatribe on good and evil. The theme is simply intended to help you create a better story, a story with more depth, pathos and poignancy. Don't place too large an onus on the theme and it will work out for you.

The theme is usually expr essed as a question which the story presents, but without an answer given. Pose the theme as a question you would like answered, and then do nothing to answer it. It can be practically anything, from "What is evil?" to "Why do so many people lie about their age?" Some of the most common themes in **Vampire** concern corruption, violence and the nature of reality.

Below are several examples of themes you can employ in your stories. Do not take this as any sort of complete list; there is no end to the themes you can create.

•**Love** - What is the fragility of love, and the weaknesses and strength that it can bestow? What effect can it have on the characters' lives; how can it change them? What should or should not love be? Can anyone feel love, even the most depraved? What sustenance does love provide?

•**Hate** - What creates the emotions of hate and vengeance? Why can't they be controlled? How can they ruin a life?

•**Chaos** - Is there any truth or security in the universe? Is everything in such a continuou s state of flux that true stability is impossible? Is true peace possible is such a world?

•**Morality** - How useful is conventional morality? In what ways could it be improved? Where does it excel and where does it fail? Why do people bother with morality at all? Is perfect morality impossible? Are there any immutable and absolute rules of morality?

•**Leadership** - Where does the need for leadership come from? What is required of a leader? When does leadership fail, and when does it succeed? What is the tragedy of authority?

•**Society** - Where do our societal myths originate? Why are they so important to us? What have they done to us; how have they programmed us? Can we ever escape our upbringing, or are we slaves to our culture forever? Are myths only symbolic, or are some true?

Conflict

Conflict provides energy and direction to a story, and influences the course of the plot. It propels the story by involving and motivating the characters. Though the characters need not be the primary participants in the conflict, they may become involved simply by being enveloped in the struggle. Conflict is the reason the story is interesting enough to tell or to listen to in the first place - it can be both entertaining and illuminating.

Any collision or disagreement, contention or controversy, struggle or quarrel can be seen as conflict. Conflict occurs whenever people or groups of people find it difficult to get along, whether it be due to incompatibility, mutual antagonism, or an intrinsic opposition of interests and principles. Conflict need not be between enemies, and it need not be resolved by bloodshed. Sometimes it can be simply an internal disharmony in one individual.

You can mix many different conflicts into the same story, but in order not to confuse things too much, one or two primary elements are best. You can use conflicts in your story in the same way that Archetypes are used in a character - one conflict is what the characters think is going on (the Demeanor) while the second conflict is what is really going on (the Nature).

In **Vampire**, there are 13 primary levels of conflict that you can use in your stories. Though we describe them only briefly below, you can use them in innumerable ways.

•**Kindred vs. Hunters:** There are many who pursue vampires. Some merely wish to learn more about the Kindred, but most want to slay them out of hand.

•**Kindred vs. Lupines:** The werewolves deeply resent the intrusion of Kindred into their territory, which includes most of the land outside the cities. Lupines may also have obscure plans and missions that compel them to enter the city, a place they despise.

•**Anarchs vs. Elders:** The young always resent the rule of the old. When the old live forever, the effect is only exaggerated.

•**Elder vs. Elder:** The Jyhad is an ancient, immortal war, and most Kindred are somehow tangled up in it; indeed, many of them struggle and die without realizing what they fight for. The Jyhad exists on every level of Kindred society, and practically any sort of intrigue can be considered to have its origin in the eon -old war.

•**Camarilla vs. Sabbat:** This is, at base, simply the conflict between these two sects, but it can also be seen in terms of the eternal war between order and chaos, mercy and hate.

•**Humanity vs. the Beast:** The inner war between the silence and the rage never ceases. "A Beast I am, lest a Beast I become." For more roleplaying-oriented stories, this makes an excellent conflict, as it allows you to probe deeply into the personalities of the characters and players.

•**Clan vs. Clan:** The clans continually war with one another, and the envy and antipathy run deep. The Ventrue could be attempting to take over the Mafia, or the Tremere might be pushing for a Conclave.

•**Kindred vs. Kindred:** Warfare over hunting grounds and turf is not uncommon, and the horror of diablerie is always of concern.

•**Kindred vs. Magi:** There are many wizards who have uses for vampires. It is said that they have strange rituals which require the blood and organs of Kindred.

•**Kindred vs. Prince**: Political upheaval in the city is always tumultuous, especially if the prince is involved, not as a judge, but as a contestant.

•**Kindred vs. Society:** The Masquerade must be maintained lest all be destroyed. The Kindred must constantly struggle to keep their secret from the press and society.

•**Kindred vs. Victims:** The characters might find themselves hunting a powerful and interesting member of the kine. It could be anything from "feed-on-the-mob-boss's-girl" to vessels who actually fight back.

•**Sanity vs. Madness:** There is much in the life of a vampire that can drive one over the edge of sanity. Resisting madness is most difficult, as it is often impossible to escape the circumstances which created such a terrible state.

•**Survival vs. Justice:** The most cerebral of conflicts, the conflict between the needs of survival and the demands of justice, is often the most difficult to resolve.

•**Kindred vs. Unknown:** The characters do not realize who their enemy is, or who seeks their demise. This makes it all the more terrifying.

Plot

The plot is the fabric and pattern of a story. In fact, sometimes when we talk about the story, we are actually speaking of the plot. Plot describes the progress of the story, through scenes, actions and events. A poorly conceived plot invariably leads to a trite story, but a complete and intricate plot may well provide the skeleton for a story of great depth.

The main thing to keep in mind about plot is that it should progress in a series of distinct phases. There are a number of story conventions in Western culture, and the ones that dictate the plot are the most rigid. The story is often expected to have a beginning, a middle, and an end. The end is expected to be climactic, and stories that start with a bang are more appreciated. The audience expects to be drawn into the story, and resents anything which pulls it back from full immersion. Although we encourage you to experiment, you violate these conventions at your own risk.

Detailed below are the various stages the plot can go through. Use them as a rough guide on how to structure your plots and to provide ideas on what you might need to include.

•**Setting the Scene:** You need to explain to the players where they are and what they might expect. This can take only a few seconds, or you might want to have a whole description of the scene worked out ahead of time which can then be read to them. It is usually best to set the scene actively, by allowing the players to interact with it, rather than simply reciting a descriptive monologue. Make sure you use all the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch.

•**Hook:** You need something realistic and compelling to get the characters and the players involved in the story. You can be brutal and force them into it (e.g. "You hear knocking on the door, and someone shouts 'Open up! Police!'"), but there are many more subtle ways.

You should present the players with the major conflict of the story in a unique and compelling way that teases, tantalizes and promises extraordinary adventure. You want to capture their imaginations from the start, so as to deeply involve them in the story.

In each story, the player should immediately become aware that something is amiss, danger is awaiting, or some threat hangs over the characters' heads. The hook draws the players into the narrative and arouses their curiosity.

This must happen early in the story. You should present the hook as dynamically as you can, so that the players have a chance to affect the plot from the very beginning. If you don't get them involved from the beginning, they will give up on the story.

•**Buildup:** You need to give the characters chances to overcome obstacles by providing them with elements of the central conflict to confront. The buildup needs to create a feeling of suspense and propel the characters onward into some sort of climax. In **Vampire**, the buildup should be constant and inexorable. When it is halted by dead-end investigations or dull periods, you should try to make those

interruptions as short as possible. Keep the players involved and tell the story so that there are multiple ways to reach the conclusion. Don't let them bog down so completely that the mood and urgency of the story is lost. The buildup refers to a buildup in emotions, and it is a very tricky medium to affect. Do not falter.

•**Cliffhanger:** Sometimes you will want to build the tension up, way up, and then relax it again, as a way to really get the players raring to go. Cliffhangers are one of the most common ways to do this. You simply make the characters think that they have reached the climax, and then present them with new elements of the problem to face. These might even be miniature climaxes that give the players some sense of resolution, but do not completely wrap things up. At the end of each chapter of your story (each game session), you might want to leave things in a cliffhanger - it will make sure that the players come back

•**Plot Twist**: Try to insert plot twists whenever possible. Simply change the plot in midstream to add an element of surprise to the story. This could be a "snake in the grass" - a friend that turns out to be an enemy or a victim that turns out to be a monster. Or it could be the old "Switcharoo" - one of the player characters that lost all his Humanity becomes the biggest villain in the chronicle.

•**Climax:** This is the great resolution of the story, where

all the questions are answered (or at least some). If the characters are successful (not that they should always be) then this ending should satisfy the players. In any case, it must be a logical result of events that occurred at the beginning of the story. The climax cannot be forced - the players must be emotionally prepared for the ending. It must evolve naturally from what has occurred before and be affected by what the characters have done. The characters' actions must have an effect upon the story's conclusion. The climax should never be preordained.

•**Resolution:** This is a special ending that often follows the climax and winds down the story. For some reason, it is hard to make such trailers work out right; they either seem trite or get ignored by the players. Though a resolution may be difficult to effect, it is an excellent way to set up the next story and unwind the players from the intensity of what has just occurred. It is also a time when characters who squared off during the story can make up. Resolutions can be a lot of fun to roleplay, as they allow the characters to interact with one another in a relaxed way. Use the resolution as a time to reward your players. Give them new information, wrap up the loose ends of the story, or provide them with extra power, money, or mystical artifacts.

However, do not mix the resolution with the climax - keep the two separate. Furthermore, do not ramble on with the trailer for too long; it should normally be very short. Once the suspense and drama is concluded, the curtain should close shortly thereafter.

Drama

Just as plot is the most important element of the story, drama is the most important element of the plot. Drama, for our purposes, is any series of events that has vivid, emotional, or striking results upon the lives of the characters. Dramatic moments are the sensational, startling, and deeply involving periods of the story, when everyone's attention is riveted onto what is occurring. They are the most intense and exhilarating moments of the plot.

Often drama is achieved because the lives of the characters are at stake, or the object of all their attention is about to be revealed. Staging a dramatic scene can be a difficult task, but it is essential if you want to create an engaging story. Drama can be thought of as synonymous with excitement, but there is more to it than that; drama is the essence of a story.

Just as an author or director has to maintain tension, pace and flow in the stories she presents, so a Storyteller in a **Vampire** game has the same responsibilities toward the "audience"; i.e., the players. Drama is essential if the characters are to have the opportunity to directly affect the plot through their characters' actions.

There are a number of different techniques you can use, but you should realize that the way in which you create drama must suit your storytelling style. Dramatic verisimilitude is not so much a skill as it is a talent - you've got to pick it up on your own.

You shouldn't simply stage a dramatic scene straight up. Always mix it with something else to make it different and new. If you're planning a gun battle, don't simply have two sides blast each other; mix it with a heart-stopping car chase down a mountain, set it in a graveyard with lots of stealth and misinformation, or somehow introduce new situations that force and encourage new strategies and tactics. Make each scene different so that later on, the

players can look back and have something they will remember it by.

The Drama chapter is your guide to creating effective dramatic monuments. Use it to create and sustain drama in your story. Those action scenes are often intrinsic to the players' enjoyment.

Mood

Every story should have a certain emotional quality that is in some way unique to it. The mood of a story describes the emotions you want your players to feel as it is told. The emotional response of the players is of immense importance, as it defines how much they "get into it". A good story causes the players to get into the story so much that they feel what their characters feel. The mood can affect the players in a way that heightens the effect of the story.

Create a distinct atmosphere for each story. Ask yourself what is the dominant emotional tone of your story. Adding mood to a story is the best way to arouse real and vivid emotions.

When players get to this point, not only do their characters become real to them, but the world does as well. The most precious moments in storytelling are at such times. They are transcendent, illuminating and indescribable - when they happen, you'll know.

You need to begin as soon as the game session opens. Always make sure the players have enough time to get comfortable. They should get their socializing out of the way so they are ready to get into the roleplaying. Try to time things so that when you enter into the story, the players are ready to go.

After the lights are dimmed in a movie theater, there is always a slight pause. That brief interlude is somehow always enough to bring anticipation and even a sense of delight. If you can accomplish the same sort of thing before every session of **Vampire**, you will be highly rewarded.

Begin the story with something dramatic and quirky that gets the players into the right state of mind. Perhaps you can start with a long low growl (another Kindred in the bar they are frequenting), describe the sirens they hear in the distance (that gradually get closer and closer and closer), or say nothing at all but simply stare at each player in turn (a Malkavian trying to decide whom to speak with first). If you start with a bang, you ensure that the story will have vitality, and have a better chance of capturing the imagination of the players.

As the story progresses, continue to do things that accentuate and highlight the mood and tone of the story. In your descriptions of people or settings, use your voice, your facial expressions, the encounters you create, the pacing of events, and the rolls you have the players make to carry across the mood. Use every tool at your disposal to build and perpetuate the emotions that you want the players to feel.

Below are examples of some of the different types of moods you can create in your stories.

•**Brooding:** There is an oppressive weight in the air and a sense of great evil hangs over all that the characters do.

• **Romantic:** There is a beauty and airiness to the story and things seem particularly special and bright. This is probably the most difficult mood to evoke.

•**Mysterious:** Fog and shadows shroud the landscape. This is the mood of *Casablanca* and *The Maltese Falcon*. The imagination is aroused by the things that remain nebulous and hidden. Characters should not understand all that goes on.

•**Excitement:** Nonstop action, full of intensity. Include lots of dramatic moments and suspense -anything to keep the players' blood pumping.

•**Dank:** The atmosphere is rancid and unbearably foul. Portray the degenerate aspects of the world and the fetid underbelly of the city. Play up the bizarre and the grotesque.

•**Eerie:** Everything has a strange, unreal quality to it. Nothing seems like it is occurring until the effects are actually felt.

•**Madness:** This is the feeling that things are out of control, and that there is neither rhyme nor reason to anything that occurs. Throw things at the players randomly, and never give them a moment's peace. Evoke an atmosphere of delirium and dementia throughout the setting.

•**Idyllic:** This is the mood of peace, tranquillity and pastoral bliss. Of course, you're using this to set up the players in order to dash their expectations apart.

•**Humorous:** You might want to take a really big break and create an extremely lighthearted mood. Humor does have a place in **Vampire**, as long as it is properly employed -but don't overdo it.

Story Archetypes

And I knew that this was only one of the many agonies, many deaths, in the unending scarlet loop of my modius existence. It had happened before, was happening now, and would happen again...and again...and again.

- Dan Simmons, *Carrion Comfort*

Listed below are a number of concepts for story elements that you can use as starter kits for creating your own stories. They are issues, situations and themes which can become the germ of a story. Read them over to get ideas and perhaps pick one that you like. Then weave a story from the premise you have chosen. Eventually, you'll come up with concepts of your own, but these will give you something to start with.

Mean Streets

These stories concern life on the streets, if it can indeed be called life. They deal with violence, fear, anger and madness. On one level they are the most basic of all stories, while on another they are the most emotive and intense.

•**Urban Nightmare**: Vampires not only feed on the seamy underside of the city, they are an intrinsic part of it. The question of how they interact with the very environment which tears down so many mortals will be a critical one for the players. How do they deal with homeless vagrants who are unlikely to survive more than a few years on the streets, malnourished and ill residents whose blood is so tainted as to be poison to a vampire, and people whose desperation has led them to kill over tennis shoes? Do the players act as angels of mercy even as they feed on the populace, or do they become just another

plague on these people's lives?

At the same time, the vampires must deal with an environment where they are constantly surrounded by sweet, tempting blood, where almost any action can be observed by someone, and where picking the wrong victim can bring swift and lethal retribution from armed police and criminals.

•**Adventure:** In order to keep your players amused, you need to give them a chance to cut loose - to go on an adventure. Sometimes that requires gratuitous violence. If the players need the blare of gunfire to keep them amused, give it to them - not as much as they want, perhaps, but enough to keep their blood pumping. However, don't let the players think they can treat the police as if they were punching bags, and make sure that no matter how outrageous things get, Humanity rolls are always made. After the excitement is over, there needs to be a period of silence and solemn introspection. However, if you need really foul villains and bad guys, only fellow Cainites will really do.

•**Wilderness Trek**: There are many reasons why a Kindred would leave the city; unfortunately, none of them are good. The Gothic-Punk countryside is populated with werewolves, spirits, faeries and farmers carrying 12-gauge shotguns in their pickup trucks. Is that old barn where the characters want to spend the day haunted by ghosts, home to a pack of young lycanthropes, or simply deserted?

As far as vampires are concerned, any area outside the city is considered wilderness, and it is even more dangerous for Kindred than it is for kine. The city offers security, as so many of the mortal institutions in a city are controlled by the undead, and there are places to hide no matter where one goes. There are so many people in the city that it is easy to fade into the crowds and find food. In the wilderness, strangers are easily noticed -especially by the Lupines.

There are many reasons why vampires might want to travel in the wilderness, such as to speak with one of the Inconnu (necessary if Golconda is sought). The characters may have to track down someone who is hiding in the wilderness, or punish a group of Lupines who have made a foray into the city. You can also combine the wilderness trek with the Escape story concept for a very deadly story.

•**Diablerie:** Whatever the unique motivations and goals of the characters, they are likely united by their desire for power. This concept only works if the characters are engaged in the dangerous and destructive struggle to locate, exterminate and drink the blood of their elders - and in so doing effectively advance from one generation to the next. As a group, they are able to take on these extremely powerful beings. However, the possibility for Humanity loss should be extremely high, especially if the elder had any redeeming qualities (i.e. he was a nice guy).

This is a simple hunt and kill concept. Each story should present the characters with a new target, quite likely an evil and oppressive elder. You will want to tie some basic moral issues into the chronicle, thereby making it a little more involved than a series of hack-and-slash adventures. Force the characters to pick and choose their targets, investigate them before they go in for the kill, and do the deed with finesse and cunning. At some point, you will want to have the characters face their own vigilantism and ask themselves if they are any better than the ones whom they hunt. For the purposes of this chronicle, you may want to change the rules to allow *all* those who partake of

the blood of an elder to lower their generation level, not just one.

Illuminatus

One of the best types of stories to tell in **Vampire** is the tale of intrigue. It fits the Vampire psyche very well, and is very easy to do - simply involve the characters in the Machiavellian politics of vampire society. They may be blamed for something, witness something, or get involved of their own accord. Intrigue is far better if the characters get involved on their own initiative. You need to offer them obtainable goals and ideas on how to get there, then cut them loose.

•**Jyhad:** The Antediluvians see no reason to end their everlasting existences, especially not at the claws of those fourth generation whelps. For millennia they have battled one another through pawns of lesser generation which they have manipulated, dominated and subjugated. The players may become involved in anything from helping such an Ancient eliminate the pawns of another Ancient to preventing an all-out assault on her haven. However, no matter how many others they must battle, their true enemy will always be the one behind the scenes who is using them as pawns.

The Jyhad also exists on other levels as well, for all Kindred are in competition with one another. The characters must watch their steps carefully, lest those with power choose to use it on them. For instance, a character's sire enlists the characters in her scheme to become prince by promising them great power. However, if the current prince ever discovers their role in destroying his reputation, he will stop at nothing to extinguish them.

•**Vendetta**: This story starts out with something really nasty happening to the players (something embarrassing usually works the best). Make sure that you attach an antagonist to the "evil deed," giving said antagonist a spiteful and hateful personality, and then let the players loose. They'll tear each other apart just trying to get at the evil bully. This is probably the easiest kind of story to run, because the players do all the work for you. The hardest part is setting things up so that the players really hate the bully, down to their very cores. It's almost impossible to go too far in making the bad guy bad - lay it on thick.

Make sure the players spend a lot of time planning how and when they are going to get their revenge. Encourage them to imagine it often and in great detail. The longer you can delay their vengeance, the hotter they will get. In the end, you can have it all be a big misunderstanding - the bad guy is really a nice guy - but this can be a dangerous practice. The players get very frustrated when you try to pull things like that.

•**The Masquerade**: Neonates' temptations to make the world their oyster through their newfound powers must be tempered by a realization of what the world, even a world of ants, can do to them. Often the players will have to deal with hunters without killing, injuring or even threatening them, lest their disappearance alert the nest of danger. They must prevent mortals from discovering the truth about the existence of vampires. Violence is not often an option - for

instance, killing the newspaper reporter hot on their trail will only draw the attention of even more journalists, so the players must figure out a way to misdirect him.

Alternately, some other vampires may become too obvious for the players to allow their activities to continue

unhindered. How do they deal with a rock star who can back up his claims to immortality?

•**Escape:** No matter how powerful the players are, there is always something more powerful. Imagine the players having to escape from New York with the mob, their sires, the Sabbat and the police all after them for one reason or another. This can be a thrilling story, and a great way to flip everything in your chronicle upside down. There is something very primal about having to live by the seat of one's pants in hostile territory, simply surviving from day to day (or night to night, in the vampire's case). However, players do not like to lose - don't let them know about it, but you've got to give them a better than even chance of survival. In some cases, you might want them to have something to run *to* as well as something to run *from*.

•**Mission**: The players must undergo some sort of quest or mission, which has been "assigned" to them by a greater power. They may be rewarded for doing so, or may be forced into action through Domination, threats, or blackmail. The characters may even undertake the mission as a favor to a friend. While on the mission, they not only have to deal with the enemies of the person they are serving, but must also explore their relationships with the one who now controls their existences.

The Mission concept gives you a great deal of latitude to create any sort of story you desire, since it does not need to mesh with the rest of the chronicle as closely as other sorts of stories do. However, the mission is also less fulfilling for the players and can be very aggravating. Use missions rarely, and space the stories in which you use this concept widely.

Bourbon Street

Many of the best **Vampire** stories incorporate very human values and issues which the characters must face. They are trapped in very alien situations, yet still deal with very familiar problems. Bourbon Street is a style of story full of pathos; it is the most advanced of all the styles, and the most difficulty to employ.

•**Tragedy:** While **Vampire** as a whole is marked by constant tragedy, it is possible to weave individual stories around that idea. The basic idea of tragedy is that no matter what the protagonist does, there is no way to avoid the tragic ending - the hero is doomed. Whether it is Oedipus destined to slay his father and marry his mother, or King Lear killed by his own pride, the main character is what she is and cannot change her fate. In **Vampire**, the players have more free will than these figures of literature; however, the very fact of

vampiric existence leaves them open to the destructive rampages of frenzy. Though they may sometimes be able to control that frenzy, this will not always be the case.

The secret of using tragedy in a story is finding a way to make the characters' intrinsic nature work against them. If a character or characters frenzy at an inopportune moment, such as when visiting the prince or while surrounded by police, the characters will have to spend the rest of the story atoning for these mistakes.

Place the characters in situations where they must feed off loved ones in order to survive or have their enemies strike at them through those same allies. Remember, however, that even though the world of **Vampire** is rife with such horror, you must always give the players at least a modicum of free will in their characters' fates.

•**The Becoming:** Start the players out as humans and take them through the whole process of being created. It is a very traumatic, intense and emotional experience. You have to decide why the characters were chosen and why they were selected as a group. Are they the brood of a single sire, or perhaps the progeny of the elders of a single city who created many neonates at a single time?

The goal of the characters could be to find a way to become human again. They have left behind people whom they love and who need them. The focus of the chronicle is their increasingly desperate desire to escape the curse. What lengths will they go to in order to attain their goal, and will they, tragically, destroy their Humanity in the process?

Characters start with no Disciplines, but they will gain their three points over the course of the chronicle - as they are trained by their sire. You need to describe the haven of the sire in detail, as well as his immediate enemies and friends. The sire must be an exquisitely complete character. Make both the haven and the chronicle as a whole have a claustrophobic feel, so that when they finally move on they will truly feel a sense of wonder and anticipation.

•**Romance**: Vampires of both myth and cinema are often deeply sensual beings, both sexually and romantically. As creatures of untamed passions, they forge much more intense bonds than most mortals will ever know. The conflict between a vampire's hunger and love, and the attempt to keep the Beast from destroying that which is most treasured, can be the concepts for innumerable adventures. For instance, how does the player cushion the shock for his mortal lover after he becomes a vampire?

Besides their attachments to mortals, vampires have to deal with the deep emotions they sometimes feel for one another. The relationship between a sire and his progeny is not only that of a parent and a child, but can also be that of an experienced lover with a virgin. This makes it even harder, and perhaps even more important, for a childe to become independent.

There are also the deep attachments Kindred form through Blood Bonds. While it is easy to play this out through the guidelines provided, it is more interesting to force the players to test the boundaries of their love and devotion to the other vampire. They will sacrifice their friends, their plans and even their lives to make their master happy. Of course, this becomes even more interesting when the other vampire is Blood Bound as well (to the player or a third vampire).

• **Redemption**: Some vampires want nothing to do with the hunts and riddles which make up other Kindred's lives. For them, the goal is to regain their humanity. Simply present the characters with an opportunity to set something right, to do something good. This could be anything from assisting an old man in combating the Brujah who is living in his home to helping a Malkavian see past her delusions and accept the fact that she is a vampire. Often stories about redemption can involve the gaining of Humanity, and indeed this is the only way to regain one's mortality.

•**The Quest:** The characters seek Golconda as a means of not merely escaping, but transcending their curse. This is a somewhat existential approach to roleplaying, for the characters look for that which is not real, yet is true, and for that which is illusion, yet so essential. The quest leads the characters into their own souls, so it is absolutely essential that they be fully created and realized. Often it is best to transform a story into a quest after it has been going a while.

•**A Normal Life:** The characters are attempting to continue their mortal lives even after the Embrace. They must somehow balance their two lives, keeping each a secret from the other. The characters must learn to rely upon one another to succeed. If they are well-known for any reason, it can make things all the more difficult. Play out the prelude at length, to make the characters as real and detailed as possible, but start the chronicle soon after they are Embraced. The whole point is to roleplay through the transition period.

You will need to detail the everyday worlds of each character in order to give them something to interact with. Provide something of compelling interest in the city as well to draw them into the world of vampires. Juxtapose the two opposing worlds as often and as vividly as you can, and force the characters to balance the two of them.

BOOK THREE: PERMUTATIONS

The scent of decay is a perfume to me. The malignant air clasps me live an old lover. When a tire screeches on the asphalt, or a flash of neon illuminates the dream of the city, I know I have come home.

Even as the Hunger prowls on the edge of my consciousness, even as I stagger through the haze of my delirium, I know this is my place. Here the dinner table is always set. Here the music of life accompanies every meal.

Lovers walk by, hand in hand. I feel the Hunger build within me. Their lives are mine, should I wish it. The Beast stirs. But I shall not feed on them. The Beast must be controlled, though it cannot be destroyed. I must fight it one day at a time.

I have fed upon many. Their faces float before me, some to haunt me and some to thank me. Full lips beg for pleasure and receive ecstasy. Glazed eyes plead for life, but find only release. Before my hunger, their fates were sealed. My need was their end. My desire the final nail in their coffins.

Those who died, were they not criminals? Had not those faces looked upon death before I met them? They knew me when our paths crossed. Death destroys death; just as life begets life. I am the Beast.

The sound of violence assaults me in a music of power. It sings of my need and awakens my hunger. I track the music to its source - a peacock costumed in garments of color.

Beating a painted woman onto the ground, he pulls money from her bag. Parasite. Slowly I approach him. Cancer. His shallow eyes meet mine. Disease. I swallow his essence into mine. Dust. A Beast I am lest a Beast I become.

He who fights with monsters might take care,

lest he thereby become a monster.

And if you gaze for long into an abyss,

the abyss gazes also into you.

- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

Chapter Seven: Traits

The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom.
- P. B. Shelly, "Prometheus Unbound"

In **Vampire**, Traits are the basis of a character - they describe, conjure and pin down who and what a character really is. They enable you to detail your character's strengths and weaknesses, allow you to translate the character into game reality by using dice, and most importantly, they help you focus and understand your character.

The Traits describe only the general parameters of the character. The essence of the character is created through the roleplaying and the imagination of the player. Traits in **Vampire** are left intentionally sketchy - at least the number-crunching part - so you will not concentrate on the character sheet too much. What has been only crudely established during character creation becomes fleshed out in play. Don't look at your Traits thinking you have a complete character. Your roleplaying will create your character, not these Traits.

Specialties

For each Attribute and Ability rated at four or higher, a player can select a specialty. Although a general description of the Trait is listed below, sometimes there are also particular facets of a Trait that a character is capable of performing with additional proficiency-your character may be able to drive very well, but he may be especially good at off-road maneuvers. Most players select specialties simply to flesh out a character, but they can have some very real effects on the story as well. Although a player may declare a specialty as a guide to roleplaying even if the character does not have a rating of four or higher, it will have absolutely no effect on rule mechanics.

A specialty allows the player to reroll 10s on actions where the specialty directly applies to the action being attempted. She gets to keep the success the 10 originally indicated, but may subsequently try again for another success, rolling another die for every 10 obtained.

Clans

We are Siamese, if you please.

We are Siamese if you don't please.

- the cats, *Lady and the Tramp*

The following seven clans are the body and soul of the Camarilla. They are by no means the only vampire clans in existence; however, these seven are the only clans that actively support the Camarilla and are thus part of the normal life and society of the Kindred. A player may choose her character's lineage from one of these seven, or she may choose to be Caitiff - a vampire with no clan.

Brujah

The Brujah clan is almost completely composed of rebels of one kind or another, forever searching for the ultimate expression of their individuality. The Brujah are punks, skinheads, bikers, death-rockers, freaks, socialists and anarchists. They tend to be stubborn, highly aggressive, ruthless, sensitive to slights, and extremely vengeful. They are the most uncontrollable of all the Kindred.

These malcontents tend to be fanatical in their disparate beliefs - the only thing that unites them is their desire to overthrow the social system, be it vampiric or mortal, and replace it with one of their own making (or with nothing at all). Many are bullheaded crusaders of the worst sort, devoted to their cause until they become blind to any other shades of the truth.

Though the Brujah are incredibly fractious, they aid each other in times of need, regardless of past disputes and antagonisms. If the Brujah call is made, others will respond, but the gathered host will be enraged if they think the call was unwarranted.

The clan is poorly organized and only occasionally holds informal meetings. Indeed, Brujah rely on their chaotic behavior to gain the results they desire. Other Kindred allow them their eccentricities; indeed, certain activities that would get other Kindred extinguished earn them only the remark, "Oh, a Brujah." Insolent outbursts and fevered ravings are to be expected from the Brujah. The other Kindred have simply learned to provide the Brujah an amount of leeway which would be given to no other vampire.

Nickname: Rabble

Appearance: Brujah tend to dress in whatever style is the most outrageous of the period, though some dress in a way that conflicts with the rest of the clan so as to be the "most" rebellious. Leather coats, spiked hair, chains and black boots are common today, as are the various garbs of antiquity, especially those of the Renaissance. They may also dress and assume the attitudes of street hoods, neo-Nazis, or even Deadheads.

Haven: Brujah live wherever they choose, frequently kicking whatever unlucky individuals lived there before them. By habit they move about quite a bit, never staying in one place for longer than a month. They typically possess many different "safe houses" where they can hide in times of turmoil. A new tactic of some Brujah is to move in with suburban families, Dominating them into submission. The Brujah "hang out" with the family for a few weeks, and then move on when they get bored. Certain Brujah "recruit" the rebellious teenagers in the households just before they move on.

Background: Brujah naturally prefer rebels when they choose their progeny. Only rarely is a neonate guided through the process. Typically, new Brujah are left to their own devices, summoned and aided only at the whim of the sire. Often the sire remains anonymous, so as to avoid the wrath of a strict prince.

Often a sire will create more than one childe at a time, forming a brood. Brujah don't always seek the permission of the prince when they create progeny, so the chances of the childer's survival are greater if there is a group of them. It is a strategy of numbers - the more progeny created, the more likely some will survive.

Character Creation: Brujah often have criminal or punk concepts, but many of them are intellectuals as well. They normally have very aggressive Demeanors and very extreme Natures. Physical Attributes are primary, as are Skills. Brujah commonly have Contacts, Allies and Herd as their Background Traits.

Clan Disciplines: Celerity, Potence, Presence

Weaknesses: The members of this clan fall into frenzies far more readily than other vampires. However, the Brujah flatly deny this; indeed, they become exceedingly hostile (even to the point of frenzy) if the subject is raised. The difficulty for frenzy rolls is always two higher than the number listed.

Organization: This clan is poorly organized and rarely meets formally. However, its membership supports the anarchs more than any other clan. Indeed, it lies at the movement's core.

Quote: *"All creatures of sentience deserve to be free - it is our born right. When we overthrow this decadent system that attempts to rule us, we can overthrow the system that rules the mortals as well. We shall be the saviors of the Earth."*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - They are rejected unjustly because of how they look. We are the only ones who respect them despite their bestiality.

•Tremere - Our archrivals. None are worse than these manipulators.

•Ventrue - These contemptible, conniving politicians are hypocrites of the highest degree.

•Gangrel - They know how to fight, that's for sure.

•Toreador - Effete bastards. They would make decent allies save for their addiction to the human vices.

•Malkavian - Some make fine compatriots, though they're all weirdos.

Gangrel

The Gangrel are wanderers, rarely staying in one place for any length of time. In this, they differ greatly from most Kindred, who tend to find a haven and cling to it. There are no established leaders of the clan; on the whole, Gangrel are unconcerned with such things. Withdrawn, quiet and solemn, they certainly keep their cards close to their chests.

This is a clan of survivors - vampires capable of making it on their own. They do not despise civilization or the society of other Kindred - they simply do not require it. They are known for their lack of concern when crossing the lands of the Lupines (werewolves), for it is said they have friends among the shapechangers.

The Gangrel are themselves very capable shapeshifters, which may explain their ability to cross the wild areas unmolested. There are no reports of them being able to transform into anything other than wolves and bats, but there are old tales of Gangrel elders who could achieve a mist form. Perhaps because of this Protean Discipline, their features often resemble those of animals; indeed, some of the oldest Gangrel barely resemble human beings anymore.

The Gangrel are closely affiliated with the Gypsies; in fact, if the stories are to be believed, the Gypsies are the mortal descendants of the Antediluvian who founded the Gangrel line. They are under his protection, and any Kindred who harms or Embraces one of them will answer to him. Regardless of whether this is true or not, Kindred are loath to harm Gypsies. Members of the Gangrel clan are expected, through long-standing tradition, to aid the Gypsies whenever necessary. It has been known for Gangrel to be aided by the Gypsies as well. Certain Gangrel have adopted much from the Gypsy culture, including mannerisms, linguistic elements, and even dress.

Nickname: Outlanders

Appearance: The members of this clan often have animalistic features, especially if they have the Protean Discipline. They are usually quite rustic in dress and mannerisms.

Haven: Gangrel are nomadic by nature and almost never create permanent dwellings. Though they may live within a single city, they will usually not create havens for themselves, but will instead sleep in a different place each day. They are often found in parks, zoos or semi-wooded areas in the city. Most of them are able to meld with the earth and do so each dawn to escape the sun.

Background: Gangrel always pick their progeny very carefully, seeking those who are survivors. However, once they Embrace these mortals, they abandon them, leaving the childer to make their own way in the world. Though sires may watch from a distance, they almost never interfere. When the time is right, they present themselves to their fledglings and teach them the ways of the clan.

Character Creation: Gangrel often have drifter or Working Joe concepts. Their Natures and Demeanors tend to be quite similar. Physical Attributes are primary, as are

Talent Abilities. Normal Background Traits are Allies (the Gypsies) and Mentor (their sires).

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Fortitude, Protean

Weaknesses: Gangrel become increasingly animal-like each time they frenzy - the player of a Gangrel character must pick a new animal feature each and every time the character does so. As Gangrel age, they increasingly resemble that which they truly are - the Beast. These features tend to negatively affect the character's social skills. For every five animal features gained, the player must lower one of the character's Social Attributes by one.

Organization: The Gangrel do not really consider themselves a clan. They almost never have clan meetings and rarely attend Camarilla councils. However, they do tend to enjoy each other's company more than that of other Kindred and can often be found together.

Quote: *"The city is not our home. It is simply the only place where we are allowed to exist for long. Our people have become ill and deranged because we have lived in this purgatory so long and have grown dependent on the tainted blood of the mortals."*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - Kindred of strong spirit; we have much in common with them.

•Tremere - Though they do not realize it, we are enemies. They follow the wrong path and seek to destroy us all.

•Ventrue - Every sect must have leaders; every leader must serve the sect. Our leaders are neither worse nor better than most.

•Toreador - We hold them in contempt because they have earned nothing better. They must learn to serve instead of take.

•Brujah - Their virtue is pure, but their vision is cloudy.

•Malkavian - They are reservoirs of immense power, but even they do not know how to tap it.

Malkavians

The Malkavians are insane, one and all. From madness, however, comes wisdom, and from wisdom comes power. The Malkavians are true creatures of chaos. However, the Malkavians are also known to be clowns and pranksters. As with all things connected with them, not everything makes sense.

This clan is infamous for its destructive and nihilistic members. Malkavians have a reputation for sadistic behavior and for holding little grasp of the humanity they still retain. In truth, such Malkavians are a minority. The members of this clan regularly surprise the Kindred; often they do not seem insane. Some Kindred believe the Malkavians have an undeserved reputation, and have been sullied by a few truly psychotic members. However, remember that sometimes the most normal-seeming people have the least grasp on reality.

The Malkavians have a time-honored tradition of playing practical jokes upon Kindred and kine alike. The nature of these "pranks" can vary wildly, ranging from the harmlessly fun to the potentially lethal. The Malkavians, when they interact with one another at all, tend to award prestige within the clan on the basis of these pranks. Many

Malkavians solemnly believe that the Jyhad is a joke created by the founder of their line.

The Malkavians are very picky about whom they Embrace. Typically, only those on the verge of insanity are chosen. The members of this clan search long and hard for those who have seen so much truth that they have descended into the pits of chaos, and thus have unique perspectives on reality. Indeed, if the progeny-to-be is sane, the

sire will make the Embrace and Becoming as difficult as possible, seeking to drive the mortal mad in the process.

Nickname: Kooks

Appearance: The members of this clan have different looks and live vastly differing lifestyles.

Haven: Malkavians live anywhere they feel comfortable. Many of them seek out hospitals and asylums to reside in. Some are even assumed to be inmates by the staff.

Background: The members of this clan only select those who are close to death as neonates, or those who are so insane that existence as a vampire is of little consequence. They believe all mortals should have a chance to live out their natural lives.

Character Creation: Malkavians can have any sort of concept - the weirder the better. They may have a variety of different Demeanors, which are rarely indicative of their true Natures. Mental Attributes are primary, as are Talent Abilities. Malkavians can have nearly any Background Trait.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Obfuscate

Weaknesses: All members of this clan have some sort of Derangement. In fact, characters begin the game with one. The player may choose any Derangement (see Chapter Eight), but the character will never be able to completely overcome it, no matter how much Willpower is spent. The touch of madness is always upon the members of this line.

Organization: Many Malkavians probably do not understand that they are a clan, and the rest are busy denying that they are Malkavians.

Quote: *"Madness you say! Do you fear me? Are you afraid of what I might do, of what I might say? What a fascinating reaction. Don't you find it somewhat encumbering?"*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - They are the most amusing of all the clans and perhaps the most honest, for they so obviously are what the others try so hard to avoid.

•Tremere - They perceive what we perceive, but hide from it. They still strive to avoid that which is inevitable. Nature is full of cycles.

•Ventrue - They are the most fun to play games with, for they take it all so very seriously.

•Gangrel - They are different from the rest, as are we, but they are even more lonely.

•Toreador - Such gleeful hedonists it is not a life they live, but an everlasting death. But if they should ever comprehend that, their party would end.

•Brujah - They have a vision, but in their fanaticism they are as blind as the rest.

Nosferatu

The Nosferatu are the least human-appearing of all the clans. They look something like feral animals. Their smell and appearance are revolting - one could even say monstrous. Long, bulbous ears, coarse-skinned skulls covered with tufts of hair, and elongated faces splotched with disgusting warts and lumps are among their less nauseating features.

After Nosferatu have been Embraced, they undergo an exceptionally painful period of transformation. Over a period of weeks, they slowly shift from their mortal countenances to their Nosferatu visages. In the beginning, the childer may revel in their newfound powers, but soon the pain and the changes will begin. The psychological trauma of becoming such a loathsome monstrosity is often more painful than the physical symptoms.

Nosferatu usually Embrace those mortals who are twisted in one way or another: emotionally, physically, spiritually or intellectually. They consider the Embrace too horrific to bestow on any worthwhile human beings. With the change into vampires, the Nosferatu hope to somehow redeem the mortals, to give them a second chance. It is surprising how often it works. Underneath the grim exterior, the Nosferatu are practical and surprisingly sane.

It is said they revel in being dirty and disgusting and do little to make themselves look better (not that there is very much they could do). Indeed, they are cheerful amid their squalor, especially when others are forced to enter their realm. They are known for being grumpy and lewd, and cannot be trusted to conform to the standards of civilized society.

Though their Obfuscate Discipline enables the Nosferatu to travel through mortal society, they are unable to interact with it. Therefore they must live apart. The habits that develop from such an existence extend even to their interactions with other vampires. They avoid all contact, preferring their own solitary existence to the chaos of interacting with others.

Though Nosferatu may not fraternize with other vampires, they do remain surprisingly cognizant about the affairs of the city. They favor such tactics as listening to the conversations of other vampires from hiding, and Nosferatu have even been known to sneak into the prince's haven to discover the deepest secrets of this elder. Anyone wishing to know any information about the city or its immortal inhabitants need only speak with a Nosferatu.

The Nosferatu do stay in contact with one another, and have developed a unique subculture among the Kindred. They play host to one another with the most elaborate politeness and gentility. They share the information they garner among themselves, and as a result are probably the best-informed of the Kindred.

Nickname: Sewer Rats

Appearance: The changes that the curse has wrought upon the members of this clan are the most dominant of any bloodline. They sport huge fangs, their skin is coarse and wrinkled, and they typically have no hair (except in all the wrong places).

Haven: The Nosferatu most often live underground, either in dank cellars or within the city sewer system. When they do live above ground, they frequent abandoned houses or graveyards.

Background: They tend to choose their fledglings from the castoffs and failures of society: the homeless, the mentally ill and the hopelessly antisocial.

Character Creation: Most Nosferatu have lower-class concepts, and tend to have a strong contrast between their Natures and Demeanors. Physical Attributes are primary, as are Talents.

Clan Disciplines: Animalism, Obfuscate, Potence

Weaknesses: Nosferatu are so ugly that they have an Appearance of zero. Simply cross the entire Attribute off the character sheet. Nosferatu fail any action that involves their Appearance (they really are hideous).

Organization: They tend to look out for themselves and mingle little with others. They are united in spirit, with an established network, but almost never have formal clan meetings of any sort.

Quote: *"I don't look for trouble, but if it comes, I hide from it. Damn right, pretty boy. You may call me chicken, but I've known a lot of Kindred over the years who got smart just a few seconds too late. It's not like we can't die, it's just that it don't come natural any more."*

Stereotypes:

•Tremere - Shady characters; they're up to something.

•Ventrue - Too damn proper; something's stuck up their....

•Gangrel - Good blokes; they know who they are.

•Toreador - Empty-headed whelps who should be spanked.

•Brujah - Nice enough fellas, once you get past the crap.

•Malkavian - Creepy, ain't they? Don't even trust 'em.

Toreador

The members of this clan are known for their hedonism, though that is a misinterpretation of what they truly are. They are proud and regal Kindred, highly excitable, and they cultivate expensive tastes - but hedonism is going a bit too far. Artists are always so misunderstood.

The Toreador are the most sophisticated of the clans. They are concerned with beauty in a way no mortal can fathom. They use the rarefied senses and tastes given to them by the Embrace to become as consumed and impassioned as possible. Ideally, to a Toreador, nothing matters as much as beauty, though in many cases the search for beauty is overwhelmed by the search for pleasure, and the Toreador becomes little more than a sensualist.

Like all true artists, they search for a truth beyond an existence they fear to be meaningless. It is that struggle for truth, and ultimately salvation, that has inspired them with what they consider to be their mission - protectors of the genius of the human race. They are truly in love with the vigor and passion of the mortals, and never tire of marveling at their creations.

The clan as a whole considers its members conservationists; their protectorate consists of the world's greatest artists. They specifically seek out those whom they consider to be the most talented and grant them the boon of immortality, thus preserving their genius against the ravages of aging and death. They constantly search for new talent and spend a great deal of time deciding whom to

preserve and whom to leave to their fate. Among the Toreador are some of the greatest musicians and artists who ever lived.

The greatest weakness of the Toreador is their sensitivity to beauty. They so reflexively surround themselves with elegance and luxury that they often lose themselves in the endless pursuit of vice after vice. Some among this clan become concerned with nothing but their own continued pleasure - the reputation of the entire clan is affected by their excesses.

Nickname: Degenerates

Appearance: The members of this clan are usually good-looking. They always dress in the very latest fashions from the most expensive stores. Of all the Kindred, only the Toreador manage (or bother) to keep up with the ever-changing panoply of human fashion.

Haven: They often live in luxury condos or apartments near the center of the city, as close to the action as possible.

Background: They pride themselves on only selecting the most exemplary members of human society for initiation into their clan. Most members were artists or musicians, and many continue their artistic pursuits in undeath.

Character Creation: Toreador often have entertainer or dilettante concepts. They have flamboyant Demeanors, but may have very unique Natures. Social Attributes are primary, as are Skills. Normal Background Traits include Fame, Resources and Retainers.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Celerity, Presence

Weaknesses: The members of this clan are as much prisoners of their artistic vision and sensitivity as they are its beneficiaries. They are often overcome by the beauty they see around them, and become immobilized with fascination. Such things as paintings, neon signs, or even sunrises can captivate them. It requires a successful Willpower roll to break the fascination quickly; otherwise, the Toreador will stand, awed and helpless, for minutes or even hours. This trait explains why Toreador so often fall in love with mortals.

Organization: The members of this clan meet frequently, though these gatherings are more social occasions than councils. In times of great urgency, they become united and ferociously active, but typically they are too apathetic to be much of a force.

Quote: *"I remember my first love, a beautiful woman with a silver laugh. For nine years we were constant companions, but in the end I had to let her go. She begged me to take her but I could not. You may call me cruel, but in the end I realized she was not a true artist, but an imitator. She was unworthy. I don't think I have ever recovered."*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - These loathsome beasts ought to have been expelled from the Camarilla long ago. They hate all beauty and despise us for ours.

•Tremere - Honesty is not a word we associate with this clan, but we respect them for their dedication.

•Ventrue - The patricians of our kind, the Ventrue are the only ones with the refinement to appreciate art, though not as we do.

•Gangrel - We don't claim to understand them. Are they Kindred at all?

•Brujah - They have little respect for the accomplishments of civilization, but they do understand the virtue of change.

•Malkavian - Though chaos can be beautiful, it would be a difficult life.

Tremere

The members of this clan are dedicated and extremely well-organized. Others, however, think of them as arcane and untrustworthy. They are aggressive, highly intellectual and manipulative, and respect only those who struggle and persevere despite all odds. The Tremere believe they must *use* the other clans in order to prosper. "Be friendly with them, let them think that we are one with them, but never forget that we serve our clan first and foremost," the Tremere elders whisper to their progeny. "If you must use your friends in service to the clan, then you know that your time was not wasted."

The Tremere are an odd lot indeed. They claim to have once been wizards who voluntarily gave up their "art" for the powers and eternal life of the vampire. They have never named a founder, and some claim they have none, having instead harnessed mystical powers to achieve their state. Most elder Kindred discount this claim, however.

Their link to the substance of blood apparently runs deep, and they are rumored to be able to use blood in special ways to gain extraordinary powers. Many also believe that the knowledge of those practices has been passed down from generation to generation, and that it is now viewed by the younger Tremere as natural and commonplace - certainly not magic.

The leaders of this clan are based in Vienna, though they have chantries ("guild houses" for the practice of magic) on every continent of the world. A council of seven elders is said to control the entire clan from the Vienna chantry. From that locus, they maintain a tightly ordered, highly hierarchical group, one that allows no outsider to view their inner workings.

Tremere typically have immense love for and loyalty to their clan, and the younger members of Clan Tremere are expected to obey their elders without question. This is not as true in practice as it once was, however. Though there are some rebels and anarchs from the Tremere line, it is thought that they are posing as such on the orders of the clan, as part of its long-term plots.

Nickname: Warlocks

Appearance: Tremere traditionally wear black coats or even cloaks with high, upturned collars and arcane symbols sewn on the lining. Though this is no longer universal, they still prefer black, impressive-looking clothing (such as the pinstripe power suit). Many Tremere also carry props such as canes; some of

these "ornaments" are rumored to be potent mystical talismans.

Haven: The Tremere clan operates a chantry in almost every city where it has members. All those of the Tremere clan are welcome in any chantry. Those who live on their own have a wide variety of accommodations.

Background: They choose the most aggressive and

ambitious people as their neonates, preferring males. They carefully train and nurture them for years, calling them "apprentices."

Character Creation: Tremere usually have professional and highly educated concepts and their Natures and Demeanors tend to be archetypes connected with power or science. Mental Attributes are primary, as are Knowledge Abilities. They often have the Mentor Background Trait.

Clan Disciplines: Auspex, Dominate, Thaumaturgy

Weaknesses: Tremere neonates must all drink from the blood of the seven elders of the clan when they are created. This means that all Tremere are at least one step toward being Blood Bound to the clan, and therefore must watch their step very carefully when around their leaders.

Organization: The Tremere are tightly organized and very hierarchical. The younger members are expected to obey the older ones without question, but this is not as strong a tenet as it once was.

Quote: *"We must survive Gehenna and establish the tenets of the new world order once the horror is overcome. If we are to succeed, we must control the other clans. No more time can be wasted. If they cannot be convinced to aid us, they must be forced."*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - These creatures may make useful servants, but they are too noxious to tolerate for long.

•Ventrue - Too fractious to be truly effective; nonetheless, they are our chief rivals for control of the Camarilla.

•Gangrel - Noble Kindred, in their own way.

•Toreador - Idle hedonists. They do not understand that Gehenna will end their way of life forever.

•Brujah - Ignorant revolutionaries who don't even comprehend what it is that they oppose. They respect only power.

•Malkavian - So often they seem normal, but all their lineage carry their strange curse. They are occasionally useful.

Ventrue

Old-fashioned and tradition-bound, the Ventrue are sophisticated and genteel. They believe in good taste above all else and work hard to make their lives comfortable. They are most frequently the leaders in the Camarilla, and are cautious, honorable, social and elegant Kindred.

The Ventrue fancy themselves a clan of the modern world, and deny that they live in the past. This may be true of the most powerful members of the clan, but many are unable to give up the habits and dress of the time when they were Embraced. The attitudes and beliefs of one's mortal days are never forgotten by a Ventrue.

They are most often found among the upper crust of the mortal world. Their sophistication serves them in good stead among the elite of mortal society, and it allows them to control many of the more powerful members of the city. Because of the relative ease in which they fit in among such company, the Ventrue often have a monopoly on political control of the city. If something goes wrong, it is often to the Ventrue that the other Kindred turn to for aid.

There is a strong Ventrue tradition that any member of the line may find safe refuge with any other member of the line, and cannot be refused. Thus many Ventrue aid their fellow clan members before the need

arises for this tradition to be invoked. Harboring a fugitive in one's haven can be detrimental to one's welfare.

They are very proud of their leadership of vampire society, and will always insist that they were the founders of the Camarilla. They will do nearly anything to retain their grip on the politics of the cities and the Camarilla, and are exceedingly protective of their reputations.

Nickname: Blue Bloods

Appearance: The Ventrue do not change their ways easily, so they often dress in very old-fashioned styles - lace and ruffles, top hats and evening coats. Younger members still dress very well - preppy would best describe it.

Haven: They tend to make their homes in mansions, often their mortal dwellings.

Background: Typically they select older and more experienced people as neonates, usually members of the upper class. Sometimes they will only Embrace their own mortal descendants.

Character Creation: Ventrue tend to have upper class concepts. Mental Attributes are primary, as are Knowledge Abilities. Resources and Influence are common Background Traits.

Clan Disciplines: Dominate, Fortitude, Presence

Weaknesses: Ventrue have exacting and rarefied tastes, even when it comes to blood. The player must pick a restriction on the type of blood her character can feed upon, e.g. only young men, no animals, only virgins, etc. The character will feed on no other type of blood, not even if she is starving or under duress.

Organization: Though the Ventrue clan meets often, their councils are sarcastically called "debating societies" because of the amount of talk and lack of action. The Ventrue consider this the only civilized way to get anything done.

Quote: *"The best way to get even with one's enemies is to outlive them. Because we are reasonable and above such petty concerns as vengeance, we are the leaders among our kind. Our colleagues do little to support the Camarilla, so we must bear the burden alone."*

Stereotypes:

•Nosferatu - Frightful creatures, but they can't help being what they are.

•Tremere - Good chaps, support the Camarilla 100%, but they have uncertain motivations.

•Gangrel - They are somewhat uncouth, but can be trusted.

•Toreador - Tasteful and creative, if a bit unrestrained.

•Brujah - Bullies and rebels all. They are uncontrollable and untamable.

•Malkavian - They are not half as crazy as they pretend to be.

Generations Chart

	Trait Max Rating	Blood Pool Size	Blood Points/Turn
Third	10	?	?
Fourth	9	50	10
Fifth	8	40	8
Sixth	7	30	6
Seventh	6	20	5
Eighth	5	15	3
Ninth	5	14	2
Tenth	5	13	1
Eleventh	5	12	1
Twelfth	5	11	1
Thirteenth+	5	10	1

Trait Max Rating: This indicates the highest Trait rating a vampire can have. This is especially important when it comes to Disciplines. Note that it is impossible for player characters to have more than a five rating in any Trait, at least at the beginning of the chronicle.

Blood Pool Size: Ancient vampires are capable of storing more blood (or its energy) in their system than younger ones.

Blood Points/Turn: This describes how many Blood Points a vampire can use in a single turn for either extra dice or levels of healing.

Personality Archetypes

As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light of meaning in the darkness of mere being.

- C.G. Jung

We humans roleplay on an intrinsic basis. Every moment of our lives is spent playing a role. Our being is made up of many layers of personalities, some of which we pretend to be, others of which we present naturally.

Personality Archetypes are a way of defining these personalities. They describe the eternal roles that are a collective characteristic of our identities and that we all share in common. The psychologist Carl Jung invented the concept of Archetypes as a way to describe the primordial concepts residing in the universal unconscious of

humanity. He never tried to give names to them, as he believed one really couldn't describe such universal symbols with words. However, in order to incorporate the concept into **Vampire**, we have done exactly this, so remember to take what we say with a grain of salt.

Archetypes encompass not only personalities, but places and things as well. They are a way for the Storyteller to get the players to understand the characters and setting, and to relate them to their own lives. Archetypes help us make sense out of things, and help the Storyteller bring the story home.

Characters do not, in fact, fit into such neat and tidy categories. Archetypes are the molds for an infinite number of different personalities, and should not be seen as absolute standards. They are fundamental patterns, yet each individual varies from the pattern in many ways. These personality Archetypes are examples of the variety of personalities that can found; they are intended to guide, not to restrict.

The key to the use of Archetypes is the interaction between

the character's Nature and Demeanor. The Nature is the true personality of the character, that which she is but may not reveal to others. Most people do not wish others to know them intimately, and they therefore create facades behind which they can hide their true selves - false fronts. A character's Demeanor may be as consistent as her Attributes, or it may change from minute to minute. An extraordinarily open, honest or simple-minded individual will have the same Demeanor and Nature.

Archetypes have a practical impact on the game, for each Archetype provides a different way to regain Willpower points. The Nature of the character is thus vital in regaining Willpower. The procedure works like this: the player notices her character may be able to regain Willpower due to her actions or the situation - this varies from Archetype to Archetype. She asks the Storyteller if she can regain Willpower, and the Storyteller either accepts or rejects the

request. If the Storyteller deems the request to be valid, he awards anything from one to three Willpower points, depending on the nature of the character's actions. The Storyteller shouldn't reward a character if he thinks the player was performing the actions in order to regain Willpower and was not really roleplaying. For more details on how this works, see the Willpower section in this chapter, pg. 176. Details on adding to your permanent Willpower total are in Chapter Eight, pg. 184.

The Storyteller should encourage his players to develop their own Archetypes to describe their characters' Natures or Demeanors, thus giving them an opportunity to create truly unique personalities.

Architect

Your sense of purpose goes beyond your own needs; you try to create something of lasting value for those who will come after you. People need many things, and you gain satisfaction by providing whatever you can. You are the type of person who makes an effort to build something of value: to found a town, create a company or in some way leave a lasting legacy. Many American pioneers were Architects by Nature.

- Regain Willpower whenever you create or establish something of importance or lasting value.

Bon Vivant

Life is pointless, shallow and meaningless - so have as good a time as possible. Rome may burn, but you shall drink wine and sing songs. A hedonist, sensualist, sybarite and party animal, the words austere, self-denial and self-discipline have no place in your life. You much prefer the concept of instant gratification. Still, you don't mind a little hard work as long as a good time awaits you upon completion. Most Bon Vivants have low Self-Control, for they so dearly love excess.

- Regain Willpower whenever you have a truly good time and can fully express your exultation (or perhaps even more points if you enjoy an especially fun night).

Bravo

You are known as a bully, a ruffian and a tough, and delight in tormenting the weak. Things must always go your way, and you do not tolerate those who cross you. Power and might are all you respect; indeed, you heed only those who can prove their power to you.

You see nothing wrong with forcing your will upon others.

There is nothing you like better than to persecute, antagonize, heckle and intimidate those for whom you have contempt -and of them there are many. The emotions of kindness and pity are not completely foreign to you, but you hide from your own sense of weakness through cruelty to others. While most Bravos despise the weak, a few become their protectors.

- Regain Willpower whenever you intimidate or physically force another person to do what you wish.

Caregiver

You always try to help those around you, struggling to make a difference in the needs and sorrows of the unfortunate. People around you depend on your stability and strength to keep them steady and centered. You are the one people turn to when they have a problem.

- Regain Willpower whenever you successfully protect or nurture someone else. It can be as small as a smile of support or a shoulder to lean on at an appropriate moment. You must help the other person in some way, though he need not acknowledge it openly.

Child

You are still immature in personality and temperament: a kid who never grew up. Though you can (hopefully) care for yourself, you prefer the security of being watched over by others. Often you seek out someone to look out for you - a caretaker of sorts. Some see you as a spoiled brat, while others see you as an innocent cherub unaffected by the evils of the world. This is a very common archetype for Kindred who were created when they were young and subsequently matured mentally, but not emotionally.

- Regain Willpower whenever someone does something to help you with no apparent gain for herself.

Conformist

You are a follower. Taking charge is just not your style. It is easy for you to adapt, attune, adjust, comply and reconcile yourself to whatever new situation you find yourself in. You flit to the brightest star, the person whom you feel to be the best, throwing your lot in with her. It is both difficult and distasteful for you to go against the flow or rebel. You hate inconsistency and instability, and know that by supporting a strong leader, you help prevent chaos from occurring. All stable groups need some kind of Conformist.

- Regain Willpower whenever your group (the brood) accomplishes something because of your support and aid.

Conniver

What's the sense of working hard when you can get something for nothing? Why drudge when, just by talking, you can get what you want? You always try to find the easy way out, the fast track to success and wealth. Some people might call what you do swindling or even outright theft, but you know that you only do what everyone else does; you just do it better. Additionally, it's a game, and you get great pleasure out of outwitting someone. Connivers play many roles, so you may be a thief, a swindler, a street waif, an entrepreneur, a con man or just a finagler.

- Regain Willpower whenever you are able to get your way by tricking another person into doing as you wish.

Curmudgeon

You are an irascible, churlish person at heart, taking everything seriously and finding little humor in life (though you may have a wickedly barbed wit). Cynicism is you r middle name; it is the tool with which you judge everything in life. You have a very well-defined understanding of how things really work, especially when they involve the circus of human endeavor. Long ago the foolish actions of others ceased to surprise you.

- Regain Willpower whenever someone does something stupid, just like you predicted. You must predict it either out loud to the other characters or in private to the Storyteller.

Deviant

There are always people who don't fit in, and you are such a miscreant. Your beliefs, motivations and sense of propriety are the complete antithesis of the status quo. You are not so much an aimless rebel as an independent thinker who does not belong in the society in which you were raised. You don't give a damn about other people's morality, but you do adhere to your own strange code of conduct. Deviants are typically irreverent, and some have truly bizarre tastes and desires.

- Regain Willpower whenever you are able to thumb your nose at society and its precepts without retaliation (most often vampiric society rather than mortal).

Director

You despise chaos and disorder, and tend to take control and organize things in order to suppress anarchy. You like to be in charge, live to organize and habitually strive to make t hings work smoothly. You trust your own judgment implicitly and tend to think of things in black-and-white terms: "This won't work," "You're either for me or against me," "There are two ways to do this - my way and the wrong way."

- Regain Willpower when y ou are allowed to lead a group and accomplish some significant task.

Fanatic

You are consumed by a cause; it is the primary force in your life, for good or ill. Every ounce of blood and passion you possess is directed toward it; in fact, you may feel very guilty about spending time on anything else. You will let nothing stand in your way - nothing that you cannot overcome, in any case. You and those around you may suffer, but your cause is everything - the end justifies the means. Before the game begins, make sure you describe your cause, and define how it may affect your behavior.

-You regain Willpower whenever you accomplish an act which furthers your cause.

Gallant

You are as flamboyant as you are amoral; some see you as a rogue, a Don Juan, a rake, a paramour or just a lounge lizard - but you see yourself as all of the above. A consummate actor who loves to make as big a show of things as possible, nothing attracts your attention more than an appreciative audience. You love people and you love to impress them even more. Though you may indeed be a superior lover, you enjoy the chase almost as much as you enjoy the act. Gallants vary widely in temperament and ambition, holding in common little more than their love of attention.

- Regain Willpower whenever you manage to dazzle or impress another person. The Storyteller is always the judge, even when characters are involved.

Jester

You are the fool, idiot, quipster, clown or comic, forever making fun of both yourself and others. You constantly seek the humor in any situation, and strive always to battle the tides of depression inside yourself. You hate sorrow and pain, and constantly try to take others' minds off the dark side of life. Sometimes you'll do nearly anything to forget pain exists. Your particular br and of humor might not always impress your friends, but it makes you feel better. Some Jesters manage to escape pain and are truly happy, but most never find release.

- Regain Willpower when you raise the spirits of those around you through the device of h umor, especially when you are able to escape your own pain in the process

Judge

As a facilitator, moderator, arbitrator, conciliator and peacemaker, you always seek to make things better. You pride yourself on your rationality, your judgment and your ability to deduce a reasonable explanation when given the facts. You struggle to promote truth, but you understand how difficult it is to ascertain. You respect justice, for that is the way in which truth can reign.

In your view, people are resources, albeit on es that are most difficult to manage and employ. You hate dissension and arguments, and shy away from dogmatism. Sometimes Judges make good leaders, though a lack of vision can sometimes cause them to maintain the status quo instead of searching for a better way.

- Regain Willpower when you are able to successfully separate the truth from a web of lies or can convince disputing individuals to agree with your judgments.

Loner

You are the type of person who is always alone, even in the midst of a crowd. You are the wanderer, hunter and lone wolf. Though others might think of you as lonely, forsaken, isolated or remote, in truth you prefer your own company to that of others. There are many different reasons why this might be so: you don't understand people, you understand people too well, people dislike you, people like you too much, or you are simply lost in your own thoughts. Your reasons are your own.

- When you manage to accomplish some significant task on your own, without the aid of others, yet which still aids the group in some way, you regain Willpower based on the significance of the achievement.

Martyr

All possess the martyr instinct, but few act upon it. Even fewer live the life of a Martyr, but you are such a one. Your desire for self-sacrifice stems either from a low self-esteem, a feeling of a lack of control, or a profoundly developed sense of love. You are able to endure long-lasting and severe suffering because of your beliefs and ideals.

At worst, a Martyr expects sympathy and attention because of his or her suffering, and may even feign or exaggerate pain or deprivation. At best, a Martyr will

choose to suffer injury or even the Final Death rather than renounce his religion, beliefs, principles, cause or friends.

- Regain Willpower when you sacrifice yourself in a real and immediate way for your beliefs or another individual.

Rebel

You are a malcontent, iconoclast and free-thinking recalcitrant. You are so independent-minded and free-willed that you are unwilling to join any particular cause or movement. You are just yourself and only desire the freedom to be yourself. You do not make a good follower and aren't usually a very good leader either (unless your followers are willing to go wherever you lead). You tend to be insubordinate to authority to the point of stupidity.

- Regain Willpower whenever your rebellion against the status quo turns out to be for the best.

Survivor

No matter what, you always manage to survive. You can endure, pull through, recover from, outlast and outlive nearly any circumstance. When the going gets tough, you get going. You never say die, and never give up -never. Nothing angers you as much as a person who doesn't struggle to make things better, or who surrenders to the nameless forces of the universe.

- Regain Willpower whenever you survive a difficult situation through your own cunning and perseverance.

Traditionalist

You are an orthodox, conservative and extremely traditional individual. What was good enough for you when you were young is good enough for you now. You almost never

change. In general you are opposed to change for the sake of change - what point is there in that? You may be seen by some as a miser, a reactionary or simply an old fogy. You strive to always preserve the status quo.

- Regain Willpower whenever you are able to protect the status quo and prevent change.

Visionary

There are very few who are brave or strong or imaginative enough to look beyond the suffocating embrace of society and mundane thought and see something more. Society treats such people with both respect and contempt -for it is the Visionary who perverts as well guides society into the future.

You may be a spiritualist, shaman, New Ager, mystic, philosopher or inventor, but whatever you are, you are always looking for something more. You see beyond the bounds of conventional imagination and create new possibilities. Though you might have your head in the clouds and are often of an impractical bent, you are filled with new ideas and perceptions.

- Regain Willpower whenever you are able to convince others to believe in your dreams and follow the course of action outlined by your vision of the future.

Attributes

Physical

These Traits describe how strong, dexterous and sturdy a character is, and are the primary Traits of an action-oriented character. Physical Traits concern only the strengths and weaknesses of the body.

Strength

This is a measure of your mean physical strength -your ability to lift, carry and cause physical harm. A person with a high Strength rating is usually larger than someone with a lower rating. Of course, there are always exceptions.

Strength is used when you attempt to lift, carry, push, heave or break something. In melee combat, it is added to your damage Dice Pool. Strength is also used when you attempt to make any sort of jump or leap.

Specialties: Strong grip, Massive, Husky, Able-Bodied, Broad Shoulders, Hearty, Powerful, Bulging Biceps, Wiry, Large

• Poor: You can bench press 40 lbs.

•• Average: You can bench press 100 lbs.

••• Good: You can bench press 250 lbs.

•••• Exceptional: You can bench press 400 lbs.

••••• Outstanding: You can bench press 650 lbs.

Dexterity

This Trait is a measure of your general physical prowess - speed, quickness and agility. It indicates the capacity for moving with agility and manipulating objects with accuracy and grace. Dexterity includes hand-eye coordination, fine motor manipulation, reaction speed, reflexes and bodily grace

Specialties: Smooth-Motioned, Lithe, Steady, Deft, Graceful, Nimble, Athletic, Catlike Reflexes, Swift, Sure-Footed, Fleet-Footed, Light Touch.

• Poor: You are butterfingered, so don't use a chainsaw.

•• Average: You can chew gum and walk at the same time.

••• Good: You have excellent raw athletic potential.

•••• Exceptional: You can juggle five knives.

••••• Outstanding: You can juggle five knives while blindfolded.

Stamina

Stamina is a measure of general health and resistance to pain; it indicates how long you can continue to exert yourself as well as how much physical punishment you can sustain. Stamina is your staying power, both physically and mentally, and one of its most important elements is the will to live.

Specialties: Tireless, Enduring, Tough, Determined, Aggressive, Tenacious, Stalwart, Durable, Forceful, Dedicated

• Poor: You are frail in constitution and may be sickly.

•• Average: You are moderately healthy.

••• Good: You are in good shape, the result of regular exercise.

•••• Exceptional: You could run a marathon.

••••• Outstanding: You are tough enough to survive almost anything.

Social

Your Social Traits describe your appearance, charm and familiarity with the human mind. Your Social Traits are vital in determining first impressions, leadership ability and the nature of your interactions with others.

Charisma

Charisma is a measure of your aptitude for enticing and fascinating others. You use Charisma to win others over to you emotionally and to get them to trust you. This Trait is more a facet of a charismatic personality than it is an overt manipulation of others. It is a sum of the character's bearing, charm and power of influence. Charisma reflects your power to convince others to put their faith in you.

Specialties: Smooth, Eloquent, Outgoing, Captivating, Charming, Regal, Genial, Well-Mannered, Urbane, Sophisticated, Rustic, Gracious

• Poor: Others avoid being around you.

•• Average: You are likable.

••• Good: People trust and confide in you.

•••• Exceptional: You have something which draws people to you.

••••• Outstanding: You could lead a nation.

Manipulation

This Trait measures your aptitude for active self-expression, such as when you want to get someone else to do something. It is important when you attempt to influence or manipulate another person directly. You use Manipulation to trick, fool, bluff, outmaneuver and out-talk another. While you may be effective at manipulating people whom you have just met, those who already know you are rarely fooled.

Manipulation is used in all rolls where you are attempting to influence or convince another person overtly. Whether they like you or not is of no consequence (though it can affect the difficulty of what you are trying).

If you fail a Manipulation action and the other person realizes what you were trying to do (you botch for instance), she may well be angered. People are manipulated all the time and usually they ignore it. However, if it is brought to their attention, it can be a very disturbing thought. Manipulation can net great results, but it is risky to perform openly. Characters with high Manipulation are not well-trusted by those who know them best.

Specialties: Glib, Expressive, Cunning, Persuasive, Smooth, Silver-Tongued, Bravado, Ingratiating, Eloquent, Blarney, Double-Talker, Sophist, Witty

• Poor: You express yourself in as few words as possible.

•• Average: Others might believe you.

••• Good: You'd make a good lawyer.

•••• Exceptional: You should run for office.

••••• Outstanding: You could sell ice to an Eskimo.

Appearance

This Trait describes your Appearance in terms of your attractiveness and force of presence. You do not necessarily need beauty to have a high Appearance, you only need looks that somehow attract others to you. Appearance is not just your static, model beauty, it's the appeal of the way you move and talk, your animation and expressiveness. It is a measure of how interesting and attractive you seem to others.

Appearance is vital in any social situation where words are not exchanged. It is more important than you might think offhand; the impressions you get of another are heavily affected by that person's looks, no matter how open-minded you are. You may not like to admit it, but it's true.

More than simply being a Trait you use to make rolls, Appearance is often used by the Storyteller to roughly judge

how others usually react to you when you first meet. Thus it can affect all other Social rolls you make with that person (in some cases, your rating determines the maximum number of successes from a Social action that can actually be applied, making it impossible for an ugly person to achieve anything other than minimal success).

Specialties: Bold Demeanor, Alluring, Captivating, Sexy, Luminous, Honest Face, Imposing, Dignified, Pleasing, Handsome, Beautiful, Gorgeous, Look of the Eagles

• Poor: You tend to attract the hostility of others.

•• Average: You are easily ignored, for you fit in so well with the crowd.

••• Good: You have a pleasing appearance, and people treat you well.

•••• Exceptional: You are good-looking enough to be a model and are given respect and attention because of it.

••••• Outstanding: First reactions are either that of awe, intense jealousy or complete solicitude.

Mental

The Mental Traits represent your character's total mental capacity, including such things as memory, perception and the ability to learn and think.

Perception

This Trait indicates how aware you are of the environment around you. While sometimes this is a conscious action, such as when you are searching for something, it more often works intuitively - you simply notice something. At base, Perception is a sensitivity to the world, an open-eyed quality common among children (for whom the world is a boundless and mysterious place) and seldom present among the most jaded.

Perception is used to see if you have the insight to understand or be aware of a certain fact or concept. It can help indicate how alert you are to ambushes, the subtext of a politician's speech, and the subtleties of color in a painting.

Specialties: Insightful, Attentive, Patient, Probing, Keen-Eyed, Intuitive, Visionary, Astute, Apprehensive

• Poor: You are blind to anything but the obvious.

•• Average: You are unaware of the subtle interactions that occur around you.

••• Good: You are aware of moods and textures.

•••• Exceptional: You are constantly alert to the nuances of life.

••••• Outstanding: You can see a needle in a haystack.

Intelligence

Your Intelligence represents both your memory and your ability to learn and think. It is important for Abilities that require complex thought processes. Some describe it as a person's quickness of mind or judgment, but it is more than that - it is the facility for understanding, and the capacity for reasoning and evaluation. Intelligence is a rating of an individual's depth and flexibility of thought.

Common sense, street savvy and wisdom are not components of the Intelligence Attribute; these are facets of a character that are portrayed by the player. However, low Intelligence can indicate a character who lacks the capacity to understand complicated thoughts, and who is a very slow learner - he might simply see things in terms of black and white, and won't understand that things are really in shades of gray.

Characters with high Intelligence, on the other hand, are sophisticated thinkers capable of decoding many different levels of an argument or a problem. They have a discerning judgment and are well able to tell the truth from lies, at least when they have the time to think things over. Intelligence caters to carefully thought-out judgments rather than snap decisions, which is the realm of Wits.

Specialties: Discerning, Creative, Knowledgeable, Pragmatic, Astute, Brilliant, Bookworm, Clear Thinker

• Poor: IQ 80

•• Average: IQ 100

••• Good: IQ 120

•••• Exceptional: IQ 140

••••• Outstanding: IQ 160+

Wits

The Wits Attribute describes your ability to react quickly and correctly to new situations, as well as your overall sharpness of mind and cleverness. In the simplest of terms, it is a measure of how quickly you think. A more complex view understands Wits as a shrewdness, sagacity and capacity for understanding problems in the most basic terms.

Those with low Wits are occasionally unable to take appropriate action because of surprise (like a deer caught in the headlights). A low Wits can indicate that you are more easily tricked and fooled than most people, for you are a gullible and unsophisticated student of human nature. If you have high Wits, you are able to react quickly to new situations and are seldom caught off guard by sudden changes in events. Whatever else happens, you are able to keep your Wits about you.

Specialties: Clever, Shrewd, Sharp, Practical, Wily, Level-Headed, Creative

• Poor: You send money to televangelists.

•• Average: You know when to bet or fold in poker.

••• Good: You are capable of handling L.A. rush hours (without shooting anyone).

•••• Exceptional: You could be a stand-up comic.

••••• Outstanding: You have a supercomputer for a brain - it's fast.

Abilities

Talents

Talents describe all the untrained and intuitive Abilities. Talents can never be trained or studied, but can only be learned through direct experience - usually during a story. If your character takes an action using a Talent he does not possess, there is no effect on your roll. The number of dice equal to the base Attribute are rolled. Talents are such natural and intuitive Abilities that it is assumed that everyone has some small capacity in each one.

Acting

You are practiced at feigning emotions, beliefs or a certain frame of mind. Even if you have never been on stage before, you could do an adequate job if you were ever thrust upon it. However, simply because you have this Ability does not mean you use it unethically. Many honorable politicians have used it to lend power and depth to their speeches (namely, Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt). You are able to feign tears, anger, friendliness and virtue.

• Novice: A rank amateur, you can feign sickness.

•• Practiced: You have developed a wide range of acting ability.

••• Competent: You are capable of playing almost any role.

•••• Expert: You are certainly a professional, or have that potential.

••••• Master: You could win, or have won, an Academy Award.

Possessed by: Actors, Politicians, Amateur Thespians, Con Men, Evangelists

Specialties: Pretend, Roleplaying, Inspirational, Feigning Emotions, Stage, Religious Awe

Alertness

Over the years, you have become practiced in noticing all that happens around you, even if you are not actively concentrating upon the surroundings. You are a capable bodyguard, for you have learned how to stay alert over a long period of time. Alertness simply indicates how aware you are of the world around you. It describes how much attention you pay to things other than the rumbling of your belly or the doubts in your mind.

• Novice: You tend to be alert to changes, moreso than most.

•• Practiced: You are watchful and very attentive to your surroundings.

••• Competent: You are highly vigilant.

•••• Expert: You are a truly cautious individual, and rarely let down your guard.

••••• Master: You notice everything that goes on around you.

Possessed by: Watchmen, Hunters, Bodyguards, Reporters, Burglars

Specialties: Bodyguarding, Traps, Ambushes, Forests,

Crowds, Noises, Paranoia

Athletics

This Ability describes your general athletic prowess and assumes a familiarity with most sports. It is used to see if you can jump across a chasm, swim through a storm, throw a football, vault a fence or climb a tree.

Athletics concerns complex motor actions; physical actions requiring only one type of motor action, such as lifting, do not use the Athletics rating, nor do athletic actions already subsumed by another Ability.

• Novice: Little Leaguer

•• Practiced: High school jock

••• Competent: College Varsity player

•••• Expert: Professional athlete

••••• Master: Olympic gold medalist

Possessed by: Professional Athletes, Enthusiasts, Dancers, Jocks, Kids

Specialties: Swimming, Mountain Climbing, Acrobatics, Dancing, a specific sport

Brawl

You know how to fight unarmed. This Ability includes such maneuvers as punching, kicking, grappling, throttling, throwing, gouging and biting. Brawling can get quite ruthless, but generally it is a non-lethal form of combat.

• Novice: You know what to do, but you haven't had much experience.

•• Practiced: You know where to hit people and make it hurt.

••• Competent: You can choose your bar seat.

•••• Expert: You are a black belt martial artist.

••••• Master: You could be a Golden Gloves boxing champion.

Possessed by: Martial Artists, Soldiers, Thugs, Police Officers, Bouncers

Specialties: Armlocks, Boxing, Wrestling, Karate, Judo, Tai Chi, Grappling, Throws, Showing Off

Dodge

The most effective way to win a fight is not to be struck. Becoming proficient in the Dodge Talent is a very wise choice. Your rating in this area describes your ability to avoid both melee and missile attacks, which includes diving for cover and ducking punches.

• Novice: You hit the ground if someone screams "Duck!".

•• Practiced: You have no problem finding cover in a firefight.

••• Competent: You're always the last one out in dodgeball.

•••• Expert: A lucky shot may land once in a blue moon.

••••• Master: You can nearly sidestep gunshots.

Possessed By: Criminals, Street Fighters, Military Personnel, Bouncers, Boxers

Specialties: Leap, Sidestep, Duck, Cover, Dive

Empathy

You understand and can sympathize with the emotions of others, and are thus able to respond to them appropriately. You can often discern the motives behind someone's actions by simply listening to them. You can also detect when you are being told lies. Empathy has a down side, however - because you are so open to the feelings of others you often feel the same emotions as those around you.

• Novice: People tell you their problems at parties.

•• Practiced: Occasionally you get sympathetic pains from others.

••• Competent: You have an amazing insight into others' motivations.

•••• Expert: No lies ever get past your scrutiny.

••••• Master: You often finish other people's sentences.

Possessed by: Actors, Mediums, Above-Average Salesmen, Pick-Up Artists

Specialties: Emotions, Truths, Spirits, Personalities, Backgrounds

Intimidation

The art of intimidation comes in many forms, ranging from a subtle suggestion to outright physical damage. Each method of intimidation has its time and place. You understand the science of being overbearing, and know how to use it to get what you want. People with high Intimidation ratings seem to radiate an aura of authority.

• Novice: Six-year-olds give you the right of way.

•• Practiced: You win an occasional staredown.

••• Competent: Your gaze is very unsettling.

•••• Expert: You would be an above-average drill sergeant.

••••• Master: You can make vicious animals turn tail and run.

Leadership

You can get people to follow your lead and obey your orders by exerting authority and by example. Leadership isn't so much knowing the techniques of getting people to follow you as it is being the type of person people will follow. Leadership is often used in conjunction with Charisma.

• Novice: You could coach a Little League team.

•• Practiced: Your voice is a dominant one and you can demand silence.

••• Competent: You are an effective leader in times of strife.

•••• Expert: You attract followers without really trying.

••••• Master: You are a Napoleon, a Churchill - or a Hitler

Possessed by: Politicians, Military Officers, Gang Leaders, Executives, Police Officers

Specialties: Commands, Orate, Compelling, Friendly, Noble, Military

Streetwise

The streets are a major source of information and money, as well as big-time trouble. Streetwise has a variety of uses. First and foremost, Streetwise allows you to blend in with the local scene without drawing attention to yourself. Gossip, felony theft and street slang are also imparted by using this talent.

• Novice: You know who sells drugs.

•• Practiced: You are considered cool by the populace.

••• Competent: Member of a prominent gang

•••• Expert: You have spent most of your life on the streets.

••••• Master: If you don't know it, it hasn't been said.

Possessed by: Gang Members, Winos, Reporters, Homeless People, Detectives

Specialties: Picking Pockets, Drugs, Fencing, Slang Terms

Subterfuge

You know how to conceal your own motives; moreover, you know how to decipher the motives of others and how to use those motives against them. The secrets and intrigues of others interest you, and you work at understanding their weaknesses. A command of this skill makes you the ultimate conversationalist, or the ultimate spy.

• Novice: A few white lies never hurt anyone.

•• Practiced: You can pick up in a nightclub.

••• Competent: You could be a criminal lawyer.

•••• Expert: Amway salesmen have nothing on you.

••••• Master: Perry Mason wishes he had it so good.

Possessed by: Lawyers, Con Men, Casanovas, Politicians

Specialties: Finding Weaknesses, Seduction, Little White Lies

Other Talents

Search, Guile, Intrigue, Expression, Painting, Sculpture

Skills

Skills are all the Abilities that are learned through apprenticeships or rigorous training. If you try to use a Skill but have no rating in it, the difficulty goes up by one. You are simply untrained in the techniques of that Skill, and thus have a harder time accomplishing the task than someone who has at least some idea of what he is doing.

Animal Ken

Animals do not behave in the same way that humans do under the same circumstances. The ability to understand the actions of animals can come in quite handy. Those characters skilled in Animal Ken can not only predict the actions of animals, but can use this knowledge to calm or enrage them. Animal Ken is also the skill used to train animals.

• Novice: You can befriend a domesticated animal.

•• Practiced: You can housebreak a puppy.

••• Competent: You could train a seeing-eye dog.

•••• Expert: You could train a circus animal.

••••• Master: You could domesticate a wild animal.

Possessed by: Animal Trainers, Zookeepers, Nature Lovers, Masters

Specialties: Dogs, Cats, Horses, Parrots, Farm Animals

Drive

You can drive a car, and perhaps other vehicles as well. Simply because you have a Drive skill does not mean that you have a familiarity with all land vehicles. Your target number may be raised or lowered depending on your general experience with a particular automobile.

• Novice: You can drive an automatic automobile.

•• Practiced: You can operate a manual/shift transmission.

••• Competent: Commercial trucker

•••• Expert: Formula One car driver

••••• Master: Evel Kneivil

Possessed by: Truckers, Race Car Drivers, nearly everyone born in the 20th century

Specialties: Curves, Sudden Stops, Stick Shifts

Etiquette

You understand the small nuances of social life, and are able to conduct yourself in a manner that is both unobtrusive and gracious. You understand how to get along well with mortal society. Your specialty is the culture with which you are most familiar. You use Etiquette during actions such as dancing, seduction, and haggling. Etiquette is also used when engaging in diplomacy.

• Novice: You know when to shut up.

•• Practiced: You know not to wear paisley at a black-tie dinner.

••• Competent: You know which spoon to eat soup with (not that you can still eat).

•••• Expert: You could get along with just about anybody.

••••• Master: You could prevent World War III.

Possessed by: Diplomats, the Idle Rich, Executives

Specialties: Business, High Society, Street Culture

Firearms

Skill in Firearms means that you have a broad knowledge of all guns, from a simple .22 to an Ingram Mac-10 machine gun. Firearms does not include the ability to operate heavy machinery such as tank guns and other artillery weapons. However, skill in Firearms also includes the ability to repair them.

• Novice: You've had one or two lessons at the gun store.

•• Practiced: You do all right at a firing range.

••• Competent: You can pull off a few gun tricks.

•••• Expert: You're cool and steady, even under pressure.

••••• Master: "Do you feel lucky? Well, do ya punk?"

Possessed by: Gang Members, Police, Criminals, Soldiers, Hunters

Specialties: Rifles, Handguns, Pistols, Machine Guns, Sprays

Melee

The ability to fight with a weapon is a valuable skill in the Gothic-Punk environment. Proficiency in this skill allows you to use hand-held weapons. Knives, sai, saps, tonfas and swords are examples of the types of weapons covered under the Melee skill. This skill is almost archaic nowadays because of society's dependence on firearms, but keep in mind that a wooden stake or silver spear is a melee weapon

• Novice: You have seen a knife being used.

•• Practiced: You've taken a six-week course in fencing

••• Competent: Average street thug

•••• Expert: Any weapon is deadly in your grasp.

••••• Master: Bruce Lee with a pair of nunchuka

Possessed by: Police, Fencers, Kendo Enthusiasts, Thugs, Gang Members

Specialties: Swords, Axes, Rapiers, Knives, Clubs, Disarms

Music

You can create and play music; you know how to play one instrument for every rating point you have. Of course, the higher your rating, the better you are at playing your instruments, especially the first instruments you learned. This is the ability to create music -the higher your rating, the greater your musical ability. You should decide what instruments you play.

• Novice: With effort, you can play a few simple chords.

•• Practiced: You could play rhythm guitar in a garage band.

••• Competent: You could make a decent living playing the club circuit.

•••• Expert: You could play lead guitar on a 30-country tour.

••••• Master: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Possessed by: Rock Musicians, Disk Jockeys, Singers, Conductors

Specialties: Guitar, Composition, Lyrics, Tuba, Improvised Solos

Repair

You are able to repair simple or complex devices of all sorts. This includes doors, cars, and even computers. Mastery in this skill means you are a jack-of-all-trades. This skill covers everything from simple carpentry to mechanics. Given the proper tools, you can fix almost anything.

• Novice: You can assemble ready -made kits.

•• Practiced: With proper time you can wire a house.

••• Competent: You save quite a few dollars in mechanics' fees.

•••• Expert: You are able to repair personal computers within minutes.

••••• Master: If it's broke, you can fix it.

Possessed by: Handymen, Carpenters, Electricians, Mechanics

Specialties: Wood, Computers, Electronics, Engines, Automobiles, Electricity

Security

You know the techniques and are proficient with the tools used for such activities as picking locks, hotwiring cars, setting and deactivating burglar alarms, and opening up safes or vaults, as well as many other forms of breaking and entering. Many individuals who possess the Security Skill do not use it to conduct criminal activities, but rather use it to prevent such from occurring or to deduce how they were accomplished after the fact.

• Novice: You can pick a simple lock.

•• Practiced: You can hotwire a car.

••• Competent: You can disable a house alarm.

•••• Expert: You can crack a safe.

••••• Master: Fort Knox isn't safe from you.

Possessed by: Criminals, Locksmiths, Police Officers, Detectives, Security Specialists

Specialties: Electronics, Speed, Silently, Pick Locks, Hotwire, Burglar Alarms, Safes, Vaults

Stealth

Stealth is the ability to sneak about or hide without being seen or heard, and is often rolled against another character's Perception. Stealth is of extreme importance when vampires engage in the Hunt.

• Novice: You can hide in the dark.

•• Practiced: You can hide in the shadows.

••• Competent: You are an accomplished hunter.

•••• Expert: You could walk silently over two inches of dry leaves.

••••• Master: Ninja clan leader

Possessed by: Criminals, Spies, Reporters

Specialties: Prowl, Hide, Lurk, Shadows, Crowds, Crawling

Survival

The wilderness is a dangerous place, at least for those who do not understand it. The skill of Survival includes seeking shelter, finding a direct route through and relative safety in the wilderness, and tracking. When you use Stealth in the wilderness, you cannot roll more dice for your Stealth rating than you have in Survival.

• Novice: You can survive a five-mile hike.

•• Practiced: You are familiar with the wilderness.

••• Competent: You know how to brew natural medicines.

•••• Expert: You are at home in the wild.

••••• Master: You could find an oasis in Death Valley.

Possessed by: Tribesmen, Hunters, Park Rangers, Hikers, Native Americans

Specialties: Tracking, Arctic, Jungle, Hunting

Other Skills

Piloting, Cooking, Boating, Painting

Knowledges

Knowledges include all of the Abilities that require the rigorous application of the mind, not the body, so nothing but Mental Traits can be used to modify Knowledge rolls. Though the ratings discuss Knowledges in terms of college degrees, school is not the only way to gain Knowledges -it is simply the most common. These are scholastic Abilities for the most part, but self-study or tutoring is also possible.

If you do not have a Knowledge, you cannot even attempt a roll that involves it. There are exceptions, however, such as when the Storyteller rules that the roll only involves trivial information that anyone has a chance of knowing.

Bureaucracy

This Knowledge includes the ability to bribe city officials and make your way through the political system. The Knowledge also includes an ability to operate a bureaucracy, which of course includes at least a rudimentary sense of organization. In fact, this Knowledge

can be seen as the preeminent organizational ability in the game.

• Student: You have good organizational ability.

•• College: You understand power structures (who is really in control).

••• Masters: You can perform stalling tactics indefinitely.

•••• Doctorate: You can perform high administrative duties.

••••• Scholar: You could manage to get a meeting with the U.S. President.

Possessed by: Lawyers, Politicians, Journalists, Executives, Bureaucrats

Specialties: Negotiation, Intrigue, Bribery, Diplomacy, Thwart, Delay, Bypassing the System, Bluffing

Computer

You understand how to operate and program computers. You may also be able to design your own system. If you wish to break into a computer system, you need this Knowledge.

• Student: You can boot up a video game.

•• College: You made at least a B in Data Processing 101.

••• Masters: You are a competent programmer, and can design your own software.

•••• Doctorate: You make a living scamming Ma Bell.

••••• Scholar: Why aren't you playing *Cyberpunk 2020*?

Possessed by: Programmers, Data Processors, Gamers, Students, Hackers

Specialties: Hacking, Virus Programs, Retrieving Data

Finance

You are knowledgeable about the values of many different things and can properly evaluate the worth of many different objects. With your practiced eye, you can judge the value of almost any item with a fair degree of accuracy. Finance is often used in connection with other Abilities to ensure a fair price.

• Student: You are able to perform basic accounting and can accurately keep the ledgers of a business.

•• College: Having either gone to a school of management, or somehow gained practical experience, you understand higher management.

••• Masters: You could be an international banker.

•••• Doctorate: You can get many times your outlay on almost any investment.

••••• Scholar: You are an economic genius and can make money do nearly anything.

Possessed by: Accountants, Managers, Businessmen, Economists, Drug Dealers

Specialties: Accounting, Corporations, Leveraged Buyouts, Fencing, Investing

Investigation

You are trained to notice all sorts of details others might miss, and at high levels may function as a detective. This Knowledge also reflects a character's ability to do research, both in libraries and through interviews.

• Student: Amateur detective

•• College: Police officer

••• Masters: Private detective

•••• Doctorate: FBI, CIA, KGB, MI 5, Interpol agents

••••• Scholar: Sherlock Holmes

Possessed by: Detectives, Insurance Investigators, Reporters, FBI Agents, Intelligence Agents

Specialties: Search, Prowl, Tail, Detective Work

Law

The law is not a thing to trifle with and those with knowledge of the law are well able to use it to their advantage. If you ever want to get out of jail, this Ability is essential.

• Student: Practical knowledge, police officer

•• College: Prelaw, beginning lawyer

••• Masters: Lawyer, full partner

•••• Doctorate: Judge

••••• Scholar: Supreme Court Justice

Possessed by: Police, Lawyers, Judges, Detectives, Criminals, TV Viewers, Legislators.

Specialties: Courts, Contract, Litigation, Criminal, Police Procedure

Linguistics

It is assumed that you can speak your natural language, but you must purchase any other languages that you wish your character to speak. For each level of Linguistics, your character may fluently speak another language. However, Linguistics also gives a character an understanding of the structure of language, which is in turn the basis of thought. With this Ability, you can identify accents or decipher word puzzles.

• Student: One additional language

•• College: Two additional languages

••• Masters: Three additional languages

•••• Doctorate: Four additional languages

••••• Scholar: Five additional languages

Possessed by: Travelers, Scholars, Diplomats, Interpreters

Specialties: Curse Words, Technical, Diplomatic, Political

Medicine

Medicine is the study of the human body and the techniques used to cure its ills. While a vampire's body is different, Medicine can be used to treat its most serious wounds as well. It includes knowledge of the structure and functions of the body, the use of medicine, and the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

• Student: You know the basics of setting bones and preventing shock.

•• College: You have paramedic-quality training.

••• Masters: You are a doctor and can diagnose and treat diseases.

•••• Doctorate: You can perform surgery.

••••• Scholar: You are a specialist of great renown.

Possessed by: Doctors, Paramedics

Specialties: Pharmacy, Paramedics, Emergency Care, Disease, Neurosurgery

Occult

You are knowledgeable in the occult, particularly in vampire lore. This understanding of the more sinister side of the world includes knowledge of curses, voodoo, magic and mysticism, and contains much that is only speculation and fantasy. This Knowledge is of the utmost interest to many vampires and pursuit of this Knowledge may indeed become a major facet of your chronicle. A four or five rating indicates a deep understanding of vampires and other aspects of the occult (mostly what is patently false).

• Student: You've dabbled, but aren't in the know.

•• College: You're starting to know what's going on.

••• Masters: "There are things out there, really."

•••• Doctorate: You know a few arcane secrets.

••••• Scholar: Fully initiated in many of the great mysteries. You don't need your sire to tell you what's going on!

Possessed by: Weirdos, New Agers, Occultists, Scholars, the curious

Specialties: Vampires, Witches, Mystical powers

Politics

This Knowledge provides a familiarity with the politics of the day, including the people who are in charge and how they got there. This can be an essential Ability when attempting to deal with mortal authorities in any way. This Ability has some influence on being a capable politician yourself, as long familiarity with a subject can sometimes give one ideas...

• Student: Protester or casual observer

•• College: Campaign worker or political science major

••• Masters: Campaign manager or speech writer

•••• Doctorate: Politician

••••• Scholar: Machiavelli

Possessed by: Lobbyists, Politicians, Lawyers, Protesters

Specialties: Neighborhood, City, Congressional, Elections, Nihilism, Dogma, Radical

Science

You have at least a basic understanding of physics, chemistry, botany, biology, geology and astronomy. Your knowledge deals more with the useful applications of science.

• Student: You can make smoke bombs with a chemistry set.

•• College: You understand the major theories and applications.

••• Masters: You could teach high school science.

•••• Doctorate: You might win a Nobel Prize someday.

••••• Scholar: Albert Einstein

Possessed by: Engineers, Researchers, Inventors, Technicians, Pilots

Specialties: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, Relativity, Nuclear Physics

Other Knowledges

Psychology, Art History, Philosophy, Theater, Journalism, Military Science, Geography, History, Theology, specific area of knowledge/trivia

Disciplines

A pretty man came to me, never seen eyes so blue,

You know I could not run away

It seemed we'd seen each other in a dream;

Seemed like he knew me, he looked right through me.

- Heart, "Magic Man"

Disciplines are the supernatural powers all vampires possess to some degree or another, powers which separate them from mortals. A strong human can lift as much as a strong vampire; however, if the vampire also possesses the Discipline Potence, her effective power is increased dramatically.

The origin of these "mystical" powers is a mystery to almost all vampires. Normally, Kindred simply accept the Disciplines as yet another indication of how they are superior to all other creatures that walk the earth. Whatever their source, Disciplines are integral to a vampire's existence.

There are 10 Disciplines described here which characters may possess. Like all other Traits in **Vampire**, Disciplines are normally rated from one to five. Extremely powerful vampires may well possess abilities beyond the scope of these Disciplines, but these powers are unique to the individual in question and may be defined at the Storyteller's whim. The rating a vampire has in a particular Discipline should be noted on the character sheet, where the names of these powers may be written in.

Characters begin the chronicle with three points in their Clan Disciplines - those powers most often associated with the clan to which the character belongs. However, additional Disciplines may be gained by spending "freebie" points during character creation.

Animalism

Animalism allows empathy with and power over the animal world, as well as the animal within, and embodies the Beast which lurks within the soul of every Cainite. Those with Animalism can understand and soothe the passions of animals and control the actions of such creatures by touching the heart of the beast within them all. Vampires lacking this Discipline or the Skill of Animal Ken can seem offensive to animals, as beasts are distinctly uncomfortable around the undead and will do all they can to move away.

As the Storyteller, give each animal the characters encounter a unique personality and manner of speech. Eventually the animal may befriend the characters, so the better you can portray it in the beginning, the longer the animal will seem interesting to the player. Remember that animals may be simple-minded and take things quite literally.

The Gangrel clan, the masters of Animalism, have named these powers in ways which reflect their feelings toward their animal brethren.

• Sweet Whispers

While most animals are hardly intelligent enough to carry on a lengthy discourse on any subject, with this Discipline you can attempt a limited form of empathic

communication and can make specific requests of creatures. Such intercourse takes place mentally - there is no need for you to hiss or bark to communicate your ideas to an animal. You need only look into the animal's eyes to initiate the conversation. Eye contact must be maintained throughout. If it is broken, you will have to reestablish eye contact in order to speak with the animal once again. Of course, there is no guarantee that a given animal will either desire to talk at all or deal honestly if it does.

After establishing eye contact, you are able to issue complex commands to a single animal, which it will follow to the best of its ability. However, the command must be couched in terms of a request, and the animal must be coaxed into it (in other words, you need to roleplay through it).

The "favor" cannot be too complex for the intellect of the animal to comprehend. For instance, a mouse would be incapable of distinguishing between people, while a dog wouldn't know what a phone is. Certainly no animal could be told to attack the person "who strikes me with the intent to harm."

These commands can be deeply implanted, however, so that they will affect the animal for some time. For instance, you could instruct a cat to come and get you when anyone enters the cellar, and the cat will continue to do so for days or even weeks.

System: No roll is necessary to talk with an animal, but the player must make a Manipulation + Animal Ken roll to get it to do favors (difficulty 6). This difficulty can be adjusted by circumstances and roleplaying skill. Depending on the nature of the character's inner soul, the approach of the conversation with the animal will differ - it is not completely up to the player to decide, and depends heavily on the character's Nature. The approach taken might be that of intimidation, teasing, cajoling, rationality, emotional pleading or practically anything. Interactions must be roleplayed through, but the player should understand that he does not simply play the character, but the Beast within instead.

•• The Beckoning

The essence of the animal has grown strong in you, and now animals respond when you call to them. You are now able to summon nearly any species of animal, drawing them

to you. The character must actually sing in the voice of the animals to be summoned - howling like a wolf or squawking like a bird.

The primary limitation is that you may not call animals of different species. Only one summons may be active at a time and there is no way to cancel a call after it has been made. Thus, you had better get it right the first time.

Animals called in this way are under no immediate obligation to heed your commands, though they are often friendly and inquisitive with regard to your call.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Survival to determine how well the call is received by the intended targets (difficulty is normally 6) and consult the table below. The only animals that might respond are those within hearing distance of the song.

The summons may be very complicated, though the Storyteller will assign a higher difficulty if the player gets too carried away. For instance, a vampire could simply call out all the rats of the sewers (difficulty 6), all rats with white fur (difficulty 7), or even summon the specific rat that had the audacity to bite her (difficulty 8).

1 success - One animal responds

2 successes - A quarter of the animals who hear The Beckoning respond

3 successes - Half of the animals respond

4 successes - Most of the animals respond

5 successes - All of the animals respond

••• Song of Serenity

This power allows you to expel the savagery from an animal or mortal, causing the target to become passive and listless. Simply by touching the individual you wish to affect and singing a song of comfort and solace to the Beast within, you can take from him that which gives him the fire of individuality and creativity.

When the Beast has been removed from an individual, he loses the will to fight or struggle. He cannot use or regain Willpower, nor can he resist any sort of attack upon him. Kindred are immune to this power.

Mortals and creatures who lack a Beast are prone to accept nearly anything which occurs to them in this state as completely normal and natural, evincing no reaction to it. Later they might wonder why they had no reaction, but often they avoid thinking about the situation at all.

System: The player must roll Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty 7) and must collect as many successes as the target has Willpower (five for most animals). This is an extended roll. Any failure indicates that the vampire must start over from the beginning, while any botch indicates that he will never again be able to steal that creature's Beast.

•••• Sharing of Spirits

By staring into the eyes of an animal, your spirit or conscious mind moves within the animal and possesses it. This allows you to control the actions of the animal as if you were that animal. Your body becomes unconscious and remains motionless during this time, exactly as if you were in torpor.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Animal Ken (difficulty 8) as the character looks into the animal's eyes (only animals with eyes can be possessed). The number of successes obtained determines the free will and powers the character still retains while possessing the animal. Less than three successes means the player must use Willpower points to take any action which directly violates the instincts of the animal in question.

1 success - Cannot use Disciplines

2 successes - Can use Auspex

3 successes - Can also use Presence

4 successes - Can also use Dominate

5 successes - Can also use Thaumaturgy

The character will behave much like the animal if less than five successes are obtained - her spirit is clouded with the needs and impulses of the animal body. Sometimes she will begin to think and feel like that animal, even after the connection has been broken. The player behaves like the animal she was, retaining many of its instincts for a time. This will continue until seven Willpower points are spent to resist and overcome specific effects.

At the end of any particularly exciting incident, the player should roll Wits + Empathy (difficulty 8) for the character to retain her own mind. Failure indicates that the character's mind returns to her own body, but still thinks in purely animal terms. A botch sends the character into a frenzy.

When employing this power, it is possible for a vampire to travel about during the day, albeit in the body of an animal. However, she must be awake to do so, and therefore the player must successfully make a roll to stay awake (see Chapter Nine).

••••• Drawing out the Beast

You have attained a deep understanding of the mysteries of man's wild cousins. Armed with this knowledge, you are better able to deal with the Beast within. When the Beast becomes too powerful to control, you can transfer the feral urges to another creature.

Effectively, you induce frenzy in another animal, man or vampire as a means of avoiding it yourself. The recipient of this vast, savage energy must be something that is fit for the burden; only beings with a Humanity score of 7 or less are wild enough to provide a home for your Beast.

This unfortunate creature actually receives your Beast, and thus your personality will be apparent in the nature of the frenzy the victim undergoes. The frenzy will progress just as if you were the creature in that state.

System: To use this power, the vampire must be in frenzy, or close to it, and roll Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 8). The player needs to announce his preferred target prior to rolling. It must be someone within eyesight. Refer to the table for the results:

1 success - The character transfers the Beast, but releases it upon a friend

2 successes - The character is stunned by the effort and may not act next turn, but transfers the Beast.

3 successes - The character is completely successful.

If the attempt fails, the intensity of the frenzy actually increases, for as the character relaxes in expectation of relieving himself of the savage desires of the Beast, the Beast takes that opportunity to dig deeper. The frenzy will last at twice as long and be twice as hard to shrug off; it will also be many times more severe than normal. A botch on this roll is even more catastrophic. The heightened frenzy is so extreme that not even the expenditure of Willpower points will effectively curb its duration or effects.

If the character leaves the target's presence before the frenzy concludes, he will lose his Beast, perhaps permanently. While no longer vulnerable to frenzy, the character will not be able to use or regain Willpower and will become increasingly lethargic. To recover the Beast, he must find the person who now possesses it (who probably won't be enjoying herself much) and retrap the Beast. He must behave in ways that will make the Beast want to return since, unfortunately, the Beast does not always wish to do so.

Auspex

This Discipline is one of extrasensory awareness, empathy and perception. Those with this Discipline tend to be strongly affected by environmental phenomena, especially beauty. Loud noises can be very disturbing. Nearly all Auspex powers require some type of Perception roll to determine how much is learned and understood.

• Heightened Senses

You can sharpen all five of your senses to an extraordinary degree. This is done at will, and lasts as long as you choose. This allows you to double your normal ranges of hearing and sight, in terms of both distance and the conditions in which those senses are effective. Your other senses become equally useful; with increased olfactory sensitivity, you can track even if there are no tracks left, and you can identify almost any object by touch alone.

There is a drawback, though, as loud noises or bright lights can disturb you while in this state. You may even become "blind" in that particular sense for a short period of

time (depending on the degree of noise or glare, it could be days). Thus, if you are exposed to sunlight while employing Heightened Senses, you may be blinded for a week, even after the aggravated damage sustained is healed.

You are also occasionally alerted to impending danger with unsettling premonitions. These premonitions are typically confusing, but can be invaluable.

System: Though this power comes into play largely through Storyteller description, certain circumstances require the use of dice. The Storyteller secretly rolls a character's unmodified Auspex rating whenever danger might be sensed. The difficulty varies according to the circumstances (and whim). For instance, a warning that a gun has been pointed at the back of the character's head may only require a five, while the sudden realization that the prince is scheming against her at the next table may require a nine.

•• Aura Perception

You can see the auras of other beings, the colors of which indicate their moods, identities and levels of hostility. This power also allows you to recognize other vampires (they have pale auras).

Even the most shallow, transparent person usually has several different colors composing his aura. The aura may shift between the different colors in a predictable cycle, or it might shift completely at random. The colors change along with the current emotional state of the character, and because people so often have mixed feelings, the aura is often mixed in color.

System: The player must make a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8). The Storyteller may wish to make this roll so that the player doesn't know if he failed or botched. Each success indicates how much of the aura is seen and can be understood (see the chart below). A botch indicates a misleading interpretation.

1 success - Can only distinguish the shade (pale or bright)

2 successes - Can distinguish color as well

3 successes - Patterns can be recognized

4 successes - Subtle shifts can be detected

5 successes - Can identify mixtures of color and pattern

See the Aura Colors chart for examples of some of the predominant colors that can be found and what emotions they represent.

An aura may be looked at only once with clear vision. If the character attempts to look at it again, any failure

should be considered a botch, as it is very easy to imagine   seeing what one wants to see when it comes to auras.

Aura Colors

Condition	Aura Colors
Afraid	Orange
Aggressive	Purple
Angry	Red
Bitter	Brown
Calm	Light Blue
Compassionate	Pink
Conservative	Lavender
Depressed	Gray
Desirous or Lustful	Deep Red
Distrustful	Light Green
Enraged	Crimson
Envious	Dark Green
Excited	Violet
Generous	Rose
Happy	Vermilion
Hateful	Black
Idealistic	Yellow
Innocent	White
Love	Blue
Obsessed	Green
Sad	Silver
Spiritual	Gold
Suspicious	Dark Blue
A Vampire	Appropriate color is pale
Confused	Mottled, shifting colors
Daydreaming	Sharp flickering colors
Diabolist	Black veins in aura
Frenzied	Rapidly rippling colors
Psychotic	Hypnotic, swirling color
Magic Use	Myriad sparkles

••• The Spirit's Touch

With this power you may pick up an object and gain impressions of one of the individuals who last held it. This object reading is usually limited to a "snapshot" of the tableau, but sometimes such things as the race, sex and even aura of the person in question can also be discerned. The Spirit's Touch can also reveal how the owner came to possess the item, or reveal what went on during the last moments the subject held the object.

System: The player must make a Perception + Empathy roll. The difficulty is determined by the age of the impressions and the mental and spiritual strength of the person who left them.

The number of successes determines the amount of information gained, both in terms of snapshots (images of the scene when the object was being held) and the nature of the person who was holding the object. Generally one snapshot and one aspect of the person's identity (Nature, Demeanor, aura, name, sex or age) is received for each success.

•••• Telepathy

You can probe the surface thoughts of any nearby subject and listen to them as you would listen to that person speak. Given enough time, you can learn nearly anything

about the subject. For instance, you might be able to divine the sire of another vampire through Telepathy.

System: The player must make an Intelligence + Subterfuge roll with a difficulty equal to the subject's Willpower. One success must be rolled for each individual item of information plucked and level of consciousness pierced.

The vampire mind cannot normally be read, but a Willpower point may be spent to make the effort. After the point is spent, Intelligence + Subterfuge is rolled as normal.

The Storyteller should describe the mind of the subject by using a series of adjectives akin to a stream of consciousness. This forces the player to deduce for herself what is going on in that mind. For example, you might say, "*Sullen sorrow* Where is Damien? *Worry* Can't wait he hears this one! *Anticipation*" As is apparent, it can be somewhat difficult to understand what is going on inside the psyche, especially in the minds of the deranged.

••••• Psychic Projection

You are able to expand your consciousness to such a degree that you can separate your mind from your body. While in this state you can travel without the use of your body, journeying nearly anywhere on Earth. However, as your astral self reaches the outermost point of the Moon's orbit, you will encounter what has been referred to as the Limit of the Lunar Sphere - an impassable barrier.

The physical body left behind lies as motionless as if it were in torpor. Your mind stays with the astral self, and you have no way of knowing what is going on around or in your body. Indeed, for all you know, your body is in flames.

A silver cord, a diaphanous line grounding your consciousness to your body, connects your astral self to your real body. If this cord is severed during an astral mishap, you become completely lost and fully enter the astral plane, the realm of ghosts and shades. Finding one's body again requires an arduous and terrifying journey.

System: Each time the character journeys in astral form, the player must spend a Willpower point and make a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty varies depending on the complexity of the trip) to determine how well the character fares on the journey. Essentially, this determines whether or not he finds his destination.

Another roll must be made each time the character decides on a new destination. Failure indicates the character is lost (though he can find his way back by retracing his route via the silver cord), and a botch indicates the silver cord has snapped.

Travel at speeds of up to 500 miles per hour is possible in astral form. Also, a character's astral self is naked - no physical objects may accompany the character, though there are rumors of magical artifacts capable of astral travel.

Interaction with the physical world is impossible unless the character spends a point of Willpower (though Aura Perception and Telepathy can be used freely). This allows the character to manifest in a ghost-like form for one turn. However, the character can view events around himself that occur in the physical world, and can generally do so without fear of detection, although characters with the Auspex Discipline may have premonitions that someone is nearby.

When two characters encounter one another, or if one encounters a being native to the astral world such as a ghost (who is often tied to one location), they may interact as if both were on the physical world. Speech, contact and even combat are possible. Since it is impossible to actually harm another astral character, the goal of conflict is always to cut the opponent's silver cord (use Willpower points as the equivalent of Health Levels; when they are all lost, the cord is severed). The Physical Attributes are not, of course, effective, so Social or Mental Traits must take their place. Specifically, Wits replaces Dexterity, Manipulation replaces Strength, and Intelligence replaces Stamina.

While vampires do not actually travel in the spirit world while in this form, they can sometimes interact with it. Ghosts and Lupines traveling in the spirit world can sense them, and attempt to harm them. It is said that those who know the way may journey to Arcadia, otherwise known as Faerieland, by traveling through astral space, though that may also require a higher Auspex rating.

Celerity

This Discipline explains the superior quickness of vampires. A rating in Celerity allows a vampire to move extremely quickly in times of stress and take multiple actions in a single turn. While anyone can decide to split their Dice Pool during a single turn, a character with Celerity can perform extra actions without penalty.

One extra action is allowed per point of Celerity, and the vampire may use his entire Dice Pool for each one. One Blood Point must be spent every turn the character uses Celerity, even if he does not take all the actions allowed. For instance, if a vampire has a Celerity rating of 4, and wishes to take three actions in a single turn, he will still need to spend a Blood Point.

Dominate

This Discipline reflects the mystical ability of vampires to influence the minds and actions of others. Dominate is an aspect of the power of the mind and the will. It affects the judgment and mental functioning of the target, not the emotions.

Dominate always requires eye contact with the subject in order for it to be employed, and is thus sometimes known as the Piercing Gaze. It can therefore be used on only one subject at a time. It is one of the most powerful Disciplines, but can be exacting and difficult to employ. Orders and suggestions must always be given verbally to those who have been Dominated. The extent to which control over a subject is possible is delineated with each power below.

Those with the Dominate Discipline tend to be people who like control. Over time, those who rely upon it may become overtly manipulative and controlling. At the Storyteller's discretion, characters with high Dominate scores may be unable to spend experience points to increase Abilities such as Empathy.

There are some mortals known as "neutrals" who cannot be Dominated in any fashion, but only one in a million has this power. Additionally, the Inquisition knows certain rituals to render a mortal immune. The best of the witch-hunters are neutrals or are protected by such rituals.

Restrictions: It is impossible to Dominate another

vampire who is of stronger Blood - the character must be of an equal or earlier generation than the subject for Dominate to be effective. Vampires may resist any attempt at Domination by spending a Willpower point for each success gained in the Dominate roll. The subject is then immune to attempts at Domination for the rest of the scene. The target must spend the full Willpower; partial expenditures will do no good.

If a botch result is ever received on a Dominate roll, the target is rendered immune to future attempts by the same vampire for the rest of the story.

• Command the Wearied Mind

You are able to give a one-word command to another; the command must be obeyed instantly. This command must be a simple and concise word with only one meaning - jump, sit, stand, laugh, cry, run, hop, blink, smile, frown, cough. If the word is at all ambiguous, the subject will react with temporary confusion. You may include the word in a sentence, and only stress the command word slightly, thus concealing from others what you are doing.

System: The character must make a Manipulation + Intimidation roll (difficulty of the target's Willpower). More successes force the target to act with greater vigor.

•• Mesmerize

You can implant a suggestion into the unconscious mind of a subject. This requires intense concentration and the careful and precise use of instructions for the intent of your orders to be carried out properly. You may cause the mesmerization to take effect immediately, or you can designate the events which will trigger it.

You must maintain eye contact for as long as it takes to complete your command (roleplay it out, if you have the inclination); however, very complicated suggestions can be made. Careful wording is essential, as the target will unconsciously attempt to pervert the spirit of the suggestion as much as possible.

You may give exact commands to another person, like "climb up that ladder" or "pretend that you're a dog," or the control can last longer and be much more subtle. Maintaining eye contact is no longer necessary after the initial suggestion is given.

The suggestion cannot force the subject to do something against her innate Nature, and only one suggestion may be implanted in a subject at a time.

System: The player must roll Manipulation + Leadership (difficulty is the Willpower of the target). The number of successes determines how well the suggestion is implanted. With less than three successes, the subject cannot be forced to do anything which seems strange to her. The subject might walk outside, but is unlikely to pretend to be a chicken. With less than five successes, the suggestion is effective unless heeding it would endanger the subject. A businessman won't pick a fight with someone, but a bouncer will in a heartbeat. At five successes, nearly any sort of command can be made.

••• The Forgetful Mind

With this power, you can steal, create and remove memories from a subject. This is an effective technique for causing people to forget that you drank their blood or that they even met you. A lot of mischief can be caused with this power, as it is possible to steal nearly any memory

from a subject. The power is not always completely effective. For instance, the target might know someone bit her on the neck, but think it was a lover.

Sometimes a memory will return years later, confounding and frightening the subject.

System: The player rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty is the Willpower rating of the target) and then consults the following table to see how much may be done to the subject's memory.

1 success - Memory loss lasts but a day

2 successes - May remove, but not alter memory.

3 successes - May make slight alterations to memory.

4 successes - May alter or remove entire scene from subject's memory.

5 successes - Whole periods of subject's life may be reconstructed.

•••• Conditioning

Over time, an individual can be Conditioned so that she is thereafter unable to resist your Domination and is also more resistant to the Domination of others. Kindred often Condition their servants to ensure loyal retainers. The procedure works based on the fact that mortals who have been Dominated repeatedly have a harder time resisting future attempts.

Conditioning is not something that is effective on the drop of a hat. It takes time to carefully cultivate the subject's mind for the kind of control you will exercise. Fully conditioning a subject can take weeks or even months.

Conditioned retainers have very little imagination, and tend to obey the orders given them quite literally. The conditioning actually destroys some of their free will, turning them into automatons.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Leadership (difficulty is the target's Willpower). Conditioning is an extended action. The Storyteller will determine in secret how many successes are required, and keep track of how many are gained. Typically between five to 10 times the subject's Self-Control is required. The player will only know if a target is successfully Conditioned through roleplaying.

The subject becomes so completely Dominated that the vampire's presence, let alone eye contact, is no longer required to maintain absolute control. He does exactly as he is told as long as he is within earshot of his master. No command roll is necessary unless the subject cannot see the vampire at all. Even if a command roll is failed, the subject is still likely to carry out part of the orders given. Additionally, others will find the subject more difficult to Dominate, as Conditioning raises others' difficulties by two (to a maximum of 10).

••••• Possession

With this power you can take complete control of another person's mind and body. By actually entering the other person's mind, you may control her actions in a very precise manner. The subject is an automaton, completely incapable of independent action. While controlling the subject's mind, your body is as motionless as if it were in torpor.

You may not Possess other Kindred. Such control over other vampires is only possible through a Blood Bond.

System: In order to Possess another individual, a character must completely strip away the target's Willpower. The two square off in an opposed roll; the subject rolls Willpower, while the Possessor rolls Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty 7 for both). For every success the attacker obtains over the other's total successes, the target loses a point of Willpower. A victory by the subject does nothing but prolong the struggle, for each success provides her with that many extra dice to roll on the next turn. A botch by the attacker, however, makes the subject permanently immune to a character's Dominate attempts.

Fortitude

Fortitude describes a type of supernatural toughness and vigor which allows Kindred extra advantages in resisting the harm to which their kind is especially vulnerable. All vampires have a pow erful constitution, and are able to shrug off the injury inflicted by guns and weapons of all sorts. However, most are very susceptible to sunlight and fire, and are easily harmed by them. Those with Fortitude are not easily bowed by even these elemental forces, and are even more resistant to "normal" injuries

System: Fortitude provides the ability to resist sunlight and fire to those who possess it. For each level of Fortitude a character possesses, he may roll one die to soak damage from fire and sunlight. Fortitude is also added to a character's ability to soak other wounds (see Chapter Eight, pg. 190).

Obfuscate

Kindred with this Discipline excel at hiding among and away from crowds. When they do not wish to be seen, others, especially mortals, rarely notice them even if they stand right in front of a crowd. Though this Discipline affects others' minds and does not actually render the users invisible, the end result is much the same - Kindred employing Obfuscate simply can't be seen. However, surveillance devices still track the character normally.

Unless the vampire purposely makes herself seen, she can remain obscure indefinitely. At higher ratings, a vampire may slowly fade from the view of those around simply by not thinking about remaining in sight.

Auspex and Obfuscate are opposed to one another. When Obfuscate is used against a Kindred who possesses a higher Auspex score than a character's Obfuscate score, the character is unable to conceal himself from the searcher. However, if the hider's score is higher, then the Kindred is fooled normally.

While mortals normally have no ability to divine the location of Kindred with this Discipline, the Storyteller may rule that those with psychic powers may be able to see the vampire directly. Furthermore, child ren, especially those who retain their own unique perspective on the universe and have not fully accepted the reality imposed by their parents, are often able to see through Obfuscate.

• Cloak of Shadows

Your ability to conceal yourself is not yet fully dev eloped, so you need some sort of cover in order to hide yourself effectively (or at least you must be in a position that eyes easily pass over anyway). Most often, such cover is the shadows of an alley or a recessed door frame, but this power also works if you can interpose a tree or lamppost (no matter how narrow) between yourself and the ones from whom you hide.

Once under cover, you must remain completely motionless in order to remain obscured. If you move, if a light is turned on which would illuminate you, or if a viewer moves to an angle at which you are directly in his line of sight, the Cloak of Shadows fails.

System: No roll needs to be made, since the Obfuscate succeeds once the criteria have been met. However, those with Auspex higher than the character's Obfuscate will see right through the shadows.

•• Unseen Presence

Your powers of remaining unseen have become so potent that you can effectively cause yourself to disappear indefinitely and remain hidden even if you walk around.

You are completely ignored unless someone specifically looks for you. People will move about in ways that cause them to avoid you and will even take actions to remove themselves from your vicinity. Their unconscious minds will do nearly anything to prevent their conscious m inds from realizing that you are there.

System: No roll is normally required; however, if the character speaks or engages in violent physical activity (e.g. combat), she will probably draw attention to herself. The Storyteller may ask for a Wits + Stealth roll to determine how well the character remains unseen. At least three successes are required to allow her to speak and still not be seen.

••• Mask of the Thousand Faces

This potent ability does not hide you from the gaze of others, but makes you appear a s someone other than who you truly are. Your appearance does not actually change - you simply make people think they see someone else.

System: The player must roll Manipulation + Acting (difficulty 7) to determine how well the character assumes his mask. Refer to the chart to see how successful the attempt is.

1 success - People could still pick you out of a police lineup.

2 successes - The character looks somewhat different; subjects describe him differently.

3 successes - The desired look is successfully broadcast.

4 successes - Appearance, movement and actions are completely different.

5 successes - The character can even appear as someone of the opposite sex.

•••• Vanish from Mind's Eye

Your power has advanced to such a degree that you may actually disappear from plain view. Even if you are standing face to face with a mortal, you may exercise this power and simply vanish. Those who witness such a disappearing act, especially mortals, are normally stunned with indecision for a turn. One member of a large group might be able to react (such as to fire into the space where the character vanished), but this is the exception. Moreover, mortals with low strength of will may actually forget that they every saw you at all.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Stealth (difficulty is the Wits + Alertness of the target). If more

than three successes are obtained, the vampire completely disappears from sight. If the player obtains more successes than the target's Willpower, she completely forgets the vampire's existence, but the vampire must leave her presence immediately or be remembered.

••••• Cloak the Gathering

This incredibly manipulative power allows you to extend any of your Obfuscate powers to those around you. Not only are you concealed, but so is everyone else with you whom you wish to conceal.

If one character compromises the disguise or invisibility, then only she is no longer under the protection of your powers. However, if you compromise the position, the Cloak drops completely and everyone may be seen.

System: The character can conceal one additional individual for every point of Stealth possessed. See the appropriate power above to see what must be rolled to determine how successfully the power is used. A single roll determines the effectiveness for everyone; each character does not roll separately.

Potence

This Discipline defines the superior strength that vampires possess. This additional physical might allows great feats to be accomplished, far beyond what a normal mortal would be able to perform. Potence allows vampires to jump and leap greater distances, lift greater weights, and inflict greater harm upon objects and individuals when they are punched or hit.

System: The character's rating in Potence provides her with automatic successes on nearly any Strength roll - one automatic success per rating point. Thus she can succeed at most Strength rolls automatically without needing to make a roll at all. In melee and brawling combat, the automatic successes count on the damage roll.

Presence

A vampire with the Presence Discipline is exceptionally attractive and appealing to others. People want to be around the vampire, to bask in the brilliant light he sheds. He need not make any sort of overt or deliberate action, for Presence is a natural aspect of one's personality. Presence is a powerful, if subtle, Discipline.

The Presence Discipline is a power over the emotions of people, not their judgment or reason. Orders may not be given using Presence; the effect is completely nonverbal.

Presence causes others to feel things or react in certain ways toward the vampire, but direct manipulation of the mind is the domain of Dominate.

Unlike Dominate, it can be used on many people at the same time, nor is eye contact required for it to be effective. The vampire needs to be clearly in sight of those he wishes to affect, however, as his face must be seen clearly.

Those affected by Presence can use Willpower points to resist the effects for a turn, as with Dominate. During this time they are able to turn around, thereby escaping the effects more permanently. Kindred are usually savvy enough to do so, but mortals seldom are.

• Awe

When you employ this power, everyone near you becomes intensely attracted to you. They will do nearly anything to be close to you, although their fascination is not so complete that they will endanger themselves. The effects last only as long as the subjects are in your presence, but the next time they see you, the feelings are likely to be reawakened.

By carefully using this power, you can have phenomenal powers of mass communication. Since Presence uses emotion to sway victims, it doesn't really matter what is said, but you can more easily convince people of a certain course of action or the nobility of a purpose by using this Discipline.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Acting (difficulty 7). Those affected can use Willpower points to overcome the effect, but must continue spending Willpower every few minutes for as long as they remain in the same area as the character. However, as soon as a number of Willpower equivalent to the number of successes rolled is spent, the Awe is completely shaken off, and the subject can't be affected for the rest of the scene.

The number of successes rolled also determines how many people can be affected:

1 success - one person

2 successes - two people

3 successes - six people

4 successes - 20 people

5 successes - everyone in the vampire's immediate vicinity (e.g. an entire auditorium of people)

•• Dread Gaze

The exhibition of your full vampiric powers can cause great fear and loathing in mortals. This is usually accomplished by baring teeth and claws while hissing loudly. While most vampires can performing this action, you are exceptionally adept at it, and are capable of driving mortals insane with fear, or frightening them into submission or flight with the merest snarl. The subjects are cowed by your appearance and will do anything to avoid incurring your wrath.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Intimidation (difficulty is the victim's Wits + 3). Any success indicates that the target is cowed, while three or more successes indicate that he runs away in fear. Moreover, each success reduces the number of dice the victim is allowed to roll the next turn by one.

This roll may be attempted only once per turn, though if performed in successive turns, the vampire may collect successes as an extended roll in order to completely subjugate the target. Eventually the target may lose so many dice that he will be unable to do anything but curl up on the ground and weep. Failure indicates that the attempt has faltered. All collected successes are lost, the victim may act normally again and the player must start over next turn. A botch indicates the victim is not at all impressed, and any use of Presence by the character will not be effective against him again this story.

••• Entrancement

Entrancement is used to convince another to serve you. The subject of Entrancement will be enchanted with you and desire to serve your needs. However, unlike a person Possessed with Dominate powers, the subject of Entrancement retains her freedom of action and creativity.

This can be both good and bad.

The subject is certainly much more enjoyable to be around and tends to remind a vampire of the cruelty of control less often, but such a victim can be unpredictable in how she will attempt to please the Kindred. Because so much freedom of will is maintained, an Entranced person does not count as a new Retainer.

System: The player must roll Appearance + Empathy to Entrance a subject (difficulty of the target's Willpower). The number of successes determines how long the victim is Entranced. There is no way to extend a period of Entrancement; indeed, once the condition wears off, the victim is likely to think ill of the vampire.

1 success - one hour

2 successes - one day

3 successes - one week

4 successes - one month

5 successes - one year

•••• Summon

With this power, you may call a person from a very great distance and that person will come to attend your desires. The subject of the Summons may not know exactly why he is walking across the room toward the cloaked stranger, but the Kindred's powerful aura will completely entrance the subject.

Vampires have been known to Summon a person from halfway around the world; indeed, the subject will use the fastest and most direct means of travel to reach his master's side. Such is indeed possible, but in order to Summon a person who is out of sight, you must have previously met the person. A person who is Summoned knows exactly where to find you and will home in on that location flawlessly. If you Summon someone from New York to Chicago but subsequently depart for Seattle, the subject will arrange for travel to Seattle as well.

The exact time it takes for a subject to fulfill the Summons can vary, but the subject will always use the fastest available method of travel. Concerns like money limit the response time, but if the subject happens to be short of cash and can't afford a plane ticket, he will even hitchhike. The Summons must be repeated each day if it takes more than one day for the subject to reach the Summoner -each Summons roll lasts for 24 hours.

System: The player must roll Charisma + Subterfuge. Normally the difficulty for a Summon roll is five, but if the subject is a stranger, the difficulty increases to seven. If the Kindred has successfully used the Presence Discipline on the subject in the past, then the difficulty is only four, but if the target previously resisted the vampire's Presence attempt it is an eight. The number of successes indicates the subject's reaction:

1 success - Target approaches, but slowly and hesitantly

2 successes - Target approaches reluctantly and is easily thwarted by obstacles

3 successes - Target approaches with reasonable speed

4 successes - Target comes with haste, overcoming any obstacles in their way

5 successes - Target rushes to you, doing anything to get to you

••••• Majesty

You are almost universally respected and feared. Unless mortals or even Kindred stop to consider their feelings about you, they are likely to treat you respectfully without conscious thought. Indeed, the very sight of you causes jaws to drop in awe and even the most courageous to fear you. You simply seem so formidable that no one would even consider crossing you, let alone making a physical challenge. You will not be attacked or harmed in any way for as long as the effects of Majesty remain unresisted.

System: The subject must make a Courage roll (difficulty is the character's Charisma + Intimidation) if she wishes to be rude, crass or even non-servile to the vampire. A subject who fails the roll will go to absurd lengths to humble herself before the vampire. Kindred may spend a point of Willpower to overcome such feelings if the roll is failed.

Protean

This Discipline allows a vampire to transform either her entire body or a part of her body into something inhuman. The vampire can thus grow claws, turn into a bat, meld into the earth or transform into mist.

A vampire can use most other Disciplines while shapeshifted. Thus, a Kindred in animal form may still read auras and communicate with animals. Only when a vampire is in mist form should additional restrictions be applied. For example, eye contact cannot be made, so Dominate powers cannot function. Additionally, while personal possessions and clothes transform with the character, larger objects will not.

No transformations are possible when a vampire is staked through the heart. Some suspect that this is possible at higher levels of ability, but it has never been confirmed.

• Gleam of Red Eyes

You can see perfectly in normal darkness. Limited vision is even possible in absolute darkness (e.g. an underground cave where there is no light at all), a fact that perplexes the scientific-minded among the Kindred. When this power is activated, your eyes glow an eerie red.

System: No roll need be made, but it takes one full turn for the change to occur.

•• Wolf Claws

You are able to grow an inch-long claw on each finger. These claws make excellent weapons in combat and can be used in many attacks. Wounds caused by the claws are especially vicious; indeed, the wounds are aggravated and cannot be healed normally through the use of Blood Points.

System: No roll need be made; the transformation is automatic and takes but one turn to accomplish. However, one Blood Point must be spent each time the claws are grown.

••• Earth Meld

One of the most prized powers that a vampire can possess, Earth Meld has saved the lives of countless vampires through the ages. This power enables you to make the earth part of yourself and thus merge with it. Others viewing your use of Earth Meld will simply see you sink

into the ground.

You can only sink into earth. It is absolutely impossible to meld into earth through another substance. For example, while there may be earth underneath it, a linoleum floor completely prohibits the use of this power.

Earth Meld is a great way to find cover when outdoors. Being one with the earth prevents contact with sunlight and also provides a way to sleep away the centuries. Many ancient vampires use Earth Meld to rest in safety, and thereby gain strength and power. Some whisper that thousands of Ancients sleep within the ground and will awaken on the night of Gehenna.

System: No roll is necessary and the transformation is automatic, but a Blood Point must be spent.

•••• Shadow of the Beast

You may transform into either a wolf or a bat. When in the form of either creature, you benefit from all of the obvious advantages, such as the increased senses of the wolf or the bat's ability to fly.

System: No roll is required, but the transformation requires the expenditure of one Blood Point. It takes three turns to complete the transformation (though the Storyteller may allow it in one turn with the expenditure of three Blood Points).

••••• Form of Mist

You possess the vampiric power of legend to transform into mist. Your very essence seems to slowly float apart when this power is employed.

Many advantages are gained in mist form. You can float in any direction at walking speed, are not affected by physical attacks, and can slip through the tiniest of openings with ease. Additionally, you take one less die of damage from sunlight.

Contrary to popular opinion, vampires in mist form are not particularly vulnerable to powerful winds. Wind, even that of hurricane strength, cannot tear a mist form apart. However, strong winds can blow the vapor cloud about just as any other object can be pushed. Only your Potence should be taken into account when determining how stiff a wind you can resist.

System: No roll is required, but the transformation requires the expenditure of one Blood Point. It takes three turns to complete the transformation (though the Storyteller may allow it to take place in only one turn with the expenditure of three Blood Points).

Thaumaturgy

Few Kindred are able to practice the rigorous discipline of Thaumaturgy. This is the practice of blood magic, and is largely the province of the Tremere Clan, who created it and guard its secrets jealously.

This magic is directly descended from the theories and practices of the Order of Hermes, a medieval order of magi. While few humans know aught of blood magic, this art has been developed for centuries by the Tremere to take advantage of their vampiric strengths. Tremere Thaumaturgy is despised and feared by most mortal wizards.

Thaumaturgy also allows the wielder to use rituals, as well as a number of different paths: the Lure of Flames,

Movement of the Mind, and Weather Control. These are discussed immediately following the treatment of blood magic proper.

• A Taste for Blood

You possess a variety of simple Perception-based abilities that relate to blood. You may determine how much blood is left in a Kindred or mortal, how recently a vampire has fed

and the approximate generation of a vampire. You must touch the blood in order to be able to tell anything about it.

System: The player must roll Perception + Occult (difficulty 7). The number of successes determines how much information is received and how accurate it is.

•• Blood Rage

With but a touch, the character can force another Kindred to use her blood whether she wants to or not. Thus a vampire may find her Strength suddenly increasing and have no idea why. Additionally, since the vampire becomes more excitable, the difficulties of all frenzy rolls for the rest of the scene increase by one.

System: The player must roll Dexterity + Subterfuge against a difficulty of the target's Willpower. Every success forces the target to immediately spend one Blood Point in a way the Thaumaturgist desires.

••• Blood of Potency

You may perform manipulations of blood which make the blood within your body more potent for a short time, thereby lowering your effective generation.

System: Roll Manipulation + Survival (difficulty 8); successes must be spent both to decrease the vampire's generation and create a duration in hours.

•••• Theft of Vitae

You can mystically transfer blood into your system from a distance and even drain the Blood Pools of other creatures to add to your own.

System: The player must roll Intelligence + Medicine against a difficulty of six if the blood is stationary (such as in a blood bank) or against the target's Willpower if attacking another being. The number of successes determines how many Blood Points are transferred. The blood to be stolen must be within 50 feet and in clear view, and the source of the attack will be obvious.

••••• Cauldron of Blood

You are capable of manipulating others' blood. By touching another, you are able to boil her blood, not only causing incredible physical harm but destroying much of her blood as well. This virtually ensures the death of any mortal whom you perform this upon, and can inflict great harm upon vampires as well.

System: The player must roll Willpower against a difficulty equal to the number of Blood Points the vampire wishes to boil at once + 4 (maximum 10). The victim also takes one wound for every point boiled.

Rituals

Rituals are meticulously prepared, but powerful, magical spells which must be performed under highly specific circumstances and according to exacting procedures. All Kindred who know Thaumaturgy also have the ability to cast rituals. By learning the basic concepts of blood magic, an apprentice acquires a familiarity with the magical formulas required to cast rituals.

Each ritual in **Vampire** is rated in power from one to five (or higher). A character must have a Thaumaturgy rating at least equal to the power level of the ritual in order to perform it successfully. Rituals take at least five minutes per level to cast.

Sometimes material components are required, as stipulated by the ritual itself. These could include such things as feathers, wood splinters, mud, herbs, bones, eye of newt and frogs' toes. Blood is used in many rituals.

At the first level of Thaumaturgy, the vampire automatically gains a single Level One ritual. In order to learn further rituals, a character must find a teacher (or scroll) to instruct him in the proper procedures and incantations. Learning how to perform a ritual properly can take anywhere from only a few days (Level One ritual) to many years (Level Five ritual).

Below are examples of some Level One rituals. If you want to include higher-level rituals in your chronicle, you will need to create them yourself.

Defense of the Sacred Haven

This one-hour ritual ensures that no sunlight may pass through any window within 20 feet of where the ritual is performed. Sunlight is simply reflected by the windows. This ritual functions only as long as the Kindred who performs it stays within the area of effect. A drop of blood - the caster's own - must be placed on each window in the ritual's area of effect. At least one Blood Point will thus be used.

Wake with Morning's (Evening's) Freshness

This half-hour ritual must be performed immediately before a vampire prepares to sleep through the coming day. A period of complete meditation is required. Any interruption or performance of other activities after the ritual, but before sleep, will render the magic ineffective. The ritual allows the protected Kindred to immediately awaken at any sign of danger during the next day. The rule regarding how Humanity restricts the number of dice usable during the day is waived for the first two turns of action. Thereafter, it is once again effective, but no matter what the character's Humanity or condition, he will awaken in time to (hopefully) alleviate the danger. Feathers are required to perform this ritual, and they must be burned and the ashes spread over the sleeping area.

Communicate with Kindred Sire

This very practical ritual takes only five minutes. Upon completion, the ritual allows a vampire to speak telepathically at any distance with his sire. The ritual has been modified throughout the years to also allow the vampire to speak with any Kindred who has been Blood Bound to the caster, or even anyone who has partaken of the caster's blood since the most recent sunset. The communication is two-way, but unlike the Auspex power of Telepathy, the vampire may not probe the target's mind. The caster need to possess an item which once belonged to her sire.

Deflection of Wooden Doom

The caster of this hour-long ritual must be completely surrounded by a circle of wood. Anything wooden, even furniture or wood shavings, will work, but the circle must be unbroken. Thereafter, the caster need not fear being staked until the sun next sets. Though only the first attempt is deflected, any wooden stake that is about to plunge through the vampire's heart will instead instantly disintegrate. In order to activate the power of the ritual, the stake must have actually been ready to penetrate the vampire. A stake merely held near the Kindred's heart will not be affected. A wooden splinter must be placed in the caster's mouth at the end of the ritual (if the splinter is taken out, the ritual is nullified).

Devil's Touch

This ritual curses a mortal, causing all those around who do not have a close emotional tie with the subject to feel a distinct dislike for him. They will hate the mortal and will do all they can to make the mortal's life miserable. This effect lasts for one night, only disappearing with the first light of day. The mortal needs to be present for the ritual to be effective, and a penny (or any coin owned by the caster) must be placed somewhere upon the mortal's person (such as in a pocket).

Paths

The other powers gained by continuing study in the arts of Thaumaturgy usually come from one of three paths - the Lure of Flames, Movement of the Mind and Weather Control. These paths must be initially learned from a tutor or text during the chronicle, and may not be taken during character creation. Experience points are also necessary to acquire and progress in these paths; the costs for such are listed in Chapter Eight.

Each time these individual powers are employed, a Blood Point must be spent and a Willpower roll must be made against a difficulty of the power's level +3. A failure on the roll indicates that the magic fails, but the Willpower point is not lost. A botch indicates that the Willpower point is lost as well.

The Lure of Flames

The character can create flames. Only small ones are possible at low levels of ability, but larger and hotter flames can be ignited by those proficient in Thaumaturgy. The character can create the flame anywhere within line of sight, but must roll Perception + Alertness to properly place it unless it is upon his own body. The flames created by this path are unnatural and cannot burn objects until they have been released by the Kindred. Therefore, a "palm of flame" will not burn the vampire's hand and create an aggravated wound - it will only produce light. Additionally, if the Thaumaturgist ignites his own body, those grappling with him will not suffer.

1 success - Candle

2 successes - Palm of flame

3 successes - Camp fire

4 successes - Bonfire

5 successes - Conflagration

Movement of the Mind

This path enables the user to mentally control objects' motions. Objects may be lifted, moved, spun in circles, or

whatever. If this path is practiced on a living creature, the subject can attempt to resist; caster and subject match Willpower in an opposed roll. Objects cannot be moved faster than the character can move himself, so objects cannot be "thrown" with any great ability. However, objects may be manipulated as if by the vampire's own hands: axes can chop at people or trees, and guns may be fired, assuming the Kindred is advanced enough to lift the object.

The weight of the object moved is very important: a certain rating is necessary to even attempt to move certain objects. Once a vampire achieves a rating of three, he is able to levitate himself, no matter how much he weighs. Otherwise, weight restrictions apply.

1 success - one pound

2 successes - 20 pounds

3 successes - 200 pounds

4 successes - 500 pounds

5 successes - 1/2 ton

Weather Control

This path allows a character to affect the weather. The difficulty of the magic depends on the weather at the time. It is very hard (difficulty 9) to pull lightning down from a sunny sky, but it's easy to create fog in London (difficulty 3).

The player must roll Manipulation + Survival. The number of successes determines the strength of the new environmental force and how much damage is caused by the lightning bolt.

1 success - Fog

2 successes - Rain

3 successes - Wind

4 successes - Storm

5 successes - Lightning Strike (Roll 10 damage dice, difficulty to hit as per firearm range)

Backgrounds

It was many years ago that I became what I am.

I was trapped in this life like an innocent lamb.

Now I can never show my face at noon

And you'll only see me walking by the light of the moon.

The brim of my hat hides the eye of a beast

I've the face of a sinner, but the hands of a priest.

- Sting, "Moon over Bourbon Street"

These Traits describe the special advantages of your character. However, you must choose why and how you came to possess these particular Traits. Where did you get your Resources? What kind of Contacts do you have? Where does all of this Influence come from? Make sense out of your Background Traits and integrate them into your character concept.

Rolls can be made using these Traits to obtain information, resources or favors. Frequently, these Background Traits are used in conjunction with an Attribute, such as rolling Charisma + Influence to get the police off your back, or Wits + Resources to get your parents to write you that one last check - as a loan, of course.

Allies

Your Allies are mortals who help and support you - they could be family or friends, or even an organization to which you are friendly. Allies have their own lives to live, so they are not at your beck and call, but they often have Influence in the community and access to Contacts or Resources. An Ally is ultimately a mortal whom you have befriended, and who protects and aids you out of love or common interest.

For each point of Allies that you have, you have one Ally. This individual is a person of influence in the city where she lives. An Ally could be a police sergeant, an advisor to the mayor, or even (if your rating is a 4 or 5) the mayor herself.

Allies are generally very trustworthy and loyal. However, it requires time and energy to maintain the alliance, for the friends expect the aid of the character in return in time of need. Though they likely do not know you are a vampire, they may know of some of your powers and thus may come to you for favors. This is often a means by which a story can begin.

• One Ally, of moderate influence and power

•• Two Allies, both of them of moderate power

••• Three Allies, one of them quite influential

•••• Four Allies, one of them very influential

••••• Five Allies, one of them extremely influential

Contacts

You know people from many different walks of life, and they comprise a system of information and help that could come in very handy some day.

Your Contacts are not only the people you can manipulate or bribe to get information, but friends whom you can really count on (Major Contacts) to provide you with accurate information (in their areas of expertise). You should describe your Major Contacts as complete characters, either as the chronicle progresses or beforehand. You also have a number of Minor Contacts spread throughout the city. When you wish to get in touch with a Minor Contact, make a roll using your Contacts rating against a difficulty of seven. Each success means you have gotten in touch with one of your Minor Contacts; of course, you will need to bribe or charm her into giving you needed information.

• One Major Contact

•• Two Major Contacts

••• Three Major Contacts

•••• Four Major Contacts

••••• Five Major Contacts

Fame

You are widely known among the mortals, perhaps as a movie star or writer. This gives you great privileges when you travel among the mortals, but it can also attract just a bit too much attention. Fame can grant a lot of pull in the

mass media, allowing you to attempt to manipulate the thoughts of the populace.

Sometimes Fame can seem like more trouble than it is worth, causing you to be recognized when you don't wish to be seen. However, there are many circumstances where it can come in handy, like getting you into clubs, parties and appointments that you otherwise would not have been able to attend. You are also harder for your enemies to physically dispose of, as you cannot just "disappear." Sometimes Fame will be used with Manipulation in order to make a roll ("See

if you can convince the doorman to let you in - difficulty of 8."), but more often it is simply used as a measure of how well-known you are. Each level of Fame subtracts one from the difficulty of hunting rolls in heavily populated areas (people tend to flock to you).

• You are known by a select subculture of society in the city; e.g. among the elite

•• Your face is recognized by a majority of the populace; local celebrity

••• You are fairly famous; your name and face are known by many

•••• You are quite renowned; everybody knows something about you

••••• You are a nationally famous individual - a movie star, politician or performer

Generation

This Trait describes what generation of vampire you are. This is crucial in determining the ultimate potential of the character. If you do not take Generation, you begin as a vampire of the 13th generation. See the Setting chapter for more information on generations.

• Twelfth Generation: 11 Blood Pool, can spend 1 Blood Point a turn

•• Eleventh Generation: 12 Blood Pool, can spend 1 Blood Point a turn

••• Tenth Generation: 13 Blood Pool, can spend 1 Blood Point a turn

•••• Ninth Generation: 14 Blood Pool, can spend 2 Blood Points a turn

••••• Eighth Generation: 15 Blood Pool, can spend 3 Blood Points a turn

Herd

You have built a group of mortals from whom you can feed without fear. This Herd also helps protect you and can be used to perform a number of different services. However, the Herd is not as tightly controlled nor as loyal as Retainers, and are not as closely connected to you as Allies. Ultimately, the Herd describes only the number of Vessels you have readily available. Your Herd rating adds dice to your Hunt rolls, as described in Chapter Nine.

• 3 vessels

•• 7 vessels

••• 15 vessels

•••• 30 vessels

••••• 60 vessels

Influence

Influence reflects your ability to produce results when attempting to sway or control the political and social processes of the mortal community. It is the ability to compel a mortal to take action on your behalf, perhaps because of some hold you have over him. This could mean that you have a prestigious family, control the police chief, or simply that you have gained political office. In short, Influence is how much political power you exert upon society, particularly among the police and bureaucrats.

Some rolls might use Influence in place of an Ability, especially when you start to interact with any sort of minor bureaucrat.

• Moderately influential; a factor in local politics

•• Well-connected; a factor in city politics

••• Position of influence; a factor in state politics

•••• Broad personal power; a factor in regional politics

••••• Vastly influential; a factor in national politics

Mentor

This Trait describes one or more elders (your sire?) who look after you. Each rating point of Mentor you possess describes how powerful your Mentor is in the community of the Kindred. Your Mentor could simply be a vampire who has learned her way around the city, or an Ancient who has garnered huge amounts of power in both the mortal and immortal worlds. Your Mentor can advise you, protect you from other elders, speak for you to the prince, caution you when you intrude on the affairs of other elders, and inform you of opportunities for power and advancement.

Often a Mentor is your sire, though it can be any vampire who has taken interest in you. If your Mentor is powerful, it might not be a single person, but a group. Thus, a brood could be a Mentor, as could the ruling council of a clan. Tremere often have the Mentor Background Trait because of the aid they receive from their elders.

A Mentor may expect to receive something in return for the aid she provides. Though she may simply enjoy your company, in time of need she may call upon her "apprentice." This may begin a number of excellent stories. In general, however, you do receive more than you need to give out.

• Mentor is an ancilla, and of little influence.

•• Mentor is an elder and is well respected.

••• Mentor is a member of the primogen

•••• Mentor is a prince and has much power over the city.

••••• Mentor is a Justicar and is extraordinarily powerful.

Resources

This Trait describes your financial resources, or your access to such resources. Your Resources are not 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.

This Trait assumes that you gain a basic allowance each month, appropriate to the level of Resources. However, you must detail the source of this income, as it might well "dry up" depending on the circumstances of the chronicle.

• Small savings: You have an apartment and perhaps a motorcycle. If liquidated, you would have $1000 in cash. Allowance of $500 a month.

•• Middle class: You have an apartment or condominium. If liquidated, you would have $8,000 in cash. Allowance of $1200 a month.

••• Large savings: You own a house (or at least have some equity). If liquidated, you would have $50,000 in cash. Allowance of $3000 a month.

•••• Well off: You own a very large house, or perhaps a dilapidated mansion. If liquidated, you would have $500,000 in cash. Allowance of $9000 a month.

••••• Fantastically rich: you are easily a millionaire many times over. If liquidated, you would have at least $5,000,000 in cash. Allowance of $30,000 a month.

Retainers

You have one or more servants and assistants who are your loyal and steadfast companions. Retainers may be ghouls who are Blood Bound to you, individuals whom you have so Dominated over the years that they are incapable of independent action, or individuals whom you have so overwhelmed with your Presence that they would do anything for you.

Retainers must always be controlled in some way, either through a salary, through the donation of your blood, or through the direct control of their minds. They may not always be loyal, though typically they are. If given the chance, they may betray you, depending on how well they have been treated.

Retainers should not be supermen, even if they are ghouls. Each should have a weakness. For instance, one Retainer might be very loyal, but not very skilled. Another Retainer might be very powerful, but have a very independent mind. No retainer should ever be the perfect bodyguard; nothing is that easy in **Vampire**. Retainers are meant to be characters in and of themselves - something to add flavor to the chronicle. Do not let them be abused.

• One Retainer

•• Two Retainers

••• Three Retainers

•••• Four Retainers

••••• Five Retainers

Status

You have something of a reputation and a standing within the community of Kindred (which in the character's case almost always means the Camarilla). It is usually determined by your sire's Status and the respect your particular bloodline is due.

The more Status you have, the less ill-treated you are by the elders, and the more respected you are. Anarchs can be considered to have zero Status, unless they have garnered so much power and attention that they must be treated seriously. Status is sometimes used in rolls with Social Traits and reflects your prestige in such instances.

• Known: a neonate

•• Respected: an ancilla

••• High Status: an elder

•••• Powerful: a member of the primogen

••••• Luminary: a prince

Virtues

Only the free have disposition to be truthful,

Only the truthful have the interest to be just,

Only the just possess the will-power to be free.

- W.H. Auden, "In Time of War: Commentary"

These three aspects of your character describe his orientation on life and his essential integrity and moral strength. These Traits are intended to help you understand and direct your characters, not force a certain action upon them. However, a vampire is a creature of great passion, and sometimes Virtue rolls are required, with failure indicating that the character is not restrained enough to avoid going into a frenzy, not remorseful enough to avoid losing Humanity, or not brave enough to conquer terrifying circumstances.

Conscience

Tolerant and merciful of heart, even to those who have harmed or betrayed you, you find it hard to hold a grudge and make every effort to forgive those who have injured or betrayed you.

Conscience is a Trait of self-awareness which enables you to evaluate your own conduct. The judgments made by Conscience stem from your attitudes, ideals and morals. They are internalized prescriptions of self-worth and the voice of the real self - not the facade you might present to the world. Conscience rolls are made to determine whether you feel remorse for immoral acts, and therefore do not lose Humanity.

• Chaste

•• Moral

••• Just

•••• Charitable

••••• Remorseful

Self-Control

You are a person of great temperance and self-mastery. You have the discipline and the self-restraint to prevent yourself from doing things your impulses would otherwise have you do. This Trait indicates the amount of control you have over your feelings, emotions and most importantly, actions.

Self-Control is used to resist going into a frenzy. When you use Self-Control, you can never roll more dice than the points you currently have in your Blood Pool. Quite simply, the hungrier you are, the less easily can you resist. See the Frenzy section of the next chapter for more information.

• Calm

•• Temperate

••• Disciplined

•••• Hardened

••••• Total self-mastery

Courage

You are a person of bravery, tenacity, and considerable perseverance. Courage is a quality of the mind that enables you to stand up in the face of opposition, hardship or danger. Courage is used to resist running away in terror from things a vampire instinctively fears, such as the sun, fire or a cross held by a person with holy powers. See the Terror section of the next chapter for more information.

• Bold

•• Dauntless

••• Steadfast

•••• Gallant

••••• Valorous

Humanity

Maybe there's no haven in this world for tender age

My heart beat like the wings of wild birds in a cage

My greatest hope my greatest cause to grieve

And my heart flew from its cage and it bled upon my sleeve

The cries of passion were like wounds that needed healing

I couldn't hear them for the thunder.

- Indigo Girls, "Prince of Darkness"

Humanity is a measure of how much of your character's mortal nature remains despite the curse of vampirism. Humanity influences how well your character is able to resist all her newly unearthed urges and instincts. The most important Trait your character can have is Humanity, for as it drops, so does the character's connection to her human nature. A character with no rating in Humanity becomes a totally inhuman monster and is no longer under the control of the player. A new character must be created if the player wishes to continue playing.

This is the basic reason why you want to preserve your character's Humanity, but there are many others. For instance, you cannot roll more dice in any Empathy roll than you have as a Humanity rating. The less Humanity you have, the deeper you sleep, and the more difficult it is for you to wake up in an emergency. You also tend to go into a frenzy more often in stressful situations, as you find it difficult to control your primal instincts when you are in danger. The actions you take when in frenzy could lead you to lose even more Humanity.

This Trait can be seen as what separates a vampire from a human. Vampires with high Humanity are the most human, while those with low Humanity are brutal and monstrous. Of course, it's not as clean-cut as that; many humans have a low Humanity - sadistic killers for example - so it's possible for a vampire to be even more human than some humans.

x Monstrous

• Horrific

•• Bestial

••• Cold

•••• Unfeeling

••••• Distant

•••••• Removed

••••••• Normal

•••••••• Caring

••••••••• Compassionate

•••••••••• Humane

Effects of Humanity

• To a large extent, Humanity determines how human vampires appear and how easily they can pass for human in the general populace. The less Humanity a character possesses, the more bestial he appears.

•Vampires tend to sleep very deeply and, even if there is danger, can be difficult to wake up. During the day, especially after being awakened, you cannot roll more dice on *any roll* for *any action* than your character's rating in Humanity. See the Awakenings section of the Drama chapter for more information on how Humanity affects activities during the day.

•Humanity directly affects Virtue rolls when you attempt to resist going into frenzy. You cannot roll more dice that your character's Humanity. Therefore, as you sink into the abyss of bestiality, you can not long resist the call of the wild. As Humanity is lost, the character inches slowly closer to the day when he loses all self-control.

• The length of time spent in torpor is also directly affected by the Humanity rating. The lower the character's Humanity, the longer he remains in torpor.

Willpower

The need comes upon me, a wash of lust and craving which I cannot resist. Like a tree against the storm, I do not bend but eventually I will break. I may wait, containing my desire for week upon week, allowing the agony to mount, but eventually I can resist no more and I must kill again....

- Thomas Braundenburg, *Soul Whisper*

Willpower measures how capable a character is at overcoming the urges and desires that may tempt her. However, unlike other Traits, it is not something you roll (at least not often); Willpower is something that you use up. When you use a point of Willpower, you remove it from the character's Willpower Pool (the squares), not from the Willpower rating (the circles). The rating stays constant, while the Pool gets used up during the story.

Willpower from the Willpower Pool goes up and down a great deal during a story. It decreases by one every time the player uses a Willpower point to do something extraordinary, such as to retain self-control or gain an automatic success. Eventually, the character will have no Willpower left and will no longer be able to exert himself the way he once did. The character is mentally exhausted and can't rouse himself enough to give a damn - he's expended all his Willpower.

• Weak

•• Timid

••• Unassertive

•••• Diffident

••••• Certain

•••••• Confident

••••••• Strong

•••••••• Controlled

••••••••• Iron-willed

•••••••••• Unshakable

Using Willpower

Willpower is one of the most active Traits in **Vampire**, simply because there are so many different ways to employ, regain and change it. Willpower is such a focus of the game that you will be paying a lot of attention to it, so you had better understand the following rules.

• A Willpower point can be used to give you one automatic success in an action. Only one point of Willpower can be used in this way on a single turn, but it gives you a single guaranteed success. In this fashion it is possible to succeed automatically in any simple action, simply by concentrating. For extended rolls, the extra success can make the critical difference between success and failure. There are some situations in which the Storyteller may not allow such a use of Willpower. Only vampires may use Willpower in this way.

•On some occasions, the Storyteller may tell you that your character does something because of instinct, primal urge or gut reaction ("You run away from the window in mortal terror as the sunlight streams through."). You can use a point of Willpower to avoid this and do as you please. However, the feeling might return and another Willpower point might be required. Sometimes it will return more times than you have Willpower, while other times you may completely overcome the urge.

•When one of your Derangements is about to cause you to take a course of action you do not prefer, a Willpower point can be used to control yourself. However, each time you attempt to overcome the Derangement, another Willpower point must be spent. Eventually, if enough Willpower points are spent, the Derangement is overcome permanently. This is the only way Derangements can be overcome, though this is not effective on a Malkavian's initial Derangement.

Willpower can only be permanently increased by the expenditure of experience points, but the Willpower Pool can go through enormous changes during a story. Discussed below are all the different ways Willpower can change.

Recovering Willpower

A character recovers her Willpower Pool whenever she is able to rest or gets a chance to restore her self-confidence. It is up to the Storyteller to decide when and how a character recovers Willpower.

Listed below are the three different ways in which a character can regain Willpower. This does not have anything to do with the Willpower rating (which can be changed only with experience).

• At the end of the story (not a game session), characters regain their Willpower - **all** of it is recovered, up to the amount of the Willpower rating. The Storyteller may wish to restrict them somewhat by insisting the characters

attain some modicum of self-pride or achieve moderate success in the story. *e.g. The story ends with a partial stalemate. You didn't get everything you were after, but didn't embarrass yourself either. Recover all your Willpower.*

• (Optional) You achieve some special success during the story that the Storyteller judges would cause the character to recover her self-confidence (and thus all or some of her Willpower). *e.g. You rescue your father from the Sabbat just before he was to receive the Embrace. Regain three Willpower points.*

• (Optional) You fulfill some criterion of the character's chosen Archetype, thus regaining from one to three Willpower points, subject to Storyteller judgment. This must be achieved through roleplaying, and approved by the Storyteller. *e.g. As a Conniver, you manage to trick the bartender into giving you the key to his car. Regain two Willpower for that scam.*

If none of the options above suit your style of play, consider allowing the characters to regain one point of Willpower after they wake up each evening. It's a simple way to organize it because they are already subtracting a point from the Blood Pool, and it guarantees a steady recovery of Willpower.

Blood Pool

Why do your locks and rumpled clothes show

'Tis more than usual sleep has made them so?

Why are the kisses which he gave betrayed

By the impression which his teeth have made?

- Ovid

This is simply a measure of how much blood a vampire has in its system. The Blood Pool can be empty, which simply means that the character has used up all available blood in his body system. He will then lose a Health Level the next time the rules require him to lose a Blood Point (such as when a night passes). In other words, when the Blood Pool is empty, the character may not use Blood Points.

Blood Pool is an important factor in all Self-Control rolls. You may never roll more dice on any roll involving the Self-Control Trait than you currently have as a score in your Blood Pool. Thus if you only have three Blood Points left, you can only roll three dice to avoid going into a frenzy, even if your Self-Control is four. This reflects the negative effect hunger has on Self-Control.

Some Kindred of earlier generations will have Blood Pools larger than 10 Blood Points. If a character ever gains the ability to have more than 10 Blood Points, simply have her draw dots in pen below the dots already shown.

Using Blood Pool

Every night of existence uses up one Blood Point (scratch it off after a day of sleep). However, characters can decide to use Blood Points for other purposes. The number of Blood Points a character can use per turn is determined by her generation, though the effect is cumulative over a number of turns.

•One Blood Point can be spent to restore one Health Level, but only if the character is at rest and is not active. It takes one turn to heal one Health Level. See the Development chapter for more information.

•One Blood Point can add one point to a specific Physical Attribute (Strength, Dexterity or Stamina). The player must announce the expenditure of a Blood Point, and for the remainder of the scene, she gains one extra die. Only one Blood Point can be used per turn, but the effects accumulate over a number of turns as more Blood Points are used. After three turns and three Blood Points, a character could have +2 Strength and +1 Dexterity. Of course, Kindred of lower generations can often spend more blood in a turn.

• A vampire can give a portion of her Blood Pool to another, thus enabling him to restore Health Levels or take special actions. This necessitates the slashing open an artery and letting the other character drink from it. Some characters may frenzy and attempt to drink more than they should, so this action can be somewhat dangerous. Additionally, if this is the third time someone has drunk a certain Kindred's blood, the recipient will become Blood Bound to the donor unless he is already currently Blood Bound to another vampire.

When a character drinks the blood of an animal or human, she gains nourishment - the blood essential for a vampire to live. This is described in the game as Blood Points. If a character has 10 Blood Points (or slightly more, depending on generation), she is full and cannot benefit from drinking more. If a vampire drinks all of a person's blood, that person will die. If more than half is drunk, the person will need to be hospitalized and will perhaps die (mortals drop one

Health Level for every Blood Point lost). If characters do not want to risk losing Humanity, they'd better learn to control themselves.

Blood Point Chart

Source	Blood Pool size
Vampire	10 - 50
Lupine	25
Average Human	10
Child	6
Cow	5
Dog	2
Cat	1
Plasma Bag	1
Rat	1/2
Bird	1/4

Gaining Blood Pool

When a vampire drinks the blood of a human or an animal, she is able to add blood to her Blood Pool. Up to three Blood Points can be drained in one turn. The shorter the turn, the less leisurely the character is taking the sustenance. Many Kindred drink very slowly so as to eke more pleasure out of the experience. It is impossible to take more than three Blood Points in three seconds (the shortest an action turn gets).

Once a human is bitten, he no longer resists the attack of the vampire and indeed becomes a full partner in the ecstasy. Thus, the vampire need not fear the victim once the teeth have sunk in. In the cases of exceptionally strong-willed individuals (9+ Willpower), resistance may continue, but eventually even they are drawn into the seduction of the Kiss. Some mortals, given the opportunity, learn to enjoy the Kiss and may develop a lust for it.

If a vampire drinks more than half of a victim's Blood Pool, that person's life is in serious danger, and some sort of treatment is usually necessary to ensure the victim's survival. If mor e than three-fourths of a victim's blood is taken, immediate hospitalization is required or the vessel will surely die.

A wounded character usually has less blood than normal. Assume that a normal-sized human has one fewer Blood Point for every level of wounds. Vampires do not lose blood to wounds in this way. Assume humans regain one Blood Point a day if they do not have a full supply of blood. While some animals may have much more blood than a human by volume, it is far less nourishing and therefore is worth less in Blood Points.

Old blood is never as potent as fresh blood, unless it is extraordinarily potent, e.g. the blood of an elder, in which case it will maintain its vitality for some time.

If a vampire drinks the blood of an Ancient, each point taken may be worth two Blood Points or more. Therefore, it is possible to gain a tremendous amount of Blood Points by feeding from such creatures. Elders are able to concentrate the blood they drink, thereby increasing their effective Blood Pools. Each "point" of *their* Blood Pools is therefore worth 1/10th of their total Blood Pools.

Essentially, elders have much larger Blood Pools than other vampires, although they are not physically larger. They are able to contain the blood only because they are able to concentrate it. Thus, if another vampire drank that blood, she would receive a highly concentrated dose (which often has special properties as well). The blood of Lupines is just as potent; see the section on werewolves in the Appendix.

Health

And he that will this health deny,

Down among the dead men let him lie.

- John Dyer, "Toast: Here's a Health to the King"

This is a measure of how hale and hearty a character is. There are various levels of injury, and each applies a different penalty to the person so injured. A character who is Hurt, -1, would have one less die to roll on all her rolls, while a character who is Crippled, -5, would have five less dice to roll. If that leaves the player with no dice to roll, then the character cannot take that action.

Health Levels		
Bruised:		Character is only bruised and has no action penalties.
Hurt:	-1	Character is only mildly hurt; movement isn't hindered.

Injured:	-1	Minor injuries; little hindrance to movement.
Wounded:	-2	Character cannot run, but can still walk.
Mauled:	-2	Character is badly injured and can only hobble about.
Crippled:	-5	Character is severely injured and can only crawl.
Incapacitated:		Character is completely

	incapable of movement.

A vampire who is Incapacitated can take no action whatsoever. He is immobilized and the only action he can perform is to heal himself using Blood Points or swallow blood that is offered to him. A mortal who reaches this state is very close to death; if she loses one more Health Level, she dies. If a vampire sustains an aggravated wound at the Incapacitated level, he dies the Final Death as well.

Chapter Eight:
Systems

Nothing determines who we will become so much as those things we choose to ignore.
- Sandor McNab

This chapter discusses the different ways a character can change during the course of the chronicle. It describes many different systems for resolving changes to characters, whether the changes in question be the accumulation of experience or the accumulation of wounds.

This chapter is subdivided into three sections, each of which discusses a number of different systems affecting character changes. The character development section describes how Traits can increase (and decrease). Physical States includes systems for injuries, recuperation, and torpor. Mental States includes systems for Frenzy, Rötschreck, Degeneration, Derangements and Blood Bonds.

One of the most exciting things about playing characters is seeing them change over time. Watching a character develop and grow is like watching a child grow up before your eyes. However, in **Vampire**, development doesn't always mean the character gets better. It often means the character slowly and steadily sinks into the abyss. Such is the nature of this game. Focus on getting better and surviving the rough periods, and try to appreciate the artistic impact of losing your Humanity or your mind.

Trait	Cost
New Ability	3
New Thaumaturgy Path	7
New Discipline	10
Willpower	current rating
Humanity	current rating x 2
Virtue	current rating x 2
Ability	current rating x 2
Attribute	current rating x 4
Thaumaturgy Path	current rating x 4
Clan Discipline	current rating x 5
Other Discipline	current rating x 7

Notes: Characters with no clan, Caitiff, have no Clan Disciplines. For them, all Disciplines cost the current rating x 6 to raise by one due to their lack of specialization.

Character Development

Experience is the child of Thought, and Thought is the child of Action.

- Benjamin Disraeli, *Vivian Grey*

We humans are learning machines, and we learn constantly - almost despite ourselves. By acquiring not only facts and figures, but new ways of being, we can make ourselves into what we want to be. Vampires do not learn as easily, for the inertia of their deaths is hard to reverse, but their long lives allow them to accumulate a vast treasury of knowledge and lore. Change occurs to them as well. As the years fly by, it becomes more and more difficult for them to add to their knowledge; nonetheless, they do learn. Neonates fear elders not only because of their heightened powers, but also because of their wisdom and hard-earned knowledge.

Experience Points

During a story, characters learn many things. Much of what they learn is not the type of thing that can be recorded on character sheets, but is rather something the players simply keep in mind. They may have learned never to leave a car door unlocked or never to walk into a dark alley with a light behind them. Sometimes, however, what they learn can be recorded.

At the end of every story, the Storyteller awards experience points to each character, normally giving the same amount to each one. The players then simply record how many experience points they gained. Experience points can be used to increase Traits. The cost for raising Traits varies widely; see the chart for specifics. The cost is almost always based on the present rating times a certain number (yes, you have to do multiplication). Thus, if the character has an Alertness rating of two and the player wants to raise it to three, it costs four experience points to do so. If the character does not have the Trait at all, the cost is listed as a "new" Ability or Discipline. A Trait can only be raised by one per story - never more.

When the Virtues increase via experience, Humanity or Willpower do not go up as well. Once the chronicle starts, they are considered separate Traits (though, of course, one Virtue point must be deleted each time a Humanity point is lost).

Roleplay It

As the Storyteller, you should not let a player simply spend her experience points to raise any Trait she wishes - it's a little more involved than that. The increased Trait must be something the character had a chance to learn about during the story - either the character achieved great success through use of the Trait, or made a big mistake she can learn from. In the case of Willpower, something must have occurred that would have actually made the character more self-confident.

You should only allow the changes if they have been or can be woven into the story. At the very least, the changes need to make sense in terms of the story and not simply be changes the player makes because she wants her character to be a certain way. This experience system can be as realistic as you make it. The more you force the players to make sense of their experiences, the more it will add to character development as a whole.

Awarding Experience Points

Players will love you and hate you for it. Assigning experience points requires a careful balance between rewarding the players and maintaining game balance. If you follow the guidelines below, you probably won't get into too much trouble, but feel free to experiment as you see fit.

End of Each Chapter

Give each character one to five experience points at the end of every chapter (game session). One point is given whether or not the brood succeeds or fails as a function of simply being there (remember, we learn despite ourselves sometimes).

One point - Automatic: Each player gets one point after every game session.

One point - Learning Curve: The character would have learned something from his experiences during the chapter. Ask the player to describe what his character learned before you award the point.

One point - Acting: The player roleplayed well - not only entertainingly but appropriately. Award for exceptional roleplaying only; your standards should get increasingly higher. In most cases, only award this to the person who did the best roleplaying in the troupe.

One point - Roleplaying: The player acted out her character's Nature and Demeanor very well. While some players may find it tough to fulfill both roles convincingly, those who give the Storyteller a feel for both their facade and true self deserve a reward.

One point - Heroism: Usually in scant supply among Kindred, those rare acts of heroism deserve some reward. When a character puts himself at risk for others, such as when he suffers multiple aggravated wounds fighting the Lupine long enough for the rest of the brood to escape, give him an experience point. Don't let characters take advantage of this, however. There is a fine line between heroism and stupidity.

End of Each Story

At the end of each story, you can assign each player up to one to three *additional* experience points on top of the one to five points earned for completing the final chapter.

One point - Success: The brood succeeded in its mission or goal. Perhaps it was not a complete success, but at least a marginal victory was achieved.

One point - Danger: The character experienced great danger during the story and survived.

One point - Wisdom: The player (and thus the character) exhibited great wits or resourcefulness and came up with an idea that enabled the brood to succeed.

If you want to award even more points so the characters develop more quickly, simply invent new categories in which you can make awards. They can even vary from story to story, and can be based on the specific circumstances of that story.

Raising Disciplines

Disciplines are probably the most difficult aspect of a character for a player to develop, though it is certainly a high priority if the character wishes to indeed live forever - only vampiric power provides real and continuous safety.

Though characters gain Disciplines simply by spending experience points, the Storyteller may want to restrict the process somewhat more. For instance, if a character wishes to learn a new Discipline in which she has no current rating, she may have to seek out a tutor or discover a magical amulet which awakens her latent Discipline. How this works is up to the Storyteller; unless the Storyteller says otherwise, players can simply use experience points to purchase Disciplines.

Beyond the Disciplines already described in Chapter Seven, elder vampires possess other, mightier powers. These can either be invented by the Storyteller or found in supplements to this game. It is possible for characters to gain these new Disciplines, but extraordinary measures are required to do so - and it is rumored that sometimes the blood of an elder must be consumed

Gaining Humanity

Players can raise Humanity as well, but only after prolonged and consistent artistic or aesthetically-based behavior. A player may spend experience points to raise Humanity only after his character has done a "good deed." The Storyteller, as always, is the final adjudicator of when this occurs.

As the Storyteller, be very strict about how characters can regain Humanity. Remember that over the course of the chronicle, the characters should slowly lose more and more Humanity. Preserving the status quo should be difficult enough for a character, and actually gaining Humanity should be next to impossible.

You may wish to make Humanity gain a specific reward for a particularly vigorous story in which there was no real or practical reward offered or given. Only the rescue of some unfortunate or the persistent search for some kernel of truth or goodness will be enough to gain new Humanity. Even then the gain doesn't have to be certain; you could require a Virtue roll to gain the point.

For instance, a vampire with high Auspex might become aware of a mortal in grave danger somewhere in Paris.

Acting only on a hunch, and with no idea as to the source of the danger, the character might go to Paris to look for this individual. She eventually finds the mortal and discovers that they share an eerie bond. In the end, she learns the mortal traces his ancestry to her sire, and that the mortal needs protection. By becoming involved with the mortal, she gains a new sense of her own Humanity.

Gaining Willpower

Characters can buy permanent Willpower with experience points, but sometimes you may give a player a specific chance to raise his Willpower. The opportunity to gain Willpower makes a great motivation for stories, especially your more bizarre ones.

Characters can lose permanent Willpower as well. This occurs whenever a player botches a Willpower roll. Luckily, this occurs only rarely, for Willpower is usually only rolled during frenzies, when employing the dangerous forces of Thaumaturgy, and in order to resist Domination.

Backgrounds

Background Traits never change through the use of experience points. Instead, the change happens as a normal course of events during the chronicle. Eventually, the Storyteller will note the changes and the character's Traits will increase. A player may wish to ask the Storyteller if one of her Background Traits should be changed, but this should not be done too often. The Storyteller may design a list of things characters must accomplish in order to increase a Background - the players may or may not be shown the list. To gain a new Retainer, for example, a vampire has to find the right subject, befriend or Dominate him, and train him in the duties she wishes performed.

Personality Development

Be all that you can be, the greatest challenge of them all...Yourself.

- Advertisement

A character's personality can change over the course of the chronicle, but for the most part the changes occur through roleplaying and not by simply changing the character sheet. For instance, as time passes, character motivations change as well. Deciding when and how a character's motivations change can add a great depth to your roleplaying. However, when a character's Demeanor or true Nature changes, it should be recorded on the character sheet as well. No aspect of personality can ever be changed through the use of experience points.

Demeanor

Though the Demeanor listed on the character sheet is simply the way the character most commonly presents herself, it is not an absolute standard of behavior. Changing the Demeanor of a character may help the player focus on the change in personality. A player may change his character's Demeanor at any point in the game, but should either tell the Storyteller he has done so or make it evident through his roleplaying.

Sometimes the Storyteller might suggest the change after watching the way the character is played, simply as a way of alerting the player that she has noticed the change in personality. Keep in mind that it really isn't all that important. Demeanor is only a tool the player uses to focus and direct roleplaying. If a change in Demeanor is called for or seems appropriate, the player should feel free to go right ahead and change it.

Nature

A player may also change her character's Nature, but rules for this are somewhat more restrictive than those for changing Demeanor. A character's Nature is central to who and what he is - it is the locus of his being. A change in Nature is akin to a change in personality - everything is different after it occurs. It should not be decided on the spur of the moment, but must be thoroughly considered. The Storyteller should force a player to roleplay the change over a number of game sessions; a story might even be created around this tumultuous transformation. Conversely, sometimes it may simply make sense that the change in personality comes about suddenly as a reaction to what has occurred to or around the character. Though it is certainly up to the Storyteller's discretion, a change in Nature sometimes results in a reshuffling of Virtues, though never a change in the ratings of a character's Humanity or Willpower.

Rebirth

Live baby live, now that the day is over.

I gotta new sensation,

In perfect moments impossible to refuse

Sleep baby sleep, now that the night is over.

- INXS, "New Sensation"

Despite the tragedy of their existence, vampires can escape their curse and become mortal again. Though exceedingly difficult, it is a major theme of the game and something that will direct the ambitions and thoughts of many characters.

Truly exquisite moments can be created in roleplaying through the search for Rebirth. When characters who have searched together for Rebirth finally arrive at the point where it is possible, they must decide whether they wish to actually become mortal again.

Rebirth is never possible to accomplish through the rules, but must instead be a primary element of the story and a part of the roleplaying. There are a variety of myths and legends among the Kindred concerning how Rebirth might come about. The decision of which myths are true and which are false is up to the Storyteller. However, it is legitimate, and even perhaps advisable, to make Rebirth impossible if it is not the focus of the chronicle. If you do wish to include it, here are some ideas on how vampires might achieve Rebirth.

•If the character manages to kill his sire, and his sire's sire, and his sire's sire's sire, he may break free of the curse. This is not always the case, however, for sometimes one must progress all the way up the bloodline to an Antediluvian or possibly even beyond. Why it is possible for some to slay only their masters and be freed, while others must go farther along the bloodline, is unknown. If there is a logic to it, it has not yet been discovered.

•If a character sacrifices herself for another person and dies in the attempt, it is possible that the character's death may be that of a mortal. The sacrifice is so great that in death the vampire is restored to mortal form. In situations

where a character has recently died, this can be just the thing to shine new light on the situation. This sort of "poetic justice" might not be appropriate in some chronicles.

•There are a number of complicated rituals that can be enacted to end the curse and rescue a character from the Damned. These rituals must be researched, the "ingredients" found, and the proper time and place decided. If one factor is wrong, the ritual could end in the death of the character, not salvation.

• It is said that at the final point of the Golconda ritual, it is possible to choose to be mortal, rather than attain Golconda itself. Many elders deny this, but as it is unlikely they have reached Golconda, it is difficult to decide whether they know the truth.

Diablerie

Do unto others as they've done to you

But what the hell is this world coming to?

- Metallica, "Fight Fire With Fire"

It is possible for vampires to garner immense powers, advancing even in the potency of their blood, and approaching the quintessential power of Caine. In fact, the lure of just such power created and now fuels the eternal conflict between the Kindred - the great Jyhad. It is the lust for this power that causes neonates to slay their sires, and it is the fear of this lust that causes elders to persecute their fledglings.

The process through which a vampire kills another in order to rise in power is called diablerie, or the Amaranth. The Amaranth is a legendary undying flower, a treasure beyond price, and according to legend was given to an elder a week before he was attacked. "Diabolist" is the epithet for one who hunts his own kin for their blood.

When a Kindred drinks from another until all her blood is drained away, and continues to drink until she is extinguished (she has lost all Health Levels) the very essence of the vessel is transferred. Not only is the vessel killed, but the vessel's life-force is passed along to the slayer.

If the vessel was a vampire, and was of an earlier generation than the vampire who drank the blood, the slayer's effective generation is lowered by one. This provides many benefits: it allows her to raise traits over five (if the new generation is seventh or lower), to Dominate a larger number of the Kindred (one can only Dominate vampires of a later generation) and possess and use a larger Blood Pool (see Chapter Seven for more details). If the vessel's generation was more than three earlier than the character, it may be possible for more than one Diabolist to drink and thereby reduce a generation.

If a character wishes to continue drinking the blood of a vampiric vessel, even after all the blood is drained, he must roll Strength against a difficulty of nine. Each success indicates that the target loses one Health Level. No blood is actually drained, but instead the very spirit of the vampire is taken from the body. Once all the vessel's Health Levels have been taken, she dies the Final Death, and her life-force is passed along to the character. If the vessel was not of an earlier generation, this does not mean very much. Such cannot be done with mortals, for their life-forces have already been extinguished by the time they lose all their Blood Points.

Each time a player character does this, the Storyteller should require a Humanity roll of some sort, especially if the one whom he has slain displayed any sort of good or noble tendencies.

Note: The blood of many elders is extremely potent. It can often be used for a variety of purposes. It is said that this blood is occasionally able to grant temporary empowerment in one or more Disciplines when it is imbibed by a lesser vampire. Though only one character can gain the benefit of the lowered effective generation, the other characters involved can still use that blood (perhaps even preserving some of it in vials) to invigorate themselves in other ways.

Golconda

Should the whole frame of nature round him break,

In ruin and confusion hurled,

He, unconcerned, would hear the mighty crack,

And stand secure amidst a falling world.

- Horace, "Odes"

The theme of **Vampire** often centers around the Hero's Journey - the quest to discover who one really is. It is the journey of Prometheus, the Greek hero who brought us fire.

At the point where a character overcomes her sin and approaches the end of her quest, two things can happen. Either she becomes mortal once again, or she becomes a new kind of vampire: one that no longer feels the urge to frenzy, the need to feed, or the desire to sin so strongly.

Golconda is a state of being wherein the character manages to control her frenzies and restrain the Beast. All Kindred of clear mind seek this state unless they want a total release from their undeath. Golconda is not an easy state of being to attain, but for many it is the only goal worth achieving. It is not a reconnection to one's mortality. In fact, the opposite is true - Golconda is an acceptance and hence a control over one's bestiality. Golconda is the final acceptance of one's curse and the subsequent power over it.

Basic to Golconda is the act of remorse. This is not necessarily any sort of religious repentance, but rather a more personal and immediate realization of the sins one has committed. The character must make some sort of penance, such as donating to a charity, aiding someone in need, or in some cases even punishing herself. The worse the sins, the more she needs to do.

Storytellers should almost never allow a character to reach Golconda. Only if she does a superb job of trying to make things right, and experiences profound remorse for her actions, should she even have a chance. As the Storyteller, ask yourself whether the character truly feels remorse and compassion. How well has the player roleplayed through the whole process of grief and regret? Golconda should never be easily earned. In most cases, it should occur only at the end of a chronicle. A new chronicle could begin later on with the same character, but with an entirely different concept and motif.

It should take many game sessions to complete the process. More than one character can attempt to reach Golconda, but it is normally something only a few achieve.

In some ways, Golconda can be seen as a movement within

the Kindred, but if it is a movement, it does not have much organization. Some who have reached Golconda are very evangelistic and encourage others to follow the same path to peace. They wish to bring all of the Kindred into the sanctity Golconda offers. Some even travel from city to city speaking about Golconda, and encourage those who are interested to learn more. They do not reveal the secrets of Golconda, for each supplicant must learn of it on his own, but they will give hints.

There is said to be an Antediluvian who has reached Golconda and supports those who spread word of it. This Ancient's role in the Jyhad is said to be one of thwarting the others from succeeding in their plots to destroy the Kindred. Only those among the Inconnu would know anything of this creature. Of course, the critics of the Golconda movement decry the whole movement as being but a minor intrigue in the great Jyhad. The truth of the matter will perhaps never be known until the night of Gehenna.

Quest

There aren't really any rules for determining when a character reaches Golconda, for this is something that must come about as a part of roleplaying. Golconda is a sublime and nearly intangible state of being. Thus, it is the Storyteller's responsibility to set the storytelling conditions for when the change can occur. The player might not even know her character has reached Golconda until the Storyteller starts having her make a few rolls differently.

Golconda is akin to the nature of a quest. The quest is not so much a scavenger hunt as a spiritual and mental journey into one's own self. Often the quest for Golconda takes one to the astral plane or into the chaos of one's own mind. The roleplaying involved can be extremely powerful, and should only be attempted after the character has been developed over a number of stories and the player has a firm grasp of who and what the character is. Golconda is about the transformation of a personality, and thus the character must have a complete and detailed personality for it to be any fun.

The quest for Golconda often begins with the characters' search for what it is. In the first chapter of the story, the Storyteller needs to build a desire for Golconda and increase its allure to the players. Slowly the characters should begin to realize what it is all about.

The second stage of the story generally revolves around the search for an elder who can tell the characters more about Golconda. Normally this is one of the enigmatic members of the Inconnu - someone who has already attained Golconda. This mentor must be convinced to aid the characters who wish to reach Golconda and may require the completion of different "tasks" to prove the characters' worthiness.

The characters must prove they do indeed feel remorse. The tasks are likely to require the characters to make up for past deeds, to right old wrongs, or even to go back to the families of their past victims and aid them. The roleplaying involved dredges up everything that has happened throughout the chronicle and makes the players relive it. Hopefully, this will give them an even greater empathy with their characters.

When the characters have finally proven themselves to the mentor (though it is possible only one of the characters will prove herself sufficiently), he will initiate the final stage of the quest - the ritual. This ceremony can last several weeks or several months, and involves many quests into the dreams of the supplicant. This stage is known as the Suspire, and many stories are told of it. The dreams are said to be provoked by draughts of blood from one's closest companions, who travel with the supplicant through the world of dreams.

The mentor must oversee the Suspire, and often it takes place at his or her haven. No one truly knows what occurs at this ritual, for only those who successfully attain Golconda live through it, and they never speak of their experience. Most of those who do survive join the Inconnu and live out

their lives apart from mortal civilization. (Note: not all of the Inconnu have reached Golconda - only a significant minority.)

However, despite all the roleplaying involved, there are a few practical criteria for reaching Golconda. These are as essential as the story and roleplaying elements discussed above. First of all, the character's Humanity rating must be a 7 or higher (if it ever falls below a 7, then the character falls from Golconda). Second, the character's Conscience rating must be at least a 4. Finally, over the duration of the quest for Golconda, the character must spend Willpower points to overcome all urges to frenzy, do wrong or waver from the true path. Normally at least 15 points must be spent. This reflects the determination of the character to reach Golconda and the self-affirmation that the quest provokes.

Benefits of Golconda

Once Golconda is reached, the character is at peace with herself. She no longer exists in a life filled with horror and self-pity. She finally masters the Beast within by accepting that the Beast is a part of her.

There is only one major benefit for reaching Golconda, but this one is enough. When a vampire reaches Golconda, she no longer frenzies, nor is she prone to the Rötschreck. No Courage or Self-Control rolls need ever be made for as long as she remains in Golconda.

A lesser benefit is the fact that the character does not need to drink blood as often. The character only loses one Blood Point per week, rather than one Blood Point per day. If the vampire has reached the age where the need for even more potent blood arises, the desire is more subdued because of Golconda and is easily pushed aside.

Rumors also exist of Kindred in Golconda utilizing the full potential of their vampiric form. Thus, instead of being limited by their generations as to what levels of Disciplines they may take, characters in Golconda may develop any powers through experience.

Physical States

These systems discuss the parameters of health and the lack of it. Injuries and healing are discussed, as is torpor, the deep sleep of vampires.

Injury

Remember, Doc, when the will is invoked, the recuperative powers of the human body are incredible.

- FBI Agent Cooper, *Twin Peaks*

There are as many different ways a character can sustain an injury as there are injuries, but in **Vampire** injuries are described in one way: the Health Trait. A player records injuries in terms of Health Levels; each wound causes the loss of one Health Level. Simply check off Health Levels as

the character loses them, so the last check made is the character's current Health Level. As the character regains Health Levels, erase the check marks.

Think of it as a spectrum with Bruised at one end and Incapacitated at the other. As a character takes more wounds, he travels down the spectrum until he finally reaches Incapacitated. When he heals, he simply removes these checks one by one, until he is again in perfect health. Each success on an opponent's damage roll indicates a loss of one Health Level. For two successes, the player checks off two Health Levels, starting with Bruised and going down to Hurt. If a vampire takes damage beyond simply being Incapacitated, he loses a Blood Point for each additional wound level. Once he has lost all of his Blood Points, the vampire is completely helpless and will die at sunrise unless rescued. If the vampire remains at Incapacitated with no Blood Points, he will fall into torpor - an extremely deep sleep that can last years or even centuries. See the Torpor section below for more details.

Mortals' Healing Times	
Health Level	**Time**
Bruised	One Day
Hurt	Three Days
Injured	One Week
Wounded	One Month
Mauled	Three Months
Crippled	Three Months *

*Not only do mortals have to heal this wound level, but they lose one point from one of their Physical Attributes as well. Mortals who reach Incapacitated heal at the Storyteller's discretion; some will go into a coma for the rest of their lives.

Healing

Vampires are dead and never recover naturally from wounds. They must always use Blood Points to heal themselves. One Blood Point will heal one Health Level; this always takes one turn to accomplish.

Normally, a vampire remains still when healing, taking no other action, but he can attempt to heal while performing other actions. A character must make a Stamina + Survival roll to see if such healing was successful (difficulty 6). Success indicates the character heals while engaged in other activities. A failure indicates that the Health Level is not regained and the Blood Point is still lost. A botch causes the character to lose another Health Level.

Aggravated Wounds

Vampires occasionally suffer wounds so severe they cannot simply use Blood Points to heal them. These are known as aggravated wounds, and are commonly created by sunlight, fire or the claws and teeth of other undead. Aggravated wounds require both blood and time to heal. Aggravated wounds can only be soaked by vampires who possess the Discipline of Fortitude.

Aggravated wound levels can only be healed at the rate of one per day of rest and a cost of five Blood Points per wound level healed. Additional levels can be healed in a night if the character spends five additional Blood Points and one Will power point per level cured. Aggravated wounds should be indicated on the character sheet with an **X** rather than a check. The Storyteller can also deem any injury to be an aggravated injury.

Final Death

Though vampires are no longer mortal, they still face the possibility of final death. It may be tempting to imagine vampires as virtual gods, capable of doing nearly anything and of withstanding nearly anything, but there are ways to kill even vampires. A vampire who dies once again may not be brought back to unlife and is said to have suffered the Final Death.

Inflicting aggravated wounds on a severely injured vampire is the most common way in which he can be extinguished. If a vampire has no Blood Pool or Health Levels left, and sustains an aggravated wound, he is utterly destroyed. Sometimes the Final Death results in the complete and rapid disintegration of the body, and within minutes all that is left is a pile of ashes.

Vampires can also be killed if all the blood is sucked from them by another of their kind. Deep water pressure, explosions, certain vampiric diseases and decapitation are other ways in which a vampire can be extinguished. You will need to decide how death can result from these dangers in your chronicle, based on the rules given in this section.

Mortal Death

When a mortal reaches Incapacitated, she is one Health Level away from death. If she is injured one more time, or it is impossible to stem the flow of blood from her body, she will die. Death is final for mortals unless they are Embraced just before they are snatched away to the everlasting. It is possible for a vampire to take a newly dead corpse and turn it into a vampire if no more than five minutes have passed since death.

Of course, mortals heal differently than vampires. With proper medical attention, mortals recover based on the chart below. Note that the time given is how long it takes to recover that level - other levels must be healed as well. Thus, if the mortal takes three months to recover from being Mauled, he must still take the time to heal Wounded, Injured and so on.

Sources of Injury

I think of isolation and abstinence, and how each is so cruelly dependent upon the other. There are times I cannot stand to resist any longer, yet when I do feed, I cannot abide the sight of the blood that is upon my hands.

- Tamalary, *Confessions*

There are many ways to inflict harm upon a vampire. Some are common to mortals, and thus readily understandable to us, while others are specific to vampires. These sources of injury are described below.

Combat

Combat wounds are dealt with at length in the Melee and Firefight sections of the Drama chapter. Each success on a damage roll causes the character to lose one Health Level.

Falling

Occasionally, characters will fall, and the fear of that occurring is essential to maintaining suspense while players make their rolls. Use the chart below to calculate damage. Characters, mortal or undead, can make Stamina rolls to try to "soak" damage. The difficulty is an eight and each success means one fewer Health Level is lost. Each botch means an additional Health Level is lost. Fortitude adds to the roll.

Distance(in feet) / Injury

Five / One Health Level

Ten / Two Health Levels

Twenty / Three Health Levels

Thirty / Four Health Levels

Forty / Five Health Levels

Fifty / Six Health Levels

Sixty / Seven Health Levels

and so on, to a maximum of 10 Health Levels.

Fire

Fire is quite hazardous to vampires and they fear it more than nearly anything else. Fire always causes aggravated damage, and therefore it can kill vampires. Any size flame can potentially harm a vampire, but she can resist the effects if she possesses Fortitude. The player may roll a number of dice equal to the character's Fortitude rating against the difficulties listed below. The player must roll every turn the character is in the flames to see if she can resist the damage. If the roll is failed, the character takes from one to three Health Levels of damage (see the second chart below), while if the roll is successful, the character takes one fewer level of damage per success than she normally would. If the roll is botched, then the character is harmed in some special way - perhaps she loses her eyesight or her limbs are maimed.

1	**Heat of Fire**
Three	Heat of a candle (first degree burns)
Five	Heat of a torch (second degree burns)
Seven	Heat of a Bunsen Burner (third degree burns)
Nine	Heat of a chemical fire
Ten	Molten metal

Wounds	Size of Fire
One	Torch; part of body burned
Two	Bonfire; half of body burned
Three	Raging Inferno; all of body burned

Sunlight

Sunlight is one of the few ways to truly kill a vampire. Sunlight causes aggravated wounds, and each turn a vampire is exposed to sunlight, he is burned. If the character has Fortitude, he may roll a number of dice equal to his rating each turn to soak the rays. The difficulty depends on the intensity of the rays, the time of day and the cloud or smog cover. See the chart below for a rough guide to assigning difficulties.

If no successes are rolled, the character takes from one to three levels of damage, depending on how much he is exposed (see the second chart below). If he succeeds, he takes one less level of damage per success. Botches indicate the character has actually caught fire and the character must now resist both the sunlight and the fire.

There are some "sun lamps" commercially available that produce the ultraviolet light the sun emits. Though these lamps are not nearly as deadly as the sun, they can still irritate or even harm vampires, though the damage may not be aggravated.

Difficulty	Rays
Three	Indirect rays, heavy cloud cover, or twilight
Five	Fully covered with heavy clothing
Seven	Through a window
Nine	Struck by one small direct ray of sunlight, or being outside on a cloudy day
Ten	Direct rays from an unobscured sun

Wounds	Exposure
One	Only part of body exposed (only a hand).
Two	Part of body is exposed (wearing a hood).
Three	Much of body is exposed (wearing normal clothing).

Extreme Heat

Extreme heat (200 degrees +) can injure vampires in much the same way fire can. Use the same system for sustaining and taking damage, but modify it according to the situation. Normally heat is not nearly as deadly as fire unless it is terrifically intense.

Deterioration

Vampires deteriorate through lack of care. If a vampire has been staked through the heart and cannot move, she will still lose one Blood Point per day. Once all Blood Points have been lost, the vampire will begin to lose Health Levels at the rate of one per day. Once the vampire reaches Incapacitated, she enters torpor. Note that vampires cannot "die" from deterioration.

Disease

Though vampires can catch and even transmit human diseases, they cannot die from them. They may become ill and may lose Health Levels, but they cannot die from a human disease. Lost Health Levels may even be aggravated, but once they are healed the Kindred is cured. In some circumstances, the disease will not even affect the vampire, in which case he becomes a carrier and transmits the disease to those from whom he feeds. However, rumors exist of a number of vampiric diseases capable of killing Kindred within days.

Stakes

A stake through a vampire's heart does not cause death, but does completely immobilize her. Over time, the vampire will deteriorate due to a lack of blood, eventually falling into a full torpor. Of course, fire or sunlight may destroy her first. It is extremely difficult to aim a stake precisely through the heart during melee. At least three successes are required for it to transfix such a precisely delineated area.

Hostile Environment

Though vampires cannot die from cold, they can suffer the effects of frostbite and even become entirely frozen in severe temperatures. Cold is especially dangerous because vampires do not have any body warmth except in the minutes immediately following a feeding, so clothing of any sort is of no purpose. Characters need to make rolls after they have been outside in the cold for a certain period of time. This varies depending on how cold it is, but usually it's about half an hour. They must make Stamina + Fortitude rolls with a difficulty starting at three but increasing by one every roll. The time between the rolls is determined by the Storyteller, but keep in mind that vampires are much more resistant to cold than humans. Vampires can burn Blood Points to warm themselves, but such activity will not provide lasting heat.

Torpor

As demonstrated above, death does not come easily to vampires. However, when their injuries grow too great, they go into a very deep sleep known as torpor.

When a vampire becomes injured beyond Incapacitated and loses all Blood Points as well, the vampire goes into torpor (though if the injury is aggravated, the result is Final Death instead). The character is completely immobilized and unconscious, though more powerful Kindred (such as the Antediluvians) can still use some of their Disciplines in this state.

Additionally, the character loses a rating point from a Physical Attribute once torpor is entered. The player must choose which Physical Attribute suffers.

Vampires with 10 Humanity come out of the deep sleep within a day or so, while those with less Humanity sleep for a few weeks to a few months. The blood of an Ancient can sometimes prematurely revive a vampire in torpor.

Humanity	Length of Time
10	One day
9	Three days
8	One week
7	Two weeks
6	One month
5	One year
4	One decade
3	Five decades
2	One century
1	Five centuries

While in torpor, a vampire uses Blood Points normally at the rate of one per day, but once the blood is gone, no Health Levels are lost.

A character may go into torpor voluntarily. When the character goes to sleep, the player simply informs the Storyteller that the character is entering torpor. Many ancient Cainites voluntarily enter this state in a protected

place to avoid the risk of frenzies or other dangers. Voluntary torpor does not require the loss of a Physical Attribute rating point.

Mental States

These systems discuss the changes that can overcome a character's psyche. They include such conditions as frenzy, where the characters allow the Beast within to become the Beast without; Rötschreck, where the fear induced by sunlight and fire becomes an overwhelming passion; and Degeneration, where the loss of humanity is considered. Also described are the various Derangements vampires are prone to suffer (and which all Malkavians must possess), as well as the mystical Blood Bond.

Frenzy

Vampires, like mortals, are creatures of instinct. However, the instincts of the vampire are those of a hunter, not a gatherer. Vampires are the ultimate predators and stand at the apex of the food chain. They are highly developed killing machines - the harbingers of death.

For vampires to survive in modern society, however, they must learn to keep the Beast in check. The instincts of violence so essential in the wild serve only to endanger the vampire in today's complex world. The power the Beast's rage provides has its uses, but the blindness it creates far outweighs its benefits.

Vampires struggle to suppress the Beast but, no matter how hard they try, they do not always prevail. At times it gets loose, and the havoc it creates goes far beyond the horror of any mortal rage. Every vampire must constantly struggle to restrain this Beast within him. The following rules describe when and how it is released upon the world.

In situations where the Storyteller believes a vampire's instincts might overwhelm her, the player has to make a Self-Control roll. If she makes that roll, her character overcomes the impulse of rage. If she fails, the character descends into a temporary frenzy as the madness of the Beast takes hold. The character is only partially in the player's control.

Provocation

It is always up to you, the Storyteller, to decide what circumstances might provoke a frenzy. You may ignore some very blatant factors, but force the players to roll for what they consider very minor things. Your interpretation of the nature of the Gothic-Punk world is reflected in the frenzy rolls you ask the players to make.

These frenzy rules are intentionally loose so that they work in whatever way best suits your chronicle. If you want a more action-oriented chronicle with characters who can be fairly sure of themselves, you will not want many frenzy rolls. On the other hand, if you want the players to be very conscious of their characters' essential weaknesses and you want them to roleplay out and face these weaknesses, then be more strict.

Hunger often provokes the frenzy and can result in the death of the vessel as the character drinks it dry. This occurs only if the character is hungry (three Blood Points or less), and is brought on by the sight, taste or smell of blood.

A frenzy can also be provoked through anger and can turn into a great vampiric rage. Rage can be ignited by many factors, and these can vary widely from character to character. It is most often provoked by humiliation or taunting.

System

A vampire does not have to resist the frenzy, but if she wishes to do so, she must make a Self-Control roll (difficulty varies). It is an extended action, and five successes must be collected before the frenzy is entirely overcome. However, even one success temporarily prevents the frenzy from taking effect (one turn only). The difficulty for the roll

is the number indicated on the chart on the next page. The player may not roll more dice than the points the character currently has in her Blood Pool - hunger invariably overwhelms morality. A success indicates the character does not frenzy, while a failure indicates she does. A botch indicates a Derangement of one type or another at the Storyteller's discretion.

Provocation	Difficulty
Smell of blood (when hungry)	3
Sight of blood (when hungry)	4
Being bullied	4
Life threatened	4
Taunted	4
Provoked into anger	5
Taste of blood (when hungry)	5
Lover in danger	6
Outright humiliation	7

Roleplaying

During a frenzy, a vampire is capable of nearly any sort of immoral, risky and psychotic behavior. While in a frenzy, a character must behave with animalistic abandon, concerning himself only with immediate gratification - whether that means a berserk attack or stark raving madness depends on the stimuli. No logical thought occurs and all reactions are instinctive and emotional.

If blood is available, the character will drink until she can drink no more. It is likely the character will kill a vessel, for she is consumed by the desire for blood. If no blood is nearby, she will rush off in search of it. The character becomes enraged and attempts to destroy everything and anything in sight. While she will attack her enemies first, if her friends get in the way (or there are no enemies nearby), she will attack them as well.

However, while in a frenzy, the character gains some benefits as well as the obvious drawbacks. First of all, she may ignore a number of Health Level penalties equal to her Stamina - she simply does not have to apply that number of dice as a penalty. Second, she does not have to make many Willpower rolls, since she is capable of doing nearly anything. The difficulties of all Dominate rolls

against a person in frenzy are increased by two, and the character is immune to the crippling terror of the Rötschreck.

A player can decide to use a Willpower point in order to control a single action of his character for a single turn. This Willpower point provides just enough control to formulate a single thought or purpose, and unless other events get in the way, the character's behavior can be guided over the following few turns. Just keep in mind that Willpower cannot stop the frenzy - it only offers a little control over what form it takes.

As the Storyteller, use this to provoke players into roleplaying frenzies more accurately. If a player describes actions for his character that go against what you believe to be appropriate during a frenzy, allow him to perform them, but then announce that he has lost a Willpower point. Frenzies are not trivial.

Duration

A frenzy can last a variable length of time. It is up to the Storyteller to decide when it comes to an end. In some ways, a frenzy moves along a simple cycle. When things calm down and the tension level falls, the frenzy slowly comes to a halt. A frenzy lasts for the duration of the scene. When the scene comes to an end, the player may begin to roleplay his character normally again.

A character's friends can help him overcome a frenzy by confronting him and speaking with him. They must make appropriate Social roll; success allows the character to make a Willpower roll (which, if successful, ends the frenzy). However, only those who have successfully resisted frenzies in the presence of the character, or are emotionally close to the character, may attempt this. A botch on the player's Willpower roll could well mean he attacks those who tried to help him.

Rötschreck

Vampires do not fear much but, being immortal, still fear that which can put an end to their existences. The two greatest threats a vampire faces are sunlight and fire, and these dangers provoke in Kindred a terror which goes beyond all normal fear -the Rötschreck.

System

Whenever a vampire encounters the sun or fire, the Storyteller can call for a Courage roll. This roll can be provoked by anything the character truly fears - most commonly the rays of the sun or open flames. At the Storyteller's whim, this roll may sometimes be required when a new vampire is first confronted with a holy cross or even a stake.

The difficulty for the Courage roll is usually six, but can vary according to circumstances as detailed in the chart below. Each success on the roll indicates the number of turns the character can stay in the presence of the thing or circumstances which he fears. When those turns have passed, another Courage roll must be made. A failure indicates the character enters the Rötschreck, a frenzy-like state, and loses all control. A botch indicates the character not only enters the Rötschreck, but gains a Derangement of

some sort. The type of Derangements created by a botched Courage roll are generally twisted versions of the basic urge to flee in terror, escape and get away.

The player can spend a Willpower point in order to take a single action which the character would not otherwise be able to do because of the Rötschreck.

Effect	Difficulty
Lighting a cigarette	4
Lighter flame	5
Sight of a torch	5
Bonfire	6
Obscured sunlight	6
Being burned	7
Direct sunlight	8
Trapped in burning building	9

Roleplaying

When a character fails a Courage roll, he is incapable of taking any action other than panicked flight. If he is trapped with no place to run, he will collapse in terror. This reaction will last at least a few minutes (longer in some cases) after the character reaches cover and is no longer in sight of the sun or the fire.

When the character reaches a safe place, the player may make a Willpower roll to regain control (difficulty 8). Each success reduces the amount of time needed to recover from a base of 10 minutes.

Degeneration

Sometimes a character will act immorally, either willfully or despite her best intentions (while in a state of frenzy). In such cases, the Beast might take a little more control of her soul. The character's conscience reacts to what she has done, and this may affect how much of her human nature she loses. For a vampire, this actually indicates how much the Beast has corrupted her.

How you as Storyteller control the loss of Humanity is one of the most important elements of your role. If you let the players get away with anything, the whole fabric of the game is destroyed. Conversely, if you're too strict, the chronicle will last about three game sessions. You can play a little loosely with these Humanity rules, but never let them fall to the wayside.

Whenever a character takes an action which you believe to be questionable (morally speaking), you may decide it is serious enough to warrant a loss of Humanity. A Degeneration roll is made by rolling Conscience. The difficulty is commonly six, though it can vary at the discretion of the Storyteller.

If the player making the roll scores even one success, the character does not lose the Humanity point. If he fails the roll, or botches, the character loses both a point of Conscience and Humanity. A botch also indicates the character gains a Derangement as a result of the mental trauma involved in the loss of Humanity.

Remorse

As the Storyteller, you should always try to warn a player before she takes an action that will result in the loss of a Humanity point. Players should understand the consequences of what they are doing and be able to savor the anticipation if there is a chance they might not be able

to do anything about it (e.g. they're in a frenzy). When the players get complacent and think they can get away with anything, that's when you should start to warn them. However, be sure you never cry wolf - don't warn them and then not call for a roll.

Hierarchy of Sins

As the character degenerates, many things will be less likely to cause further loss of Humanity. Those with high Humanity might have to make a Humanity roll for the slightest little sins, while those with very low Humanity must do something terrible to have to make a roll. In other words, be exceptionally strict with the characters with high Humanity, but only force those with low Humanity to make Degeneration rolls if they commit shockingly evil acts.

Below is a rough guide to help you decide what actions should result in the loss of Humanity. A very bestial person would certainly not lose Humanity if he stole something, while a highly moral character might. Someone with a Humanity of 7 does not have to roll for an action listed beside Humanity 10. However, everything on this list would count for a vampire with 10 Humanity.

As a player, you must trust your Storyteller. Regardless of a character's Humanity, it is always the Storyteller's decision as to when you must make a Conscience roll. Even when it might not make complete sense according to the rules, you may be asked to do so. Humanity is an intrinsic aspect of **Vampire** and a Storyteller calls for certain Humanity rolls in order to shape the chronicle in the fashion she desires. The Storyteller's own morality is often reflected in the way she calls for Humanity rolls - this is not only permissible, but encouraged.

Humanity	Minimum Wrongdoing for Humanity roll
10	Accidental wrongdoing
9	Purposeful wrongdoing
8	Purposefully inflicting injury
7	Theft and robbery
6	Negligent killing
5	Wanton destruction
4	Murder in the heat of passion
3	Sadism and perversion
2	Premeditated murder
1	The most heinous and demented acts

Derangements

Its motor whirs and colors curl

Inside your head the monsters whirl.

- Siouxsie and the Banshees, "Carousel"

Some Kindred possess or pick up various quirks, neurotic tendencies or even psychoses which take a great deal of time and effort to overcome. These mental illnesses are known as Derangements.

The effects of a Derangement may present themselves in a variety of ways. How and why a Derangement begins, in terms of the story, is a joint decision of the player and the Storyteller. Normally, it begins soon after a botched frenzy roll, but a Derangement can be precipitated by many other factors. Malkavians, for instance, begin the chronicle with a Derangement of some sort.

When a character gains a Derangement, the Storyteller must determine the type. A die can be rolled to decide what Derangement the character gains, but we don't recommend this method. In many circumstances, the more experienced players can even create their own unique Derangements.

Roleplaying Derangements

These Derangements are not meant to be all-consuming, forcing the player to roleplay in a tightly constricted way. Rather, they are meant to add some fun and a little bit of reality into the game. A character does not have to exhibit the Derangement all the time; people can slip in and out of madness. It may only surface in particularly tense moments. The Derangement does not have to rule the mind of the character - it only need influence it.

As Storyteller, it is incumbent upon you to make sure that things do not get out of hand. Players have two bad habits when it comes to Derangements - they either forget they have them, or they let them get so out of control that the Derangement takes over the story and the game session.

To stop a player from conveniently forgetting she has a Derangement, simply tell her every once in a while that she successfully controlled her Derangement, but had to spend a Willpower point to do so.

To prevent a player from getting out of control with a Derangement, you'll sometimes have to use more forceful tactics. Take him aside and tell him that while you like his sense of drama, he's overplaying it just a bit. If he continues to use his Derangement to hog all the attention, change the Derangement to one that forces a certain degree of retreat from the world, like catatonia.

Listed below are 10 sample Derangements:

•**Multiple Personalities:** You possess a number of different personalities. For the duration of the Derangement, you have more than one Nature and, during the story, you will switch back and forth between the personalities. Thus you behave in radically different ways at different times, and regain Willpower points in different ways at different times. Naturally, this causes others to distrust and be wary of you.

•**Fantasy:** You enter a self-created world of delusions in which you are the unappreciated hero. Your desire to be good and pure is fulfilled by accomplishing imaginary achievements which sometimes overlap with reality.

•**Regression:** You become childlike, retreating to an earlier time in your life when less was required of you. It is very difficult for you to do anything for yourself. In some ways this is a very extreme form of the Child Archetype, and Willpower is regained in the way a Child's is, not according to your normal Nature.

•**Perfection:** Everything must be perfect in your life. All your energy is directed toward preventing anything from going wrong. When it does, as it inevitably must, you completely flip and must make a Self-Control roll to resist

frenzy.

•Overcompensation: You cover up your moral weaknesses by playing up one of your moral strengths -to an extreme. You believe y ou are exceptionally moral and virtuous in one way or another - that you are honorable, loyal, brave, compassionate or self-controlled. Your behavior is thus straitjacketed by your desire. You constantly lecture others on their moral weaknesses, and demonstrate extreme arrogance about what you believe to be your strengths. Of course, when reality reveals the emptiness of your delusion, the embarrassment will be great. You do not believe yourself capable of falling into frenzy, and will thus do nothing to prevent or avoid situations which might cause it.

•Obsession: You become obsessed with some interest or fetish. You direct all your energy toward some sort of perverse ambition, like an obsession for power, a certain person, amulets or even blood. You need something to focus on and give your life meaning.

•Paranoia: You are convinced that you are being hunted and that there is no escape. You are obsessed with

those you believe to be chasing you and make all kinds of preparations to protect yourself. Under no circumstances will you trust anyone; you hold even your closest friends under suspicion.

•Amnesia: To avoid having to think about what you have done, you forget a segment of your past - perhaps even the experience of becoming a vampire. This can make things very interesting for a time. This repression prevents dangerous memories from entering the consciousness; you simply forget the events ever happened. More than the traumatic event can be forgotten, however, and total amnesia is even possible. Additionally, in some cases a character may "forget" some Abilities, and thus be unable to use them for the duration of the Derangement.

•Manic-depression: You sink into deep and fitful depressions, showing no interest in anything which used to capture your imagination. You view the world as flat and gray, with nothing in it for you. You cannot rouse yourself to do anything, though you will go along with others rather than use the energy to resist. Conversely, occasional fits of great energy grab hold of you, and you will work for hours or even days on your projects. During this time you will resist even the need for sleep as you burn up blood and Willpower on your schemes.

• Delusions of Grandeur: You imagine that you are far better and greater than you really are. Perhaps you believe yourself to be a prince or Justicar, or even the mayor or a religious leader. By imagining yourself safe from that which you fear, you avoid the terror which looms so near.

Blood Bond

It's the jewel of victory

The chasm of misery

And once you have bitten the core

You will always know the flavor

The split second of divinity.

- Faith No More, "The Real Thing"

It is possible to create a Blood Bond with another vampire,

thereby turning the Bound one into a servant and, in some ways, a lover. Blood Bond is spoken of as holding Regnancy over another. The one who commands the Bound vampire is known as the Regnant, whereas the one who is held in Regnancy is commonly known as the Thrall. Usually elders are Regnants and neonates are Thralls, but not always. An essential strategy in the Jyhad is to hold many in Regnancy, for it gives the Regnant powerful and trustworthy retainers. For this reason, Blood Bond is sometimes known as Blood Oath. Many Kindred are suspicious of one another, for they are never sure who are the Thralls of Ancients, and who are not.

Creation of the Bond

The Blood Bond is created by the exchange of blood between two vampires. The Thrall must drink the Regnant's blood three times, on three different occasions (on different days). It can be any amount of blood; but a sip, or even a taste if the Regnant is an Ancient. Unlike the limitations of the Dominate Discipline, it is possible for weaker blood to hold Regnancy over more potent blood. Thus, a 10th generation Kindred could hold Regnancy over a ninth generation vampire.

The more times the Thrall drinks blood, the more the Bond is reinforced. Most Regents have their Thralls drink their blood several times a year to reinforce the bond. Many Regnants fear that if the Bond is broken, their Thralls will desire revenge. This is perhaps why so many Thralls are fairly well-treated by their Regents; after all, any servitude can be overcome. Extreme hate can weaken even the Blood Bond.

Once a vampire has been Blood Bound, he cannot again be Bound by another. Kindred can only be Bound to one vampire at a time, and are thus safe from it if already Bound. However, some vampires know rituals which allow the tie to be created with a number of different vampires if the Thrall-to-be drinks of their blood at one sitting. In fact, one of the most severe punishments of the Camarilla being forced to drink the blood of all the Kindred attending a Conclave. Usually the feelings produced by such a widespread Bond are more diffuse than normal, but they are no less powerful. The attachment is to the group and not any one individual.

All characters are already on their way to being Blood Bound, for their sires have already given them at least one taste of blood. Thus, if a character partakes of her sire's blood two more times, she will be held in Regnancy. In some cases, the character may already be held in Regnancy by her sire. Tremere neonates are also one step toward being Bound to their clan as a whole.

Power of the Bond

Bonding is primarily an emotional power. A Thrall views the vampire to whom he is Bound as the central figure in his life and is invariably obsessed with her. Though he may despise his Regnant, he will do nearly anything to aid her. He will do nothing to harm his Regnant and will even attempt to protect her from her enemies. It is very likely that the Thrall understands what is happening to him, intellectually at least, but he is unable to do anything about it.

The Blood Bond is like falling in love - once it happens, a character is caught in its grip until somehow he breaks free. The character may know he is in love, and hate what it makes him do, but that does not stop him from being in love and it doesn't prevent him from doing the stupid

things people in love sometimes do. The Blood Bond is possibly the closest approximation of that vaunted emotion many vampires ever reach. When roleplaying Blood Bond, use this "love" metaphor to understand just how deeply and completely the

character is obsessed with the Regnant. A Regnant with a high Conscience rating may return this "love" to some degree.

One of the primary powers a Regnant has over her Thrall is the ability to Dominate the Thrall without eye contact. As long as the Thrall is able to hear the words of his Regnant, he can be Dominated. All difficulties are two higher whenever the Thrall makes a roll to resist the Domination of the Regnant.

Blood Bond sometimes (but not always) gives the Regnant insight into the moods and feelings of the Thrall, and she may even know where the Thrall is from moment to moment, if the Blood Bond has been held long enough.

If a character's Regnant asks a favor of him, he will perform the task if it is at all possible. However, if it requires him to risk his life, he does not have to do it. Even love is not that blind. Even so, if there is an emergency and the Regnant is being attacked, the Thrall's first instinct is to go to aid her. Self-sacrifice is not unknown, especially if the Bond has been reinforced over the years. If the Thrall is treated well, the Bond is reinforced and it grows stronger - if he is humiliated and degraded, the hate that develops will diminish the Bond's influence on the Thrall.

At the Storyteller's discretion, Willpower may be expended to temporarily resist the power of the Blood Bond. First, the character must accumulate a number of successes on a Willpower roll (difficulty 8) equal to the number of times he has drunk from his Regnant. Then, depending on the circumstances, a Willpower point will eliminate the effects of the Bond for a single turn to an entire scene. If the character simply wishes to plot against his Regnant, one Willpower point will enable him to do so for an entire scene. However, if he wants to actively attack his Regnant, it will take at least one Willpower per turn, and the player will probably have to make an additional Willpower roll each turn just to get the nerve to spend that Willpower point.

It is possible to break a Blood Bond, but it is very difficult. It requires not only a massive expenditure of Willpower over a long period of time, but also necessitates that the character completely avoid his Regnant. If a Thrall does not see the Regnant for some time, and does not interact with the object of his attachment, the Bond will eventually die away. Some types of Natures, such as Child and Fanatic, may never escape the Blood Bond, while others, such as Conniver or Loner, may do so very easily. The breaking of a character's Blood Bond cannot be achieved through experience points or successful rolls; it must be roleplayed.

It is whispered that the Sabbat knows of ways to break the Bond, but it is said one must pledge to the sect before the process will be imparted. Whatever the case, those who most resent their Bondage and retain the free will to act independently flee to the Sabbat - fearing the Black Hand less than continued servitude to an elder.

Chapter Nine:
Drama

That which does not kill us, makes us stronger.
- Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

There are many actions a player might want to take during a turn - jump a fence, seduce a mortal, or research werewolves in the library. Though you, as the Storyteller, already know the rules (from reading Chapter Four), and can probably figure out how to adjudicate the player's roll, there are a few techniques and variations on the rules that you might be interested in. That's what this chapter is all about - it provides advice on rules systems for resolving dramatic actions. Various character actions are described, including swimming, seduction and research, and interesting methods for resolving players' rolls as well as roleplaying through them are provided.

This chapter is not meant to be all-inclusive. These systems are only examples of how to resolve the actions taken by the players. Use these as examples and invent your own systems for running things if you'd like. Don't stop the action in the middle of a dramatic scene to look up something in this chapter - just make up something, perhaps based on a rules system which you first encountered herein.

Only if a roll is truly called for should you use one of the systems described in this chapter. If it is a simple roll, none of these systems are needed. If you're not interested in the drama created by putting the *game* into the *story*, use the automatic success rules. Go to the Traits chapter and, just by reading about the Trait in question, figure out if the player is successful or not without even rolling any dice. You may not want to roll dice if you don't have to - they can really get in the way. However, there are occasions when rolling dice adds tension and suspense, as Lady Luck makes her appearance.

Even beyond the roleplaying business, as a general rule, have the player make a roll only when there is substantial doubt in your mind as to whether the character will succeed in her action or not. If you can reasonably assume she will succeed, then just let her do it - don't worry about the rules or dice rolls. Use the automatic success rules as often as you can; your game will be better as a result.

When you do start making rolls and have the players do the same, make the rolls special and make them different. Don't waste a lot of time on a dice roll that doesn't do anything special for the story, or is uninteresting for you or the players. Each time you roll the dice should be a game in miniature, with strategy and tactics to master, luck to foul things up and opponents to squash.

Scenes

No one move a muscle as the dead come home.

- Shriekback, "Nemesis"

A scene is a moment in a story when the troupe focuses on the events at hand and roleplays through them as if they were really occurring. This may only require roleplaying and a lot of conversation between the players and the Storyteller, but may also involve a number of different actions, some requiring dice rolls.

A scene is like a series of shots taken in a movie in the same location and at the same moment in the story. It is the real gist of the roleplaying, when the players are actively in their roles and are able to describe their characters' reactions to events rather than explain what they intend to do.

You should do everything you can to make the scenes in your story as dramatic, complete and fulfilling as possible. The better you can give each scene an exciting start, an action-packed middle and a fulfilling end (or a strategically frustrating one), the better your story will be.

Describe the scene not as a static picture, but as a place or time full of life and action. It should have its own existence apart from the characters. The gang leader does not simply sit at a table - while the characters are watching he calls over one of his henchmen and begins to berate him. Create an open-ended story in your descriptions and then invite the players to enter it. Don't force the players to animate your creation - breathe life into it from the very first moment.

Time during the story not spent in a scene is called downtime. This can be when the players are doing extensive research, are traveling, or simply don't want to bother roleplaying through everything second by second. Downtime is a break from the intensity of the scene. Though normally you want to spend as little time as possible in downtime (generally it's relatively boring), you shouldn't avoid it altogether. Use downtime to organize players, direct the story more precisely, and progress the plot more quickly.

The story can turn into a scene at almost any time. Often it does so quite naturally, without anyone realizing it has

happened. For instance, while you discuss with the players how they intend to make a journey to Chicago, you may begin to describe what they see along the way. You have gone from downtime to a scene. When you begin roleplaying an old man who walks up to them and asks for change, you have completely immersed them in the scene. By simply beginning roleplaying without warning, you jump-start the players into getting out of the player mode and into their roles, thus instantly beginning a scene.

Turns

A scene is divided into turns in order to organize and structure the arrangement of events. A turn is a variable period of time during which characters can do things. It helps

you keep track of what is going on and ensures that each player gets the same chance to do something. **In *one* turn, each character should be able to do *one* thing.** Additionally, each player should be given about the same amount of time to describe what she wants her character to do. Each turn, go around the table in order of initiative and give each player an opportunity to state an action, and then go to the next person. When you get to yourself, describe the actions of the non-player characters.

Even if doing so might not make complete sense, you should use the turn structure pretty loosely. You might, for example, let someone climb a tree while someone else fires a gun, even though in normal circumstances climbing a tree usually takes a minute, while shooting a gun takes only three seconds. Adrenalin (and blood) makes people do amazing things, after all.

Multiple Actions

A character can perform multiple actions in a turn (such as running and shooting a gun), but unless he possesses Celerity, he has to divide up his dice.

To split a Dice Pool between two different actions, the character takes the dice from the action with which the character has the least skill (the one with the smallest Dice Pool) and divides that Pool among all the actions he wishes to perform.

If the character moves while taking other actions in a turn (such as firing a gun), he may do so simply by taking away one die from the pool for every three yards he moves. Movement is already considered in the rules for dodging, so characters who dive for cover accrue no extra penalty.

Characters with multiple actions take their first action in their normal order of initiative (unless they delay). They may take no more than one action at this time. After all characters have completed their first (or only) action, characters with more actions may take their second action, again in order of initiative. After everyone has taken their second action, play proceeds with the third and subsequent actions in order of initiative, as above. While characters may delay their action, they must take it before the rest of the characters move on to their next action, or it is lost. However, characters can always use dice to dodge as long as there are any dice left in the Pool.

For example: Jaeger, with a Celerity rating of two, faces off against two of the Prince's ghouls. He announces he will punch each once and dodge, all with full Dice Pool. Ghoul A must cover two yards before attacking with her stake; meanwhile Ghoul B decides to split his Dice Pool so he can dodge and attack with his stake. The players determine initiative and arrive at the following order: A, Jaeger, and B. A moves in, and will have one fewer die for her action. Jaeger launches an attack at B, who dodges. Now that all participants have taken an action, the sequence starts over. A attacks, Jaeger dodges and B attacks. Now only Jaeger has an action left, and he punches B's lights out.

Action Scenes

Many scenes are so full of actions and dice rolls they require special rules to make sure everything runs smoothly. These are times when the adrenalin is racing and the pacing is fast. Action scenes are the fights, races and feats of danger so common in adventure stories. During an action scene, the turns are usually very short, lasting only three seconds or so. Most of the systems described in this chapter occur during action scenes and use action turns.

Many different types of actions can occur in an action scene, and correlating everything can seem a little tricky. Let a character do nearly anything she cares to try, even if you assign a difficulty of 10.

Make sure you carefully describe where everyone is in the scene as well as what cover is available and how far it is from the characters. Otherwise, you will have to describe the scene over again and hear complaints like, "Wait a minute, you didn't say anyone was over there!" You may also want to describe the environmental conditions and how they might affect the scene. Rain, wind and smoke can affect many rolls.

Organizing an Action Turn

Just as turns organize a scene, so there are different stages of each turn. Still, you will probably not need to divide up turns unless they are action turns. Though you need not go by these stages exactly, look over this list to get ideas about how you can organize things when the action gets hot. The better you've got it organized, the more smoothly it will go and the more fun everyone will have.

• Describing the Scene

At the beginning of each turn, you should describe the scene from the characters' perspective. You may want to suggest what the characters' opponents might be about to do, but do not actually describe what will happen. Sometimes this will be a wrap-up of the last turn, making it clear to all the players what occurred. This sort of constant redescription is essential if you want to avoid confusion.

This is your chance to organize and arrange things so that all will go smoothly when the players begin to interact with what you have set up. You will want to make your description as interesting as possible, leaving open all sorts of possibilities for actions to be taken by the characters.

The players need to roll for initiative to determine the order in which their characters will act. In especially complicated situations, you can have the players describe to you what they intend to do that turn, starting with the player who rolled the lowest initiative. This statement of intent can help you clarify in your own mind what is going on, but it slows things down, so avoid it if you can. If you

wish to be

particularly free-spirited, then eliminate the initiative roll altogether and have the players act in whatever order you wish.

e.g. *"In the distance you hear sirens, and you see that the street punk at the end of the alley seems to have noticed them as well. He wins the initiative and sprints towards the fence. What are you going to do?"*

• Decision Stage

Going in reverse order of initiative (if the players made initiative rolls), have each player explain what her character intends to do and how she intends to go about it. If you did not call for initiative rolls, simply go around the table from left to right, or in order of character Wits, or using whatever consistent method you like. You then decide how you want to resolve the action - what kind of roll each player will make, the difficulty of the roll, and the number of successes needed. You can make the process as simple or as complicated as you like.

e.g. *"If you want to catch him before he gets over the fence, you need to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll. You need to get six successes to catch up with him, but he only needs three more to get over the fence."*

• Resolution Stage

This is when the players roll to see whether their characters succeed or fail. The players roll dice to attempt the actions they described in the preceding stage.

At the end of the turn, you need to summarize everything by describing what happened and translating all the dice rolls into description, plot and story. Don't simply say, "You manage to hit the bad guy for three Health Levels of damage." Get more graphic and say, "After ducking away to the left, you sweep across with your fist and strike him alongside the head. Your hand stings, but you've broken his nose and wounded him for three Levels."

e.g. *" With a great burst of speed and a daring leap over a garbage can, you race down the alley after him. Next round you will be able to make a grab at him before he gets completely away. However, you see a police cruiser pull in around the corner of the alley."*

Initiative

At the beginning of most scenes, you will want to figure out who goes first. Rolling for initiative is the best way to decide in what order players will take their turns for the remainder of the fight. Sometimes it will be obvious who goes first, such as when an ambush was set or one person is clearly caught by surprise. In combat, however, if you intend to let the opponents have a free shot at the characters, you should not simply spring it on the players. Let them make Perception rolls (hard ones) to see if they notice something just before the bad guys open up. Otherwise, you'll have a pack of whining jackals on your hands. The difficulty depends on

how well the ambush was set (usually 8 or so). The number of successes the players score indicates the number of dice they can roll on their first actions, usually dodges.

In a normal situation, each player makes an initiative roll, and you do so for each of the opponents. Everyone involved makes a Wits + Alertness roll (or you can have them roll Wits + Brawl, Melee, Firearms or any appropriate Ability). The difficulty is usually four -

characters with the most successes go first and ties go simultaneously. Characters who fail act after those who succeeded last. A botch on an initiative roll means the character does not get to act that turn -his gun jams, he stumbles and cannot punch or dodge, etc.

Taking Actions

The three basic actions characters can take without making rolls include:

•**Yielding:** The character allows the person with the next highest initiative to take his action, thereby yielding her turn. She can still take her action at the end of the turn. If everyone, including her opponents, yields as well, no one does anything that turn.

•**Healing:** The character can decide to do nothing but use a Blood Point to heal himself. In one turn, one Health Level can be restored automatically if no other action is taken. A Blood Point can be used to enhance a Physical Attribute while the character performs other actions.

• **Moving:** The character may move by walking, jogging or running. If she walks, she may move seven yards. If she jogs, she may move 12 yards + Dexterity. If she runs, she may move 20 yards + (3 x Dexterity). No roll is required, but this movement is the only action the character can perform in that turn. In some situations, it can be hazardous to jog or run, and a roll might be required to maintain balance when there is glass on the ground or bullets are raining down. If the character wants to run away from the conflict or encounter, she must dodge unless she is not in the field of fire or hindered in any way.

There are all sorts of other actions that can be made that require rolls. Some are listed here:

•**Attack:** A character may decide to fire his weapon or strike someone. The roll made depends on the attack; for instance, a Firearms attack requires a Dexterity + Firearms roll.

• **Climb a wall:** This action requires a Dexterity + Athletics roll.

• **Crowd control:** A character with the Presence Discipline may use his power to clear away a crowd with the appropriate rolls.

•**Dodge:** A dodge not only allows a character to avoid an attack, but removes him from the line of attack altogether. A character can make a dodge roll right after someone tries to hit him, thereby (hopefully) avoiding the blow.

• **Get to feet:** It takes a turn to get up from the ground without having to make a roll. If a character wants to do this in addition to her other actions, she would have to take dice from her announced action and attempt to score at least one success on a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty at least 4).

• **Leadership:** A character may give commands to followers and have them obeyed with appropriate Charisma (or Manipulation) + Leadership rolls.

•**Reload gun:** This can be done in a single turn with a preloaded clip.

•**Research:** A character may try to look up a vital piece of information in a book using the Investigation Ability. Though this would likely take longer than three seconds, in the interests of drama, you may wish to suspend reality a bit.

• **Start a car:** This action doesn't require a roll at all, unless a character is hotwiring it.

• **Sneak up on enemy:** This action requires a Stealth roll of some sort.

•**Unjam gun:** This action can normally be performed in a single turn with a Wits + Firearms roll.

Dramatic Systems

The one thing about living in Santa Carla that I never could stomach is all the damn vampires.

- Grandpa, *The Lost Boys*

Described below are a variety of different systems to resolve actions, or, to put it simply, a bunch of ways to make rolls. If you prefer to roleplay through dramatic scenes, just use these systems to get ideas on what sorts of things can happen during the scene.

Remember, these are only *examples* of how you can do things in your chronicle. If you don't like the way the Firefight system works, then change it. Don't think that these rules are written in stone, because they're not. They were written for you to use and abuse as you see fit.

Physical

These systems describe physical actions and confrontations - dramatic situations where the Physical Attributes predominate.

Awakening

Often a character will need to wake up in the middle of the day. This is extremely difficult for vampires to do, as they are highly nocturnal creatures. When something occurs during the day which may require a character to rouse, such as a noise or a motion near the bed, a Perception + Auspex roll must be made (difficulty 8). Any success indicates the character awakens enough to notice what is going on. Failure indicates she doesn't wake up, while a botch indicates she won't awaken except under the most dire circumstances.

Once the character has roused slightly, she can make a Humanity roll to see how long she can remain awake. The difficulty is normally an eight; each success indicates the character can stay awake for one turn. Five successes means she awakens completely. No actions can be taken until the character is completely awake. A failure means she goes back to sleep, but if something else happens which might awaken her, she can roll again. A botch means she goes back to sleep and nothing will rouse her short of Gehenna.

Throughout the rest of the time the character stays awake, you may require her to make Humanity rolls to see if she can remain awake. The difficulty of this roll is also eight, but only one success is needed for her to stay up. Failures and botches have the same results as they do above.

Remember, during the day no vampire can use more dice than her rating in Humanity.

Climbing

Though humans have to use their arms and legs to climb, vampires have other means of scaling walls, not the least of which is simply to jump to where they want to go. For normal climbing, use the system below; otherwise, go to the Jumping system. Some powerful vampires can shapeshift into a bat and simply fly.

When a character attempts to climb any sort of surface (a tree, cliff or building), ask the player to roll the character's Dexterity + Athletics. If the character has the Protean power of Claws, an additional die may be rolled. The difficulty depends on the sheerness of the climbing surface, the type of surface being climbed and, to a lesser extent, the weather conditions. Each success indicates the character has climbed five feet. Once he accumulates enough successes to get to where he wants to go, he can stop rolling. For example, Malcolm is trying to climb a 25-foot wall, so he needs five successes to get to the top. A failure indicates the character is not able to make any progress during the turn. A botch indicates the character falls and cannot attempt to climb again without expending a Willpower point.

2 - Easy climb: a tree with many stout branches

4 - Simple climb: a cliff with many handholds

6 - Straightforward: a tree with thin branches

8 - Treacherous: very few handholds

10 - Extremely difficult: a nearly sheer surface

Hunting

Obtaining blood is one of the most important things in a vampire's life. When you don't wish to roleplay out the hunt for food, this system provides a fairly rapid way to determine how much blood characters get and if there are any complications.

For each hour the player decides to spend hunting, give her one die. Using these dice, a roll is made; the difficulty is determined by the neighborhood. Remember, the Fame and Herd Background Traits make hunting easier.

Area - Difficulty

Slum neighborhood - 4

Lower class - 5

Downtown - 6

Warehouse district - 6

Suburb - 7

Heavily patrolled - 8

A success indicates the character tracks down prey and may feed for one die worth of Blood Points (roll one die; the result indicates how many Blood Points the character receives from her nocturnal prowlings). A failure indicates the vampire fails to find a vessel, while a botch of any sort indicates a complication.

After a botch, immediately go into roleplaying mode at the point where things start to go wrong. Describe the scene and relate to the player what happened up to the point where the hunt went awry. The player has to figure out how to get out of trouble.

If you don't have time for roleplaying, tell the player that her character manages to feed. Later on, however, inform the player that her character has contracted some sort of loathsome disease.

After the feeding begins, a frenzy roll is sometimes required to see if the character can resist the urge to gorge on the vessel. If the character has three or fewer Blood Points when she begins feeding, a frenzy roll is required (using Self-Control). See the Frenzy rules in Chapter Eight

for more details.

Jumping

Jumping requires a Strength roll, or a Strength + Athletics roll if it is a horizontal jump and the character gets a decent running start. The difficulty for a jump is almost always a three (unless there are difficult weather conditions or there is a narrow landing space). The Storyteller calculates how many successes are required to make the jump. There are no partial successes in jumping; the character either succeeds in one roll, or she falls.

If necessary, you can use the chart below. The number of successes required is based on the number of feet that must be jumped and whether the character is jumping horizontally or vertically (see the chart below).

Type of Jump - Feet per Success

Vertical (up) - 2

Horizontal (across) - 4

A failure or a botch indicates the character falls, trips or for some reason fails. If the roll was merely a failure, you could give the character a second chance by having the player make a Dexterity + Athletics roll to see if the character can grab onto the ledge, etc. However, a botch is always a complete failure - the character falls. The wounds inflicted by a fall are discussed in the Injuries section of Chapter Eight.

If the player makes a Perception + Athletics roll before the character makes the jump (average difficulty of 6) and receives three successes, you can tell him exactly how many successes the character will need in order to make the jump.

Feats of Strength

Often a character's Strength is used alone, without an Ability, in actions where brute Strength is all that matters, though the Discipline of Potence can be added. This system works on the same basis as automatic successes. If the character's Strength + Potence equals or exceeds the difficulty of the task he is attempting, he does it automatically. Only if the difficulty is higher than his Dice Pool must he make a roll. Blood Points spent on Strength raise this maximum.

When the character makes the roll, however, it is based on Willpower, not Strength. It is a simple roll, so the character gets only one chance to make it. The difficulty is almost always a nine, though it can vary according to the surface conditions, the wieldiness of the object being lifted, and Storyteller whim. Each success pushes the character's effective Strength up one step on the chart below (to a maximum of five). Thus, if the character had a Strength of 4, but wanted to flip over a car, she would need three successes on the Willpower roll to do it.

Dice Pool	Feats	Lift
1	Crush a beer can	40 lbs
2	Break a chair	100 lbs
3	Break down a wooden door	250 lbs
4	Break a 2' x 4' board	400 lbs
5	Break open a metal fire door	650 lbs
6	Throw a motorcycle	800 lbs
7	Flip over a small car	900 lbs
8	Break a three-inch lead pipe	1000 lbs
9	Punch through a cement wall	1200 lbs
10	Rip open a steel drum	1500 lbs
11	Punch through 1" sheet metal	2000 lbs
12	Break a metal lamp post	3000 lbs
13	Throw a car	4000 lbs
14	Throw a van	5000 lbs
15	Throw a truck	6000 lbs

Repair

Getting something fixed is not always as easy as taking it to the garage; sometimes the task has to be performed oneself. When a character wishes to fix any sort of mechanical implement, he must roll Dexterity + Repair. The difficulty is determined by the complexity of the task (see the chart below). Before the job can be considered completed, a certain number of successes must be collected, usually between two and 20. Each roll means that a certain amount of time is spent - whatever the demands of the story require. A botch indicates that the device is somehow damaged in the attempt.

This system can be fun to use during combat, as one character desperately tries to start the car while the others hold off the pack of ghouls.

Job	Difficulty	# of Successes
Simple mechanical repair	4	3
Soldering job	5	2
Electronic malfunction	5	5
Fitting in new part	6	10
Repair stalled car	6	5
Tough auto repair	7	10
System overhaul	8	20
Technical glitch	9	2

Sneaking

When a character attempts to hide in shadows or sneak up on a guard, she must roll Dexterity + Stealth. The difficulty is the guard's Perception + Alertness. Anyone who is on watch or who is actively looking for intruders can be considered a guard.

The character needs to collect a certain number of successes in order to make it to where she wants to go. A

Perception + Stealth roll can be made if the player wants to find out how many successes will be needed; the difficulty for this is usually seven. Failure of any sort indicates detection.

Shadowing

Sometimes a character will want to follow someone. In order to be led somewhere interesting, this needs to be done as discreetly as possible. That is what shadowing is all about - following someone without him knowing the character is there.

There are two components to shadowing-keeping track of where the subject is and making sure he doesn't see his tail. Shadowing can be conducted on foot or in a vehicle. Rolls can even be made if someone else is driving, such as a taxi driver - "I'm sorry, but I can't remember the address - you'll just have to follow my directions. Take a right at the corner. No, wait, a left!"

The character attempting to shadow must make a Perception + Investigation (or possibly Streetwise) roll. The difficulty is normally a six (though it can vary from five to nine depending on the thickness of the crowds, relative speeds of vehicles and weather conditions). Each success indicates that the character has been followed for a turn. A certain number of successes is required to follow the subject all the way to where he is going. A failure indicates that the character has temporarily lost the subject, but can try again next turn. If she gets a second failure, she has lost the subject completely and the chase is off (unless she can come up with a new approach). A botch indicates that not only does the character completely lose the subject, but she is so involved in shadowing that she gets into trouble of her own - a gang tries to beat her up, she falls into an open manhole, or she has a car accident.

Though the Perception roll is the most important aspect of shadowing, a Stealth roll must also be made to see if the subject notices he is being followed. Each turn the Perception roll is made, the Stealth roll must be made as well. The player must roll Dexterity + Stealth (or Dexterity + Drive if the character is in a vehicle).

The difficulty is the subject's Perception + Alertness, but it can be modified by +/- 3, depending on the circumstances (empty streets or thick crowds, for instance). A single success indicates the shadower was not detected, and each success also makes it more difficult for the subject to spot the shadower, even if he is actively looking. A failure indicates the subject becomes suspicious and starts to surreptitiously glance over his shoulder (and may make Perception rolls of his own; see below). A botch indicates the character completely reveals herself and the subject now *knows* he is being followed.

If the subject is alerted somehow (by the shadower's failure on the Dexterity + Stealth roll above), or simply looks to see if he is being followed (out of habit perhaps), roll Perception + Investigation (or Streetwise). The difficulty is the Stealth + 5 of the character who is shadowing. Each success on this roll indicates a higher degree of suspicion. Successes can be accumulated from turn to turn; see the chart below to see how alert the subject is to the fact that he is being followed. A failure means nothing out of the ordinary is seen and the suspicion value of the subject decreases to zero. A botch means the subject is convinced he isn't being followed and no longer looks behind him.

Successes - Suspicion

1 - Hunch

2 - Suspicion

3 - Near-certainty

4 - Positive knowledge

5 - The shadower has been spotted

Buddy System: Two or more characters can share shadowing responsibilities by trading off. However, they must have worked/trained together in this technique previously, or the difficulties of all rolls for the pair are one higher. One player shadows for a turn or more, and then trades off whenever her partner gives the signal. If the pair switches off, the subject can't accumulate successes for very long, which makes it much harder for the subject to spot the shadowers.

Swimming

Although total immersion in water is not fatal to vampires, it is not very pleasant. Because vampires do not breathe, they cannot drown. However, they can sink.

Any vampire immersed in water without any means of support must roll Dexterity + Athletics; the difficulty is determined by the severity of the water conditions. The number of successes obtained determines how far the vampire swims (or alternately, how long he stays above water). Normally it is five feet or five minutes, but that can vary according to the needs of the story. A botch means the character loses ground (the current pulls him along or the tide pulls him back).

If a vampire is caught underwater during the day, he can be harmed by the sun's rays - water is little protection (treat as if the vampire were outside on a cloudy day). If a vampire dives deep enough, the sunlight will not penetrate, but the character may well be crushed by the pressure or suffer the effects of the cold temperature. Remember also that many sea creatures, such as sharks and giant squid, are much less choosy about their prey than terrestrial animals, and have been known to eat carrion

Stunt Driving

This system is used to determine the outcome of nearly any type of automobile chase or maneuver. Dice rolls in chases are not only made to see how fast a driver goes, but also to see if she stays on the road or not. Each vehicle is rated for its maximum safe driving speed, as well as its maneuverability. One vehicle is not always as fast as another nor as maneuverable, so the details of the chase often depend on the make of the vehicle (see the chart below).

A character can make special maneuvers in order to catch or lose another vehicle, such as spinning around a tight corner, doing a 180° turn, or wheeling about to block a road. Essentially, one character makes a special maneuver and the other character must copy that maneuver by making the same or an approximate roll.

The player must roll Dexterity (or perhaps Perception) + Drive. However, the maximum number of dice that can be rolled is the Maneuverability rating of the vehicle. The difficulty of the maneuver and the speed of the car determine the difficulty. You should give each maneuver a basic difficulty from two to seven, and then designate a speed at which it can be completed at that difficulty. This is most often the Safe Speed, but can be much less depending on how complicated or tight the maneuver is.

The difficulty goes up by one for every 10 mph the vehicle exceeds that speed while performing the maneuver. The driver decides how fast her vehicle performs the maneuver, although she will not always be able to slow down enough to avoid a crash or collision.

Vehicle	Safe Speed	Max Speed	Maneuver
6-wheel truck	60	90	3
Bus	60	100	3
18-wheeler	70	110	4
Sedan	70	120	5
Mini-van	70	120	6
Compact	70	130	6
Sporty compact	100	140	7
Sport coupe	110	150	8
Sports car	130	170	9
Formula One race car	140	240	10

Pursuit

This simple system is used when one character attempts to run down another. One opponent starts with a certain number of successes. This number is either determined by the Storyteller (this is the preferred method) or by having the pursued character roll Dexterity + Athletics for each turn of headstart on the pursuer and add up the number of successes achieved. This roll has a difficulty of six. This number of successes must be collected by the other character before he can catch up. Once he does, he can try to grapple the fleeing person (see the Melee rules). The pursuer might only want to catch up halfway, just to get a better shot at the fleeing character.

Each character involved must roll Dexterity + Athletics. Each success means the character travels a little farther. A failure indicates the character falters, while a botch means he falls and will not be able to roll at all the next turn (he needs to get up off the ground). If the pursuer scores more successes in a turn than the pursued, he gains on her by that number of successes. If the pursued scores more successes in a turn than the pursuer, she pulls away by that number of successes. If the pursued ever gains a lead of of enough successes (7-20, depending on the terrain), she gets away and eludes pursuit.

This system can be modified for use with car chases if the standard driving system does not suit your troupe's needs.

Stealing

While illegal, theft and robbery are sometimes elements of a **Vampire** story. On occasion, a vampire has no other recourse. There are many different ways to steal, though only a few are discussed below. If the character's Humanity is above 7, he must make a Humanity roll when he steals something, especially if it was from someone who really needs whatever was stolen. If the theft is particularly heartless, even a character with a Humanity of less than 7 might have to make a Humanity roll.

Shoplifting: The player rolls Dexterity + Streetwise. The difficulty depends on the circumstances - a crowded store, the size of the item, guards and mirrors. Normally it is an eight. Failure indicates the storekeeper notices the character taking something, while a botch means she has been caught red-handed. The number of successes on the shoplifting roll determines the difficulty of the storekeeper's Perception + Alertness roll. One success means the shopkeeper is highly suspicious, while five successes means he has caught the character in the act.

The player can make a Perception + Streetwise roll to see if the character is being watched or not. The difficulty is at least an eight, but each success cancels one of the storekeeper's successes.

Pickpocketing: The player rolls Dexterity + Streetwise. The difficulty depends on the circumstances - a thick crowd or deep pockets, for example. The number of successes determines the difficulty of the target's Perception + Alertness roll, while a botch indicates the target notices the thief in the act and catches him red-handed. The target needs to roll higher than the pickpocket's number of successes. One success means she moves away unconsciously (the thief can try again); two successes means she turns to look at the pickpocket but doesn't know what's going on; three successes means she catches on.

Cat Burglary: The troupe should roleplay through this, with lots of Stealth and Perception rolls to provide drama. Once the cat burglar gets inside, she needs to find what she is looking for. You'll have to judge how slickly the player planned the burglary, and then judge the character's chances of getting caught. There is always a chance things might go wrong. If more than one person attempts this activity, they greatly increase their chances of getting caught; however, it can be boring for the other players to wait for one person to finish her solo. Roleplay it out, but if people are waiting, don't spend more than a few minutes on it.

Holdup: The character holds up a store, usually by threatening the storekeeper, and then takes whatever he wants. A Manipulation + Intimidation roll must be made. The difficulty is the storekeeper's Willpower. Usually some sort of gun must be displayed or a demonstration of force made for the intimidation to be truly effective. Each success indicates the storekeeper is cowed for one minute. A failure indicates the storekeeper is angry and might try something, while a botch indicates that the storekeeper attempts to trip an alarm, call the cops or reach for a hidden firearm. If the storekeeper gets killed or even injured as a result of the character's actions, a Humanity roll is in order.

Social

She did not seduce, she ravished.

- George Meredith, *Diana of the Crossways*

These systems involve social interaction between people. They nearly always require a Charisma, Manipulation or Appearance roll. Often these systems are best left unused, and roleplaying used instead to determine the success or failure of a particular social interaction.

Seduction

Seduction is an unnatural means of gaining intimacy with another person, because every step is carefully staged and real feelings are not shared (they are faked). A seduction goes in stages, and unless a person is successful in each stage in succession, he will not succeed at all. This system is designed to replicate the activities of a dominant person over a more submissive one. If the emotions and motives are true, then you should ignore this system and roleplay it out.

Though a vampire can easily use her Dominate and Presence Disciplines to seduce a mortal, often she does not wish to do so, preferring the hunt to the capture. In many cases, depending on the Nature of the character, Willpower can be regained if she succeeds in the seduction. Bon Vivants, Connivers and Gallants often regain Willpower by successfully completing a seduction.

Opening line: The player rolls Appearance + Subterfuge. The difficulty is the Wits + 3 of the subject (the player gains a bonus of 1 -3 dice if it's a good line, minus 1 - 3 if it's a stupid one). Each additional success adds an extra die to the roll on the next stage.

Witty exchange: The player rolls Wits + Subterfuge. The difficulty is the Intelligence + 3 of the subject. Again, give bonuses and penalties for roleplaying. Each additional success adds an extra die to the roll on the next stage.

Conversation: The player rolls Charisma + Empathy. The difficulty is the Perception +3 of the subject. Again, roleplaying bonuses come into play here.

Intimacies: At this point, the couple may move to a private area and become physically intimate. No roll is required, especially when one considers that at this point the vampire can drink from the subject.

Fast Talk

This system describes a means to browbeat and confuse someone into submission. The player must roll Manipulation + Subterfuge, though Charisma or Appearance can sometimes be used, as can Acting. The difficulty is the target's Wits + 5. Success indicates that the target becomes confused.

The target may make whatever rolls he wishes; however, the fast talk is likely to confuse him too much at some point to take the appropriate action. Willpower points can be expended to resist the fast talk. Failure indicates that the attempt has faltered, and the target can try to get something in edgewise - an attempt to explain himself, or perhaps even an attempt to fast talk back. This attempt to say something back continues until the subject fails or botches. A botch indicates that the target doesn't get confused, only angry. Fast talk attempts by the character will never again be effective on him.

Repeated rolls might be necessary to truly confuse the target. As Storyteller, you need to run attempts at fast talk in a way that is consistent with the mood of your game. They can be as slaphappy or as deadly serious as you like.

Oration

If a player wants her character to give a speech, but doesn't want to actually recite it, you can use this system. You want her to describe what she says, and maybe tell you a memorable phrase she uses - that might even get her to roleplay it out. Oration is often very difficult to roleplay, so never force your players to do so. Just use this system.

The player makes a Charisma + Leadership roll. The difficulty depends on the mood of the crowd, its willingness to hear what the orator says, and its penchant for throwing rotten vegetables. Usually the difficulty is a seven. If the orator has any sort of reputation, you may wish to adjust the difficulty accordingly. If the character has Fame or Status among the group being spoken to, she can add that rating to her Dice Pool. The number of successes indicates how impressed the crowd is (see the following chart). It is a simple roll, so the player has only one crack at it. A failure indicates the crowd ignores the character. A botch indicates the character is going to be lynched, or if that sort of thing isn't common, then booing begins.

Successes - Crowd Reaction

1 - They listened, but aren't excited.

2 - The character has convinced them somewhat.

3 - The crowd is won over.

4 - The crowd is completely enthralled.

5 - The crowd is in the palm of the character's hand.

If the speech is vital to the story, the player may make several rolls. If you want to spend some time on it, you can make it an extended action, interspersing each roll with roleplaying. The character can spend as many turns as she wants on the speech, but after the third turn, the difficulty goes up each turn by one. More successes than five might be required to completely win over the crowd.

Interrogation

Interrogation can occur in a number of different situations. It is a form of questioning, not torture, though intimidation is certainly employed. Torture can be used, but you will have to develop your own rules for that if you wish to include it in your chronicle.

The player makes a Manipulation + Intimidation roll; the difficulty is the victim's Willpower. The number of successes indicates the amount of information obtained (see the chart below). A failure indicates the character learns nothing of value. A botch indicates the subject tells the character nothing, and will never tell him anything - or worse, the subject lies. For this reason, it is often useful if the Storyteller makes the roll for the player.

Successes - Interrogation

1 - Only a few mumbled facts

2 - Some relevant facts

3 - Much interesting information

4 - The subject talks on and on

5 - Everything of import is discovered

Credibility

This system is used when a character attempts to convince someone she is telling the truth, such as when she attempts to persuade the jury she is not lying, or tries to convince a police officer she is who she says she is. The player must make a Manipulation + Leadership roll; each point of Fame the character possesses adds one to the Dice Pool. The difficulty is the other subject's Intelligence + Subterfuge. Lower the difficulty by 1 -3 if the character is telling the truth (it does make a difference). Each success indicates a higher degree of believability. Five successes indicate the subject is completely convinced. A failure indicates disbelief, and a botch indicates the character is caught in a lie (or the subject thinks he has caught her in a lie).

Note that if the character is telling the truth, it is still more difficult to convince a smart, worldly person of this than a stupid one (smarter people tend to be more cynical).

The Facedown

This system is used during facedowns, when two characters are engaged in a duel of Willpower and neither wants to be the first to back down. No words are exchanged - the opponents just glare at one another. This "childish" behavior is surprisingly common among vampires; the intense hostility two Kindred might have for each other must be restrained, but often cannot be concealed.

Both opponents roll Charisma + Intimidation; the difficulty is the opponent's Willpower. The one who first accumulates as many successes as his opponent's Wits + 5 wins, forcing the other to look away. A character can spend a Willpower point each turn to avoid this and keep on glaring, but eventually he will run out of Willpower.

Performances

This system is used whenever a character gives any type of performance, whether it be comedy, music, acting or storytelling. It can be on a stage or in a nightclub, formal or informal, and the audience can be humans or Kindred.

The player must roll the appropriate Attribute + Ability. The combination could be Wits/Intelligence/Charisma/Dexterity + Music/Acting/Leadership - you decide which, depending on the type of performance. The difficulty is based on how receptive the audience is. A failure indicates a lackluster, eminently forgettable performance. A botch indicates a miserable performance that cannot even be finished -the instrument breaks or the character is booed off the stage.

The number of successes indicates how moved the audience is (see the chart below). These successes determine the artistic merit or technical verisimilitude of the piece.

Successes	Your Performance	Reaction
1	Mediocre	Polite applause
2	Average	Approval
3	Good	Genuine appreciation
4	Superior	Vigorous applause
5	Exceptional	Ecstatic reaction
6	Superb	Immediate sensation
7	Brilliant	Miracle, *Magnum opus*

Mental

Trieste, Italy - Gun-toting toughs hijacked a bloodmobile near the Italian-Yugoslavian border, stealing hundreds of pints of freshly drawn blood - and lawmen blame the robbery on vicious, thirst-crazed vampires!

- Weekly World News, "Vampires Hijack Bloodmobile!"

These dramatic systems deal with the use of the mind and the Mental Attributes. They are employed in situations where the drama is not so much a factor of the action as it is of psychological tension.

Research

Research will often be the only way for a character to proceed to the next stage of a story. He will have to investigate matters in a library, newspaper office or through computer files in order to obtain needed information. Research is a great way to let a character with high Intelligence show off, and takes the focus off fast-paced action.

The player rolls Intelligence + Investigation (or an appropriate Knowledge Ability). The difficulty is based upon how obscure the information.

Difficulty - Accessibility of the Information

2 - Generally available

4 - Widely documented

6 - Accessible

8 - Difficult to find

10 - Incredibly well-concealed

The number of successes determines how much the character discovers. One success might mean that only the most obvious facts are found, while five successes might mean that the full (and maybe truthful) story is uncovered. Depending on what the character looks for, 10 or 20 successes might be required to find all the available data.

The player might want to continue the research after gaining a partial success. However, continued research takes longer than the initial search. Basic research usually takes only an hour - that's the first roll. More in-depth research (and a second roll) takes one complete day. If the player

wants a third roll, further research takes a week; a fourth roll takes a month, a fifth roll takes a year, and after that use your imagination. Therefore, it is easy to see how some research projects can take years or even decades to complete. Of course, vampires usually have the time.

If the player wants to reroll (because he failed, but thinks there is still information to be found), the research takes twice as long as it did the first time, and Perception is the governing Attribute instead of Intelligence. Additionally, the difficulty will be at least one higher. Again, the number of successes determines how much is discovered.

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Composition

Sometimes a character will want to create an original and creative work of art - a painting, song or poem. Though this can simply be assumed if the character has the appropriate Abilities, sometimes a roll can make the creative process a little more interesting. Have the player roll Intelligence + an appropriate Ability (such as Music or Acting). The difficulty is chosen by the player, but the higher the difficulty, the more complicated and elegant the final product is. Each success indicates how original, creative and worthy the art is. These successes can help you determine what the reaction is to that piece of art - something very important to some Kindred (such as the Toreador).

Recollection

Vampires live so long that sometimes they have trouble recalling particular memories. If a character is trying to remember a fact of any sort, you may want to use this system. The player must roll Intelligence + the appropriate Ability (usually a Knowledge). The difficulty is assigned by the Storyteller, but is usually low and rarely over seven. The more successes, the more the character remembers. Use the following chart as a guideline. A failure indicates nothing was learned and a botch indicates that what the character remembers isn't true (if the player doesn't roleplay this properly, award her fewer experience points, or have her spend a Willpower point for "the strain of recollection").

Successes - Memory

1 - A hazy idea of what it was about

2 - Most of the facts are recalled (including faces)

3 - Names and numbers are recalled

4 - Complete recollection

5 - Eidetic recollection

Track

This system is used to track people and things by following the physical trails they leave. The player rolls Perception + Survival (or Investigation in the city - but tracks are rarely left on sidewalks and pavement). The difficulty is based on weather conditions, terrain and the age of the tracks, but averages around eight. Each success lowers the difficulty of the next roll by one. However, you might interrupt this by inserting a tough obstacle with a difficulty of nine, such as when the pursued crosses running water.

The character needs to succeed for a certain number of turns; the exact number depends on the length of the trail. Each turn is usually about five minutes long. If the character misses a roll, she can try again; this time, however, the difficulty is one higher. Once it goes above 10, the character loses the trail.

Investment

Regardless of how easily vampires obtain money, an important consideration of security is having money in the future as well as the present. The player makes an Intelligence + Finance roll (difficulty of six, unless the economic climate is especially good or bad); one success indicates the money invested was retained. Five successes indicate that the character's Resources rating increases by one.

Forgery

This system allows characters to forge documents. Two rolls are required: one to know what type of forms and signatures are necessary, and the other to actually sit down and forge the papers. The player is only able to roll as many dice on the second roll as the number of successes achieved on the first roll. It is very difficult to successfully forge documents. You may wish to make the second roll yourself so the player does not know exactly how good the forgery is.

The first roll is made using Intelligence + Bureaucracy (in some cases Linguistics is necessary). The difficulty is based on the complexity of the document being forged (average of 6). A failure means that not enough is known about the nature of these papers and some research must be performed. Another roll can be made after a period of hours or days. A botch indicates the character has no clue of what he is doing, and cannot try to make the roll again unless some new information is found.

The second roll is made using Dexterity + Bureaucracy. The difficulty varies but is normally a six. Each success indicates a higher grade of forgery is accomplished - see the chart below for a general idea of relative worth. A failure indicates the paperwork isn't passable at all - it was too difficult for the character and he cannot try again. A botch indicates some fatal flaw was made, which will be readily seen by any official to whom the papers are shown.

Successes - Results

1 - Passable at a casual glance.

2 - Could trick those who have never seen the real thing.

3 - Would fool most, but not those familiar with the actual thing.

4 - It would take an expert to detect it.

5 - Perfect forgery; no one could tell it was a fake.

Search

This system enables a character to search for something in a confined area, like a room. Have the player roll Perception + Investigation; the difficulty depends on how well concealed the object is (usually between seven and 10). Each success indicates more is found. Sometimes a certain number of successes are required to find something that is well hidden. If you want, a lower number of successes could warrant a hint or clue from you indicating where to look, thus encouraging roleplaying and a degree of puzzle solving. As much as possible, lead the player through the search step by step. Have her describe to you where she looks. Don't let her succeed if she doesn't specifically search in the right area, and let her succeed automatically if her description is detailed enough.

Cryptology

This system is used to decipher codes. The player must roll Intelligence + Linguistics, or Intelligence + Computer if the character is using a computer to help him crack the code. The difficulty will normally be quite high (between 8-10, or less if the character uses a computer). Each success cracks more of the code. Multiple rolls can be made to accumulate successes. It takes anywhere from two to 20 successes to fully crack a code, depending on how complicated it is. Each "turn" can be from one minute to one month, depending on the needs of the story, the intricacy of the code, and the use of computers. Any failure indicates all collected successes are lost and the decoding

process must restart from the beginning. A botch indicates total failure; the job can never be attempted again, or the character has misdeciphered the code.

To create a code, a character must roll Intelligence + Linguistics three times (difficulty 5). The total number of successes indicates the number of successes it takes to crack the code.

Safecracking

A character needs a Security rating of four to even attempt to crack a safe. Even then, you should not allow him this specialized ability without an explanation of where he learned to do such a thing (from his background), or a short period of research and eduction.

The player must make a Perception + Security roll. The difficulty is based on the solidity of the safe and the tools the character uses. Some safes will be impossible to crack with the tools on hand, regardless of the character's skill. A certain number of successes must be accumulated in order to open the safe. Failure means the character cannot get the safe open and anyone examining it later can tell an attempt was made. A botch usually means an alarm has sounded.

Combat

Combat in **Vampire** attempts to capture the drama of violent conflict without downplaying the grim reality of what is going on. We have made every effort to create a system true to the dynamics, limitations and viciousness of real combat, while still leaving room for the unique elements vampires bring to it.

There are three types of combat, all of which use the same basic system, yet have some minor differences. They are the firefight, the melee and the brawl.

•A firefight is any type of armed combat using projectile weapons - things like Uzis and sawed-off shotguns. Opponents normally need to be within sight of each other in order to engage in a firefight.

•Melee refers to fighting with hand weapons - anything from broken bottles to silver axes. Opponents need to be within one or two yards in order to engage in melee.

•A brawl describes a hand-to-hand battle fought with bare hands and claws - unarmed combat. Opponents need to be within touching distance to engage in a brawl.

The rolls made in combat determine whether or not an attack has succeeded, whether the target dodges and how much damage the target suffers. Almost all combat turns are around three seconds long, though they will take somewhat longer than that to resolve.

As with all action scenes, combat turns begin with an initiative roll. However, because combat can sometimes get a little sticky, divide the turn into three stages to make it easier to keep track of things - the Initiative, Attack and Resolution stages.

Stage One: Initiative

This stage organizes the turn, and here characters must declare their actions. Characters can take a number of different actions - anything from leaping behind a wall to trying to shout a warning. Each player must declare what

his character is doing in as much detail as the Storyteller requires. At this point, everyone needs to decide what weapon to use, if any.

Characters make initiative rolls using Wits + Alertness (difficulty 4, though Storytellers can vary it if they so desire). The character with the most successes acts first, while those characters who rolled fewer successes take their actions in descending order of successes. Some characters will act simultaneously because they rolled the same number of successes. Those who gain no successes at all on this roll go last, and those who botch do not get to take actions at all.

Remember to have the players declare what actions they want their characters to take during the combat turn before going to the Attack Stage. A character splitting his Dice Pool must also declare how many dice to allocate to each action.

Anything a character wants to do happens when it is her turn to act. The only exception to this is the dodge, which a character can perform at any time, as long as she has dice left in her Pool.

Stage Two: Attack

The attack is the meat of the combat turn. It is where the success or failure of an attack is determined, as well as something of its potential impact on the target.

The Roll: There are three different types of attack rolls; the type of combat determines which one to use.

• For firearms combat, roll Dexterity + Firearms.

• For melee (with weapons) combat, roll Dexterity + Melee.

• For hand-to-hand (without weapons) combat, roll Dexterity + Brawl.

The weapon or attack used by the attacker determines the base difficulty of the roll. The number of dice rolled might be modified by the gun's rate of fire or the use of a scope, but usually the difficulty is only modified by the circumstances around the attack. If no successes are obtained, the character has failed his attack and no damage is inflicted. If a botch is obtained, then not only does the attack fail, but something nasty happens; the Storyteller needs to invent something truly awful.

Dodging

Any time someone attacks the character, he has the option of dodging. In fact, a player may announce at any time that her character is using an action (or part of it, by dividing her Dice Pool) to dodge, simply by declaring "Dodge!" before the opponent makes an attack roll. In some cases a dodge many not be allowed, such as in confined quarters or in situations where the character has been surprised. The required roll is Dexterity + Dodge; each success takes away one success from the attacker's roll.

The difficulty to dodge melee or brawling attacks is a base six, plus one for every opponent after the first.

In firefights, the difficulty depends on the availability of nearby cover, behind which a character can dive to avoid getting hit. Each success removes one of the opponent's successes. A character can even take away successes from different opponents, though this means splitting successes between them. After such a dodge attempt, the character usually ends up behind some sort of cover or, at the very least, lying on the ground (if there was no cover to be

found).

The difficulty to dodge during firefights is determined by how close cover is.

Difficulty - Terrain

2 - By moving back half a step, the character is back under full cover.

4 - Full cover within diving distance (one yard)

6 - Full cover within running distance (three yards)

7 - Partial cover within running distance (three yards)

8 - Flat and featureless, no cover (the character dives to the ground)

Stage Three: Resolution

In this stage, characters determine the damage inflicted by their attacks and the Storyteller describes what occurs in the turn. It is a mixture of game and story, for though the dice never lie, the Storyteller must interpret what luck has decreed.

Damage: Each weapon or attack allows the wielder to roll a certain number of dice in order to cause damage (difficulty 6). Each success means the target loses one Health Level. Additionally, each success made with a firearm (after any dodge) adds one die to this damage roll. Melee and brawling successes do **not** add to the damage; however, each point of Potence a character possesses adds one automatic success to melee and brawling damage.

Soak: A target may make a roll to see how much damage she "soaks up" due to her natural hardiness. The target rolls Stamina + Fortitude (difficulty 6); every success reduces the damage by one.

Exception: Damage and soak rolls are the only rolls in **Vampire** which cannot be botched.

Complications

A number of factors determine whether an attack hits or not. Smart combatants head for cover as soon as bullets start flying. Others find that ganging up on one foe in a brawl never hurts. The following modifiers allow Storytellers to account for many of the variables which affect combat.

General Complications

• **Changing Actions:** If a character changes her declared actions after the turn has started, the difficulty for the new action increases by one. Generally, the Storyteller should only allow the character to change her declared action if events have made it impossible. "Yes, I know I said my character would jump into the car, but that ghoul just blew it up!"

• **Immobilization:** If a target is immobilized (e.g. held down by someone), but still struggles, the difficulty for the attack roll is lowered by two. However, if the target is

completely immobilized (e.g. is tied up or has a stake through the heart), then no roll is required and the attack succeeds automatically.

Firefight Complications

• **Range:** Getting close to one's foe is a good idea if a character doesn't mind taking a few shots in return. The

range given on the Firearms Chart is the weapon's medium range; the character receives no modifier for shooting at this range. Twice that range is the farthest the weapon can shoot. Shots within this range have their difficulties increased by one. On the other hand, shots made at targets within a yard of the attacker are considered "point-blank"; the difficulty of a point-blank shot is four.

• **Cover:** Intelligent characters use cover to protect themselves from enemy fire. Cover increases the difficulty of an attack depending on how much of the character's body is still out in the open. However, though it acts to protect someone, it can also hamper return fire, and in some rare instances it can completely prevent any return fire. For instance, ducking out from around a corner to shoot may increase the difficulty by one, while watching a shootout through the cracks in a battered wall will prevent a character from firing back at all.

Cover	Difficulty
Lying flat	+1
Behind pole	+2
Behind wall	+3
Only head exposed	+4

• **Movement:** Shooting at a moving target increases the difficulty by one (or even more), as does shooting while moving at any speed faster than a walk (such as firing out the window of a speeding car).

Firefight Complications

Complication	Difficulty	Dice
Changing action	+1	-
Immobilization	-2	-
Long range	+1	-
Point-blank	4	-
Lying flat	+1	-
Behind pole	+2	-
Behind wall	+3	-
Only head exposed	+4	-
Movement	+1	-
Aiming	-	+ Perception
Scope	-	+2
Specific area of target	+2	-
Mutiple shots	+1/extra shot	-
Full-auto	+3	+10
Three-round burst	+1	+3
Spray	5 +1/yard	+10

• **Aiming:** A character may add her Perception rating to her Dexterity + Firearms Dice Pool if she spends time

aiming. However, it takes one turn for each die added, and during this time the character can do nothing but aim - it takes time and patience to aim. Additionally, the target may not be moving at a speed faster than a walk. Shotguns and SMGs cannot be aimed.

If the gun has a scope, the character may add two dice to her Pool in addition to the dice added for Perception. The scope bonus can only be used once per shot - after the +3 added in the first round (+2 for the scope and +1 for Perception), the character continues aiming as outlined above.

• **Targeting:** Aiming for a specific location (gun hand, the heart, etc.) increases the difficulty by two.

• **Multiple Shots**: If a character wants to take more than one shot in a turn, he must divide his Dice Pool into two or more actions. Also, for every additional shot after the first, the difficulty increases by one. Ten is, of course, the maximum the difficulty can be raised to. A character can only take as many shots as allowed by the rate of the firearm.

This penalty is cumulative. Thus a character adds two on the third shot, and three on the fourth. It is not usually wise to blindly take off potshots; the recoil always catches up with one. Using these rules, it is permissible to fire two or more three-round bursts in a single turn, though a character can only fire on full-auto once per turn (and must reload to do it again).

• **Full-Auto**: The full-auto option is the most damaging attack a firearm can make, as the attacker unloads the full contents of a gun's ammunition clip within a very short time span . However, the gun becomes a bucking bronco, difficult to control and even harder to aim.

A character gets 10 additional dice to roll on the attack, thus increasing the chance to hit and cause damage. However, the difficulty is raised by two due to recoil.

Full-auto fire can only be done when a weapon has more than half its clip remaining. Whenever a character uses the full-auto option, he uses up the entire clip of the weapon. Reloading takes one full action and requires the character's full concentration (and Dice Pool).

• **Three-Round Burst**: The semi-auto option is the middle ground between the full-auto and the single-shot options, and has some of the strengths and weaknesses of both. A burst gives the attacker three additional dice on the attack roll. However, due to the recoil, the difficulty increases by one.

• **Spray**: When on full-auto, a character can decide to spray across an area instead of focusing on only one foe. A spray uses the extra 10 dice given by full-auto fire, but the attack has a base difficulty of five, increased by one for every yard covered by the spray, in addition to other modifiers.

The player divides any successes gained on the attack roll evenly between all targets in the covered area. However, if only one target is in the sprayed area, only half the successes affect him. The player then assigns any leftover successes as she desires. If the attacker rolls fewer successes than there are targets, the player may only assign one to a target until they are used up. This attack also empties the clip.

The difficulty of a dodge roll against a spray is increased by two.

Melee and Brawling Complications

• **Multiple Opponents:** If a character is battling multiple opponents in close combat, that character's attack and dodge difficulties are increased by one per opponent (to a maximum of 10).

• **Flank and Rear Attacks**: The difficulty of a flank attack is lowered by one, while that of a rear attack is lowered by two.

• **Stake**: Attempts to stake a foe through the heart require at least three successes (even after any dodge), and the attack must do three Health Levels of damage to the target. If this happens, an opposing vampire is immobilized. If the attack succeeds, but not well enough to immobilize the foe, damage is still done normally.

• **Bite:** After a bite which does at least one Health Level of damage to a target, a character may subsequently drain the victim's blood. A bite causes aggravated wounds, but an attacker can only bite after she successfully grapples the target (or has been grappled).

Melee Weapons Table

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Conceal
Sap	4	Strength	P
Club	4	Strength +1	T
Knife	4	Strength +1	J
Foil	5	Strength +3	T
Saber	6	Strength +4	T
Axe	7	Strength +5	N
Stake	6	Strength +2	T

• **Claw**: Only those with the Protean Discipline at rating two or above can employ this maneuver. Claws cause aggravated wounds.

• **Grapple**: An attacker can try to grab a foe, hoping to either immobilize him or get a shot at biting into a vein. If the attacker scores more successes than the opponent's Strength, the attacker can immobilize him. In the next round, she can begin to inflict harm. Any character struck by this attack loses his attacks for the current turn.

If the attacker misses altogether (by failing the Dexterity + Brawl roll), she is knocked down and will need to spend an action to get to her feet.

Continuing to grapple during each turn after the first requires the combatants to make opposed Strength + Brawl rolls. Whoever accumulates more successes may opt to immobilize the other. If both score the same number of successes, neither gains the upper hand this turn.

• **Body Slam:** A character may also try to charge forward, hurling his weight into his opponent in an

attempt to damage her. It is possible to damage oneself with this attack, as bodies were not meant to be used as battering rams. A character needs three successes to unbalance an opponent and does one level of damage to himself for every success less than three.

If the attack succeeds, the opponent is off balance, and the difficulties for the rest of her actions for this round are increased by two. Also, if the opponent does not succeed in a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty of the successes + 3), she falls to the ground. The base damage done by the attacker equals his Strength; each success scored on the attack roll abov e the minimum adds one to this base. If the attacker does not roll at least three successes, this maneuver fails; he falls to the ground and is treated as though he had no dice left in his Pool (unless he has Celerity).

Brawling Table

Maneuver	Accuracy	Damage
Bite	5	Strength +1
Punch	6	Strength
Grapple	6	Strength
Claw	6	Strength +2
Kick	7	Strength +1
Body slam	7	Special; see Options

Armor Chart

Class	Armor Rating	Penalty
Class One (reinforced clothing)	1	0
Class Two (armor T-shirt)	2	1
Class Three (vest)	3	2
Class Four (flak jacket)	4	3
Class Five (full suit)	6	4

Armor

A character with body armor can add dice to her soak rolls. Different types of body armor have different armor ratings, which are the number of extra dice rolled on a soak roll. Certain types of armor restrict body motion, and thus penalize the character's Dexterity rolls (any rolls involving this Attribute have their difficulties raised by an amount equal to the penalty).

Firearms Table

Type Example	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip	Conceal
Revolver, Lt. SW M640 (.38 Special)	6	4	12	3	6	P
Revolver, Hvy. Colt Anaconda (.44 magnum)	7	6	35	2	6	J
Pistol, Lt. Glock-17 (9mm)	7	4	20	4	17+1	P
Pistol, Hvy. Sig P220 (.45 ACP)	8	5	30	3	7+1	J
Rifle Remington M-700 (.30-06)	8	8	200	1	5+1	N
SMG, Small* Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)	7	4	25	3	30+1	J
SMG, Large* Uzi (9mm)	6	4	50	3	32+1	T
Assault Rifle* Steyr-Aug (5.56mm)	7	7	150	3	42+1	N
Shotgun Ithaca M-37 (12-gauge)	6	8	20	1	5+1	T
Shotgun, Semi-auto Fianchi Law-12 (12 gauge)	7	8	20	3	8+1	T
Crossbow**	7	5	20	1	1	T

Range: This is the practical range of the gun in yards. A character may fire up to double the listed range; however, that is considered a long-range shot.

Rate: The maximum number of bullets or three-round bursts the gun can fire in a single turn. The rate does not apply to full-auto or spray fire.

Clip: The number of bullets that can be held in one clip or in the barrel. The +1 indicates a bullet can be held in the chamber, making the gun ready to fire.

Concealment: P = can be hidden in a pocket; J = can be hidden inside a jacket; T = can be hidden inside a trenchcoat; N = cannot be hidden on one's person at all.

* indicates the gun is capable of three-round bursts, full-auto fire and sprays.

** The crossbow is included with this list for those characters who wish to use one to stake other vampires. However, unlike firearms, it does not add successes on the attack roll to the Dice Pool for damage. Additionally, a crossbow takes five turns to reload.

Example of Play

Story Section

I got my brain on hype.

Tonight'll be your night.

I got this long-assed knife,

And your neck looks just right.

- Body Count, "Cop Killer"

Facing the forbidding gates of Shadowlawn Memorial Cemetery, Clarissa stopped to survey the dark graveyard. She and Ian had already scouted the area for watchers, but Clarissa decided one last look couldn't hurt. Her eyes pierced the gloom and swept across the silent scene, lingering momentarily on an especially ornate mausoleum.

The tomb was an ominous construction of stone and marble, with detailed paneling across the top and sides: exactly the sort of design Emily would have enjoyed. Emily. Her disappearance had brought Clarissa to this ominous site. She almost shuddered as she stared at the mausoleum.

"You Toreador," cackled Ian, following her gaze. "One gaudy statue and you're all atremble. No taste at all." Momentarily , Clarissa glanced at the gaunt shadow of her companion, huddled in his black trenchcoat like a great crow. The Malkavian had been in yet another of his foul moods when they first arrived, but now seemed to be enjoying himself. Perhaps reaching the graveyard had put him in his element.

Satisfied no one else was watching, the two slowly climbed the gate and made their way through the cemetery. Knowing Emily, a sculptor in life, enjoyed being alone among statues and carven art, Clarissa headed directly for the most elaborate section of the graveyard. In the dark, the statues and mausoleums seemed to slowly writhe and mock.

Rules Section

The beaten generation, the beaten generation

Reared on a diet of prejudice and misinformation.

The beaten generation, the beaten generation

Open your eyes, open your imagination.

- The The, "The Beat(en) Generation"

The first session of a game can try any Storyteller, so Mark decides to set the story in Chicago, a city with unlimited potential. The three characters are Clarissa, a renowned Toreador performance artist played by Travis; Ian C. Roper, a manic-depressive Malkavian played by Rob; and Dre, a Crip turned Brujah anarch played by René.

Mark wants to immerse the characters immediately into the labyrinth of Chicago's Kindred politics, and Travis makes it easy for him, saying he wants to search for Clarissa's sire, Emily, who disappeared shortly after Presenting her to the prince. Mark decides Clarissa has heard rumors that the dread Sabbat seized Emily, and that the last place Clarissa's sire was seen was Shadowlawn.

Afraid to face the Sabbat alone, Travis has Clarissa enlist the aid of Ian, a manic-depressive. Clarissa knows Ian despises being alone, and he joins her at once. Dre, on the other hand, knows neither of the other characters at the beginning of the game, but will meet them at the cemetery. During Dre's prelude, René decided he recently staked out lonely Shadowlawn as his turf. This sets Mark's mind awhirl with the potential stories he could stage in such a place, and he starts this one at the very gates of the graveyard.

First, Travis wants Clarissa to use her Heightened Senses to ascertain if anyone else is around. Mark decides the difficulty is six since the graveyard is fairly open and, thanks to her Auspex, Clarissa can see in the dark. Clarissa has a Perception of 2 and an Alertness of 3, and therefore has five total dice in her Pool. She rolls and gets 9, 6, 6, 3, 1. The 1 cancels one of her successes, but she still has two. The Storyteller tells Travis Clarissa is fairly sure no one else is about.

Now Clarissa and Ian need to enter the locked cemetery. They decide to climb the gate; the Storyteller says this action has an extremely low difficulty of three since its design leaves hand and footholds everywhere. Both characters have Dexterity ratings of 2 and Athletics ratings of 1, so their Dice Pools equal the action's difficulty. Thus they both succeed automatically, but with only one success. The climb is easy

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"We're not alone," Ian whispered in her ear, so silently only her heightened hearing could pick it up. "You head on." The Malkavian seemed particularly overjoyed, almost ecstatic.

Impulsively, Clarissa looked over her shoulder but saw no one. When she looked back, Ian was gone, so she walked slowly along. As soon as she heard Ian hiss, "Why do you follow us?" she doubled back as fast as she could.

She saw a black man, apparently in his late 20s, dressed in a blue starter jacket, black jeans, sneakers and a baseball

but slow. As the characters begin moving through the cemetery, Rob announces Ian will constantly keep his paranoid eyes open for tails.

As they walk through the graveyard, Clarissa and Ian pass by Dre's resting place - a grand mausoleum for a former mayor. Dre, who was quietly preparing himself for the night's hunting, has a chance to hear them as they walk. René rolls three dice for Dre's Perception and two more for his Alertness. Mark rules that since he is not expecting

cap, squaring off against Ian.

"You're on my territory, kook. You Licks got no business here, and I want you gone," he said, before realizing Clarissa had returned. He maneuvered himself so his back rested against a tall tombstone.

"You rule here?" Clarissa demanded. "What have you done with Emily?"

Dre stared back at her, a befuddled look in his eyes. "Who the hell is Emily?"

anyone, the difficulty is an eight. The dice come up 10, 8, 8, 7, 5, so Dre has three successes and definitely hears the intruders.

René says she wants to know if Dre recognizes the two as he peeps through a crack in the wall. Since Clarissa has a point of Status among the undead due to the prestige of her sire, Mark lets René roll Intelligence + Politics (difficulty 6). René scores one success, and Mark says Dre recognizes Clarissa as a vampire but knows little more about her.

After they pass, Dre slips out and begins tailing them. First he must make a Perception + Investigation roll (difficulty 6). He only has four dice in his pool, but he gets two successes and can tail them for two turns (six minutes, since that is how long Mark has decided these turns are). Now he must roll six dice to see if he can follow them stealthily. Since only Ian said he was looking out for tails, Dre's difficulty is only five (Ian's Perception + Alertness). Still, he only rolls one success.

"Emily. My sire. She came here a week ago and has not been seen since. What have you done with her?" Clarissa was almost screaming as she advanced on the newcomer, the red haze of frenzy shrouding her sight.

The man immediately saw what Clarissa was going through. Nervousness rising in his voice, he said "Nothin', G. I've never seen Emily. Nobody ever comes here. Chill out!"

Seeing her start to calm down, he added, "Look, I'll make this one exception. Go ahead and look around for your Emily. You've got an hour to find her, then you leave. OK? Never let it be said Dre was anything but fair. Look around to your still heart's content."

Quietly, Ian asked, "How did you know we're Kindred? You seem nothing but rabble, if not one of the Clanless. Maybe you're something even worse," he muttered, his voice breaking off into a demented titter.

Now Ian may make a roll to notice Dre. His difficulty is seven (Dre's Stealth + 5), and he has five dice in his pool. He rolls two successes and notices the Brujah skulking behind them.

After notifying Clarissa, he ducks behind a tree and uses his Obfuscate to melt into the shadows. No roll need be made for this.

The confrontation between the three characters is handled purely through roleplaying, and none of the players make any rolls. René decides Dre has no interest in fighting two vampires, so he will just make sure they know the graveyard is his and leave it alone in the future.

As the three travel on, Mark has them all make Perception + Alertness rolls to see if they can hear Sheriff's conversation with Michael. Since Mark does not state a difficulty, all the players assume it is six, and each rolls at least one success. To sneak up on the discussion, he tells them to make Dexterity + Stealth rolls, and again does not mention the difficulty. Since they all roll at least one six, Mark rules that they have reached their observation point quietly enough.

The players do not need to roll to recognize Sheriff since he is such a well-known figure. Additionally, Mark decides Clarissa automatically recognizes Michael from Toreador parties. Rob says he wants Ian to try and determine if the third figure breathes. Mark allows him to make a Perception + Alertness roll (difficulty 8), with three successes needed to be sure. Ian rolls two successes on the first turn and one during the second, noting that the figure does indeed breathe.

Bristling, Dre replied, "We Brujah know a whole lot more than you think, freak." Seeing Ian's disbelief, Dre added, "You disappear. You reappear. You ain't quite ugly enough to be a sewer rat, so you're a kook. Satisfied?"

Relaxing, Clarissa looked around to see Ian smiling, the grin covering his face. "Shall we continue?" he asked. "I'm sure the night's amusements have only just begun."

For the next 30 minutes the trio made its way through the cemetery, Dre slowly relaxing. As Clarissa searched, Dre and Ian talked, arguing about the prince of the city, his primogen council, and other matters which meant nothing to Clarissa.

Then, as one, they heard voices emanating from a small, unobtrusive section of the graveyard. Quietly they covered the intervening ground. Crouching behind tombstones, they

However, when Michael pulls out the ring, and Sheriff wipes the blood on the tombstone of Dre's dead homey, both Clarissa and Dre must make Self-Control rolls not to frenzy. Mark rules the difficulty is five for both characters, but Dre's increases by two since he is a Brujah. Dre has four dice to roll and scores one success, while Clarissa's "ones" cancel out all her successes. She flies into a frenzy and attacks Michael, the immediate object of her rage.

Mark decides Clarissa has taken the others completely by surprise and may take her first action unopposed. Travis says she will spend a Blood Point to activate her two levels of Celerity, allowing her to take three actions this turn. For her first action, she sprints across the open ground between her and Michael. Once there, she kicks him twice.

The difficulty for a kick is seven, and she has four dice in her Pool. Travis scores no successes on his first roll, but the

carefully peeked out.

Twenty feet away squatted three figures. Clarissa immediately recognized the huge central shape as one of the prince's lackeys, an imposing vampire known as Sheriff. Another, outfitted smartly in tux and cummerbund, was the Toreador Michael, a renowned partier. The third, dressed in a dull brown suit, she did not know, but Ian whispered in her ear, "The one in earth tones is a ghoul."

Clarissa also heard Dre mutter angrily, "That's Christian's tomb! The slob's pigs killed him and now he sits on his grave." Clarissa motioned for him to be quiet, and listened intently.

"Pleasant evening we're having, wouldn't you say?" Clarissa heard Michael ask Sheriff. "The moon hovers in the sky, bathing us in its sublime radiance. The night wind caresses us with fingers of ice, and "

"Is it done?" Sheriff interjected.

Obviously annoyed that his soliloquy was interrupted, Michael said, "I've brought what you wanted. Picked it out of the ashes when the sun finished her. Now, you've promised to help me against Sharon. She must feel pain beyond any she believes possible."

second roll comes up 8, 8, 7, 1. Her damage roll is Strength + 1 (three dice) and the difficulty for damage is six. She rolls 9, 6, 6, and Michael must prepare to lose three Health Levels. Mark rolls Michael's Stamina of 3 (difficulty 6) but only scores one success. Michael is now Hurt and will lose one die from his Pool.

To begin the next turn, everyone makes initiative rolls - Wits + Alertness rolls (difficulty 4). Dre gets four successes, Clarissa and Sheriff both score three, Michael (who receives one less die for initiative since he is Hurt) and the ghoul score two and Ian gets none. Now the players declare what their characters will do, in reverse order of successes.

Realizing Ian is no combat machine, Rob says he will pump one Blood Point into his Stamina (to help soak any wounds he may receive) and Dominate the ghoul. Mark says it appears the ghoul is reaching into his jacket for something and Michael (whom Mark decides is low on blood) is dodging. Travis says Clarissa will put a Blood Point into Strength and punch Michael, while Mark says Sheriff drops the ring and will try to grapple her. Now mad at Sheriff, and always itching for a fight, Dre decides to spend a point of blood on his Celerity so he can run to Sheriff and punch him all in one turn.

Dre uses no dice to run up to Sheriff, but must wait until everyone else has acted to punch him. Mark decides Sheriff will change his action and punch Dre, who seems to be the more immediate threat to his well-being. Since Sheriff has pumped blood into his Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, his pool to punch Dre has eight dice. The normal difficulty is six, but it increases to seven since he changed his action for the turn. He still scores three successes on the roll, and then rolls four dice for the damage. While he only scores one success on that roll, he also delivers three automatic levels of damage from his Potence. Dre manages to soak two of them, but is now Hurt.

Clarissa punches Michael and scores two successes. He rolls two dice to dodge and botches! The Storyteller decides he will not be able to use his Celerity for any more actions this turn as he had planned. Clarissa again rolls three dice for

"Let me see it," Sheriff commanded. Michael reached into his pocket and pulled out a small bag. From the bag he took out a bloodstained ring. With a finger he cleaned the ring - Emily's famed ruby ring. He wiped the blood on Christian's tombstone.

Dre squelched a growl of anger to her left, but Clarissa could not hold back her rage. With an amazing burst of speed she charged Michael. Before anyone could react, she thrust her left foot at his side. It skimmed past his stomach, but left him off balance for her next kick, which slammed into his groin.

A red haze began clouding Clarissa's vision, but from the corner of her eye she noticed Dre charge right into Sheriff's ham-sized fist. She also thought she heard Ian yell something, and then heard sounds of retching from the ghoul. Ignoring all this, Clarissa slammed her fist into Michael's cheek and heard a satisfying crunch. Michael stumbled to the left, and planted his foot squarely on a bouquet left at one of the graves. It skidded out from under him, sending him careening into a tombstone.

damage thanks to the Blood Point she previously spent on Strength, and again scores three successes. Michael only soaks one and drops down to Wounded, losing two dice on future rolls.

The ghoul pulls a heavy pistol from his shoulder holster and looks around for a target just in time to make eye contact with Ian. Using the Command the Wearied Mind power of Dominate, Ian yells "Regurgitate!" He rolls his Manipulation + Intimidation (six dice) against the ghoul's Willpower of 6. He scores three successes, and the ghoul will spend the next turn making his suit very messy.

The next turn begins and everyone makes initiative rolls. The turn's order turns out to be Sheriff, Clarissa, Ian, Dre and Michael (Mark decides the ghoul will obviously not act this turn). Michael will spend Blood Points on his Dexterity and Celerity before dodging and then punching Clarissa, all the while trying to heal a Health Level. Dre again activates his Celerity and will dodge and punch Sheriff. Forsaking his better judgment, Ian leaves his place of concealment and advances on the ghoul. Clarissa continues spending Blood Points on Celerity and punching Michael. Finally, Sheriff will spend blood on his Celerity and punch Dre several times.

Sheriff scores three successes on his first attack, but Dre rolls an equal number of dodge successes, thus canceling out the punch. Clarissa punches Michael and scores one success,

Clarissa drove her fists repeatedly into Michael's face and body, quickly knocking him to the ground. She took no notice of the damage Sheriff was doing to Dre as her whole world shrank to nothing more than the motion of her hands and their impact on her enemy.

Suddenly a hand reached over and snatched Michael away. Her vision returned in time to see Sheriff run off into the darkness of the graveyard. As she slowly regained her senses, she saw Dre lying on the ground next to the ruby ring. Moving slowly, like a puppet manipulated from afar, she stooped and picked up the ring from the wet grass where it lay.

while Michael scores none on his dodge. She delivers two more levels of damage, of which only one is soaked. Ian moves up to the ghoul. Dre and Michael have spent their first actions on dodges and may not act now, though Michael makes his roll to heal a level of damage. He rolls Stamina + Survival (three dice) and rolls one 8, allowing him to heal one Health Level.

Using his Celerity, Sheriff takes another swing at Dre. Dre uses his level of Celerity to dodge once more; the difficulty increases by one because he is changing actions. This time Sheriff scores one more success than Dre does, and hits for two levels of damage plus his Potence. Dre soaks three and is now Injured. Clarissa swings at Michael and connects again, this time taking him all the way down to Crippled.

Sheriff has two more actions this turn, and uses one to hit Dre again, dropping him to Mauled. Clarissa attacks Sheriff with her last point of Celerity, but he soaks all her damage.

Seeing that he will be facing three vampires by himself next turn, Sheriff splits his Dice Pool for his last action of the turn. He prepares to leave by grabbing Michael and the ghoul.

Winning the initiative in the next turn, he runs away faster than the neonates can hope to follow. Clarissa spends a point of Willpower to control her frenzy, and takes that turn to pick up the ring - her only clue to the many mysteries of the night.

Appendix

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves, and sharpens our skill. Our Antagonist is our helper.

- E.Burke, Refelections

Antagonists

Many individuals and organizations will oppose the characters throughout the chronicle. These antagonists are not necessarily the enemies of the characters, but they always have different goals.

Mortals

Though individual mortals are weak in comparison to Kindred, in numbers they can be deadly antagonists.

Police Officer

Most local cops can be found in police cruisers, often with a partner. Help is only a radio call away, and one to five other patrol cars will arrive within minutes of an emergency call. In extreme emergencies, 50 or more police officers can be called in to help within 15 minutes.

Character Creation: Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 15/9/3, Background: 7, Willpower: 5

Suggested Attributes: Police officers possess a rating of two in all Attributes, except for Physical Traits which are rated at three.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Leadership 1, Brawl 2, Streetwise 1, Dodge 2, Security 3, Repair 1, Firearms 3, Drive 2, Melee 1, Stealth 1, Investigation 2, Bureaucracy 1, Computer 1, Law 2, Police Procedure 3

Equipment: Light Revolver, Light Automatic Pistol, Pump Shotgun, Billy Club, Handcuffs, Radio, Badge, Flashlight

Police Detective

Police detectives are called to the scenes of murders and other major crimes. They are the officers who will become involved in investigating matters related to Kindred.

Character Creation: Attributes: 8/5/3, Abilities: 17/9/3, Background: 7, Willpower: 7

Suggested Attributes: Detectives possess ratings of two in all Attributes, except for Perception and Wits, which are rated at three.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Leadership 2, Brawl 2, Streetwise 4, Intimidation 1, Subterfuge 3, Dodge 1, Security 3, Repair 1, Firearms 3, Drive 2, Melee 1, Stealth 1, Investigation 4, Bureaucracy 1, Computer 1, Law 2, Police Procedure 4

Equipment: Light Revolver, Light Automatic Pistol, Handcuffs, Radio, Badge, Flashlight

Government Agent

These characters can be from the FBI, the NSA, the CIA or whatever local government agency is appropriate. They will often have a tremendous amount of backup and possess considerable authority. The Camarilla severely punishes those who kill or even interact with such agents; the risk to the Masquerade is too great.

Character Creation: Attributes: 9/5/4, Abilities: 18/10/6, Background: 7, Willpower: 8

Suggested Attributes: Agents have ratings of three in all Attributes, except for Perception and Intelligence, which are rated at least four.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Leadership 3, Brawl 3, Acting 1, Intimidation 2, Dodge 2, Subterfuge 1, Athletics 1, Security 3, Firearms 3, Drive 3, Stealth 3, Investigation 4, Bureaucracy 2, Politics 1, Computer 1, Law 3, Police Procedure 5

Equipment: Light Revolver, Heavy Automatic Pistol, Submachine Gun, Radio, Video Camera, Forensics Lab, Portable Phone Tap, Portable Lie Detector, Bugs, Class II Armor, Mirrorshades

SWAT Officer

These officers are specially trained with high-power weapons and military tactics. If things ever get out of hand with the characters, they will certainly be called in.

Character Creation: Attributes: 8/5/3, Abilities: 15/9/3, Background: 7, Willpower: 6

Suggested Attributes: SWAT officers possess ratings of two in all Attributes, except for Physical Attributes, which are rated at three.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 3, Leadership 2, Brawl 3, Streetwise 1, Dodge 3, Security 3, Repair 2, Firearms 4, Drive 3, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Intimidation 2, Law 1, Police Procedure 3

Equipment: Light Automatic Pistol, Submachine Gun, Radio, Bullhorn, Class III Body Armor, Battering Ram, Rappelling Equipment, Armored Vehicle

Witch-Hunter

Witch-hunters are generally agents of the Inquisition, often members of one of the various holy orders, but can be any who hunt vampires. A number of priests have become involved in the Inquisition through their efforts to tend their flocks. They form the network that supports the activities of the Inquisition's agents. All that they do, however, is without the formal knowledge of the Church.

Character Creation: Attributes: 8/6/3, Abilities: 21/12/7, Background: 6, Willpower: 9

Suggested Attributes: Priests have ratings of two in all Attributes, except for Charisma and Intelligence, which are often rated at four.

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Leadership 3, Intimidation 3, Dodge 1, Subterfuge 2, Empathy 4, Repair (carpentry) 2, Animal Ken 2, Survival 1, Etiquette 3, Medicine 3, Investigation 2, Bureaucracy 2, Politics 2, Linguistics 3, Theology 5, Philosophy 4, Art 2, History 2, Teaching 3, Occult 3

Equipment Available: Bible, Silver Cross, Medal of St. Ignatius, Relics, Robes

Minister: Some ministers of other faiths - Christian, Jewish and Moslem - may search or hunt for vampires.

Character Creation: Attributes: 8/5/3, Abilities: 18/9/3, Background: 7, Willpower: 8

Suggested Attributes: See Priest, above.

Suggested Abilities: Leadership 4, Acting 2, Intimidation 1, Subterfuge 2, Empathy 2, Drive 1, Music 2, Survival 1, Etiquette 2, Bureaucracy 2, Finance 2, Linguistics 3, Theology 4, Philosophy 3, Art 2, Psychology 2

Equipment: Bible, Crucifix, Automobile

True Faith

Those of true faith are able to ward off vampires using the cross or other holy symbols; this is believed to be more a function of the faith of the wielder than the symbol itself. It is possible that a person without a symbol is capable of warding off a vampire merely through the use of religious words - normally, however, a symbol is required.

Especially religious characters may possess a Faith rating from 1-10, which describes their essential holiness, faith and closeness with their deity.

Each turn a vampire attempts to approach the individual, a Willpower roll must be made. The Faith rating is the difficulty for the roll. The number of successes indicates how many steps forward the vampire may take. Failure means no approach is possible, while a botch indicates either a Health Level is lost (due to pain) or the vampire flees in the grip of the Rötschreck.

Faith may also be used, on rare occasions, to determine if a miracle takes place; the nature of a given miracle is completely up to the Storyteller.

Scholar: These intellectuals are involved in the gathering and classification of paranormal matters of all sorts, including the Kindred. They are not interested in violent confrontation with the supernatural and will avoid such at all costs. Interference or contact with them is forbidden by the Camarilla.

Character Creation: Attributes: 9/6/3, Abilities: 15/9/3, Background: 7, Willpower: 6

Suggested Attributes: Scholars possess ratings of 2 in all Attributes, except in Perception and Intelligence, which are rated at 3 or even 4.

Suggested Abilities: Leadership 4, Acting 2, Intimidation 1, Subterfuge 2, Empathy 2, Drive 1, Music 2, Survival 1, Etiquette 2, Bureaucracy 2, Finance 2, Linguistics 4, Occult 4, Philosophy 3, Art 2, Psychology 2, Science 2

Equipment: Automobile, various gadgets, investigative paraphernalia

Vampires

The greatest enemy of the vampire is another of his own kind.

Neonate: These are vampires who have not yet reached 100 years of age and are usually of the ninth through 13th (or greater?) generations - the "teenagers" among vampires.

Character Creation: Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 13/9/3, Background: 7, Virtues: 10, Willpower: 7, Disciplines: 4

Ancilla: These are the vampires who have survived more than 100 years, though the term is used very loosely. They are often of the seventh, eighth, or ninth generations.

Character Creation: Attributes: 9/6/4, Abilities: 18/9/3, Background: 7, Virtues: 10, Willpower: 8, Disciplines: 6

Elder: These are Kindred of the fifth, sixth or seventh generations, who have survived between 300 and 1000 years and therefore have considerable inherent power.

Character Creation: Attributes: 10/7/5, Abilities: 21/9/3, Background: 12, Virtues: 6, Willpower: 9, Disciplines: 10

Methuselah: These vampires are of the fourth or fifth generations, and are often members of the Inconnu. They no longer concern themselves with the affairs of mortals. They are usually over 1000 years old.

Character Creation: Attributes: 12/8/6, Abilities: 24/12/7, Background: 12, Virtues: 6, Willpower: 9, Disciplines: 15

Antediluvian: These Ancients are of such immense power that to assign them Traits of any sort would be foolish - they are far too powerful for this game system to define. Simply assume that any conflict between an Antediluvian and any other Kindred (including the characters) would automatically result in the Ancient's victory. To the other vampires, they are gods, and it is nearly impossible to defeat them - at least directly. Only through the use of creative tactics, diplomacy, and coordination between many allies is it possible to defeat an Antediluvian's plans.

Ghouls

A mortal who drinks the blood of a vampire, but has not first been drained, becomes a ghoul. Ghouls do not age as long as they feed on vampire blood regularly, and may even gain some of the special powers of a vampire. However, they can travel during the day and are not especially susceptible to fire. Such ghouls do not even need to be human; animals can be changed as well (but Animalism is generally needed in order to control them).

Kindred create such creatures regularly, as a means of creating loyal servants who are able to protect them during the day. Permission is required from the prince in order to create a ghoul, or so the Council of the Camarilla has ruled, for it technically breaks the restrictions of the Masquerade. Ghouls are generally told very little and are too fearful of their masters to relay much information.

A ghoul can become Blood Bound to her creator just as a vampire can. Thus, after three feedings, the ghoul is inexorably Bound to her master. However, if the ghoul spends more than a year without receiving blood from her master, she ceases to be Blood Bound. If she spends more than a month without being fed vampire blood she becomes fully mortal once again. Once the point of her natural lifespan has passed, the ghoul must always have vampire blood in her; otherwise she will die very quickly- within a few days, or in a few rare instances, a few hours.

No statistics can be given for ghouls, since they differ greatly from one another - simply take a mortal and adapt her Traits to make her more "ghoulish."

Werewolves

Werewolves, or Lupines, are described in great detail in Vampire's companion game, Werewolf: The Apocalypse. However, if you do not intend to make werewolves a focus of your chronicle, the following rules should suffice.

Character Creation: Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 15/9/3, Background: 5, Willpower: 8, Disciplines: 6 (equivalents, usually physically-oriented)

They have several powers:

•Werewolves are able to attack several times per turn (Celerity from 2-8 without a blood restriction).

•They automatically heal back a Health Level every turn (only silver weapons or the teeth and claws of Kindred can harm them permanently).

•The claws and fangs of Lupines cause aggravated wounds.

• While in wolf-man form, Lupines are able to make shocking use of frenzy. They completely let the Beast loose when in wolf-man form and in return can expect to retain their Humanity when in human form. In a story with Lupines, grant them all the benefits of frenzy in combat, but allow them to release themselves any time after they have tasted blood.

•They can shapechange into a variety of forms, all of them some variation of the wolf. Thus they can change into a wolf, a man, or something halfway in between (a wolf-man). When werewolves are met during the day, treat them as mundane mortals - it is only if they are met at night, in wolf form, that they have special abilities.

In wolf form, all their Physical Attributes are doubled (yes, very nasty). However, they are no longer able to use Social Attributes in connection

with any creature other than werewolves and other wild beasts. They may also be able to use many different Disciplines (equivalents of the vampire Disciplines).

Magi

Treat wizards as normal human beings except for their magical powers. In general they are extremely disdainful of the Kindred, but are always extremely cautious around them. Many of them have a special contempt for the Tremere, whom they consider to be traitors and blood-wizards.

Character Creation: Attributes: 7/5/3, Abilities: 21/12/8, Background: 9, Willpower: 9, Disciplines: 12 (equivalent)

See the Thaumaturgy Discipline for ideas on how the wizards can use magic, but understand that they are far more capable than the Tremere in these magical arts. Simply write down a number of effects (spells) which you would like them to be able to use. Make them as creative and specific as you can, and as spectacular as you would like. Let the mage use each spell you have written down once per scene. Keep in mind that magi are, in general, much more powerful in places with magical auras and times of magical significance.

Faeries

Faeries are the strange and enigmatic creatures who live in the mystical, magical realm of Arcadia, but occasionally cross over into our world. They are able to do so only on the most magically significant days, and go to great lengths to remain unseen from mortal eyes (they are greatly aided by natural Obfuscate powers).

In terms of faerie powers, simply provide them with a variety of Disciplines, as well as various illusion powers. The physical forms of faeries range from tiny sprites to mighty tree-lords; give them whatever Attributes you deem appropriate, but most have high Wits.

Vampire are generally unable to travel to Arcadia, but it is rumored that Kindred especially skilled in the Discipline of Auspex may do so.

Ghosts

Ghosts are everywhere, but are usually unseen. Vampires, being dead themselves, often find themselves in contact with such forsaken souls. Most ghosts have the equivalent of the Auspex and Thaumaturgy Disciplines.

Forged in Steel

This city is afraid of me. I have seen its true face. The streets are extended gutters and the gutters are full of blood and when the drains finally scab over, all the vermin will drown.

- Rorschach's Journal, *The Watchmen*

What follows is a brief example of a **Vampire** chronicle. It demonstrates some of the preparation work that should be done before a chronicle begins, and details some of the products of that work as well. If you, as the Storyteller, intend to use this for your own chronicle, plan on spending some more preparation time fleshing out what is presented here. Though the information that follows is enough to begin, the more detail you have developed, the smoother the chronicle will run.

This chronicle was created by the Storyteller (Mark) specifically for his players (Stewart, Lisa and Steve). He didn't know who their characters would be at first, so some things changed after the chronicle began.

The name of this chronicle was taken from the city motto of Gary, Indiana: *Built on Sand, Forged in Steel.*

Concepts

When Mark first started to imagine the setting, he sat down and wrote a list of words to describe what feelings and images he wanted the setting to evoke. These helped him more carefully delineate what he wanted the chronicle to incorporate.

After writing down two or three words, he realized that his images were centered around a movie he had just seen, *Roger and Me*, which depicted the decay and poverty in the Rust Belt. This made him think about Gary, a city just to the east of Chicago, which he had driven through the summer before on his way to Milwaukee. He immediately decided to make Gary, Indiana the setting of the chronicle. He continued to add words to the list by conjuring more images of what Gary might be like in the Gothic-Punk world of **Vampire**:

• Old tattered billboards

•Run-down

•Beyond hope, beyond despair

•Rust - Rust Belt

•Steel mills, factories

•Pollution

•Chain-link fences

• Poverty-stricken, deteriorating streets

•Abandoned houses

•Lake Michigan

•Run-down harbor

• Container ships

•Gothic cathedral amidst the ruins

•Squalor and lethargy

•Empty warehouses

• Pool halls

•Abandoned urban renewal projects

• Burnt-out street lights

•Greed

• Drugs

•Gangs

•Graffiti

•Projects

•Abandoned stores

•Unemployment

• Opulence and decadence

•Zombie people

• Aging, decaying mansions

•Filth-choked rivers

Premise

After brooding a while, and using the list of images to build from, Mark invented the overall premise of the chronicle. He decided that the chronicle would involve a lot of intrigue, and be crowned with such themes as betrayal and decadence. He hoped that this sort of atmosphere would fit in well with the ambiance of the setting.

Because Gary is too small to have much intrigue, he knew that the majority of the intrigue would have to originate in Chicago. From that premise sprang the idea of making the cities of Gary and Chicago arch-rivals. For generations, their princes had fought, each with a different power base, but with the collapse of the steel industry, the power of Gary has fallen. Not only are the living of Gary in misery, but so are the undead. By setting up Gary in opposition to Chicago, Mark hoped to create a dramatic situation from the very beginning. As a result of this basic concept, he came up with a number of different ideas:

•Gary is in even worse shape than in our world. The city is in a terrible state of decay - a perfect place for vampires to hunt. Few notice any more how many people disappear each year. Industry has completely fled the area, leaving a desolate patch of rust known as the Wasteland.

• Gary is ruled by a prince who is something less than a prince. Modius is the arch-rival of Lodin, the Prince of

Chicago, and at one time they were fairly evenly matched. Modius controlled the unions while Lodin controlled big business. However, Lodin purposefully destroyed the steel industry in order to destroy Modius' power base. He was so successful that Modius lost almost all of his power. Today, he is only a pale reflection of his formerly combative self. Lodin has won, hands down.

•The success of Lodin over Modius peaked when Lodin was able to win away a Conclave. Twenty-three years ago, as a last-ditch effort to defeat Lodin, Modius convinced the Toreador Justicar to call for a Conclave to be held in Gary. It ended abysmally, and was reconvened in Chicago the next day. Though Lodin was

unable to depose Modius, he was able to secretly force Modius to agree to "confer" with Lodin on all major decisions.

•The prince of Chicago has banned the creation of neonates for the last fifteen years, in an attempt to gain more control over the anarchs. However, this has simply led the vampires of Chicago to bring their neonates to Gary to release them. Modius is known to welcome newcomers.

•Chicago is known for the vehement and subtle intrigue of its inhabitants. The Jyhad is constantly in motion in Chicago; some even whisper than an Ancient is active in the city.

Setting

After completing his basic conception, Mark sat down and got into the nitty-gritty work of designing the setting. This was essentially the task of creating the city of Gary. The characters could thus involve themselves in the riotous Chicago politics without being swept away by them.

Gary is situated on the east side of Chicago, and was once a fairly prosperous industrial area. In the early '70s, however, the steel industry fled abroad, and the city was left with no tax base. Things spiraled downward and the area has today lost nearly 50% of its population. Gary is possibly the most dismal and decaying city in the nation - and for the sake of the Gothic-Punk world, the squalor is emphasized.

The Kindred of Gary frequently go to Chicago for fun, but they are severely harassed by the Kindred of Chicago. The Prince of Chicago claims greater Chicago as his domain, but accepts Modius as a lieutenant, while Modius is strident in declaring that he is the Prince of Gary, not one of Lodin's lieutenants. They hate each other and have not met in years.

Some important "neighborhoods" in Gary are:

•**The Wasteland:** A huge tract of rusting and decaying factories known as the Wasteland stretches along most of the waterfront and east of the dockyards. It is bordered by Lake Michigan to the north and the Indiana East tollway to the south. From the highway, it is all too easy to see the devastation, all eight miles of it. Flakes of rust cover everything in the Wasteland, and drums of toxic waste can be found everywhere. The federal government once attempted to track down the ex-owners and force a cleanup, but they were unable to locate any who still lived in the United States. These steel mills, factories and warehouses were once thriving economic centers; now they are almost completely abandoned except for the presence of a number of street gangs who use the empty buildings as their bases of operations. It is thought that some of the anarchs from Chicago also have a meeting place in the Wasteland. It is difficult to know for sure what lies in the Wasteland, since not even the police dare enter it anymore.

•**Dockyards:** Ocean vessels can reach Gary via the St. Lawrence Seaway. Almost all of the ship cargo bound to and from Chicago is unloaded in Gary. The docks are almost the only source of employment in Gary in these hard times. However, they are not even located in Gary, but are found in the Chicago suburb of East Chicago, which Modius also claims.

•**Gary Exports Co.:** This company operates a highly successful smuggling venture (mostly drugs and guns) which will transport vampires on the side. Passengers are placed in a specially-built container, and then loaded on board a freighter. Customs inspectors are bribed not to look in the container and the vampires get off in another country at night - all without ever seeing the light of day.

•**The Auction:** Each Saturday night, a ghoul named Williams holds an auction in an abandoned church - human beings are the commodities for sale. It is a slave auction, of a sort not seen for over 100 years. Men, woman and even children are sold. Most often they are street people rounded up by William's men, but sometimes they are kidnapped from their homes. All of them are tranquilized so as to make less trouble. Many Kindred from Chicago come to the auction to acquire vessels which suit their peculiar tastes more easily.

Williams seeks both money and blood from the vampires, for he wishes to preserve his ghoulish powers. However he will not drink more than twice from any vampire, out of fear that he will become Blood Bound once again. It is said that he destroyed the vampire who first gave him blood. Whatever the truth, almost all fear him.

This is one of the more disgusting and demented aspects of the Gary Chronicle, and hopefully the characters will take it upon themselves to end it. If the characters use the auction to procure meals, they need to make Conscience rolls (difficulty 10!) to avoid losing Humanity.

Characters

With only a few exceptions, the players may choose nearly any sort of characters. Tell the players before they create their characters that they need to make their characters fit the "Lords of the City" concept. They should feel responsible for Gary, and strive to keep it free of the Chicago Kindred. This desire can grow, but the seed should be present from the very start.

There are only seven other vampires in Gary. They include Modius, the prince; Allicia, his progeny; Michael, who lives in a graveyard; Juggler, the anarch of Gary; Evelyn, his childe; Lucian, the elder who controls the docks; and Danov, who is a simple wanderer.

The general idea in this fairly simple chronicle is to set things up with the characters, and then to let them pursue and create their own goals and plots. The best way to do that is to give each character a unique enemy, an antagonist of some sort. In the "Cast Of Characters" section, we have described a number of potential antagonists, both mortal and Kindred. Pick the appropriate ones for each character and weave them into the

chronicle at opportune times. You don't want to be too heavy-handed, though.

Each prelude should be private (though that may cause the players to distrust each other) and should introduce the player to the setting. It will give you a chance to implant some of the crucial elements of the chronicle into the character's persona and the player's mind before the chronicle even begins. Because the chronicle is complicated and intrigue-filled, it is almost essential that the players be primed to participate in the great "Chicago Game."

All the sires of the characters are from Chicago. Lodin has forbidden the creation of neonates for the last 18 years, so the characters' sires went to Gary to Embrace those whom they chose (for one reason or another). They have gone against the wishes of their prince, but their crimes are difficult to punish.

Near the end of the prelude, bring the players together and let them get to know each other before the chronicle actually begins. Each character will know one or two others; in this way a network will be formed.

The characters will have likely lived in Gary for only a short time, though some of them certainly could have lived here for up to 10 or 15 years. However, for this concept to work best, direct the prelude so that most of the characters are unfamiliar with the other undead inhabitants of the city. It shouldn't be too hard to do, for most Kindred live out their unlives in near-solitude.

Character Contacts

Below are listed five different contacts you can give your players during the prelude. They make it easier for the characters to become a part of the chronicle. It may be difficult to weave these situations into the prelude, but they are well worth the effort. These connections are described in terms of the type of contact each will be, and you should judge each character carefully when you decide what connection to use.

• **Romance -** After the character first comes to Gary, he may realize that he is being watched. Do not present it in such a way that the character will be frightened or paranoid, but make it seem beautiful, gentle and romantic. It is Allicia who is watching him, though at first the character will not know her name; he will only see a beautiful woman wearing yellow lace. If approached, she will always flee, using her Obfuscate to good purpose. She will never speak with the character. Eventually, Allicia will reveal herself fully to the character -using some dramatic means to do so, perhaps by simply waiting for him in his haven late one night as he returns. She still will not speak, but will make it obvious that she wishes to share blood.

• **Charity -** The character meets Michael, perhaps by noticing a strange lurching figure with a pale aura wandering about the city. At first he will be very frightened if the character presents herself to him. He may even try to feed from her, if he doesn't realize she is Kindred. Once his fright is over, he will make a very interesting friend. Michael's loyalty knows no limits - once he has given his love and trust, it can never be broken. However, there is one complication. The witch-hunter, Sullivan Dane, has been watching Michael for some time, and may begin to follow the character as well after seeing her with Michael. Sullivan plans to uncover all of the undead of Gary and Chicago (he does not realize how many there are) before he hunts them down. Once he is led to Modius, his hunt will begin and the character may be blamed by Modius.

• **Dangerous Friendship -**The characters meet Evelyn somewhere in the Wasteland. She is wandering about, exulting in her new powers, reveling in her new perceptions and desires. She is the childe of Juggler, but will not admit such at first. It is presumed that she and the characters will become friends, but remember Evelyn has a death wish and will lead the characters into much danger. Through Evelyn, the characters will eventually meet her brother, Gregory, a detective in the Chicago police force. She has broken the Masquerade and told him of her condition. Evelyn doesn't realize the magnitude of what she has done; otherwise she would tell no Kindred about him. Later on, Special Agent Shepard may learn of the characters through his connection with Detective Stephens. These are dangerous contacts to have, for in times of crisis they may well turn against the characters (whom they will use for information). But if a friendship can be struck and trust built, they can come in handy. Of course, if the characters tell them anything, and it is found out, a Blood Hunt will be called against the characters for their violation of the Masquerade.

• **Adopted Son -**When one of the characters is introduced to Modius, really play it out. Make the sire of that character very cruel, but play up Modius' charm and good taste (he's having a good day). The plan is to make Modius and the character good friends. Modius' weaknesses will no doubt eventually be revealed, but they should already be friends by then, so that the player will understand why Modius is so. Modius will adopt the character, treating him as if he were his own childe. He will even introduce the character to Allicia, hoping the two will hit it off (they won't and Allicia will hate the character). Eventually, Modius will tell the character about the history of Gary and Chicago, and even reveal his prior defeat. He will tell the character that he is weary with his position, and will even suggest abdicating in favor of the character, if only Gary's independence can somehow be wrested from the evil Lodin.

•**Sinister Secret -** This connection is the most difficult to create, but is likely to be the most interesting. Juggler must be the sire of the character (and thus the character must be a ninth generation Brujah). However, only he and the character know this fact (only the Storyteller and the player). Juggler makes it very clear to the character that, no matter what, the connection must remain secret: "If any should discover that you are mine, you would be destroyed, as would I." Modius accepts the character as the childe of a powerful but mysterious elder from Chicago, and thus treats the character with exaggerated respect (he thinks the character is of an early generation). Juggler has threatened to kill the character if she reveals him as her sire. Though he will aid the character if at all possible, Juggler will not do so if it makes his favoritism apparent.

Antagonists

There are a number of possible enemies for the characters. These antagonists are described at the end of the Cast of Characters. For the most part they are hunters, individuals who track down and slay vampires. However, because this is such an intrigue-filled chronicle, they have developed personalities, so they may not only hunt the characters, but interact with them as well.

Plan

The chronicle should embroil the characters into deeper

and deeper conflict with the Chicago vampires. Eventually, the characters should be forced to defend Gary from the Chicago vampires. While they probably have neither a particular love for Modius nor any real desire to keep hold of Gary, they have no other place to run. Ultimately, the characters must decide whether to defend their home or not. The characters and the other vampires of Gary are likely to become allies of convenience. Therefore, the Storyteller must cultivate a dislike for Chicago in the players. The first story will develop this idea (see the story example following).

At first, the conflict will be minor, but gradually it will become more and more brutal. Lodin wants to bring Gary completely under his heel and subjugate its fractious inhabitants once and for all. Turf wars always spill blood among the Kindred, and this one is likely to be especially harsh. If the characters can hang on long enough, a Conclave will be called by a Justicar to resolve the dispute. The results of such a meeting will depend on many different factors, and should not be preordained.

Hopefully, the issues and direction of the chronicle will evolve naturally out of the stories. The stories should have a great deal of focus and direction, but the chronicle should be much more open (in contrast to some of the chronicle concepts listed in Chapter Three, which are often tightly focused).

Motif

The motif is best described by the word "decay." It is not so much decadence that is the trouble in Gary (that's a Chicago problem) as raw entropy. The vampires who inhabit Gary are at the end of their rope, and no longer have the drive or desire to change their situation. The setting itself is incredibly deteriorated, polluted, dilapidated and shattered. Nothing in the city is new or in perfect condition. Neither the city nor its inhabitants have money, nor do they have hope.

On the surface, some things may seem to be strong and vital, in sharp contrast to everything else, such as "Bold Prince Modius." But in the end, underneath the *veneer*, the characters will uncover the same decay.

This will present a chance to point out the decay of the real world, using Gary as a grim and exaggerated example. The decaying infrastructure, the flight of capital, the corruption of public officials, the drug epidemic, the low quality of education, and the decadence of youth are all themes that can be woven into the chronicle at one time or another. Certainly the basic setting incorporates such concepts; they need only be emphasized through the storytelling.

Cast of Characters

The good die young. That is why immortality

is reserved for the greatest of evils.

- Daniel Baldwin

Modius

Clan: Toreador

Nature: Conniver

Demeanor: Cavalier

Generation: Seventh

Embrace: 1806 (born 1765)

Apparent age: early 40s

Description: Modius is of slightly less than average height, but of above-average build. He looks like Albert Einstein, only he wears nicer clothing and has a more stately bearing. The hair is about the same.

Notes: Modius has on many occasions claimed that he uses his name, not as an affectation, but as a sigil for his true power. He claims to have been active in the mystic subculture of Europe following the Renaissance and to have been present during the formation of the Arcanum. The truth of his past is certainly obscured by his beliefs about what he is.

Modius is a study in contrasts, for he is not what he pretends to be. He lusts after power, yet when he gets it, he is terrified that someone will take it away from him. He is the aggressive yet cowardly Prince of Gary, and he would be happier were he not prince. He feigns interest in the arts and indeed has many paintings of value in his mansion, but in fact he has lost his love for such things. Though he does not realize it, Modius is no longer able to appreciate beauty.

Though rumors circulate that he has been or is somehow associated with Clan Tremere, this remains unproved. He keeps two servants at his run-down mansion; both are elderly black men whom he Dominates so ruthlessly and completely that they are no longer capable of independent action.

Modius attempts to control Gary with a strong hand. He has thus far been able to keep the young malcontents from the sporadic bursts of terror and violence that have besieged Chicago. However, he does not really have much power to exert, and is incapable of actually controlling what occurs in his city other than through cajolery and threats. Of the Kindred of Gary, only Juggler has learned that so far.

Roleplaying Tips: Be as gracious, polite and sophisticated as you possibly can, but always add an edge of unspoken insult. Conjure the attitude of a born gentleman - arrogance and all. Let some of your nature show through every once in a while; simply raise your voice and the players will get the message.

Allicia

Clan: Toreador

Nature: Martyr

Demeanor: Caregiver

Generation: Eighth

Embrace: 1938

Apparent age: late 20s

Description: Short and of average build, Allicia is a dark-haired beauty of apparently mixed European descent. Her wide, full eyes are a sharp near-emerald green that shines against her pale skin. She has noticeably thin lips, but a wide, easy smile. When angered, however, her face becomes a stone mask of rage. She wears old-fashioned clothing, seemingly more suitable to an older woman, and nearly always wears a lace shawl.

Notes: Other than a few wispy memories of red curtains and a smiling woman, Allicia claims to remember nothing

of her life before her Becoming. To her, life began with her Becoming in Gary in the late 1930s, when she was Embraced by Modius. For a time, she survived by attaching herself to rich older gentleman who easily fell to her intriguing ways and beguiling gaze. Her herd was, in fact, the leading industrialists of Gary, who thought of her as their mistress. She would still be with them now, if any were still in Gary.

Allicia does not speak now, and has not spoken for the last 50 years. She can speak, but simply has no desire to do so. If she falls in love with someone, such as a character, she will speak with him, at first with great shyness and difficulty, but after a time with amazement and energy.

She is a familiar figure in the east side of Chicago, and is known for being a rich eccentric who refuses to leave Gary. She leads a simple existence, drawing on funds she acquired before striking out on her own. She maintains connections with one or two of the more notable families in Chicago, but those too will be sliding away as her lack of aging becomes more apparent. Her immortality has become a problem for her as she is beginning to realize that she must break her remaining connections with the mortal world. The chances of discovery have become too great.

Now she spends much of her time at the mansion of Modius, her sire, for whom she retains a strong fondness. He reminds her of the men whom she once loved, and she does not notice the weak man he is today. As she is Blood Bound to him, this is not surprising. Allicia works to make the other Kindred of Gary more loyal to Modius. He encourages her to pursue her attraction to some of the handsome male newcomers to the city, telling her "you must open your heart to them." She does this by sharing blood with them. After three times, they become Bound to her, and through her to Modius, but as she is already Bound to Modius, she cannot be Bound to them. She knows little of vampire lore, and does not realize what she is actually being used for. She shares blood because she is desperate for love of any sort, and even more importantly, for the beauty which has fled her life. Allicia is indeed an innocent, though the characters may well believe otherwise after a time.

Roleplaying Tips: Be demure and seductive, but proper at the same time. Imagine your grandmother when she was a young woman. Evoke the sadness in Allicia with shy eyes and wistful looks. She will never look directly into someone's eyes unless she is about to share blood. Since she does not speak, you have to portray her frail beauty through your acting.

Juggler

Clan: Brujah

Nature: Jester

Demeanor: Conniver

Embrace: Unknown

Apparent age: early 30s

Generation: Eighth

Description: Juggler is of slightly below average height and lightly built. He has shoulder-length dark blond hair and dark gray eyes with green-flecked irises. He has average, undistinguished features. Those who remain around him for a time may be unnerved by the fact that he never blinks.

Notes: Juggler has few friends in Gary, but is tolerated because of his strange relationship with Modius. It is suspected that Modius, though obviously not his sire, owes Juggler some debt that has yet to be repaid (and Juggler may in fact be deliberately holding off payment of that debt). Neither discuss the subject.

Juggler can most often be found haunting the streets of the Lincoln Park area (inside Chicago proper - a risky practice) often attaching himself to late-night revelers, mystifying them with his presence, and then clouding their memories of him as sunrise approaches. Nonetheless, there are stories among certain circles in the area of "The Party Man" who appears suddenly, bedazzles the revelers, and then fades back into the night. He has no respect for mortals and places little value in their lives. He has been known to maim with barely any provocation when a mortal is involved. Juggler has little patience with those who hinder him.

Like many other Kindred, he speaks little of his history. His English/American dialect is nearly perfect, but in moments of rage, he is known to lapse into bursts of raw, Neapolitan Italian.

Juggler has a secret identity. He visits Chicago very often and is the leader of the anarchs there. Because he himself is from Gary, he has much more leeway than the other anarchs, who are all from Chicago. The primary base of this group is, in fact, in Gary, in an abandoned steel mill located in the Wasteland. Juggler has contacts with a number of gangs in the Wasteland and is in the process of subjugating their leaders.

Roleplaying Tips: Be dramatic and bold with every action you take. Juggler will be most vivid if you work up a strong rivalry between him and the most dominant and aggressive character in the players' brood. Throughout the chronicle, you can play and expand upon this rivalry, and it can provide new twists to your stories.

Michael

Clan: Malkavian

Nature: Child

Demeanor: Child

Embrace: Unknown; presumably within the last 20 years

Apparent age: late teens

Generation: Ninth

Description: Tall and heavily built, Michael's stringy brown hair is worn nearly to his shoulders. His eyes are wide and brown, while his teeth are broken and crooked. He walks with a limp on his left side, which give him a distinct lurching appearance.

Notes: Michael is a truly sad case. He is apparently retarded; there is much speculation that he was Embraced as part of some cruel joke and then abandoned. Miraculously, he has managed not only to survive but to attract little or no attention in the process.

He resides in the Telton Cemetery in Gary, where he sleeps within a mausoleum that bears the name Martin Greenman. Michael, when asked, will point to the name and say "Daddy." There are no records that indicate the Martin Greenman who is buried there had anyone in his family named Michael.

Michael is extremely shy and difficult to talk to. He will

only reveal himself to another Kindred who has spent at least a few days lurking in the graveyard looking for him, unless he knows the person. Occasionally, Michael attaches himself to Allicia and stays in her care. This rarely lasts for more than a few months before he wanders back to the graveyard and his solitude. He has apparently forged some form of permanent emotional bond with Allicia, however, and has been known to appear when she is emotionally distraught or on edge (she is, in fact, his Regent and he her Thrall).

He is immensely strong, but does not strike to kill, only disable. Additionally, no one in Chicago, not even Allicia, has ever seen him hunt. When asked of it, he simply shrugs. The characters may at first misunderstand Michael, thinking him to be a killer or even a member of the Sabbat. The mistaken identity can last for some time.

Roleplaying Tips: Slant your shoulders and move about nervously when you speak, so as to show off the limp. Play up your low intelligence, but make sure you let a certain craftiness and wisdom shine through.

Evelyn Stephens

Clan: Brujah

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Survivor

Embrace: A few months ago

Apparent age: early 20s

Generation: Ninth

Description: Evelyn Stephens is of average height and light build. She is almond-skinned and wears her dark hair at shoulder length. Her eyes are a unique gray-green.

Notes: Evelyn Stephens met Juggler four months ago in Chicago. Somehow, she instinctively knew there was more to this man than his outward appearance and manner implied. She pressed him, cajoled him and eventually enticed him into revealing his secrets to her. The truth unveiled, there was nothing that could stop Evelyn Stephens from becoming a vampire.

The transformation, however, was more traumatic for her than Juggler had anticipated. He was careless for a moment, and she fled in fear straight to her brother William. Juggler retrieved her, but not before her brother learned the truth.

Evelyn is heady with her power. She rarely thinks her actions through, and is unconvinced that caution is the best possible course for one of the Kindred. Juggler, as her sire, is still responsible for her; he is often amused by her actions, but his patience is beginning to wear thin.

Modius does not yet know about Evelyn, but when he learns that a childe has been created without his permission, his rage will have no bounds. Make sure the characters are present when he finds out - it will be most interesting.

Roleplaying Tips: Be extravagant and bold with your hand and body gestures. Don't let men intimidate you - manipulate them back. Assume that you will get your way, and then make sure that you do.

Alexander Danov

Clan: Nosferatu

Nature: Judge

Demeanor: Architect

Embrace: before 1400(?)

Apparent age: early 30s

Generation: Seventh

Description: Tall, with an average build for his height, he has a wide face with deep-set gray eyes. They are the only part of him that is attractive; otherwise he is a hideous creature, with coarse, crinkled skin, a twisted, contoured face and only a few tufts of hair remaining. He is an exquisite example of a Nosferatu.

Notes: Danov does not speak much of his history, but his recollections of his conversation with Lucian before the Battle of Tannenburg in 1410 and his references to his 'youth' at the time point to his Becoming being not long before that. He claims not to know his sire, but surmises him to have been but an ancilla, and places himself in the seventh generation. Nothing has been witnessed to dispute this.

The name he uses is not his birth name, but one he picked up in Russia during the mid-to-late 19th Century.

Though not formally an elder himself, Danov is well-known among the Kindred of North America. During the last half-century, he has been moving slowly from city to city on what he calls a "simple search for existence."

Danov is searching for Golconda, and has come a long way. Though he does not proselytize, he will speak about it if asked. He will guide those whom he considers to have the maturity to reach Golconda, and may eventually give them directions on how to reach one of the Inconnu who can take them through the Suspire ritual.

Roleplaying Tips: You are very quiet, but extremely watchful. You react to things that happen around you, but in a very understated way -just the smallest smile, or quietest chuckle. Unless the players are watching you closely, they will not see your reaction. At first, they should not realize that you are anything but straight-faced.

Lucian

Clan: Gangrel

Nature: Traditionalist

Demeanor: Director

Embrace: before 1 A.D.

Apparent age: late 40s

Generation: Eighth

Description: Lucian is a tall, powerfully built man. He is broad-shouldered, with square, rugged features. His hair is black, speckled with gray, and worn short. He has rich, dark brown eyes and a deep, commanding voice. He takes great pains to conceal his short tail, furry feet and overly hairy chest (results of frenzies through the ages).

Notes: Lucian is a gruff and sometimes arrogant vampire who possesses more than his share of charm. He does not speak of his past, except for the fact that he served under *the* Julius Caesar, and that he slew his own sire, whom he describes as a "vile creature," sometime around 1100. Though he commands respect, many deride him for his self-admitted Kindred-slaying. He has made many enemies in Chicago, and has great antipathy for the prince of that city -Lodin.

Lucian has never accepted the Kindred as a group, and

strongly objects to clan ties as well as to sects like the Camarilla. He deliberately sets himself apart from other vampires. He was Embraced in an age when there were few Kindred, and those that existed rarely associated with each other. His hatred of other elders is perhaps due to his own rather advanced age. Though he is old, his blood is as diluted as any recently made vampire

All in all, Lucian is a fairly decent individual. He seems to value compassion and mercy above all other concerns. He has involved himself with Kindred affairs to oppose excessive cruelty and inhumanity. On those occasions, he has displayed the ability to completely wipe the mind of a person, leaving him a gibbering husk with the mind of child.

He is trusted by Modius, but they are not friends. Lucian still controls the shipyards and the docks, where the international freight ships load and unload materials. Not only is the stevedores' union under his control, but the management of the entire operation is under his sway. He owns the Gary Export Company, which serves as the primary conveyance for vampires traveling to and from Chicago across the Atlantic. He knows much of the comings and goings of many of the elders, though it must be mentioned that such travel is very rare.

Roleplaying Tips: Ignore others as much as possible; they bore you. When you do deign to acknowledge them, use your eyes with great effect, staring coldly at those who say foolish things. If the players do not react appropriately to this, tell them his Presence is strong, and they must spend a Willpower point if they do not want to turn away.

The Hunters

Here are three different hunter characters for you to weave into your chronicle. They will act when the characters misstep, so they provide an excellent means to maintain ongoing tension and suspense. They certainly encourage the players to be exceedingly careful. If they are killed, it will only attract attention to the city, bringing even more hunters. However, an "accident" would not be so obvious.

Sullivan Dane

Born: 1957, Mapperly, Great Britain

Occupation: Former Jesuit brother; witch-hunter

Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Survivor

Faith: 8

Description: Dane is of above-average height and build, with lean, sharp features. His dark hair is usually worn short in a very utilitarian cut. His eyes are thin and dark green. He bears the scars of severe burns across both of his hands and forearms; thus, he usually wears gloves.

Notes: From an early childhood, Dane believed in his calling from God. He saw evil as a tangible force in the world, one which had to be confronted if it was to be defeated. He traveled abroad for a few years upon reaching maturity before becoming an applicant to the Jesuit order in 1980. However, he never completed his studies.

It is believed that during the winter of 1982, he encountered a rogue Caitiff on the streets of Georgetown, in Washington D.C. It is more than likely that Dane interrupted the hunting of a vampire who, on the edge of her sanity, decided to play with the young novitiate before

consuming him. Dane proved smarter than she expected. He escaped her, hunted her for the following weeks, and finally caught her. He learned of her fear of fire and used it against her. She was destroyed utterly and he was scarred by the flames himself. However, now Dane has no fear of flames.

He left the order less than a year later, unable to convince them of his experience. Clearly, if there was one such servant of evil as he had met and destroyed, there were others. Saddened, but not angered by the Church's unwillingness to believe him, he set out to perform the Lord's will himself. However, members of the Inquisition heard of his experience and have made him one of them. They have been able to give him some support, and have provided him with information as well as a number of contacts in different cities.

Dane is driven, but strongly in control of his faculties. He has learned much of the Kindred and their ways, and since that fateful encountered has been responsible for the deaths of at least six other Kindred. He has sought to prove the existence of vampires to the Church, but has been careful about concealing their existence from the general public. He appreciates full well the chaos that might reign were the world to learn of them.

He is a quiet, careful hunter. Those he stalks are barely aware of him at the periphery of their consciousness before he strikes. About five years ago he destroyed a pair of Kindred in Algeria after a long hunt. It is believed that at the time he had with him at least one active member of the Jesuit order who witnessed the pair's activity and ultimate destruction. There have been strong rumors of physical evidence: remains, photographs, possibly even videotapes. Since that incident, there have been an increasing number of rumors that the Holy Office in Rome is embroiled in an internal controversy over the incident and the existence of Kindred.

Dane understands the Kindred and their folklore, but he is a man of the 20th century. His monetary resources are usually poor, unless he is able to find some benefactor, but whenever he can, he uses the weapons and technology of the modern world in his hunt.

He has set up a base in Gary. He will likely begin following the characters, shadowing their every move and gradually learning more and more about them. The characters should have opportunities to learn they are being followed, but Dane is very careful, so it will be difficult. Dane may have gotten in contact with the Inquisition since he has reached Chicago, and thus may have significant resources backing him up. Alternately, the plot of a story could be woven around preventing Dane from getting in contact with the Inquisition.

Roleplaying Tips: Dane is too cautious to ever speak to the characters directly, though he may speak to them by telephone in order to receive more information.

Special Agent William Shepard

Born: 1958, Detroit

Occupation: FBI agent

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Fanatic

Description: Of slightly above-average height and average build, Shepard wears his midnight-black hair short in a trim, nearly military cut. His eyes are deep blue and almost unnaturally intense. He has a small scar just

below his left ear.

Notes: Shepard knows. How he knows is unclear, but he knows. He knows that vampires really exist. He knows they are everywhere, especially in Chicago. He knows they are evil and must be destroyed. What he doesn't know is how to convince others of this truth.

As a member of the FBI based out of Chicago, he is restricted by the Bureau's jurisdictional limitations. Officially, the Bureau can only become involved in a crime if it falls within its jurisdiction: kidnapping, bank robbery, offenses involving federal property or employees, interstate crime, and other related areas. Shepard is eagerly awaiting the day when one of the Kindred steps over that line. Shepard will often attempt to involve himself in matters of local jurisdiction and continue to hover nearby until warned off.

Ironically, Shepard is not a member of Special Affairs, nor is he even aware of its existence.

You will want to make Shepard the nemesis of the characters, preferably after they have made a major mistake and have in some way exposed themselves. It is best if you do not work him into the chronicle right away, but do so later. Make sure you do not kill him off if you intend to use our supplement Ashes t**o Ashes**, for he appears in it.

If Shepard ever manages to get in touch with Detective Stephens, sparks will fly. He will have a knowledgeable ally in the local forces who will have the power to call him in.

Roleplaying Tips: Shepard will speak to the characters, but only if he himself is being watched by others. He is very professional in bearing, and will not reveal what he is thinking to those he interviews.

Detective Gregory Stephens

Born: 1960, Chicago

Occupation: Police detective

Nature: Cavalier

Demeanor: Caregiver

Description: Stephens is taller than the average man and has a slightly larger than average build. He is dark-skinned, with a square and craggy face, and has close-cut, salt-and-pepper hair. His eyes are gray, though the right is slightly darker than the left.

Notes: Stephens is a detective with the Chicago Police Department, Homicide Division. He is a careful, cautious man who is knowledgeable in the ways of the police and Chicago politics. He joined the force in 1980, but he was after a job and held no special desire to uphold law and order. His time on the force has matured him into the hard-working, compassionate detective that he is.

He is intimately aware of the Kindred. Recently, Juggler sired Stephens' sister Evelyn, at her request. During the first few days of her transformation, Juggler was careless and she fled to her brother in fear. He has known of her condition since then, and is torn tremendously by it. In many ways he fears her, and those in the city like her. He loves her dearly, and pities her for the horror that she has become. At the same time, there is something disquietingly attractive about her condition.

For the last few months, he has been doing everything in his power to find a way to "cure" his sister. He has contacted all sorts of fanatical organizations, and has even

followed his sister on occasion to find out more about the other vampires. He knows more than any other mortal in the Chicago area about the undead. If need be, he will kill to protect his sister, or to rescue her from her fate.

Out of concern for his sister, Stephens has occasionally helped various Kindred within the city. He has also been known to work against them when his conscience demands it. He hates Juggler and has even argued with him on occasion. The only thing that has stayed the vampire's hand is an edict by Lodin protecting all members of Chicago's law enforcement community. That has not stopped Juggler from severely injuring him on one occasion.

If he is ever killed in the line of duty, his will stipulates that a letter in a safety deposit box be delivered to one of the police commissioners, one of Stephens' classmates from the Police Academy. The letter reveals everything that he has learned in the past few years.

Roleplaying Tips: Play the hard-boiled detective to the hilt, but don't bother to make him emotionless -Greg involves himself emotionally in everything he does, he just doesn't always show it.

Baptism by Fire

Through these fields of destruction

Baptisms of fire

I've watched all your suffering

As the battles raged higher

- Dire Straits, "Brothers in Arms"

"Baptism by Fire" is intended to be the first story you tell in **Vampire**. It is intended to be both an example of what a **Vampire** story can be like and a good introduction to the Gothic-Punk world for your players. Much of it can be played as Live-Action, though this is not necessary. A number of different issues and conflicts are raised at Modius' party, jump-starting the chronicle and getting the characters involved right away.

We only provide the first chapter; it is up to you to conclude it. This chapter concerns a "party" that Modius, the Prince of Gary, Indiana, is hosting, and the bizarre events that occur therein .

There are any number of different paths the players can choose: anything from chasing Sullivan Dane, a witch-hunter, to traveling to Chicago to deliver a letter to Lodin, its prince. The players choose what subplot they want to pursue; we leave you to weave a story from their actions.

In order to best tell this story, you should integrate it closely with the **Forged in Steel** chronicle described above. All of the characters involved in this story are described in that section, as are many of its central issues. Read it carefully. How this story concludes will be affected by what you have planed for the chronicle to become.

The Party

The characters attend a party hosted by Modius, the Prince of Gary. All of the vampires of Gary are there, so the characters have a chance to meet the major luminaries of the city and become involved in some of its intrigues.

Depending on how you decide to conclude the story, they may pursue a number of different subplots.

It is important to let the players choose the course of action they will take. Let them follow whatever subplot they happen to fall into, charting the course of the chronicle on their own. Though the Gary vs. Chicago conflict is presented as all-encompassing, you can downplay it, leaving the characters with more room to make decisions.

It is recommended that this scene be played using Live-Action if at all possible. This is best done by setting up a party in your own house, complete with dim lights, music, and refreshments (but don't let the players eat anything - at least not until the scene is over). You may even have the players wait outside the house on the porch, and come in one at a time. Try to get a few people to be First Mates. One or two will be enough, but if you can get five or six, so much the better.

Plot

Years ago, on every New Year's Eve, Modius would host a gathering of all the Kindred of Gary. Immediately following sunset, all the Kindred of the cty were expected to show up at his home and enjoy his hospitality and conversation. He has not held this party for some time, but has decided to do so again this year and word has spread among the vampires of Gary. In one way or another, all the characters know about it and understand that they are expected to attend. Allicia, Michael, Lucian, Danov, and Juggler (who arrives late with Evelyn) will all be present. The characters round out the guests.

This bash is an excellent opportunity for players to "get into character" and become intimately familiar with the politics of the lakeshore communities. The progression of different subplots at the party is described below. Just take them in order and play each one out until it starts to get a little old, then switch to the next subplot. If you are playing Live-Action and have a number of First Mates, it is likely that a number of different subplots will be occurring at the same time. This may be confusing to run, but it will be very exciting to play.

Though there are a number of different subplots at the party, some are more important than others. The central events that must occur are listed below in order of appearance. Don't miss any of them:

1) Modius greets the characters as they arrive.

2) Allicia interacts with one of the characters.

3) Juggler and his friends crash the party.

4) The letter is delivered by Annabelle.

5) Modius asks the characters to deliver a letter to Chicago.

This party is likely to be the first time that your group will roleplay their vampire personas. Start slowly by giving the players a chance to do such mundane things as look behind the drapes and talk with the "security," but gradually build up the intensity as time goes by. By the end of the scene, the players should be pumped up and ready for some action. Though this chapter doesn't really have much chance for action or drama (it concentrates more on setting things up), you will certainly want to include some in the next game session. If your players require action in every story, it shouldn't be too difficult to add it into this one. Have a character get into a fight with Juggler, a car chase with Sullivan Dane, or a skirmish with Annabelle's bodyguards (whom you'll have to make up).

At the beginning of this party, you want to catch the players off guard. Things will start with a very friendly and seemingly straightforward Modius; only later will they realize that Modius has ulterior motives. This

party is meant to be a warning to the players: you cannot trust anything or anyone in **Vampire**, and things are never as they seem. Intrigue and politics pervade every word and motion among the Damned, and one must tread carefully.

The theme of this chapter can be anything you would like it to be, including romance.

Setting

The prince's house is an old decaying mansion in the center of Gary. Once the home of a steel baron, it was built in the most illustrious neighborhood of the growing city. However, times have changed and most of the mansions in this neighborhood have been divided into apartments. Only Modius' house is left, and it has apparently sheltered Modius for quite a while. The passage of time has begun to affect the structure; indeed, the roof is near the point of collapse. Snow has gathered on the roof, and now water drips through holes in the ceilings and is collected in buckets that must be constantly emptied and moved by the servants.

If asked about the state of repairs of the house, especially for a Toreador who spends so much time in his haven, Prince Modius will display a surprising amount of paranoia regarding his safety. The characters will get the impression that Modius feels anything as noticeable as a roofing service working on the house is enough chaos to draw unwanted attention to his undead existence.

The mansion is quite large, with over 20 rooms. Most of them are furnished in what would once have been considered the height of fashion - divans, chandeliers, grand piano, and leather armchairs - but now they are moth-eaten and decayed nearly beyond use. On the main floor is the parlor, living room, dining room, kitchen, Modius' office, and an art studio for Modius (which contains a dozen partially completed paintings, most of them depicting what seems to be a Dantesque vision of hell). Modius sleeps in a basement bedroom when he sleeps at the mansion at all. He has a second haven, located in an old taconite processing plant near the lakeshore. At the end of the party, Modius leaves directly for that haven.

The house is guarded by four large, white, tough-looking men - all of them stewards from the local unions. Armed with revolvers and truncheons, they have been told not to speak with the guests. They are under the Domination of Modius just as the servants are. They are dressed in work boots, jeans, and either flannel or blue work shirts.

Despite the decay of the surroundings, Modius' party is as elaborate and sumptuous as anything a mortal would throw. Delicious-looking appetizers and main dishes are set on tables around the edges of the room, safely away from the dripping water (even though vampires can't touch the stuff). Classical music plays softly in the background (it's a Böse stereo system) and a dance floor has been prepared for anyone who knows ballroom steps - it's the only sort of dancing Modius will allow.

Dialogue

This scene is a good opportunity to determine more about each individual character and his ties to Gary. A number of small conversations could take place. Though most of the possible interactions between Kindred will be dialogue, there is a possibility that some action may take place as well. See the scenes below for examples of the types of conversations that can be held, and play out whatever dramatic moments you think are appropriate.

• The Hunt

Before the players arrive at the party, you might want to suggest that they hunt for some blood. This is an opportunity for characters low on blood to fill up, but you don't want to have to do it for each player. This may well be the players' first experience with leading their characters through the often horrific process of hunting mortals. You won't always want to spend a lot of time on such scenes, but the first one at least should be fairly detailed and evocative. Refer to the Vessels section at the end of the story for suggestions for unusual encounters, though you are encouraged to create situations that you know will evoke a special response from the player or character in question. There is often a scene with some sort of violence and mayhem at the beginning of a movie to get the audience's attention. If you think that one of your players would like this sort of thing, begin the story with that character trying to deal with a botched hunt. Make it very exciting, dramatic and tension-filled, not only for the character involved, but for the players who are watching (perhaps another character could happen across the scene and save the day; it's a good way to connect two characters). It'll wake up the players for sure.

•Formal Greeting

Modius greets the characters when they first arrive at the mansion. You should roleplay through this introduction for each character in turn. Ask the players when they are likely to arrive: early, just on time, late, or very late. Have the "just on time" characters arrive about ten minutes after the early ones, the late characters ten minutes after that, and the very late about an hour after that (just before Juggler arrives). You will need to adjust these times if you are doing the scene Live-Action.

After being allowed to enter the foyer of the mansion by the union guards, characters will be able to approach the front parlor. Standing by the door to this room is Modius in an out-of-date tuxedo (complete with tails). He shakes hands and welcomes the characters to his haven, always behaving with extreme courtesy. Remember that the characters met him at least once before when they were first released from their sire and presented to him. Perhaps something occurred to one of the characters during the prelude that you can have Modius refer to here, thus making the character more at ease. Once they are done with the pleasantries, the characters will be able to interact with the other guests at the party.

•Enigmatic Danov

A vampire stands in the middle of the dance floor in the parlor, smiling vacantly at the wall. This is Alexander Danov, a Nosferatu who has been wandering about the country for some time. Recently, he has come to the Chicago area, and Modius has given him permission to stay in Gary. Alexander will welcome the character by name, and will mumble something like, "You are new to the game, so unsullied. I will enjoy watching you grow tonight." He will be curious about the characters, wanting to know all he can about who they are as people, and to that end he asks questions about what the character thinks of morality, crime, diablerie, Golconda, the Traditions, the anarchs, etc. He is more interested in the person than where the person lives or what the person does. Use his questions as a way to get the players to think more about their characters.

As Danov speaks with a character, however, it is clear that he knows certain things about that character that he did not realize that anyone else knew. Hopefully, this will unnerve the player and give him respect for Danov. This will be repeated with each character in turn, until Danov has met them all.

He will listen in on other people's conversations, but will not start them himself. He understands everything that occurs, but will only observe what is going on and will not interfere in any way. The characters will either think he is a complete nut, or will understand his gentle wisdom. If Alexander takes a liking to one of the characters, he may give them a warning: "Don't let yourself be sucked in." He will never explain what he means by this cryptic statement.

Remember that Danov is on the path to Golconda, so he can guide the characters in their quest to reach it (if they so wish). This is a long-range objective, of course, but Danov is the way you can weave it into the chronicle.

•Shy Michael

A character may notice Michael standing in the shadows in the corner of the dining room. This simple-minded Malkavian is very reluctant to speak with anyone, and if someone makes a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8), they will realize that he is very frightened. If they are somehow able to question him about it (it will be very difficult to do so), they will discover that he thinks he is being followed. If the characters go to the front of the house and look around, they may notice (on a Perception + Alertness roll; difficulty 7) that there is a man across the street sitting in a car watching the house. Though the character will not yet know who the man is, this is Sullivan Dane, an ex-Jesuit witch-hunter who is tracking Modius. If they attempt to pursue Sullivan, he will simply drive away. All those who reveal themselves to Dane, however, put themselves on his target list. If

Modius is told about the person watching the house, he will become very frightened and may accuse the characters of being behind it. He then calls over one of his guards, who leaves to go to a back room. Within minutes, sirens can be heard, and a little while later there are seven police cars in front of the house. You may use this as an opportunity to scare the characters, but the police are actually here on the orders of Modius. The police will stand guard outside until the end of the party. This is also Modius' little way of demonstrating his power.

•Imperious Lucian

Another vampire can be found in front of the cold and empty fireplace in the parlor, sitting in one of Modius' moth-eaten armchairs. This is Lucian, who will not even look up if a character approaches him. He is clasping his hands together loosely, fingertip to fingertip, and is glaring into the distance. If a character speaks with him, he will answer her questions, but in as few words as possible. If

the questions become at all personal, he will become very angry and will threaten not to speak with them further, but this is an empty threat - conversation, even dreary conversation, is better than simply sitting there. If he warms up to a character, especially if he has a crowd, he may spontaneously launch into a story about his past, recounting how he served under *the* Julius Caesar and was forced to slay his own sire.

Speaking privately, he will warn one of the characters about the "treacherous spy from Chicago," that Danov person. He claims to have evidence against Danov, but will not reveal it, explaining that by doing so "I would bring the wrath of. . . (and at this point he whispers) ... *Lodin*, down upon my head. I would not live to see the morrow."

He may also play games with a character whom he has taken a dislike too. Taking her off to a private corner, he will say: "I would not tell you this if I did not truly like you. You must be careful. There are things going on which you know nothing of." He will then pause, back away lightly, and say that it's too dangerous for him to go further, that "it may be better, certainly kinder, if you did not know the truth." Once he is "convinced" that he should tell her what he was going to say, Lucian continues: "Modius is a cannibal and practices diablerie. He has reached such an age that he requires the blood of Kindred to live. He has already eaten his way through the last batch, and it will not be long before he begins to hunt you as well." Lucian can't wait to see what happens in this little game of his.

Later on, Lucian will ask some of the characters if they know where Juggler is. He chuckles if they ask about him, and will say "This party will liven up a bit when he gets here, just you wait." However, he will not say anything more about the matter, telling the characters to be patient.

•The Trap

At some point during the party, Modius and one of his servants will approach each character and engage in some small talk. He will be very polite and friendly, and will be, if anything, overly unctuous (don't overplay

it; make him actually seem like a nice person). However, Modius has a secret itinerary - he desires to know the location of at least one haven of each vampire in Gary. He explains that he wants to be able to contact the character if a time of crisis arises. In actuality, this is his means of gaining more power over his fractious "subjects." If the character refuses, Modius will grow very angry, and in the future will distrust whatever the character says and does. He is paranoid, and all those who fail to humor him incur his hatred and fear. If a character lies about where his haven is, he will be able to get away with it, at least for now.

•Screwing Up

If anything occurs at the party to reveal that a guest is anything other than human (e.g. a character uses Potence to lift something very heavy), Modius will fly into a great rage and accuse the "perpetrator of this terrible crime" of breaking the Masquerade. Unless he can be quickly calmed down, he will order the offending character to drink some of his blood (thus bringing her closer to Blood Bond). The other vampires will say nothing at this point, but if the characters attack Modius, the others will stand behind his authority, albeit reluctantly. Though he may be a fool, he is the prince, and for most of the year he leaves the rest of the Kindred alone.

•The Seduction

Allicia may be attracted to one of the male characters - usually the eldest or most sensitive-looking among them. She might approach a character whom she met during the prelude, or another in order to make the first jealous. Early in the party, Allicia will watch the character, but she always slips away if he stares back or tries to approach her. Eventually, she will draw near the character, put her hand in his, and lead him away from the party. She furtively takes him up the servants' staircase to her room, where a dust-covered, canopied feather bed sits. She closes the door and begins to touch the character all over, putting her finger over his lips if he attempts to speak. If things heat up, she will begin to cry, shedding tears of blood, but she will pantomime that they are tears of joy, not of sadness.

At some point, she may pantomime an offer to exchange blood. Not only is this incredibly pleasurable for vampires, but it would also make the character much closer to her because such a mingling is the first step of three toward creating a Blood Bond. However, as she is already Bound to Modius, the character is one step closer to falling under the control of the prince. However, you should let the character regain all of his Willpower because of the intensity of the passion, or perhaps even gain a new Willpower point altogether.

Modius will pretend to be the jealous and protective father if he catches the character with Allicia (which he will try to do, timing it so he catches them in the act of sharing blood). He does this to get the character to trust Allicia even more, and thus to fall even more under his control. If the character and Allicia share blood but two more times over the course of the chronicle, Modius will have the character under his complete control - or so he thinks.

This is your chance to add romance to the chronicle, or at least try it out to see if you want to include it. If Allicia truly falls in love with the character (judge by the of depth of the roleplaying), then she will side with the character and not with Modius. After a time, because of the depth of the feelings involved, she will no longer be Blood Bound to Modius, and will thus be truly able to be Bound to the character. This will drive Modius into a terrible rage and an extended frenzy which will last for weeks. The two lovers will have to hide in fear for their existences, since Modius will use all of his resources to find them. The other characters will probably not be very pleased by it either, believing the character to be manipulated (use your storytelling skills to make them think this way - secret notes, etc.). It will likely become a very Romeo and Juliet-type situation, and could end tragically.

Make the scene in her room as romantic as you possibly can. Go slowly, describe details, speak in a soft, low voice, and try to be very honest and direct in the way you speak. When you finally do look into the player's eyes (while roleplaying Allicia), do so only briefly, but do your best to make it as sincere and sensitive a moment as possible. Don't be embarrassed when describing or playing the scene during Live-Action. After all, this is only a game.

•Midnight Toast

As midnight approaches, Modius calls everyone into the dining room and the servants pass glasses of champagne around to all the guests. He stands formally before them all, and begins to speak of the future glory of Gary, and the rebirth of the union movement. He announces that he has managed to gather the power to get one of the steel mills to reopen. Within a few months, it will open and Gary will

be sparked by a brief period of growth.

A few minutes before midnight, Modius looks towards the door and suddenly demands to know where Juggler is. If no one answers, he says, "That arrogant bastard will be punished for his tardiness to my court. I will not tolerate such behavior."

Then one of the servants steps forward with a watch in his hands and counts out the last seconds of the year. Modius raises his glass and at the stroke of midnight proposes a rather strange toast: "May we discover the beauty that we cannot share."

You might want to describe the grandfather clock striking out twelve in the backgrou nd - just something to add a little tone to the mood.

•Crashing the Party

One of more radical vampires of Gary, Juggler, arrives at the party quite late. Juggler crashes the party with a retinue of mortals in

tow. The drunk mortals immediately descend on a ny available females and start dancing. Juggler scoops up Allicia for the same purpose. He turns off the classical music that Modius was playing and inserts a hardcore CD which he brought with him. (At this point you should actually change the music to pu nk or heavy metal - Black Flag or the Butthole Surfers would be appropriate.)

Modius, who was becoming very passionate in a diatribe against modern art, will be taken completely unaware. After a long moment of stunned silence, he will react by demanding that the mortals be killed for such a breach of the Masquerade. However, he does not even suggest that Juggler be punished. He's terrified that the mortals might remember the house and what they saw going on inside of it. Keep in mind how paranoid Modius is of discovery.

It will be up to saner minds (i.e. the characters) to suggest that the mortals not be killed, but simply mind-wiped. Any character that participates in such wholesale slaughter of human life should definitely roll for loss of Humanity. You ma y wish to play up the Modius-Juggler conflict even more, but remember that though Modius is the prince, he treats Juggler with respect and fear, more like an equal than a subordinate.

Juggler will only laugh at the debate and will take no part in it. Once some decision has been made, he stands back with a smile and lets the events unfold as they will. Juggler will not prevent the execution of the mortals, though he will not allow Evelyn to be harmed (see below).

Mingled with the humans is Evelyn, the woman Juggler Embraced without the permission of Modius. If one of the characters is also his neonate, Juggler may give him a quick glance, as if to say "don't say a word." During the exchange between Modius and Juggler, Evelyn will approach one or two of the characters with naive curiosity and perhaps accidentally mention who her sire is.

Juggler is openly contemptuous of Modius as well as most of the other guests, whom he calls "the little slaves." He asks one of the characters (presumably his "rival") why he is present. Before they can answer, he will loudly announce, "You groveling Thrall. Do you not see past this meaningless ritual? It is the pathetic court of a windbag, senile, has-been, weakling prince." He may speak further with the other characters, seemingly interested in who they are, but everything he says is directed more toward Modius than anyone else. The language he uses is bold and direct, and he will pull no punches.

•Evelyn's Presentation

Later on, after the excitement dies down, Juggler presents his childe to Modius. Suddenly turning off the music, Juggler announces to the others that there is "another guest whom you should all welcome to this gathering - my childe, Evelyn." He then turns to Modius with a sardonic smile, and says, "Please, dear Master, why so glum? Is she not exquisite? Such well-sculpted beauty is so rarely found these days, and she has a spirit to match!"

Modius will not react well. He will in fact be outraged, but in the end he will do nothing. After yelling and making threats for several minutes, he will suddenly grow quiet and say simply, "I trust that you have taught her of the Traditions." Having said that, he will say nothing more on the subject, and will go back to his speech on the decadence of modern art.

As for Evelyn, she acts without fear and with great boldness, introducing herself to the others. She is curious about who everyone is, why they are here, and what sort of people they are - it is all, obviously, very new for her. After a time, she even goes over to Modius and speaks with him. Once she has done so, Juggler will shout, "Ah, you have welcomed her. She is one of us now."

•Annabelle's Arrival

Late into the party, a message arrives from the Prince of Chicago. The letter is delivered by a woman of surpassing beauty. She is in fact Annabelle Triabell, one of the elders of Chicago, as well as an old friend of Modius (they are of the same clan). Before she enters the house, one of the servants comes in to tell Modius that she has arrived. Modius will look extremely su rprised, and perceptive characters (Perception of 4 or more) will notice a look of terror flash across his face. Enterprising characters who look out one of the windows in the front of the house will notice a long white limo parked in front, and may even see Annabelle delicately step from it.

Once he learns that Annabelle has arrived, Juggler leaves the party, taking Evelyn with him. Exiting via the back door, they say goodbye to no one, and try to make as little fuss as possible in doing so - in direct contrast to the way they entered.

Once Annabelle enters the room, it is clear that she is an exceptionally powerful woman. She looks about her at the guests, smiles, and gives her coat to one of Modius' servants. She then step over to Modius and patiently waits until he remembers to kiss her on the cheek. Once he has done so, she grasps his arms and leads him into his office, smiling politely at everyone else as they leave. A few minutes later, after some muffled shouts and exclamations coming from within (and an uneasy silence in the other rooms), they emerge. Modius is yelling wildly and clutching a letter written on a piece of parchment paper. "How dare he command me in this way! I will not tolerate it, Justicar or no Justicar." Annabelle, who comes out just behind him, replies, "His language is somewhat strong, but you must meet him halfway." They continue to talk back and forth about the letter, letting the players know that it is from Lodin and that it makes some sort of demand.

It should be obvious to the characters that Annabelle uses her influence with Modius to diminish his anger at the ultimatum from Lodin. Modius will vehemently protest the demands of Lodin, but will gradually settle down and tell the characters that they must

Present themselves to Lodin. If the characters interrupt Modius' conversation with Annabelle, he will become very angry and will use the anger as an outlet for his embarrassment.

Eventually, Annabelle convinces him to return with her to his office, where they remain for some time. Before they do so, however, Modius excuses himself and politely requests that everyone make themselves at home, and wait "but a few moments" for him to return. The characters will have about 15 minutes to spend discussing what occurred. If anyone tries to leave, one of the servants will fetch Modius, who will strongly "request" that the character stay.

•Announcement

When he finally emerges from his office, Modius makes an announcement (Annabelle leaves before he does so). He tells his guests that he is "rejecting this pile of rubbish, these contemptible demands," and that he will stand strong against the tyranny of Lodin. Then he tells them that he wishes the "neonates among us," to travel to Chicago and deliver a reply to Lodin. Looking quite fierce, Modius explains that he will not tolerate any interference in the affairs of his city.

He offers to make the characters "my emissaries to Lodin, to make it clear to him that I am not his servant." No non-player vampire will respond to the offer, so maybe the characters will decide to accept. If they do not, Modius will request that they do so. If they still refuse, he will threaten them, cajole them, bribe them and will in fact do anything to get them to go to Chicago (he has no choice). He will give the leader of the group a sealed letter to present to Lodin. If it is ever opened, the characters will discover it to contain only empty platitudes and excuses, the meaning of which is not exactly clear.

To assist his official representatives, Modius supplies the "volunteers" with another letter requesting safe passage for his official emissaries. Modius assures the characters that this paper will allow his representatives to reach Lodin without any trouble -he is not simply mistaken, he knows full well that the letter is worthless.

Before they leave, however, Modius will bring one of the characters over to the side and say privately to him or her: "You understand of course, for the sake of formality, that you may need to Present yourself to him. You do see, don't you - a formality. In his deluded mind, he sees you as *his* subjects, and requires you to Present yourselves to him just as you were Presented to me. It probably won't do any harm to humor him - after you deliver my letter, of course."

•Words of Advice

Before the characters leave, Lucian will approach one of the characters privately and tell him or her that if they have any troubles in Chicago to go to the Succubus Club. He describes to them an old friend of his who frequents it, a vampire named Sir Henry Johnson. While he is explaining this, however, Modius intervenes

and tells the characters that the Succubus Club is "nothing but the hangout for the dregs of our kind. It is for those who wish to pretend they have spirit, when in truth they do not." However, it is the only real lead the characters have. If they do not go to the Succubus Club, they will not know where to go at all.

Characters

See the previous section for details of the Kindred of Gary. Annabelle, an elder from Chicago, is described here.

Annabelle Triabell

Clan: Toreador

Nature: Bon Vivant

Demeanor: Bon Vivant

Embrace: 1722

Apparent age: early 30s

Generation: Sixth

Description: Of average height and slightly above-average build, she has stylish shoulder-length ash-blond hair and wide, sky-blue eyes. She has a large, full mouth and the bearing and appearance of a fashion model.

Notes: Annabelle is the eldest of the Toreador clan in Chicago, though you would never know it by her actions. She is a hedonist, living in the public eye under the name Ellen Stanley-Greer as the wife of John Greer, publisher of the Sentinel syndicate of newspapers. Greer is an older man, in his late 60s, who is apparently completely under her control. The two have been married since the early '60s, and the local media has begun to comment on the apparent agelessness of Mrs. Greer.

She knows no other life except excess. Her existence is a decadent whirlwind of action and sensation. Many of the younger Kindred in Chicago spend at least a short time in her retinue, experiencing things quite literally undreamed of by mortal man. Lodin is continually at odds with her over her behavior and the constant threat of a media scandal.

She is a friend of Modius, the Prince of Gary, who is quite flattered with her attentions. It is probably an attempt on her part to create friction between the two princes, and thus to allow her a greater measure of power. She manipulates both in order to increase the tension between them as well as decrease it. None know her true motivations.

Afterward

Upon completing **Baptism by Fire**, you have three options. First, you may feel that the party was a fitting conclusion to your first **Vampire** chronicle. Things may not have gone right and the players may have had enough of Gary. You can start over by giving everyone a chance to make up new characters now that they know what is going on. This also gives you a chance to create your own unique chronicle, as well as stories of your own.

Your second option is to continue the story by creating your own ideas on where it will go. There are any number of different subplots you can follow; indeed, much of the chronicle could involve following up each and every subplot presented above.

Last Words

I sit atop Stone Mountain today and think of all the changes of the last year. I am not who I was when I wrote this book. I have been changed by it.

I can scarcely believe what has happened since the first printing of **Vampire**. The first surprise was that people actually liked what I had created. The second was that others shared my love of the vampire. Our numbers are legion.

The White Wolf game studio has also changed this year. Success has enabled us to say and do as we wish, and more and more people seem to be listening. The word is getting out. We have some bold plans for the future.

Only the technology of the portable computer and desktop publishing allows me to do this (God bless Macintosh). It is a miracle that I am able to typeset directly into the pages of this book from my aerie. A revolution has occurred in the last five years, and no one seems to notice. Literally anyone can publish in this age of silicon. The people have the power to speak again. We don't need the media to tell us how to think.

It is because of you that these words are being written. Your support created this company, and I hope that we remain worthy of that support. You need to let us know when we stray from the path.

I love to sit atop this granite mound, because here I have vision. Here I can see beyond the petty grievances and ambitions of daily life. I can see more clearly. What you hold in your hands is the result of nearly a year of naked obsession. It is the product of sweat and passion, agony and exultation. I hope that you like what we have done with it.

As I look out over the lakes and church steeples, I can think only of the night. I can think only of the night breed. They live in my dreams.

Nature Red In Tooth and Claw

Emotional numbing, mass addictions, low self-esteem, depression , apathy , anomie , stress, all the modem illnesses are symptoms of the absurd and tragic struggle to bridle instinct. Guilt is engendered by the imperfect ability of humans to suppress the inner rage of the repressed id.

Adam Parfrey,

Apocalypse Culture

You cannot ignore emotion. You cannot suppress instinct. You cannot repress evil. The levee fills all too quickly, and the flood waters never stop adding to the reservoir. No dam is free of cracks and all barriers must eventually break.

You must learn to harness the dark waters instead of damming them up. When the flood eventually comes, it will destroy everything you have struggled to build.

Evil must be checked, but it cannot be ignored. Instinct cannot be halted, but it can be modified, redirected. Evil must be harnessed before it overcomes. You must somehow come to terms with evil, accept it and understand it, and then, finally, overcome it.

Deep in all of us resides a demon, or so the medieval folk believed. Taken as a metaphor, it speaks volumes about the human condition. There is evil in us all.

Vampire was written in order to discover the nature of Evil. Evil most certainly does exist, but it is not as cut and dried as some would have us believe. The age-old dichotomy of good and evil, black and white, is false.

Vampire is an exploration of evil, and as such, it is unsafe. You are digging deep when you play this game. This game was not meant to be comfortable - it was designed to provoke and inspire. It was designed to make you think and feel, to dream and aspire.

Most human evil is a perversion of the territoriality, aggression, and herd programming built into our unconscious. Unharnessed aggression leads to war, and unmodified herd mentality leads to the Inquisition.

We are half angel and half demon. Our reasoning capacity and self-awareness put us on a practically divine level, yet our animal bodies and biological needs chain us to evil reality.

Modern culture provides so much security against our primal fears, against nature itself, that we are cut off from our true selves. The miraculous products of technology have eliminated many of the basic terrors of existence (like being eaten) but have done nothing and can do nothing to eliminate our inner demons. And these unchecked, unharnessed inner demons are perverting us.

Explore your own inner evil, discover that which makes you unclean, and then cleanse your sores. Become good in spite of yourself. Fight against your instincts. Take the high road.

Inspiration

What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth

- whether it existed before or not.

- John Keats,

"Woman When I Behold Thee"

Many people inspired **Vampire: The Masquerade**, both those whom I have had the privilege of knowing and those whose work I have heard, watched or read. The efforts and creativity of many created this game; no one person could ever create anything of this scale. Each of us takes the ideas and thoughts of others and passes them along. We may evolve the idea, concept or seed, but we can never claim sole ownership. What we call creativity is

actually evolution. Creativity is concealing one's sources. If one has changed an idea enough so that its source is concealed, the idea is perceived as avant-garde. Below I have listed the people and works that have inspired the creation of this game. Check them out, and nurture your imagination.

Movies

Near Dark, Vamp, The Hunger, Nosferatu (original silent movie), *Dracula* (original talkie), *Dracula* (Coppola's newest) *Lost Boys, Blue Velvet, Dangerous Liaisons, Rear Window , Casablanca, Alien, Aliens, Blade Runner, Highlander* (but not II)

Music

The Cure, U2, New Order, Morrisey, Red Hot Chili Peppers, The The, XTC, Gypsy Kings, Philip Glass, Public Enemy, Sisters of Mercy, The Clash, The Doors, Jane's Addiction, Siouxsie and the Banshees, Sting, L7, Prince, Midnight Oil, REM, Pink Floyd, Mike Oldfield, Placido Domingo, Enrico Caruso

Novels

Interview with the Vampire , The Vampire Lestat, Queen of the Damned, The Body Thief, Anne Rice; *Dracula*, Bram Stroker; *I Am Legend*, Richard Matheson; *Those Who Haunt the Night*, Barbra Hambly; *Some of Your Blood*, Theodore Sturgeon; *The Vampire Tapestry*, Suzy McKee Charnas; *The Hunger*, Whitley Streiber; *The Delicate Dependency* , Michael Talbot; *The Light at the End*, John Skipp and Craig Spector; *Lost Souls*, Poppy Z. Brite; *Sandman*, Neil Gaiman; *Time Enough for Love*, Robert Heinlein; *East of Eden*, John Steinbeck

Games

Scruples, Illuminati, Cosmic Encounter, Call of Cthulhu, Ars Magica, Runequest, Pendragon, Shadowrun, Gurps Horror, Corps

Thinkers

Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Milan Kundera, Herman Hesse, Albert Camus, P.B.Shelly, Mercea Eliade, and (of course) Vaclav Havel

September 12, 1992

Summary