

# Bloody Hearts

*Diablerie: Britain*

**By Dustin Browder**



*Gigantic daughter of the West  
We drink to thee across the flood ...  
For art thou not of British blood?*

— Lord Alfred Tennyson, "Hands All Round"



*Diablerie: the ultimate thrill ... and the ultimate crime. Who can resist its tempting lure? Who can refuse the chance for immortal vitæ? Who can survive even the first taste?*

*After all, there are even worse things than diablerie — as many Diabolists have learned too late. But now a prize beyond reckoning is available. What price will the Diabolists pay for immortal power?*

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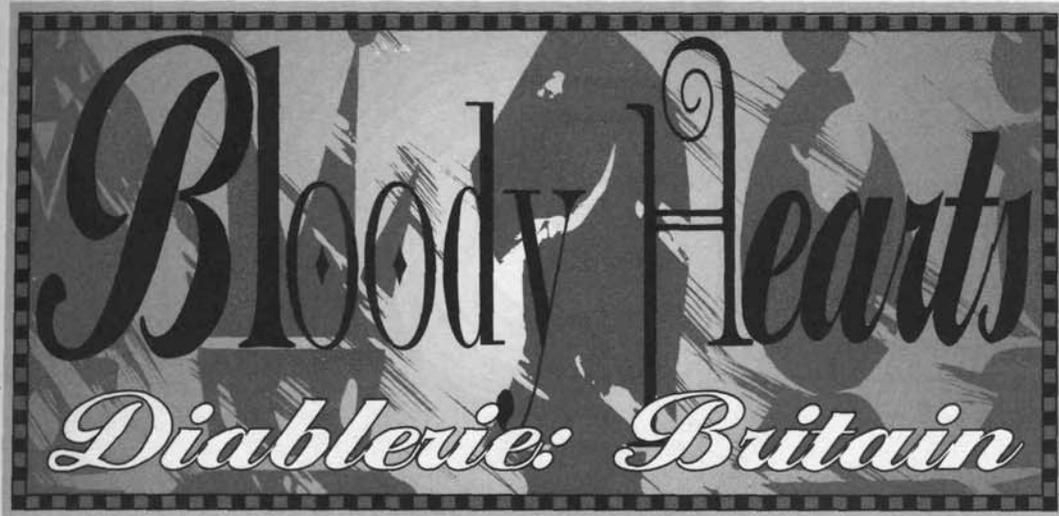
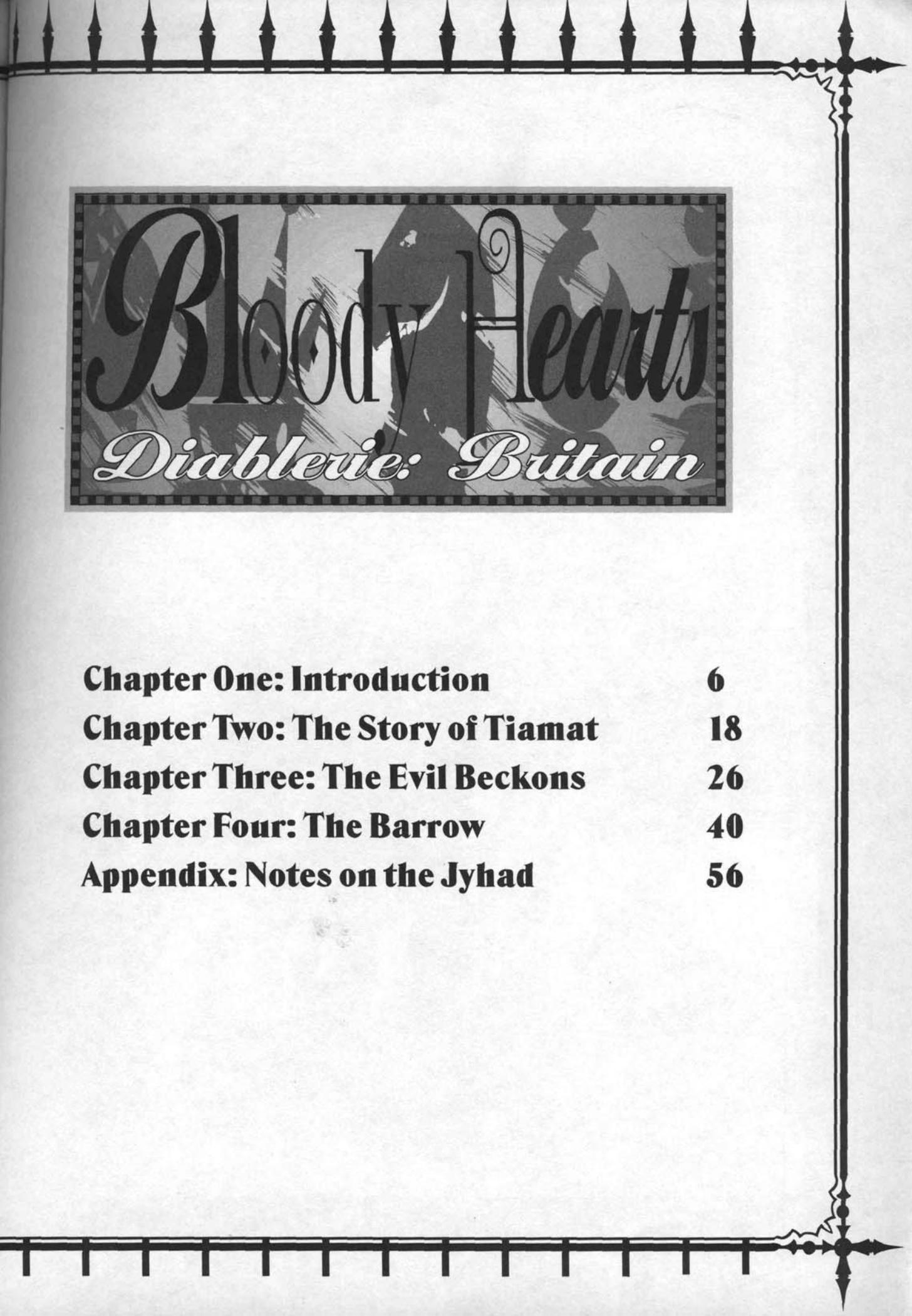
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*Diablerie: Britain*

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# Chapter One: Introduction

*Dreams of war, dreams of liars  
Dreams of dragon's fire  
And of things that will bite.*

— Metallica, "Enter Sandman"

**Bloody Hearts** is the second book in the **Diablerie** series for **Vampire: The Masquerade**. This book tells the story of Tiamat, a Ventrue Embraced prior to recorded history. Tiamat is one of the most evil beings on the face of the earth. **Bloody Hearts**, like the previous **Diablerie** book, gives characters the opportunity to discover the whereabouts of a powerful Methuselah, enter the tomb where she has slept for centuries, and drink her blood.

All power has its price, however, and the price of Tiamat's vitæ is very high indeed. Every inch of corridor, every door, every stone of Tiamat's tomb must be paid for in Diabolist blood. Built centuries ago by a tribe of savage Britons, Tiamat's barrow is a terrible place fraught with dangerous traps and powerful magic. Furthermore, Tiamat harbors an ancient and terrible secret in her breast. Her secret will only be revealed once she awakens, and then it may be too late....

## Contents

**Bloody Hearts** contains four chapters and an appendix. This introduction presents the Justicars and their deadly spies and servants, the Archons. These vampires hunt Diabolists and others who break the Camarilla's Six Traditions. The introduction also discusses these enforcers' methods and the means of catching a Diabolist. Finally, herein is Madame Guil, a powerful, young Justicar who can

appear in chronicles or who can inspire a Storyteller to build his own Justicar chronicle.

Chapter Two is the story of Tiamat. It describes the dark road she has traveled down the ages, one that has brought her to her barrow. Chapter Three suggests how to involve the characters in **Bloody Hearts** and how to get them to England so they can meet Tiamat face to face. Finally, in Chapter Four, the Diabolists creep into Tiamat's barrow and challenge her to mortal combat as only immortals can.

The appendix discusses Gehenna, when the oldest vampires will awaken. When or if this event will ever happen is a source of much conjecture among the Kindred. Dr. Mortius, a revered Tremere scholar, shares his notes on an ancient text that may reveal a fraction of the truth.

## Blood Justice

*At last! The clear trail of the man. After it, silent  
but it tracks his guilt to light. He's wounded —  
go for the fawn, my hounds, the splash of the blood,  
hunt him, rake him down.*

— Aeschylus, *Eumenides*

In a world of hunters, leopards and jackals, few try to control the undying appetite. When hunter turns on hunter, however, all are at risk. Those who dare to hunt cannibal

Kindred are the Justicars. Justicars are usually of great age and power, and their ferocity is unparalleled. Few can stand against them and fewer still would dare to try.

There are but seven Justicars and they cannot be everywhere at once. True, the Justicars have many servants. However, many more vampires seek to violate the Masquerade — or worse, slay another vampire and drink her blood. The only way for the Justicars to stem the rising tide of diablerie is to stop these crimes before they happen. The way they achieve this is through fear.

The Justicars cultivate terror. They wield it as a weapon and few vampires are more adroit in its use. The coming of a Justicar is a great event. The prince must quickly patch up all of his quarrels with the elders and prepare. The elders must hide all of their little indiscretions. Before a Justicar arrives, all those mortals in the city who know of the Kindred are often slain, thus giving the Justicar no excuse to enforce the First Tradition. Even as the elders hide their minor crimes, the anarchs prepare for war. Few anarchs have not committed some crime against the Camarilla and few are willing to cower and beg forgiveness.

Frequently, the Justicar has come for but a single vampire or single coterie, and has no interest in any other crimes. The Justicar's servants, the Archons, are often enough to handle the breaking of a Tradition. The mere threat of a Justicar's personal intervention can make even a prince mend his ways. A Justicar cannot waste her time with every little infraction of the rules; only capital crimes are worthy of her attention.

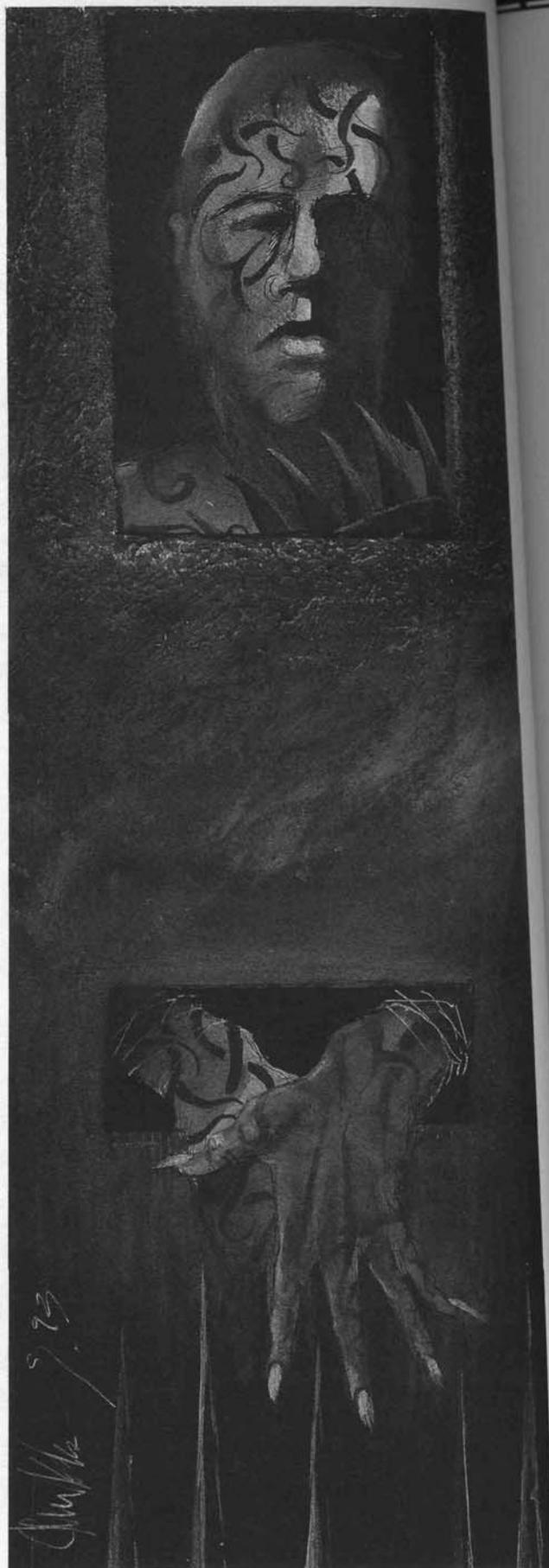
## Punishments

It is through their punishments that the Justicars spread fear. Justicar punishments are always inventive and cruel. Justicars are feared not only for their power and age, but also for their creativity and cunning. Only the strongest vampires can escape the clutches of a Justicar.

Justicars are the prototypical Mikados: the punishment must fit the crime. It is not enough for a vampire who slays another vampire to be slain in return. She must be killed in an inventive way.

For instance, a vampire found guilty of diablerie might be tied to a table and drained to a single Blood Point. Various grubs and other larvae, which have been turned into ghouls immediately prior to metamorphosis (and thus require massive amounts of food), are then inserted into the offender's orifices. The hungry vermin proceed to burrow through the offender's flesh, consuming the Diabolist just as he consumed his Kindred. The Diabolist takes nights to die and writhes in hellish agony the entire time. The remaining flesh and vermin are then burned and fed to the Justicar's hellhounds.

Punishments such as the above frighten even the killers of Kindred, and are how a Justicar maintains a reign of terror that can cover several continents.



The Justicars often unofficially compete to see who can invent the most creative punishments. Many punishments are magical in nature and often involve trapping or torturing the soul of the offender. Justicars often decorate themselves with jewels and stones, and rumor has it that each stone holds the soul of a Diabolist. While this is unlikely, it does inspire fright.

Justicars often use others to torture a Diabolist. For instance, it is rumored that a Justicar once locked a Diabolist in a tomb with his vampire lover. The two slowly went mad with want of blood and fought one another. Finally, the Diabolist slew his lover and drank her blood and spirit. When released from the charnel prison he went mad and spent hours haunting that same tomb for years, gibbering quietly to himself.

Creativity is the key. You consume another, so you will be consumed. If you eat the spirit of another, so your spirit will be eaten. If you slay the love of another, so you will slay your love. Thus, the Justicars maintain control and frighten into submission those who would break a Tradition, particularly the Sixth Tradition.

## Methods

The easiest method to detect a Diabolist is to observe her aura and search for the black, tainted lines. If such an aura is seen, a Justicar may simply pass judgment immediately. For this reason, most Diabolists do not even want to meet a Justicar or Archon face to face.

Aura Perception is not the only means by which a Diabolist can be detected. The easiest and most commonly used method is simply to ask. A city's Kindred generally know who the Diabolists are, and most Kindred fear the Justicars enough to tell them whatever they want to know. Though effective, this method carries its own dangers. Kindred often try to use a Justicar to persecute their enemies and help their allies, no matter who is guilty or innocent.

To guard against this, many Justicars have learned a Thaumaturgical ritual enabling them to sense the truth. Few other Kindred have learned this ritual, but it is invaluable to Justicars, and it has saved more than one innocent Kindred. Storytellers may wish to add this ritual to their chronicles, though it is generally recommended only for Archon chronicles.

## The Court

The Justicars often hold courts to pass sentence on suspected criminals. Each Justicar follows her own style in holding these courts, and each court has its own rules and regulations. Some Justicars hold court in an Old World style, wherein the prisoner is displayed prominently while witnesses are arraigned against him. These Justicars rarely listen to the prisoner.

Other Justicars simply gather information until they are satisfied and then carry out their sentence on the offender. At least one Justicar is said to hold courts wherein

## Cloak of Blood

Many Licks would give much for a way to conceal the black stains left on their auras by diablerie. Fortunately, there is a ritual to accomplish this effect: the Cloak of Blood. It is only a Level One ritual, easily performed by a neonate, but the ingredients and effort required make it very difficult. Before the ritual's casting, the Diabolist must fast for seven nights. During this time the Diabolist must not drink any blood, for the Diabolist's heart must be cleansed of tainted vitæ. After the seventh night, the Diabolist inscribes a rune on her chest, in her own blood (the Diabolist or another may perform the actual ritual).

Then the Diabolist must take blood from an innocent mortal. The blood must be freely given and not taken through violence, force or coercion. Deception is the usual method. This can be very difficult, for the Diabolist is extremely low on blood at this point and is likely to go into a frenzy, drinking her fill by force rather than guile.

Once the vampire drinks the blood, the black lines in the Diabolist's aura are hidden for a number of nights equal to the Blood Points taken from the innocent mortal. If any Blood Points are spent prematurely (to heal or to enhance Attributes), reduce the effect's duration by the number of Blood Points spent. If the Diabolist drinks from another source, the spell's effect is diminished. No longer are the black blotches invisible, although the number of Auspex successes required to detect the marks is still raised by one per remaining Blood Point.

Needless to say, if diablerie is committed after the ritual is cast, all benefits are lost and the black lines are more visible than ever. The use of this ritual itself often causes Humanity loss, as the deception and possible death of an innocent are always involved.

## True Sight

This ritual turns a vampire into an undead polygraph. It is often used by Justicars to catch Diabolists. Once the short ritual is performed (requiring about five minutes), the vampire's senses become amazingly enhanced, allowing her to hear the slightest quaver in a person's voice, see the minute twitching of a liar's mouth, or notice how a liar's eyes blink too much. Once this ritual is cast, a vampire may double her Perception Attribute with regard to interpersonal relationships. These additional dice may be used to negate a lying vampire's Manipulation and Subterfuge.

True Sight only detects deliberate, willful lies. If the other party believes he is telling the truth, then what he says will appear to be true. The ritual detects the state of nervousness, not whether the truth was spoken.

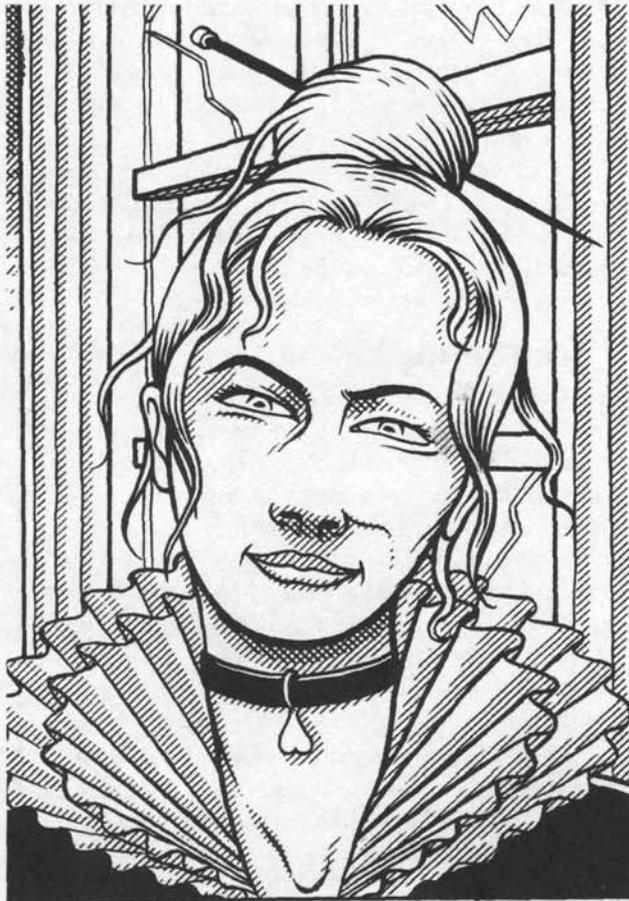
the criminal is innocent until proven guilty, though such leniency would certainly be a rarity among the Justicars. The Justicars do not have to hold a court, for they may do as they please; in many cases there is no trial.

## The Spies

In many cases, a trial will only unearth more lies. Disciplines can be fooled and witnesses can deceive. This is why the Justicars use Archons. Archons comb the world searching for criminals and especially Diabolists. Anarch gangs, which are often filled with would-be Diabolists, often have an Archon hidden among them. Indeed, entire groups of Diabolists have slain one another in an attempt to remove an Archon whose presence was never verified. More often than not, no Archon is present, but the fear that one might be present often keeps Diabolists from cooperating.

Princes go to great lengths to learn the identities of the Archon spies in their domains. While diablerie is committed often enough, the spies usually catch only those who have fallen out of favor with a prince or an elder. The prince simply steers the Archon and the Diabolist together, thus easily and legally removing her enemy.

The Justicars are aware of this weakness in their system, and are also aware that witnesses lie and that informants have their own agendas. All methods for catching a Diabolist are fraught with error and confusion. Rarely are things



as they seem. In the end, a good Justicar relies on his own intuition as much as anything else. He must be able to see into the hearts of the Kindred, past their faces and their words. Though Diabolists fear a Justicar for many things (his magic, his Archons and his great age), it is his intuition that they ought to fear most.

## Hunters of Hunters

Here is Madame Guil, a sample Justicar a Storyteller can use as he sees fit. If he plans to run an Archon chronicle, this group can be used directly. It can also serve as a peer group with which the characters can work or against which they can compete. Most Justicars have at least 15 to 20 Archons and countless informants around the world. However, as with all levels of Kindred society, there is a hierarchy. Only Madame Guil's most powerful and important Archons are presented here; all are Blood Bound to the Justicar, of course.

### Madame Guil - Justicar

She who would become Madame Guil was born to a French peasant. She grew up knowing only hunger and cold, but neither of these affected her great beauty. When she was 16, she was betrothed to a young craftsman in the next village. Though she did not know him, he was young and handsome and she believed herself in love with him. However, her young beauty did not go unnoticed and she was seized by the Baron Vollgirre, her feudal lord. He had his pleasure with her and when he was done, he Embraced her.

It was thus that Madame Guil learned to hate. Baron Vollgirre planned to keep her to share his eternal existence — at least until he tired of her. However, she had other plans. Before Madame Guil could be Blood Bound to her sire, Baron Vollgirre's castle caught fire and he perished inside. Madame Guil disappeared from the public eye and from the history of both Kindred and kine.

Two centuries later, the Revolution shook France, causing the deaths of thousands of mortals and many Kindred. Anarchs took full advantage of the chaos, rising in force to destroy their elders. Nothing like the French Revolution had ever occurred before, and the princes of Europe trembled, fearing an outbreak of this madness in their own cities. Bloody mobs filled the streets, killing any who displeased them. Those who were deemed against the people, or for aristocracy, or for the rich, or who were foreigners, became victims.

Most of the elder vampires were aristocrats, of course, and because the Revolution glorified the murder of aristocrats, Paris lost many of its elders, either at the hands of young anarchists or to roving bands of murderous mortals.

Subsequent investigations have revealed most of the factions behind the Revolution. Anarchs, Sabbat, Setites and others share much of the blame. One who has never been tied to the upheaval is Madame Guil, who was instrumental in inspiring the Revolution. She was a woman driven with hatred for the aristocrats, and she and her Kindred followers helped throw France into confusion to hide the murder of their elders.

Madame Guil was successful. The Revolution raged out of control and the aristocracy of France, both mortal and undead, was wiped out. Unfortunately, the Revolution engulfed even her. The mortals eventually ordered Madame Guil to the guillotine. However, Madame Guil had a ghoul double, a young woman whom Madame Guil had twisted and warped through blood, torture and brainwashing. This ghoul, having worked as hard as she could for her entire life to look like Madame Guil, considered it a "far, far better thing" to take her mistress' place.

Guil's other allies were not so lucky as she, and most were destroyed by one faction or another. Unable to end the turmoil wracking the country, Madame Guil was eventually forced to come to terms with the exiled Prince of Paris, Francois Villon. Together they began to rebuild France. Thus, when the Camarilla began to investigate Paris, looking for someone to blame, they found Madame Guil emulating the elders she despised. She turned the Archons onto her anarch enemies, and watched as others were destroyed for her crimes.

Thus Madame Guil escaped the hands of the Justicars. They believed her claims that she was rebuilding France and making Paris a safe hunting ground again. She gained status among the Camarilla and, without realizing it, actually became an elder.

She rapidly grew in power and status. Indeed, when Gunther, an ancient Justicar, disappeared, she seized the moment — and his position. Madame Guil gladly became both judge and executioner, a position she had held often enough during the Revolution and one she secretly relished.

Power has not been kind to Madame Guil. She initially planned to use her position to battle the elders, but has found herself fighting Diabolists and anarchists far more often. Indeed, she has been forced to seek out and punish anarchists just to squelch constant rumors that she is in their camp — a charge that could destroy her and all she seeks to accomplish.

Madame Guil has become an aristocrat among vampires, for there was little else she could do. The stress has had a century to work its poison on her. Her mind has slowly become unhinged, and she now delicately balances on the brink of madness.

It has been a long, hard battle to maintain her position and she has not always been victorious. Justicars only hold their positions for 13 years and Madame Guil has been voted out of her position by the Camarilla. Only Prince Villon's

continuing support and her own ability to destroy anarchists have kept her in power. The Jihad has many faces, however, and none know what other secret players may control this powerful pawn.

Guil hunts elders as often as she can, searching for their failings and exacting hideous and terrible punishments on those who have violated the Traditions. Her favorite criminal is an elder who has committed diablerie. The punishment for such a criminal is Final Death, often by fire, after a lengthy period of torture — a task she is more than happy to perform. Against anarchists she is more lenient, though Final Death is often involved. Anarch crimes she tries to ignore, unless there is some pressing reason why she must attend to them.

Her cruelty has become legendary, and some elders are aware that she has a definite bias against them. This makes her few friends and limits her abilities as a Justicar. Elders in a city have been known to band together against her and protect their own out of sheer principle, no matter what the crime.

**Sire:** Baron Volgirre

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Director

**Demeanor:** Bravo

**Generation:** 6th

**Embrace:** 1579

**Apparent Age:** 16

**Physical:** Strength 5, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6

**Social:** Charisma 5, Manipulation 7, Appearance 6

**Mental:** Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 5

**Talents:** Acting 6, Alertness 4, Artistic Expression 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation 7, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 4

**Skills:** Etiquette 4, Firearms 4, Melee 5, Music 3, Stealth 2

**Knowledges:** Camarilla Lore 5, Investigation 6, Law 4, Linguistics 6, Occult 3, Politics 5, Sabbat Lore 2

**Disciplines:** Auspex 6, Celerity 5, Fortitude 3, Potence 3, Presence 6, Protean 2, Serpents 3, Thaumaturgy 3

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Contacts 7, Herd 6, Influence 6, Resources 6, Retainers 7, Status 7

**Virtues:** Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 2

**Willpower:** 8

**Image:** Though Madame Guil looks like a young girl, fresh as a spring flower, there is something about her that makes her seem ferocious. She has a way of looking at people as though they are victims. She favors light, flowing dresses that make her seem waif-like — and allow her free movement in combat. She also has connections to the greatest fashion houses in France, however, and no one looks better than she at a formal affair.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Smile cruelly. Make everyone afraid of you. Show no mercy to anyone. The concept of mercy does not exist for you. You have learned over the years that battle is the only way to get what you want, and you have the heart of a soldier. Everyone is the enemy.

## Michael Unther - The Perfectionist

Head of a Prussian regiment, Colonel Unther always demanded absolute perfection from his soldiers. In the late 18th century, the country of Prussia had the most rigorous and cruel military in Europe, with severe punishments for the slightest infractions. The colonel was not a forgiving man.

Unther was present on May 23, 1802, when Prussia signed one of its short-lived peace treaties with Napoleon. At one of the many functions that night, he met Madame Guil, then gathering support for what she feared would be a war with the Camarilla. By that time he was nearly 50 years old, but he had nerves of steel and a stance like forged iron. She teased him, calling him the "Metal-Man," and invited him up to her chambers.

Colonel Unther would never have accepted such a proposal, but there was something about Madame Guil that was impossible to refuse. She Embraced him that night, and he became one of her minions. Unther has never quite forgiven his mistress for the improprieties of that night. He still struggles between his anger and his Blood Bond.

For centuries he has worked with her, first as a bodyguard against would-be assassins and then later as her Archon when she became a Justicar. He has made connections throughout the sect, and his reputation is one of his most valuable assets.

Unther is a master of detecting deceit and inventing cruel punishments. He hungers for power and though there is no question of his loyalty, it is clear that he hopes one night to become a Justicar himself. Perhaps when his mistress is dead, he might inherit her position. His cruelty is almost the equal of Madame Guil's own and he is feared by Diabolists everywhere.

**Sire:** Madame Guil

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Judge

**Demeanor:** Perfectionist

**Generation:** 7th

**Embrace:** 1802

**Apparent Age:** 45

**Physical:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Intimidation 5, Leadership 6, Sense Deception 5

**Skills:** Etiquette 4, Firearms 5, Melee 4, Music 2

**Knowledges:** Camarilla Lore 4, Investigation 5, Military Science 4, Politics 4, Sabbat Lore 1

**Disciplines:** Auspex 3, Celerity 5, Dominate 4, Fortitude 4, Potence 2, Presence 4

**Backgrounds:** Allies 1, Contacts 6, Herd 2, Influence 4, Mentor 5, Resources 4, Retainers 2, Status 4

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self-Control 5, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 3

**Willpower:** 9

**Notes:** Unther does not manifest the Toreador weakness in the same way that most of his clanmates do. Unther has little use for beauty *per se*, but can become overwhelmed by absolute, perfect order or precision. He may well turn up his nose at a lovely painting, only to weep bloody tears at the sight of a perfectly drilled military parade.

**Image:** Unther is a stern, austere, middle-aged man with whitening hair and a thick, bristly mustache. He often wears archaic clothing. He thinks it is the "proper" clothing for all civilized people.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You have the appearance of someone's uncle, but underneath the facade lurks a killer. Before you were Embraced you were a commander in one of the cruelest armies in the world. Being an Archon is little different. You especially hate anarchs as they offend your sense of tradition and propriety.



## Hafsa - The Watcher

In order to train their assassins, the Assamites sometimes take their future members just after they are born, raising and training them in the clan fortress until they are ready for the Embrace. Once done, the Assamite clan has a new and powerful member, nearly unstoppable and loyal until the Final Death.

Or so the clan leaders hope. Hafsa was powerful, but she was not loyal. The quiet fortress of the undead assassins is no place for a little girl to grow up. Hafsa had no friends except for her ancient tutors, and she had no games but exercise. She was not used as a vessel, as it was forbidden to endanger her health so, but she saw many others who were brought to the fortress for that purpose.

As Hafsa grew older, she was denied the company of other boys or girls, and she was taught nothing but physical skills: fighting, hunting, hiding and anything else that would help her slay others. When she was finally Embraced, she learned what it was to hate. She had always loved spending time in the fortress during the day, when it was so quiet and nobody was about. Then she would sneak around, avoiding the few guards and finding quiet hiding places among the nooks and crannies of the castle. From here she could watch the sunbeams make their weary way across the old, tired stones until the sun finally winked below the horizon.

Now Hafsa could never again enjoy the days. The sun burned her like a fire on those rare days she could stay awake. All her time was spent learning the art of killing and the science of murder. She grew to hate the clan and once she had learned enough, she left it. Hafsa fled nearly 50 years after she arrived, though she looked no older than 22.

Once Hafsa was gone, she was gone for good. The Assamites searched for her, but she flew far and fast. Hafsa, having been taught much about the Kindred world, wished to join a Justicar and serve the Kindred world with her skills by uncovering those who, like her Assamite masters, are killers.

Little did she realize how difficult it was to become an Archon. She found Madame Guil but the Justicar would have nothing to do with her. So Hafsa went on a campaign to convince Madame Guil of her usefulness. After years of following and watching Madame Guil, she finally presented Guil with complete documentation of where the Justicar had been and whom she had been with every night for the last few years. Hafsa became an Archon.

Hafsa's espionage work is now of a different sort. She travels across Europe looking for Diabolists and those who would break the Six Traditions. She is so good at her job that she can easily watch over several cities at once. She has an extensive information network and little escapes her notice. She never kills; another Archon is always called in to do the dirty work.



To this day, Madame Guil is still suspicious of Hafsa. She has heard rumors that there is a spy among her Archons and Hafsa is her prime suspect. She has also heard rumors of an ancient Assamite who is planting his own pawns in positions of power around the world, for some unspoken purpose.

**Sire:** Anji  
**Clan:** Assamite  
**Nature:** Child  
**Demeanor:** Fanatic  
**Generation:** 8th  
**Embrace:** 1934  
**Apparent Age:** 22  
**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 4  
**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2  
**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3  
**Talents:** Acting 5, Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Streetwise 4  
**Skills:** Drive 3, Firearms 5, Melee 5, Stealth 5, Survival 2  
**Knowledges:** Chemistry 4, Computer 1, Investigation 4, Politics 2  
**Disciplines:** Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Obfuscate 4, Quietus 5  
**Backgrounds:** Contacts 5, Resources 1  
**Virtues:** Conscience 4, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 8

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Hafsa is thin and wiry, with scraggly black hair. She is not a pretty girl, but she has a certain charm and innocence about her. She loves beautiful clothes, having only had the most spartan of outfits in the fortress. She wears many different kinds of clothes, but her combinations rarely match, for she still has little understanding of fashion.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Be very honest. You are a crusader. You believe in good and evil and you believe that you are good. You believe that Madame Guil is good. You know that others lie, but you can punish them.

## Masdela - The Spy

When Kindred go to war, they are accompanied by a bevy of new Kindred, all Embraced as cannon fodder. Few of these neonates survive. Masdela, a young Italian smith, was Embraced for such a purpose.

Masdela was Embraced purely for his strength. Before he had time to discover what it was to be a vampire, he was forced into battle with others of his kind. Elonzo, his lord and sire, was defeated and Masdela was captured while defending Elonzo's retreat.



After a brief period of torture, Masdela was sealed inside a cell in his enemies' dungeon and left to rot. He lasted for a while on rats and other rodents, but soon he entered torpor. He did not awaken until Elonzo rescued him nearly 300 years later.

Elonzo knew of his childe's heroism in that last battle and he also knew of his capture, but the Kindred are ancient and their plans can take years to come to fruition. Elonzo defeated his undead rival in the 19th century. It was then that he gained access to the castle in which Masdela was entombed.

Elonzo took advantage of his childe's gratitude and anonymity, setting him to work right away as a spy and an informant.

Currently, Masdela is spying on Madame Guil. She uses him as muscle when she needs a strong arm. He reports almost everything to Elonzo and Madame Guil suspects nothing. Madame Guil keeps him around because of his bravery, fighting abilities and apparent dedication, as well as his odd ability to discover needed information. In fact, Elonzo feeds Masdela information to keep Masdela valuable to Madame Guil. If left to his own devices, Masdela would never maintain his position.

**Sire:** Elonzo

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Praise-Seeker

**Demeanor:** Cavalier

**Generation:** 7th

**Embrace:** 1543

**Apparent Age:** Early 30s

**Physical:** Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Acting 2, Athletics 2, Brawl 5, Intimidation 3

**Skills:** Animal Ken 2, Blacksmithing 3, Firearms 1, Melee 3

**Knowledges:** Metallurgy 1, Politics 1

**Disciplines:** Auspex 1, Celerity 1, Fortitude 1, Potence 4, Presence 1

**Backgrounds:** Mentor 6, Resources 2

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 6

**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Masdela was a strong young man when he was Embraced. He is very handsome, with dark hair and dark skin to complement his fine Italian features.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You do your best to be loyal to Elonzo, and that is your only purpose in the world. The Embrace has a tendency to consume mortals, leaving them as nothing but dry husks of their former selves. This has happened to you. You have not been an awakened vampire long enough to be immune to this effect, and all your energies are focused on your lord. When with those who

believe you loyal to Madame Guil, simply transfer all of that loyalty to her name, temporarily forgetting your other allegiance.

## Pierre Gedou - The Killer

Pierre was a poor agricultural worker, but he had a reasonably warm and clean home and a happy, young family. All this changed when he was 22. Winter was always the worst time of year for small villages, and that year had already seen widespread famine. Both his wife and son died of fever. Pierre knew that cold and hunger had weakened them. For that, he blamed himself. Pierre knew he was supposed to be the provider for the family and when they died, he had failed them. Even worse, he felt as though he had murdered them through his own inability to find work.

On his way to take his wife and small child to the churchyard, he was met on the road by Duke Manette, who according to feudal law owned the manor, the entire village and all the inhabitants. The duke's carriage crowded Pierre's broken-down cart, and Pierre marveled at the carriage's beauty.

There was only enough room for one carriage on the road, and the coachman ordered Pierre to pull to the side. There was no room and Pierre was forced to step down from his cart and coax his nag to back up, all in freezing weather. By the time he had managed to find a place to pull off, his feet, clad in the remnants of what had once been shoes, had lost all feeling.

The funerals were small pauper burials where the bodies were wrapped in linen and thrown into a mass grave. Pierre covered his loved ones with plenty of lye to keep them from stinking until the grave had accumulated enough corpses to cover them. By the time Pierre had thrown his wife and son into the pit, his feet had frostbite. By the time Pierre had four toes amputated, he had shifted all his hatred to Duke Manette.

Pierre gathered his remaining possessions and made his way to Paris, hoping for work. The poverty of the city far exceeded that of his native village, and his hatred for the nobility grew to a fevered pitch as he watched the nobles abuse the peasants on a daily basis. Soon he was little better than a beggar, but then the Revolution came and Pierre had a purpose. He quickly joined the ranks of the Federalists and became a ferocious killer.

Though he was not noteworthy in any of the early battles of the Revolution, he hired on as an executioner and took at least 20 heads a day. As the bloodbath continued, he drew the attention of Madame Guil, who made him a ghoul. She used him as a spy and a tool to watch others. He would watch the faces of the crowd when he used the guillotine and see who was joyful and who was grieving. It was a crime to grieve for a traitor; in this way Madame Guil uncovered and prosecuted her enemies.



Pierre Gedou has remained a ghoul through the centuries, perfecting the art of murder and death. He is known as Madame Guil's hatchet-man. When there is an especially dirty job to do, he is called. Rumor has it that he will bury vampires alive after he has drained all of their blood, leaving them to rot and go mad.

**Clan:** Ghoul

**Nature:** Survivor

**Demeanor:** Deviant

**Apparent Age:** Late 20s

**Physical:** Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Brawl 5, Dodge 3, Intimidation 4, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Firearms 4, Melee 5, Stealth 4

**Knowledges:** Politics 2

**Disciplines:** Celerity 1, Potence 1, Fortitude 1

**Backgrounds:** Mentor 5, Resources 2, Status 1

**Virtues:** Conscience 1, Self-Control 1, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 2

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** A short, squat little man, Pierre resembles nothing more than a toad. His clothes are always unkempt

and his hair is always a mess. His fingernails are never cut and they are almost always caked with blood. He leaves his hands bloody for as long as possible to get this effect. He is still missing his toes and he sometimes does not wear shoes, showing off this gruesome deformity.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are a killer. Nothing pleases you more than watching others die by your hands. Keep your eyes constantly shifting and moving, for you don't trust anyone. You are uncomfortable with conversation because you don't know what to say.



## The Justicar Chronicle

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There are many advantages to running a chronicle based on a Justicar and his activities. The players could play the Justicar's Archons, searching cities all over the world for Diabolists and other undead criminals. This provides more mobility than is normal for a **Vampire** chronicle. It also lets a Storyteller and her troupe play vampires with a solid group goal and, possibly, noble intentions.

The Storyteller can control the Justicar and thus exercise a good deal of control over the chronicle, guiding it in interesting directions. As Archons, the characters will meet the most vicious and terrible of all Kindred. While Archons have a great deal of power because they are backed by the Justicar, they will inevitably face powerful, desperate Cainites while the Justicar is very far away. A good poker face and strong negotiation skills will be as useful as physical persuasion.

The Traditions are the only written rules of Kindred society. There are no other laws or regulations. They are very important and none wish to be caught breaking them. Archons face only the most desperate of Kindred — those who have been discovered following the darkest roads in the

world of the undead. They are often powerful (or at least power-hungry) and always dangerous. There is no safe way to deal with them and no method designed to handle them. The Archon is on his own against the predators of predators, with the threat of the Justicar's wrath as his only weapon.

Intrigue will be at least as common as violence, for many prominent vampires violate the Traditions. Guilt and innocence are often less important than are the politics of the situation. Characters should not be surprised when their investigations turn up a criminal, only to see him go free in some deal they cannot hope to understand — yet.

### Setting It Up

First the Storyteller needs to create a Justicar on whom to base the chronicle (see *Madame Guil*, above). There are many ways to do this, but it is often wise to make the Justicar a terrible and frightening Cainite. The Justicar is someone on whom the characters do not want to call for help too frequently. If they call him unnecessarily, they will suffer. A Justicar has a reputation to maintain and cannot afford mercy when he is called to a crisis situation. When the Justicar arrives, somebody dies.



A Justicar chronicle can prove challenging in many ways. The Storyteller will have to create more settings, for each evening's play could be set in a different city. Diablerie and violations of the Traditions exist everywhere — St. Petersburg, Madrid, Cairo, Bogota or San Francisco. While this is more work, it provides great variety. The Archons can discover worldwide plots and connections between events across the globe.

The Archons must be Blood Bound to their Justicar, but they also spend a great deal of time away from him, so the ties can weaken. Blood Bonds also create dramatic tension, as the characters must determine what is really in their Regnant's best interests, as well as weighing it against their own.



# Chapter Two: The Story of Tiamat

*I'm the evil in the Bible,  
go to church but never pray  
I'm a sister with a habit,  
a preacher never saved.*

— Lynch Mob, "No Good"

She crouched in the darkness, waiting for them to finish. She had gained control of her body for several months, and for several precious months "it" had been allowed no power. *Release me! Stop! Anything you like; let me out!* She laughed to herself — a cruel, wicked laugh — to hear it cry out in terror so. Terror. She knew about terror; indeed, she knew more than she had ever thought possible.

It had taken her those precious months of freedom to make her way through an empire in ruins to this tiny island called Britain. Here she was safe from those who followed and she could at last sleep. Sleep! She had been denied sleep for 2,000 years, day or night. *Sleep now; I would let you sleep. Rest, you need rest.* Not yet; a few hours more and it will be done.

The Britons had been frightened of this bold Roman matron, especially when she demanded that they dig a barrow for her. They did as she requested, however, and she had only been forced to break a few bones to force their cooperation. *Please, not this, not the unending sleep, not oblivion.* Yes, oblivion. That is what she sought, though she had not known this until it had spoken just then.

Oblivion, where evil could sleep forever undisturbed. The barrow was almost finished, the traps were laid and all the Britons needed now was a body to place inside. She

walked toward the barrow. *No, let me go and you can live. I will return from where you called me.*

There was only one thing left to do. She would soon disappear from the memory of mortals, but another vampire might come looking for her, even in this faraway place. Then the Britons might tell where she was sleeping or how the traps were laid. One last killing, this time no more than a small tribe. Surely she could manage that before sunrise, before she slept.

## The Tale

The true story of Tiamat, the one that will never be told, is a tragic one. It is a tale that Tiamat herself has yearned to tell for thousands of years. She was known among the Kindred as a great hunter, a vampire of terrible strength, wickedness and lust for power. She was a killer incarnate, one who could kill with a look or a word and who often did. She vanished in the great flames of the Jyhad she had worked so hard to fuel.

Tiamat's evil was legendary and that is what Kindred remember of her. Like so much legend, it is rife with falsehood. This is her story, as she would have told it had she been given a chance.

## The Beginning

Tiamat was born in prehistoric Ur, then a great city in Sumer, though today it would be considered no more than a town. Her father named her Lantla and, because he already had three daughters, got rid of her at the first opportunity. When a woman of power came seeking the girl, Lantla's father turned her over with no regrets. Lantla was sent to live with a woman who was both a witch and a doctor. The witch chose Lantla because she saw power in the young girl and, foolishly, she told Lantla so.

Lantla began to covet the power her mistress promised. The foolish witch, however, could not draw that power out, nor did she have any spells that required the use of any real power. Thus Lantla grew frustrated. The witch set her to menial tasks as befit her station, but Lantla was nettled and rebelled. When in the market, she would sidle up to wealthy-looking men and attempt to gain their attention, hoping to marry out of her station and gain access to money and comfort.

Wealthy men did not come to the market; they sent their slaves instead. Lantla, in her ignorance of such things, wasted much of her time on them, mistaking them in their clothing for men of power. The more she dawdled in the market, the more angry the witch grew with her and the more Lantla was beaten. The beatings got worse and she could no longer hope to gain attention in the market with large bruises on her face. So she would wrap a cloth around her head and creep in and out by back alleys.

The witch became more and more cruel as she grew older and more senile. One day the beating was so bad that Lantla lay on the floor, nearly dead. When she awoke, not knowing where she was, the old witch advanced upon her again with a hatchet. Lantla, suddenly terrified, shouted out and her power, released by fear and hatred, became real. An ancient word of magic sprang to Lantla's lips. With a sudden scream, the witch burst into flames and burned from the inside out.

Lantla was called a murderer and worse. She would have been banished or killed had it not been for a certain priest called Arakur. The man was almost a god and was greatly feared and respected. He had many wives and was one of the few men who was allowed such luxuries. Arakur was rumored to live in the great ziggurat that towered over the city. His brides supposedly lived there too, for they were never seen after he had taken them away.

In fact, Arakur was a fourth-generation vampire. His brides were his vessels, sometimes killed outright and sometimes slain over a period of many nights. He took Lantla as a wife and his word was law. Murder was forgotten and she was whisked into the temple, gone forever in the minds of the people.

Arakur had many plans for Lantla, and slaying her was not among them. The question of how she could call upon a powerful word of magic known only to a few aroused



Arakur's curiosity. More importantly, he wished her to be his childe and his servant in times of crisis. On her wedding night, Lantla was Embraced and became immortal.

Lantla was horrified by her new existence and her new dietary requirements. She would not drink from the blood of others and several times tried to throw herself into the sunlight. Arakur would not allow it and he kept her alive, often forcing her to drink his own blood. Quickly, within the course of a few nights, she grew to accept her condition and she served Arakur well, learning much about magic and its uses. Thus, Lantla got her wish: to marry a rich man and escape her poor life.

## The Coming of the Evil

One of the earliest warlords of Western civilization was Urlon of Uruk. Like many great figures of those earlier times, he was a vampire. He came to Ur to conquer. Naturally, Arakur and Lantla resisted, but Urlon had learned the power of mortal flesh and he had more troops than they did. When it became certain that Ur would fall, Arakur fell into despair and retreated into his haven to await the end.

Lantla, however, did not despair. She hated Urlon as a bully (which she understood too well) and the rage she had felt toward her old witch mistress was refocused upon Urlon. If the city could but hold out a week or two longer, Lantla thought she could do something. She studied her tablets and finally she called upon a great demon to aid her in battle. The demon was called Drakonskyr and it possessed her body, giving her great strength and power.

Drakonskyr offered to aid her still further by helping her to forge a magical weapon. This weapon, promised the demon, would allow her to kill not only the mortal followers of Urlon, but Urlon himself. Lantla readily agreed, not realizing the consequences. When Urlon's men finally broke through the outer walls, she was ready.

Naturally, Urlon hoped to slay Arakur. That was why he had come to Ur with an army of mortals. Urlon was one of the first warriors of the Jyhad, and this would be one of its earliest battles. When Urlon came to the ziggurat, he found Arakur already dead. Lantla stood over her sire, her teeth stained with his blood. Drakonskyr had taken control of Lantla and decided that they needed more power to defeat Urlon.

Urlon was no match for the two-who-were-one, especially after Lantla had consumed the soul of Arakur. Drakonskyr's sword, which it had named the Sword of Nul, slew Urlon with one blow.

Then, using Lantla's body, Drakonskyr went on a killing spree through the city, slaying Urlon's followers and the people of Ur indiscriminately. When the night had ended, Lantla found herself at the edge of the Tigris, her clothes soaked in blood. Drakonskyr laughed in her mind. Now the demon sought to leave her body. Thus it would be free on the earth to do anything it pleased, and its sentience would be uninhibited by a physical shape. Close proximity

to Drakonskyr had taught Lantla much. She realized that she allowed the demon to escape her body, she would have loosed a terrible evil upon the earth.

When Drakonskyr tried to escape, Lantla held it fast with her spirit and her magical power, binding it inside her. The demon was shocked and terrified that it could not escape. In that first moment of confusion, Lantla regained control of her body. She then flung the Sword of Nul into the Tigris. It resurfaced many times down the centuries, in many places, and was called many things, but it was never again seen by Drakonskyr.

With the weapon gone, Drakonskyr found its power greatly diminished. It could not escape from Lantla, though it could still control her body. The demon forced Lantla to stand on the shore in the rays of the sun as it rose over the river. Lantla had never known such pain. Still, she held onto Drakonskyr. Finally, afraid of what might happen to it should Lantla die, Drakonskyr relented.

Together they crawled back to the city. Lantla held their spirits so close together that it seemed there would be no escape, even in death. Wherever Lantla went, Drakonskyr feared it must follow, and it still hoped to remain on this plane.

## The Unending Battle

The following night Drakonskyr went on another killing spree through the city, enjoying itself but horrifying Lantla, as her hand was used to inflict every atrocity it committed. Drakonskyr did this in an attempt to force Lantla to release it. With every murder and act of torture, the demon told her that all she had to do was let it go and she would never again have to kill.

Lantla knew that even if she did not have to see it, Drakonskyr's evil would be much greater without a physical form to slow it down. She held on even as a drowning man holds his last breath. Each second was torture and each second brought the possibility of failure. Still, she learned to fight the demon, and most nights were spent locked in psychic combat as the two battled for control of her body. On those occasions when Drakonskyr seized control of the body, it terrorized the city. Otherwise they battled over every action and agreed on almost nothing.

Drakonskyr gradually ceased torturing mere individuals, instead preferring acts of mass carnage. The demon arranged the fall of Ur to the Elamites to hurt Lantla and convince her to let it go. Even with her city in flames and her people slain, however, Lantla held Drakonskyr, though she could do little to stop the destruction.

Lantla/Drakonskyr joined the Babylonians when they came to the city years later, and the Babylonians worshipped Drakonskyr as a goddess. The Babylonians already had a goddess of chaos, darkness and evil, and Drakonskyr capitalized upon this by claiming that Lantla was Tiamat, the goddess of the underworld and of the primordial chaos on which the world was built.

Tiamat became her new name. She was now known even among the undead as a terrible creature capable of anything. Under the demon's guidance, she built gardens of blood where fresh victims were brought to be slowly drained over long periods. Some of them lingered for many nights; their soft, helpless moans drove Lantla to the brink of madness.

Indeed, it was a wonder she remained sane, for she never went completely mad. Some vestige of reason still lurked in her mind, tucked away safely in a corner where Drakonskyr couldn't get at it. She called herself only Tiamat in her mind; Lantla, the name of her youth, was long forgotten. When thinking of Drakonskyr she thought only of "it." She would sometimes imagine that it was she who was committing these terrible acts, not Drakonskyr.

Drakonskyr despaired when it saw how deranged Tiamat had become. It realized that it could never get her to let it go now. Tiamat was not bothered by the demon's crimes. Drakonskyr could use her hands to slay hundreds of children and she would not even twitch. It realized that there was no way out of her body, for she was not going to allow it.

Being an adaptable creature, Drakonskyr decided that it wanted to hurt mankind as a whole, not just harm a few individuals. So it began to search for ways to cause pain on a massive scale.

By 900 B.C., Mesopotamia was controlled by the Assyrians, a draconian military state. Drakonskyr did what it could to encourage the Assyrians' military nature. Under Drakonskyr's aegis, the Assyrians conquered many lands, bringing back slaves from pillaged kingdoms. The Jyhad continued and Drakonskyr participated, using Tiamat to incite further anarchy and hatred among vampires and thus make their wars even more violent and destructive.

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell in 612 B.C. and Assyria fell into chaos with it. Drakonskyr loved this time, for it could do as it pleased — kill, maim and cripple without restraint. Indeed, the humans' despair over their lost kingdom intensified their personal pain. Drakonskyr fed well upon their anguish.

When the Persians came, Tiamat joined the many other vampires manipulating events behind the scenes, and their conspiracies continued against a backdrop of unprecedented military expansion. What was left of Lantla died; now there was only Tiamat.

Like other empires before them, the Persians came and went. Drakonskyr realized, when the Persians lost to the Greeks, that there were other empires to control. There were other places where ordinary people lived out their lives in ordinary ways, safe and happy. Drakonskyr could not allow this to continue, so Tiamat moved west to the Greek cities.

The undead factions were too numerous for Drakonskyr to have much impact. The Greek city-states were filled with warring Kindred. No matter how many leaders Tiamat

married and tried to control, none could gain enough power over a single city-state, let alone the Greek people, for Drakonskyr to cause suffering on any scale.

When Alexander the Great came, however, Drakonskyr was there, hoping to turn the unification to its advantage. When Macedonia was born, Drakonskyr began to look for ways to turn the realm's entire bureaucracy to evil and hatred. When Alexander died, anarchy again descended. Though Drakonskyr had not been able to turn all of the Macedonian government to evil, it realized the virtue of having a great leader and then killing that great leader — anarchy was sure to follow.

For a while Drakonskyr returned to its petty ways of torture and murder, hunting village families in the night. It took great joy in hunting a single family, including cousins, nieces and nephews, and slaying its members over a period of a month or more until the entire family was slain and gone from the world.

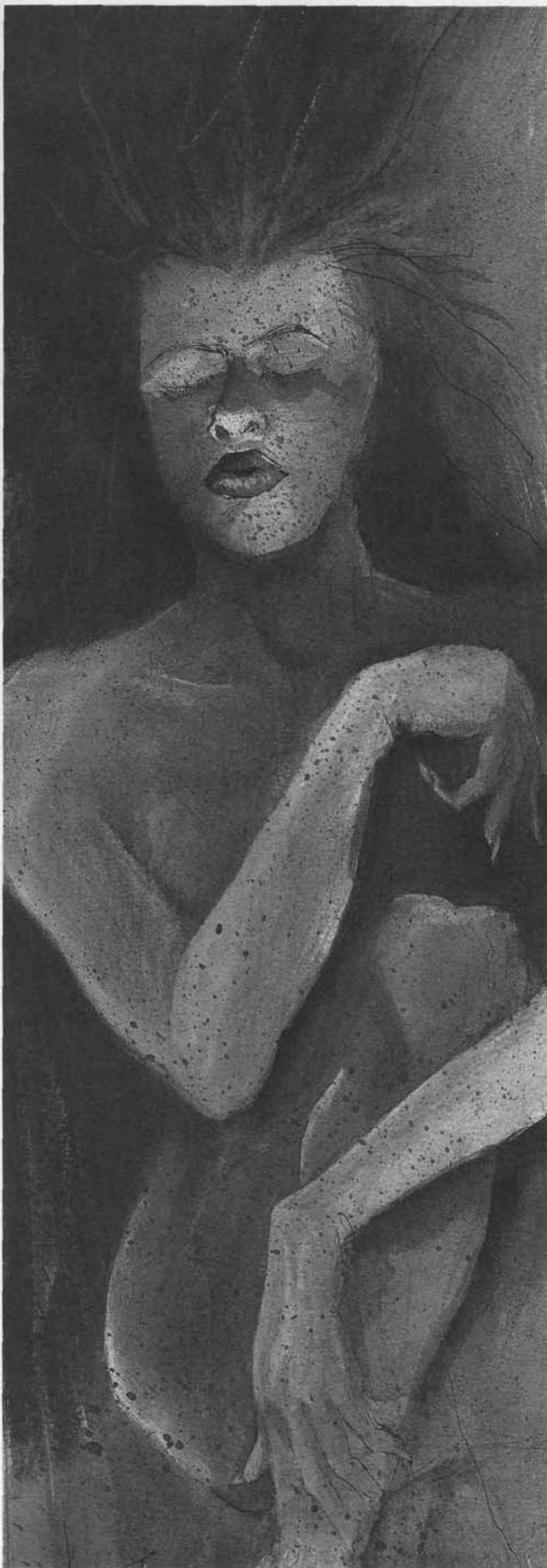
## The Horror of Rome

Then, around 220 B.C., Romans began to patrol the Macedonian coast for pirates. Drakonskyr realized that there was a wide world full of fresh, green pastures to be defiled. Thus Tiamat emigrated to Italy. All this time she who had once been Lantla traveled, a passenger in her own body. Each night was a battle to keep Drakonskyr inside her body, though she no longer fully remembered why she did it.

Drakonskyr continually pressed her mind, keeping her from reason, for she threatened to return to sanity on occasion. Drakonskyr hoped that if she went insane enough, she would no longer see a purpose in holding onto its spirit and thus free it. Tiamat's position in Kindred and mortal society no longer allowed the demon to take Tiamat on wanton killing sprees; such acts would be dangerous and suicidal. Drakonskyr had no desire to discover what would happen to it if Tiamat died and their spirits were still intertwined.

During all of this time, Tiamat did not sleep. She had never slept all the years the demon had been with her. Even when the sun was high in the sky and her instincts tried to drag her down to slumber, she would remain awake, for Drakonskyr would not let her sleep. In sleep she found peace, and Drakonskyr did not want her to find peace; better that she know constant terror and want to rid herself of it.

Drakonskyr hoped to destroy the young Roman Republic through war. The demon slowly manipulated the Romans, already a warlike people. Other vampires helped, some knowingly and others unaware of what they did and for whose purpose. The Romans, however, were stronger than Drakonskyr had known. They were victorious in all their battles. After the destruction of Carthage, Drakonskyr realized its intervention had only strengthened these people and not destroyed them as it had wished.



Now the Republic was strong on its borders, but it slowly weakened on the inside. The Roman Senate proved unable to manage the growing empire. Civil war followed civil war and through it all Drakonskyr chuckled. Tiamat grew number still, hardly noticing what went on outside her own body. When Caesar came to power, guided by the vampires who hoped to manipulate him further, Drakonskyr helped arrange his murder, hoping to throw all of Rome into civil war.

Augustus, however, destroyed the demon's hopes. Augustus was no fool, and he did not flaunt his power in front of the Senate. Instead, he always asked the senators' permission, though their assent was a foregone conclusion. The empire strengthened and Drakonskyr's anger grew. In order to manipulate Rome further, Drakonskyr had Tiamat, in the guise of Livia (a Roman matron whom Tiamat had slain and replaced via *Obfuscate*), marry Augustus.

Drakonskyr's power allowed Tiamat to remain in the sun for limited periods, though it still burned her body and she was often pale where her skin peeled away. Drakonskyr began to manipulate the royal family. Slowly the Julio-Claudians began to degenerate until finally, during the reign of Caligula, it appeared that the entire Roman Empire might collapse.

Caligula's excesses were infamous and his sanity suspect. As soon as it was evident that he would follow Tiberius as emperor, Drakonskyr had Tiamat fake her own death and retire to watch the destruction — and to avoid the anger of the many Cainites who did not appreciate Tiamat's interference in Kindred and kine politics.

The Roman Empire persisted and Drakonskyr grew impatient for the end to come. Nero became emperor after Claudius, who had followed Caligula. Nero was the last of the Julio-Claudians and, despite the terrible intra-Kindred war that ended with the great fire of Rome (which many erroneously blamed on Nero), the Empire did not collapse. Drakonskyr pushed and prodded where it could to speed the end, but other vampires were now watching for Tiamat and no moves were safe.

The demon's frustrations grew until, centuries later, the barbarians came and Rome was sacked several times. Finally, in A.D. 476, Rome fell for the final time and Drakonskyr cheered what appeared to be the fall of humanity. Drakonskyr was certain that the resulting carnage would destroy humanity as a species. While it reveled in its apparent victory, Tiamat awoke. Drakonskyr no longer pressed upon her mind and her reason slowly returned. She realized that she must destroy Drakonskyr as an act of vengeance for humanity.

She could see no way to do it, however — and she was so very tired. After holding the spirit of a demon inside her for more than 2,000 years, through countless generations and across several empires, Tiamat no longer had any

strength left. Soon Drakonskyr would gain strength from the human suffering it had caused and now, so weak and tired, Tiamat would no longer be able to hold it.

Fear of the impending crisis filled Tiamat with horror, which in turn gave her the strength to resist. For the first time since she had thrown the Sword of Nul into the Tigris, Tiamat took control of her body from Drakonskyr and made the demon a prisoner. Surprised by her sudden power, Drakonskyr lost all command of its borrowed body. Though it raged in her mind, it could do nothing to stop her.

Tiamat left the ruins of Rome and journeyed north through the Alps and into Germany. Here Drakonskyr almost regained control as Tiamat grew tired from the journey. Lupines hunted her and the German tribes did not welcome strangers from Rome. Bloody and beaten, she found her way to Gaul and then to the English Channel. Here she befriended a fishing tribe. After feeding well from them and their children, she stole a boat and crossed the channel.

She was only halfway across when the sun rose. She was forced to capsize the boat and hide under it to avoid the harsh rays of sunlight. Drakonskyr no longer protected her from the sun; it was willing to take its chances with her death. After the sun set, Tiamat resumed her journey and arrived on the shores of Britain.



The legions had long ago evacuated Britain to defend Italy. The island was in chaos without Roman law and order, on which its inhabitants had depended for the last 400 years. Tiamat found it very easy to find blood here, and she slew many as she readied herself for the final leg of her journey. She passed from Londinium to the north and, after crossing Hadrian's Wall, left the civilized world far behind.

When she had traveled as far north as she could, she found a small tribe. After slaying their chief and abusing the men of the community, she demanded that they build for her a great barrow — a tomb where the dead could rest. She instructed them on how to build many traps and tricks to protect the barrow from intruders. She had brought Roman gold with her to give them incentive and to allow them to gather materials very quickly.

Once the barrow was complete, she attacked the tribe and killed every member down to the smallest child, drinking deeply of the women's blood to prepare herself for the sleep. There was no crime too great that was not justified by her quest to put Drakonskyr to sleep forever. After looking upon the world for the final time, she entered her tomb and sealed the door behind herself. She and the demon that she carried within her breast were locked away forever — or so she hoped.

**Sire:** Arakur

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Nature:** Survivor

**Demeanor:** Bravo

**Generation:** 4th

**Embrace:** Before 3,000 B.C.

**Apparent Age:** 17

**Physical:** Strength 6, Dexterity 7, Stamina 7

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 4

**Mental:** Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

**Talents:** Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 7, Dodge 5, Leadership 4

**Skills:** Melee 5, Stealth 4

**Knowledges:** Ancient History 7, Linguistics 9, Politics 6

**Disciplines:** Auspex 4, Celerity 6, Dominate 5, Enchantment 5, Fortitude 6, Obfuscate 3, Potence 4, Presence 5, Protean 4, Serpents 2, Thaumaturgy 4 (Lure of Flames 4, Movement of the Mind 3)

**Backgrounds:** None at present

**Virtues:** Conscience 1, Self-Control 4, Courage 6

**Humanity:** 1

**Willpower:** 10

**Notes:** Tiamat's Enchantment Discipline is wholly unlike Tremere magic. It allows her to enchant objects and create the magical traps that protect her barrow. All such spells are performed out of combat and are left to the Storyteller's imagination and dramatic needs.



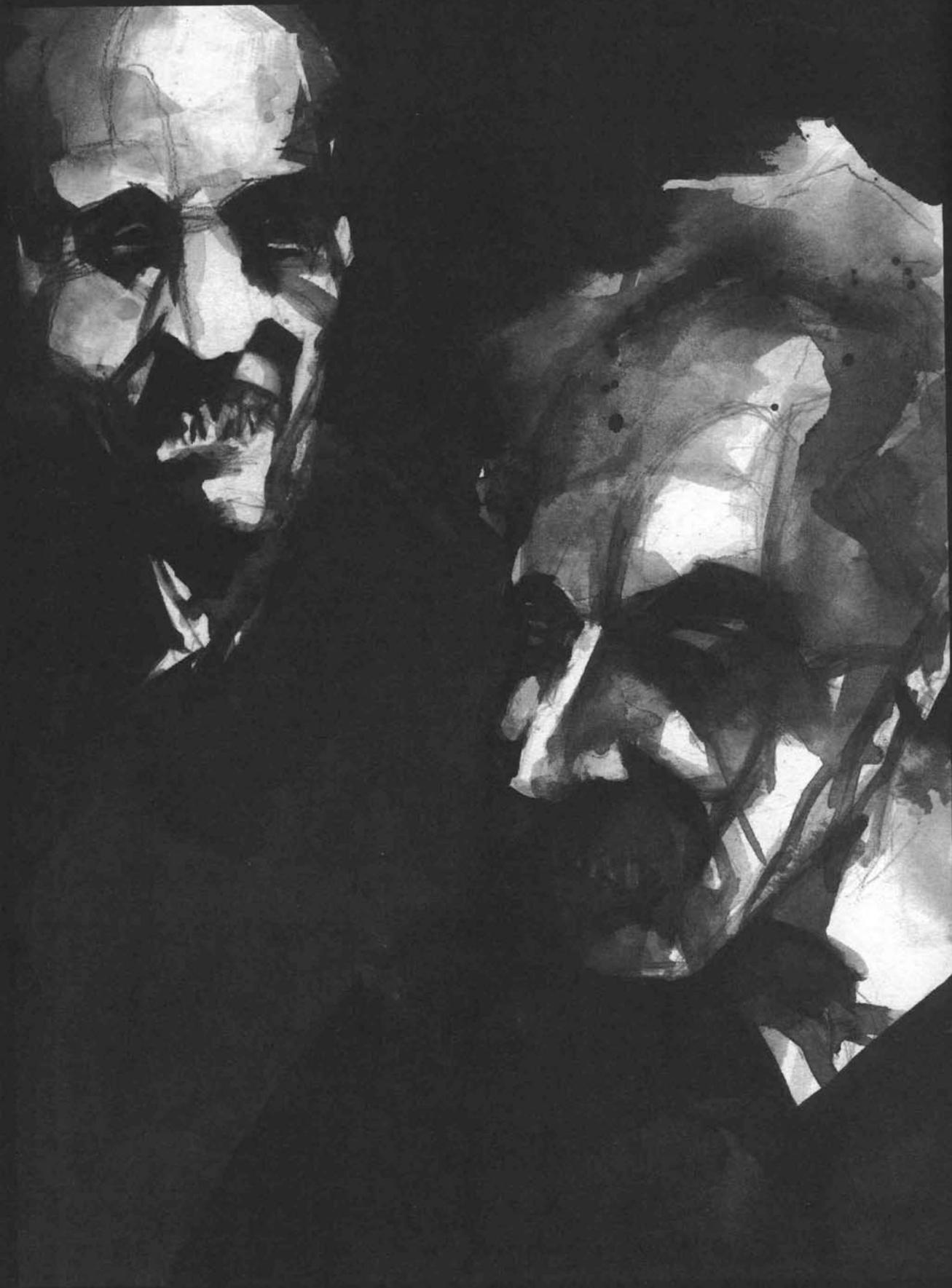
Tiamat's Traits would normally be much higher, but they have suffered from the time in torpor. Should she have a few years to recover, she would be far stronger.

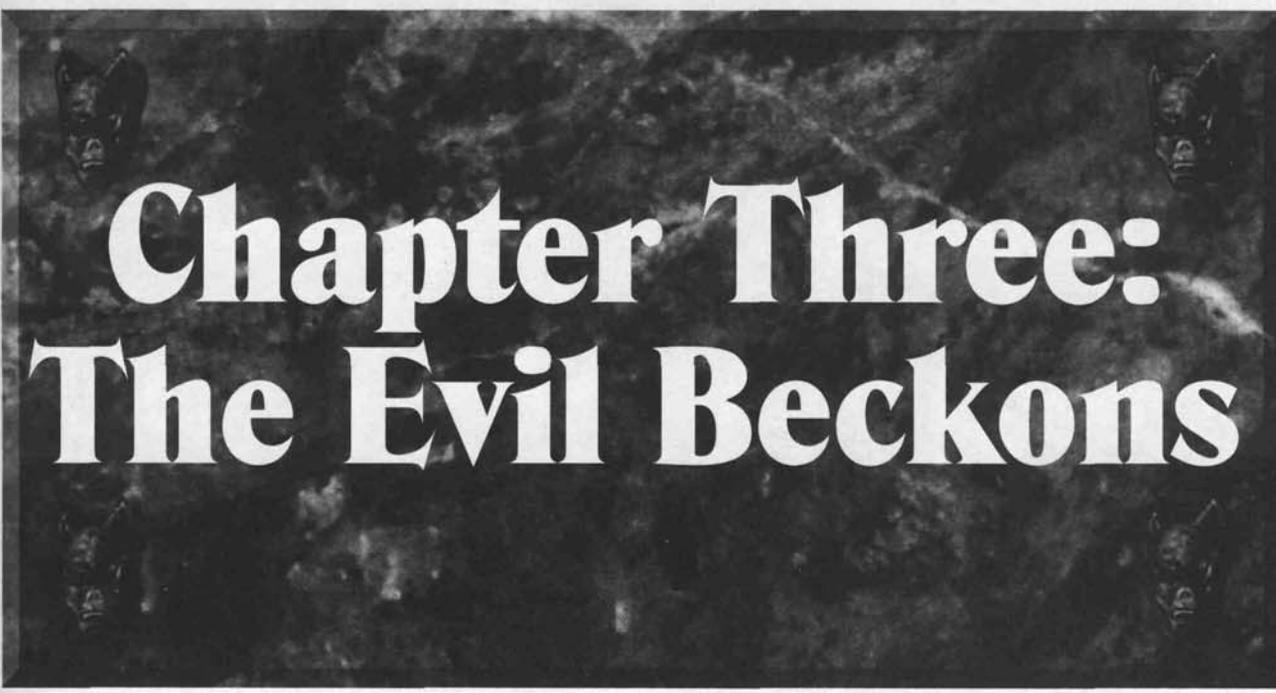
When Drakonskyr was in control, Tiamat could feed from anything (this is how she managed to drink her sire's vitæ). However, in "normal" circumstances, Tiamat may only feed from females.

**Image:** Tiamat is no longer human. She has experienced more than most vampires could ever withstand, and she is nothing like the young girl who was taken by her lord. The tomb has not improved her alien-looking Sumerian

features. Vampires do not groom while in torpor. Dust covers her body, cobwebs veil her face and fill her mouth, and her clothes have nearly rotted away.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Howl and fight! You are beyond controlled action. Though you have a high Self-Control, this is meant to represent your discipline, not your restraint. You want only to sleep — nothing else. Sleep is the only way you can escape Drakonskyr and you hate all those who interfere with your sleep. Only an exceptional effort on the part of the characters will cause you to communicate with them — and you know no English.





# Chapter Three: The Evil Beckons

*Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely.*

— Lord Acton, *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*

In the darkness of the tomb, Drakonskyr dreams fitfully inside Tiamat. The demon beckons to its ancient blade, the Sword of Nul, ordering the blade to bring those who can free Drakonskyr from its millennium-old prison. The sword has passed from one owner to another through the ages, for its power brings death to its user. It destroys all it touches, as befits a weapon forged by a demon.

Now this blade falls into the hands of the characters, carried to their city by the tide of the Jyhad. Many would seek to take the sword's power from a coterie of would-be Diabolists.

## Tale of a Sword

After Tiamat threw the Sword of Nul into the Tigris, it rested in the river until A.D. 806, when an Islamic warrior of the Abbasid Caliphate retrieved it. He bore it into battle when civil war broke out that same year.

Despite his wondrous blade, the young Arab was slain in battle and the blade was later found by a beggar looting the bodies of the dead. He sold it to the Bayt al-Himah — “The House of Wisdom.” For a few weeks, the sword was the talk of the university. From where had the blade come, and who had forged it? The scholars had little concept of archaeology and assumed that because the blade still had an edge, it must have been made recently in some unknown and distant land.

When no answers were forthcoming, the blade was forgotten, though it still remained on display. Within two years, it was moved to a shelf in an odd little corner of the library, where it remained until it was finally moved to a back room and stored away for years. The blade was taken in 1098 by a supposed witch and heretic who was, in fact, a Brujah. Down on his luck and on the run from the Prince of Baghdad, the Brujah stole the blade during a mad dash for escape.

Nowhere in the Muslim world was safe from the undead hand of the Prince of Baghdad, and so the Brujah sought to flee to Europe. He hoped to use the sword as a bargaining tool to join the Christian warriors in Palestine and thus escape his political problems.

It took him nearly a year of travel to reach Jerusalem. His enemies hounded him the entire way, and in those days a vampire did not travel fast for fear of the sun. He reached Jerusalem on July 1, 1099. Two weeks later, the crusaders stormed the city and killed everybody within reach. The Brujah was slain and the sword was taken as spoils of war.

Little enough was thought of it, as it was not decorated with gold and jewels, nor did it have any religious significance to Christians, Muslims or Jews. It finally fell into the hands of one poor knight, Sir Burder of the Holy Roman Empire, as part of his booty.



## The Sword of Nul

It looks innocent enough. It is short, straight and made of bronze. It has no ornamentation save a crude skull carved in the middle of the hilt. The handle was once wrapped in leather or cloth, but the wrapper has rotted away, leaving only the bare metal. The entire weapon is turning slightly green with age despite its power. The blade is still sharp — extremely sharp. It is much sharper than any bronze weapon could ever be — sharper than the finest steel.

The weapon has a difficulty of 5 to hit and does Strength + 5 damage in aggravated wounds. Furthermore, the weapon adds one automatic success to all attack rolls. The blade may have many other powers, though it would take time and magic to unlock these powers, and they are unlikely to enter into this story. The Storyteller may invent more powers if she likes, but those listed above should be quite sufficient for now.

The blade then passed from father to son for many generations. Even though almost all of the valuables taken during the Crusades were sold to maintain a failing fief, the sword remained and became a family heirloom. As the years passed, the fief worsened, and son after son was corrupted by the blade. Most were slain in battle, though it must be said that the family's enemies suffered far worse at the hands of the Rhineland warriors and their strange sword.

In the mid-15th century, the plagues and famines sweeping across Europe decimated the Burder fief. The family line was wiped out by the plague that swept through the castle. Most of the family's possessions were claimed by the crown, but some were taken by family and friends. One of these "friends" was in fact a servant of one of the seven Tremere who make up the clan's ruling council. The Tremere kept the blade for centuries and studied it, but never used it.

The Tremere hold Austria in a stranglehold from which no breath of freedom may spring. Still, one anarch has managed to elude them. Antoine, a Malkavian and an anarch, sneaked into the clan's secret chambers and found the blade, though not on purpose. He was looking for information that he could use against the Tremere and when he was discovered, he seized the blade and used it on the guards.

Once he had taken the blade, his escape was assured. Many guards fell before Antoine was able to escape. Those capable of defeating him were either not present or unwilling to face the sword.

Antoine fled from Austria, uncertain of what he had taken. He named the blade Soulrazor for the terror that it had caused the Tremere. From Austria, he fled to England and from there to the safest place in the world for anarchists — America, and into a dark and brooding city....

# Involving the Characters

There are many ways to involve the characters in the hunt for Tiamat's vitæ. What follows is merely one example. Most Diabolists need little temptation. For them, the chance for such luscious blood is quite enough. The best method for involving the characters depends largely on their clans and the chronicle. While anarchists may run off at a moment's notice to drink from a Methuselah and gain power, those who support the Camarilla may not be so eager.

In such a case, the Storyteller can introduce a threat that requires a great deal of power to defeat — far more power than the characters have. This would encourage them to start searching for ways to gain power, and would eventually lead them to diablerie. At first they will be tempted by mere elders, but should the threat be significant enough, they must seek a Cainite of true power.

Many vampires have heard of Tiamat. Her atrocities among the Kindred have become legendary, and the characters may know of the events described in Chapter Two. Tiamat was active in mortal and Kindred politics; there are still some Kindred who knew her and who can attest to the truth of the legends.

Thus the Kindred may start to follow a series of rumors and in the process begin to discover facts. What happened to Tiamat after she masqueraded as Livia is unclear, but it is unlikely that she died. The truth of her eternal struggle against the demon Drakonskyr is completely unknown to any Kindred. There are no rumors, for Tiamat never had the opportunity to tell anyone and all possible witnesses were slain or are long dead. The truth can only be discovered in the final chamber of Tiamat's barrow.

Rumors and eyewitness accounts notwithstanding, little can be learned of Tiamat's actual location, only that she is out there somewhere and is probably asleep or in torpor. Any who knew her feel sure she could not have been slain — her power was too great. By the same token, she must be inactive, for if she were still fighting in the Jyhad, there would at least be rumors of her plots and schemes. If the characters wish to find Tiamat, they must hope for a lucky break.

## A Lucky Break

A Malkavian stumbles into the characters' city. He is Antoine, from the story of the Sword of Nul, and now the characters are part of that story as well. He is on the run, though the Tremere of Vienna have made no serious attempt to get the sword back. After all, why not watch this fool and learn about the sword from his exploits?



However, others have heard news of the blade. Before fleeing Austria, Antoine foolishly told his coterie where he was going and that he had stolen a magical sword of great power. His coterie heard rumors of what had happened when the Tremere had tried to stop Antoine, and began to crave the blade. Its members talked among themselves of the powers it must hold. Each vampire began to think that it would make his most impossible dreams possible. Some seek power, others seek peace and all think that the sword could help them obtain those goals.

Also seeking the blade is one of the Tremere present when Antoine made his miraculous escape. He seeks the blade not for the clan, but for his own purposes. The Tremere leaders know this, of course, and once he obtains the blade, they will probably take it from him. If he dies in the attempt, so much the better; he was growing untrustworthy anyway.

Antoine is growing weary of pursuit and is looking for allies. He will approach the characters and ask for their help. The blade will also act on its own. If the characters do not force it from Antoine, the sword will kill him, animating in his hand when he is alone and running him through. Once another character picks up the blade, the sword begins to communicate with him telepathically. It tells him where Tiamat is buried and promises to lead the character to her if the character will in return promise to destroy her. The sword will not hold a conversation but will make this offer and leave the characters to decide what to do.

Antoine's death appears to be a suicide, a hypothesis made more likely by the stress he was under and the fact that he was a Malkavian. The sword knew that Antoine lacked the strength to penetrate Tiamat's barrow, just as it knew its mortal wielders were too weak. The Tremere had known better than to use the weapon and so it could never tempt them. Now it at last has a chance to save its master from eternal sleep.

Antoine has a map of England hidden in his coat. The map has many "Xs" on it, many of which have been crossed out or scribbled over. One "X" in Scotland has been circled several times. The blade has communicated with Antoine through dreams, and Antoine has been researching the images it has transmitted to him. Now whoever carries the blade will start to have similar dreams. The latest dream is about a hillside with a door hidden under a few feet of earth.

## To Britain

There are many ways vampires from the Americas can journey to the United Kingdom. The fastest method is by plane, but few, if any, trans-Atlantic flights start and end in darkness. The characters could try shipping themselves, but customs officials often use dogs to check for contraband, and a dog would become very excited at the smell of a vampire.

Boats are usually the safest method of travel. Many cruise ships have interior cabins that do not have windows.

The passengers are numerous and varied enough to make for a week of good eating, even for five or six vampires.

A cruise ship is also a wonderful setting for roleplaying, as it has many innate dramatic advantages. It provides a setting big enough for hiding, but not big enough to escape enemies. Additionally, cruise ships are slow, and dramatic tension can be built over long periods. A cruise ship is also a very beautiful place, covered with lights, ice sculptures, fine wooden bars and cool, blue swimming pools.

Although cruise ships do travel to Scotland, the only cruises running during the time frame of this story go to London instead. If the characters wish to travel by boat, they will have to disembark in London.

Of course, not all coterie will reside in North America. *Methods of travel from other lands are at the Storyteller's discretion.*

## Coterie Tactics

Antoine's former coterie does not have a large information network and its resources are limited. Its members fear that they have limited time, and they will go to any effort to acquire the sword. They catch up with Antoine the night after he meets with the characters.

At this point, Antoine will already be dead, killed by his own sword. Hoping that the characters are unaware of the sword's power, the coterie approaches them. Its members explain that they were friends of Antoine, and that they would like the sword returned.

Should this fail (as it should), the coterie will try to follow the characters back to their havens. They will break and enter the following evening and search for the sword. If a vampire happens to be in her haven, they will not attempt to kill her, though they will attack her if she gets in the way. Should this fail, they may attempt to abduct some of the characters and force them to disclose the location of the sword.

If the coterie does not work its way through all of these plans before the characters head for England, the coterie will attempt to follow by booking passage on the same boat, plane or whatever. Its members then approach the characters in public places and try to convince them to give up the sword. They will threaten them with violence, offer promises of power or favors, or attempt seduction. They may even offer a share in the blade's power should they become desperate enough and a particular character appears to waver.

They will continue to pursue the sword in this fashion until they are convinced that they cannot succeed. Also, a convincing threat, backed up with a little physical violence, might scare this group off. Its members are weak in fighting skills and they know it. Against a group of dangerous and powerful Diabolists they don't have much of a chance. If two of them are killed, the rest will give up and return to Austria.

## Tremere Tactics

Frank Weissshadel, unlike the coterie, has an extensive intelligence network from which to draw. The Tremere network, however, works both ways. The informants tell important Tremere what they want to know, but they also tell their superiors what important Tremere wanted to know. Weissshadel must use it sparingly lest the Council of Seven discover his little “freelance business.” Therefore, he watches carefully and waits patiently for his time to strike for the blade. He must follow it from a distance to avoid arousing suspicion, especially from his own intelligence network.

If the vampires take a boat, Weissshadel will also book passage, taking his three ghouls with him. Because he is not exactly certain which character has the blade, he will wait and watch. He may even make friends with one of the characters, hoping to gain information. He will pretend to be mortal for as long as he can, perhaps even hoping a hungry vampire will take him to a private place to feed from him. Then he will strike, Dominating the vampire and finding out who has the sword. If the characters have powers rendering such deception ineffective (Aura Perception, for example), Weissshadel will admit his nature and offer to help the vampires against Antoine’s coterie.

Weissshadel hopes to incite a large battle that will decimate both sides and allow him to steal or take the sword. With only three ghouls, he lacks the firepower of either of the other two vampire groups on board, and he knows it.

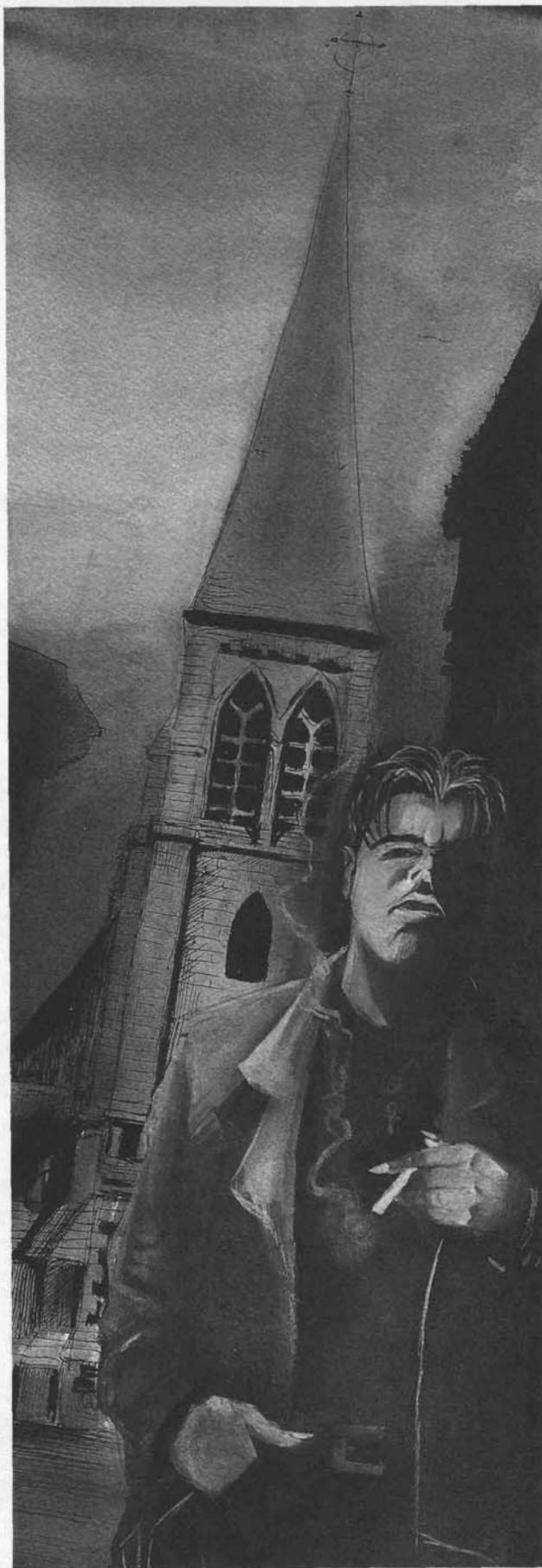
If all else fails, he may try an ambush with his ghouls on the entire Diabolist group and hope for the best, but this is not his first choice. If the Diabolists look powerful and/or well armed, he may not try this tactic at all. While he wants the blade, he is willing to wait for many years if necessary.

Once the blade is taken, he will change cabins (by Dominating the other guests) and wait for the trip to end. He cannot swim and will avoid the water at all costs, even to the point of giving up the blade rather than being thrown overboard. He has no desire to go into torpor at the bottom of the Atlantic.

## Once in London

Once the characters arrive in London, the sword telepathically informs them that they have neared their prey. Perhaps this is true in terms of distance, but many Kindred still seek to block their progress. In fact, Tiamat is located not far from Edinburgh in Scotland. First, however, the characters must get there. After all of the trouble they had getting to the British Isles, they may need to rest (remember that any aggravated wounds take time to heal) and hunt.

Hunting in London is dangerous if the characters do not know their way around. Most Kindred don’t like others cruising on their turf. If the characters do not Present themselves to the prince of the city, they may also have troubles, as such negligence violates the Traditions (not



that most Diabolists take those too seriously). The Storyteller should feel free to add whatever complications she desires.

## Archon Spy

Hafsa, described in Chapter One, is also in London, looking for violations of the Traditions. Most princes do not appreciate Archons in their domains, and an especially delicate touch is required in such a large city with a powerful prince. The larger cities must be watched by the Archons, for they are the most likely places for criminal behavior, but it is most dangerous to send an Archon to a big city.

This is certainly the case with London. The Prince of London was mysteriously killed in a German bombing raid during World War II, though his body was never recovered. Lady Anne is currently in control, though she clings to power by the skin of her teeth. She is a nervous prince. Uncertain that her power base is stable, she is reactionary and prone to destroy those whom she cannot trust.

In light of this, only very subtle Archons are sent to London, and Hafsa is very subtle. If the characters stay in the city a night or two, Hafsa will approach them and try to find out what they are doing here. If she sees the Sword of Nul, she will make a mental note and describe it in detail over the phone to her Justicar. Madame Guil will then check her books and discover its origin. From here, the Justicar can guess that the characters are up to no good. Guil will not be certain that diablerie is involved, but she will instruct Hafsa to watch the characters.

Hafsa is currently disguised as an anarch. She knows most of the anarch hideouts in the city and she can show the characters the safe places to hunt. She will try to get the characters to tell her why they are here and she may even confide all of her "crimes," like the time she committed diablerie and how much fun it is to break the Masquerade just to see the look on a mortal's face. The crimes are all fictitious, of course. Hafsa is only trying to find out how prone these neonates are to committing crimes against the Traditions.

If the characters divulge the reason they are in London or if she sees the Sword of Nul, Hafsa will go immediately to Lady Anne and inform her of the presence of a group of anarchists. She will stress their unknown purpose and the fact that they did not Present themselves to her, if this is the case. Needless to say, the Diabolists will be called on the carpet.

## The Prince

If the characters Present themselves to Lady Anne when they arrive in London (as custom dictates) or if they are called before her when they are discovered in the city, they will have some explaining to do. If Hafsa has discovered the characters' plans, Lady Anne orders the Diabolists to leave the country at once. Failure to do so brings her severe displeasure.

If Lady Anne is uncertain as to the motives of these anarchists, she demands an explanation for their presence. If they hesitate at all, or they change their stories at any time, she demands that they leave the country. If the answer they give is possible, but unlikely, Lady Anne will have them carefully watched. If they deviate in any way from what they said they were doing, she will have them warned, perhaps by having one of them killed.

Lady Anne needs to show the Kindred of London that she is in control. If necessary, she will call a Blood Hunt on these anarchists, but she is very afraid to test her power in this way. What if she calls the Hunt and nobody listens? Then she would surely die. Better to let them go on their way. Only if Lady Anne knows they intend to disturb Tiamat (a frightening concept to most vampires) will she risk a Blood Hunt to destroy them. Tiamat stalking through her domain would be far more risky than calling the Hunt.

## Ancient Enemies

Fortunately, the vampires have an ally in this unfriendly city. Gotsdam, an ancient German vampire, now resides in London. He is believed to be an eccentric old Ventrue. He is little noticed and taken even less seriously. Many think he has gone mad over the years or that he always was mad. He stays quiet, and nobody realizes exactly who he is or what is wrong with him.

Gotsdam is quite eager to help the characters and seeks them out if they get into any kind of trouble. He explains that he knew Tiamat after the days of Caligula and tells them that there was always something wrong with her. He explains that something separated her from other Kindred. She was very cruel: a merciless killer who actually enjoyed pain and inflicted it not out of necessity but out of joy. Yet, sometimes, she would look very sad and would cry tears of blood. "Beware of her," he warns, "she has two faces. Do not trust the sad face, for it is nothing compared to the angry one."

Once Gotsdam has given his advice, he will sneak the characters out of the city via a secret tunnel. Once they are away from the city, they can go to a train station in the country and make their way to Edinburgh. From there they can scour the countryside, looking for Tiamat's resting place. Edinburgh is controlled by the Toreador and is open to anarchists, so the Diabolists will have no more Kindred entanglements once they leave London.

## The Coterie

Antoine's coterie is not powerful, nor are its members particularly clever. They are, however, about as lucky as vampires get. Its members have survived for several years while carrying out guerrilla warfare against the Tremere. They were lucky to get together in the group they did, for their skills complemented each other's. They were also lucky that they never hit too big a target. Though the coterie

always thought its actions were wounding the Tremere terribly, the Tremere hardly noticed the rebellion in their land.

## Antoine – The Lost

Born in the late 19th century, Antoine never learned to be a good boy, and grew worse when his aunt took him in after the deaths of his parents. By the time he was 10, she had given up on him and sent him away to an exceptionally strict boarding school. The change did not agree with him.

Antoine's aunt came to see him when Antoine turned 16 (her third visit in six years). Instead of the sweet little boy she had hoped to find, she found a hulking, surly teenager. Horrified, she chastised the dean, threatening him with every legal recourse imaginable. After she left, the dean, a Malkavian's ghoul, told his master. The Malkavian then Embraced Antoine and gave the neonate a one-way ticket home.

Antoine's first frenzy took care of his aunt, leaving her throat ripped open and every ounce of blood drained from her body. After that, Antoine began to run, first to Europe and then all over the world.

He made few friends wherever he went, but found it easy to join anarch gangs. Eventually, he found his way to Austria, where he felt his talents for rebellion were desper-

ately needed. Now he seeks help from whomever will offer it, be it elder or anarch, for the needs of survival have risen above those of philosophy.

**Sire:** Morel

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Nature:** Rebel

**Demeanor:** Loner

**Generation:** 9th

**Embrace:** 1892

**Apparent Age:** 16

**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2

**Social:** Charisma 1, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 3, Dodge 5, Streetwise 3

**Skills:** Demolitions 2, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Stealth 3

**Knowledges:** Computer 2, Linguistics 4

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Dominate 2, Obfuscate 4

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 2

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self-Control 1, Courage 3

**Humanity:** 3

**Willpower:** 6

**Image:** Antoine is a fat, soft-looking individual. He was a fat little boy and, years later, a loud and fat young man. He is generally sloppy and unkempt, having little care for his personal appearance.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You have become quite a frightened little animal. Your eyes dart nervously around the room and you shift from one foot to another. You rarely make eye contact, except when you are asking for help. In this case you are exceptionally earnest and will always look directly into your benefactors' faces.

## Randel – The Cowardly Leader

For years Randel took the easy road, the road beaten by the tread of thousands of feet. When he reached the age of 40, he looked around at his safe, comfortable life and was pleased. Then the Sabbat came and Embraced Randel as a foot soldier in yet another of the sect's senseless wars. Randel should have been destroyed in no time, but in some quiet chests lurk great hearts waiting for an opportunity to reveal themselves. Randel had such a heart.

Though Randel rose from the grave a monster, he did not stay that way. His pack's actions revolted him, and when the opportunity came to betray it, he did. Anarchs cut down his packmates and made him one of their own. When the gang's leaders were destroyed, he was thrust into the vacuum. Now he has his own gang — and all the worries that brings.

Randel is a wonderful planner and can formulate a solution to almost any problem — if he has enough time. However, Randel is not very good at being a vampire. He is still able to eat food (and quite enjoys it) but has trouble procuring human blood. Those from whom he attempted to





feed used to beat him up, and he has learned to identify and feed upon the weakest and most helpless vessels. He has no stomach for violence and though his powers would allow him to overcome any mortal, he does not like to use them. Randel has also worked to shed his Path of Enlightenment and restore his Humanity. Amazingly enough, he has begun to succeed.

**Sire:** Salondra

**Clan:** *Ventrue antitribu*

**Nature:** Architect

**Demeanor:** Judge

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 1935

**Apparent Age:** Early 40s

**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 3

**Talents:** Alertness 2, Brawl 1, Dodge 2, Leadership 3, Masquerade 3, Subterfuge 1

**Skills:** Drive 2, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 2, Repair 2, Security 1, Stealth 1

**Knowledges:** Bureaucracy 4, Camarilla Lore 2, Computer 3, Finance 2, Investigation 3, Law 2, Military Science 3, Politics 2

**Disciplines:** Auspex 2, Dominate 2, Fortitude 3, Obtenebration 2, Potence 1, Presence 1

**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Resources 2, Status 1

**Virtues:** Conscience 5, Self-Control 4, Courage 2

**Humanity:** 1

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** Randel is a middle-aged, pudgy man with thinning hair. His clothes are simple and unimaginative. He looks like hundreds of other ordinary men who live out their lives in middle management.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Randel is at least a little crazy and extremely contradictory. Revolted by the Sabbat, he has run from his vampiric nature. He still adheres to the remnants of his old life. He solves his new problems with the same calm that he would solve problems at his old job. He is also a very bad vampire when it comes to doing anything "vampiric."

## Basir - Street Assassin

Many gangs run in the streets of Ankara, Turkey. Basir, an orphan, joined young and learned violence at an early age. He made his money by stealing and doing odd jobs for people. He even became an enforcer for a crimelord. Basir attracted the notice of the Assamite clan when he stopped a Giovanni ghoul and destroyed a zombie sent to kill his boss.



Taking a new clan member from the streets has certain advantages, but true Assamite assassins rarely come from such stock. Still, street toughs have their uses. Basir joined the Assamites willingly, having few better prospects in his life.

Few people from his neighborhood expected to live past the age of 20 anyway, so Basir hardly feels that he has taken any great chances. He revels in his new status and enjoys drinking from the mortals. He also enjoys killing, and as an Assamite, the excuses are endless.

Despite his enthusiasm, Basir lacks the talent and discipline to become a "true" Assamite assassin. He handles minor assignments and has been working with Randel's anarchs for several years now. He hopes that possession of the Sword of Nul will gain him some respect from his clan.

**Sire:** Alu

**Clan:** Assamite

**Nature:** Rebel

**Demeanor:** Bravo

**Generation:** 13th

**Embrace:** 1981

**Apparent Age:** 18

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

**Talents:** Acting 2, Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Streetwise 4

**Skills:** Drive 1, Firearms 3, Melee 4, Repair 2, Security 2, Stealth 2, Survival 1

**Knowledges:** Investigation 1, Linguistics 2, Medicine 1

**Disciplines:** Celerity 1, Obfuscate 1, Protean 1, Quietus 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 1, Mentor 1, Resources 1

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 5

**Willpower:** 5

**Image:** Basir is dark-haired and has a swarthy complexion. He dresses in black leather whenever possible and does his best to emulate the American media's image of a biker.

**Roleplaying Hints:** When talking or acting, be loud, brash and arrogant. Challenge others and use physical violence to escape situations where you might come out on the losing end. Your self-esteem is low, so make up for it with lots of noise and big talk.

## Ransam - The Old One

The period after Francois Villon regained control of Paris was an exciting one for the Toreador. French armies crossed the continent, seized art from around the world and sent it to the museums of France. Toreador followed on their heels, making sure that they took the best before the rest could be seen by the kine.



Ransam, still little more than a neonate, came with the French armies to Austria, establishing himself in a little castle on confiscated land. He strove to make himself the center of attention, and decorated his castle with some of Austria's greatest masterpieces. His narcissism steadily grew; though he claimed to be a patron of the arts, he loved more than anything his own life and his own self-created world. He loved his friends because they belonged to him. He loved his castle because it was his own castle. He loved himself so much that everything that belonged to him became an extension of himself.

When Austria regained its lost territory, the Tremere clan decided to solidify its control of the land. Ransam was chosen as an example. Ransam barely survived the eviction, and that only with the help of more powerful Toreador.

Ransam was crushed. He had been defeated quickly, easily and painlessly by his attackers. He was humiliated and from his narcissism arose passionate hatred. Now he runs with an anarch gang and uses his influence to strike back at the Tremere. He will do anything for vengeance upon those who destroyed his love for himself.

**Sire:** Juliette Dulai

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Judge

**Demeanor:** Fanatic

**Generation:** 8th

**Embrace:** 1769

**Apparent Age:** Early 30s  
**Physical:** Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3  
**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4  
**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 2  
**Talents:** Acting 4, Alertness 2, Artistic Expression 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 2, Leadership 2, Subterfuge 4  
**Skills:** Dance 3, Etiquette 4, Firearms 4, Melee 5, Music 3, Stealth 1  
**Knowledges:** Art Critic 5, Finance 3, Law 1, Linguistics 5, Politics 3  
**Backgrounds:** Resources 4, Retainers 1  
**Disciplines:** Auspex 3, Celerity 4, Dominate 3, Fortitude 2, Presence 4  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 3  
**Humanity:** 6  
**Willpower:** 7

**Image:** Ransom has a strong jaw and blond hair, and is very handsome. He has a Bruce Willis smile and can be quite a charmer when he tries. He always keeps up with the latest fashions, though he often finds obscure and bizarre "in" fashions just to be different. He usually hides a bladed weapon or a stake somewhere on his person.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Smile a lot. Do your best to charm the socks off of anyone who gets near you. Don't take "no" for an answer. You hate all Tremere. Do not deal with any of them — none of them are trustworthy. They are killers and destroyers. Little matters beyond destroying the Tremere.

## Kalila - The Firebug

Kalila lived in Germany with her immigrant parents. Often alone, lacking playmates who could speak her language, Kalila found her only friends in the fires she set. She especially loved how much attention she received when she lit one. As she grew older, her pyromania continued unabated.

Finally, one of her fires burned out of control. Because she was too old for a child's punishment, the authorities sent her to a women's prison to serve a 10-year term. Kalila, desperately in need of psychological attention, suffered and languished in jail. She became rebellious and was transferred to a high-security facility, where she eventually met her sire.

She still does not know who he was. He slipped into her cell and took her while she slept. All she remembers is awaking in great ecstasy, then feeling pain, and then feeling power flood into her. She made good her escape that night.

After a few near-fatal run-ins with the Powers That Be, she hooked up with Randel's gang. She can understand its members and their motivations. She also imagines that the enemies of her unknown sire are after her as well. She hopes that the Sword of Nul will give her enough power to strike back at her enemies, both real and imagined.

**Sire:** ?

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Nature:** Child  
**Demeanor:** Survivor  
**Generation:** 11th  
**Embrace:** 1987  
**Apparent Age:** Late teens  
**Physical:** Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3  
**Social:** Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3  
**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2  
**Talents:** Acting 1, Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Streetwise 1, Subterfuge 2  
**Skills:** Arson 4, Drive 2, Firearms 2, Security 2  
**Knowledges:** Linguistics 1  
**Disciplines:** Auspex 1, Obfuscate 4  
**Backgrounds:** None  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 4  
**Humanity:** 5  
**Willpower:** 4

**Image:** Kalila has fine Arabic features, with a strong nose and short, black hair. She has a rather rakish look to her, as though she might do anything without provocation. She always dresses in loose clothing that does not become her figure, but facilitates free movement.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Smile in a childlike way. Light things on fire. Do anything for attention. You especially enjoy attention from authority figures (who represent your



parents). Suck up to the leaders of the group. Indeed, it is possible that your rebellious activities toward the Tremere are nothing more than a bid for attention.

## The Tremere

### Frank Weissshadel – Would-Be Sorcerer

Frank's father was a wizard. Few can make such a claim, but in this case it was true. His father had been a powerful mage, though he did not realize Frank knew it. For years Frank dreamed of becoming a wizard like his father. He knew that there were underground sorcerers everywhere. He knew that the world contained many wonders unknown to the common run of mortals.

Always wishing to emulate his father, Frank studied in secret, certain that his father would take him as an apprentice once he was old enough. Yet time dragged on and Frank's father did not approach him. Finally, when Frank was 17, he demanded that his father teach him magick. His father refused.

Papa Weissshadel was in big trouble. He had meddled with powers best left alone and he had gained powerful enemies among his own peers. He did not wish to pass along his own mistakes. He knew the temptations of power and the evils it could bring on even the most innocent heart. He tried explaining all of this to Frank.

Frank did not understand; he felt that wizardry was his birthright. Nobody could take that away from him. He was certain that he had the power just as his father did and that he could master powerful spells. Then he would stand tall among a secret community that ruled the world with invisible puppet strings.

Frank was wrong. He did not have the power, though he would not learn this easily.

He left home in a rage and traveled the world. By the time he was 23, he had discovered as much as a mortal could know about mages, vampires, wraiths, werewolves and other mythical creatures. When he returned home, only to argue bitterly with his father, he went to the vampires of Clan Tremere, demanding that they make him a wizard. They instead agreed to make him a vampire. They knew he did not have the proper commitment to become a true wizard, but he was young, strong and stupid enough to be loyal to them.

They made him into a Kindred and used him for dirty jobs all across Europe. Despair overtook Frank's world. When he showed his father what a glorious creature he had become, his father was not so understanding. Papa Weissshadel tried to destroy his own son, but could not bring himself to do it. Nonetheless, his efforts drove Frank into an uncontrollable frenzy, and the vampire murdered his own father.

Now Frank has realized that the Tremere have no intention of using him for anything but an errand boy. He seeks the Sword of Nul to become a powerful wizard and claim his birthright among the mages of the world.

**Sire:** O'Meara

**Clan:** Tremere

**Nature:** Bravo

**Demeanor:** Curmudgeon

**Generation:** 10th

**Embrace:** 1970

**Apparent Age:** Mid-20s

**Physical:** Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

**Social:** Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

**Talents:** Acting 1, Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Intimidation 2, Leadership 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 3

**Skills:** Drive 2, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Security 2, Stealth 3

**Knowledges:** Investigation 2, Occult 4, Politics 1

**Disciplines:** Auspex 1, Dominate 2, Potence 2, Thaumaturgy 2 (The Lure of Flames 1)

**Backgrounds:** Contacts 4, Resources 3, Retainers 3, Status 1

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self-Control 4, Courage 4

**Humanity:** 6

**Willpower:** 6



**Image:** A tall, thin youth with thick black hair and brown eyes, Frank cares not at all for his personal appearance. When not in the presence of important Tremere, he often wears clothes with holes and stains on them. When in the presence of important Tremere, he wears a tacky, out-of-date suit.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your driving ambition has been so long denied that you are obsessed with magical power. You do not respect others who possess such power; rather, you hate them. No price is too small for this power and you will kill to get it if you must.

## The Tired Warrior

### Gotsdam

Gotsdam is a mysterious figure, and should stay that way throughout the story. His own tale is full of tragedy and horror, dating back to the days when the Roman legions took him as a hostage. He became a slave to Tiamat, who took his blood in scores of cruel ways and Embraced him when she needed a pawn to use against her enemies.

When she no longer needed Gotsdam, she abandoned him. Knowing little of what it was to be a Kindred, what he could do and what he could not, he fled from Rome and



spent the next several hundred years along the Rhine, hiding in a cave and feeding from animals and the occasional tribesman.

He feared the Lupines who ruled the woods, and learned both how to fight them and, more importantly, how to hide from them. When civilization eventually encroached on the wilderness, Gotsdam was forced to live the life of a true Ventrue and joined the world of the Kindred. Now he seeks Golconda, and is in London on a quest of his own.

He has tried to avoid the games of the Jyhad, for he saw the damage it caused to Rome. He used the pretext of madness, a tactic he sometimes used to dissuade the Lupines when things got out of hand. Now the Ventrue leave him alone.

Now Gotsdam has learned, to his delight, that there is a group of anarchs who would dare to hunt his sire Tiamat. He will not come with the characters, for he fears that an act of diablerie would ruin his chances for Golconda. He is, however, quite willing to help them along their way. Of course, if the characters try to commit diablerie upon him, Gotsdam is also quite willing to wipe up the floor with them.

**Sire:** Tiamat

**Clan:** Ventrue

**Nature:** Rebel

**Demeanor:** Jester

**Generation:** 5th

**Embrace:** 87 A.D.

**Apparent Age:** Mid-20s

**Physical:** Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Stamina 8

**Social:** Charisma 6, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3

**Mental:** Perception 7, Intelligence 5, Wits 7

**Talents:** Acting 5, Alertness 7, Athletics 5, Brawl 6, Dodge 8, Intimidation 3, Leadership 3, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 5

**Skills:** Animal Ken 5, Etiquette 2, Firearms 1, Melee 7, Stealth 8, Survival 6

**Knowledges:** Linguistics 7, Occult 6, Politics 4

**Disciplines:** Animalism 5, Auspex 5, Celerity 4, Dominate 6, Fortitude 8, Obfuscate 4, Potence 4, Presence 6, Protean 3, Thaumaturgy 4 (Weather Control 4, Movement of the Mind 3)

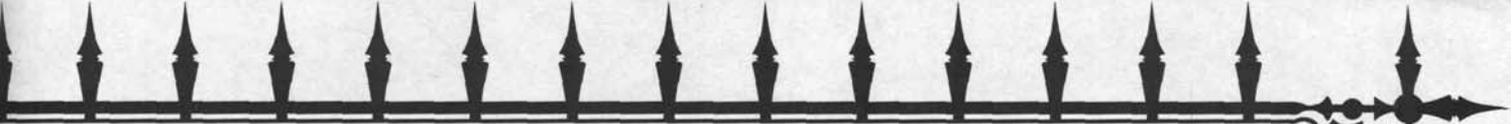
**Backgrounds:** Allies 3, Status 3

**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self-Control 4, Courage 5

**Humanity:** 9

**Willpower:** 8

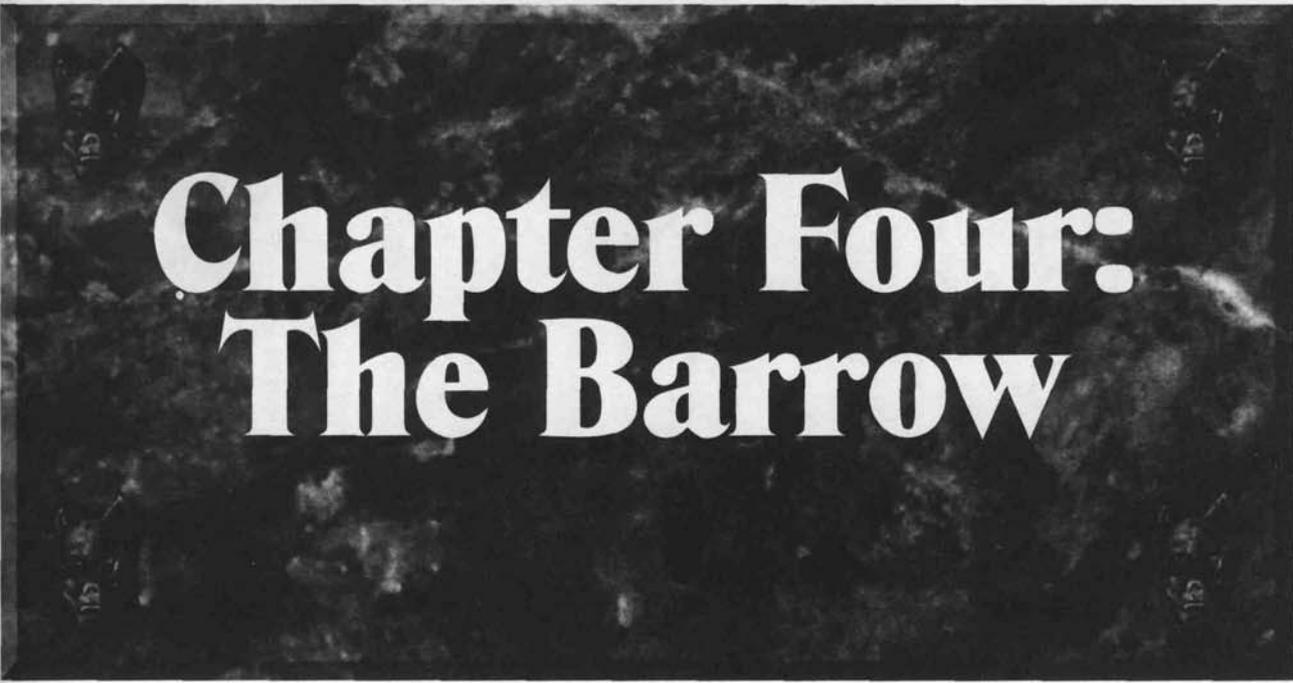
**Notes:** Gotsdam's sixth level of Dominate allows him to convince his victim that she has any one Derangement of Gotsdam's choosing. His sixth level of Presence causes all in the vicinity to leave Gotsdam alone.



**Image:** Gotsdam is a tall, blond barbarian, complete with beard and uncut hair. He looks like an extremely pale Viking. He is powerful and grim. He is a little behind the times and likes top hats and canes, a bizarre contrast to his long hair and thick beard.

**Roleplaying Hints:** You have played at being insane for so long that you really are starting to go a little mad. Talk to imaginary friends (maybe even convince the characters that these friends exist), howl for no reason, and generally act like a loon. For the most part, you try to appear more stupid than you are. Play dumb, but maneuver others in the directions you want.





# Chapter Four: The Barrow

*Nor to slumber, nor to die,  
Shall be in thy destiny;  
Though thy death shall still seem near  
To thy wish, but as a fear.*

— Lord Byron, *Manfred*

During Britain's Dark Ages, after the Romans abandoned the island, tribe warred with tribe until it seemed to the Britons that the world would crack. Some tribes buried their kings in great burial mounds that were as large as hills. Sometimes a king was buried with his gold and jewels, but always with his weapons. It was a time of little belief, for who could have faith in a god that created such a mad world?

It was to this land of cold and fog that Tiamat fled. Here, in this isolated land, she hoped other Kindred would never follow. She never dreamed of the empire that would rise and fall right over her head centuries later. Now she sleeps in the darkness of the earth, oblivious to the Diabolists who seek to disturb her.

## Finding the Barrow

It is fortunate that the characters have Antoine's map and Tiamat's sword to guide their way, for the barrow is well hidden among other hills. It is so overgrown and covered with trees that it looks like a natural hill. The entrance is on the north side of the hill. Centuries of erosion have caused the earth to slide down the hill, covering the door with two feet of earth. Bushes and shrubbery thrive in this fertile spot and the door is now indistinguishable from the rest of the countryside.

The vampire who has been carrying the Sword of Nul will be able to recognize from his dreams the part of the hill that contains the barrow entrance. If no vampire is carrying the Sword personally, the blade will contact the vampire with the lowest Willpower.

If the Diabolists have brought proper digging tools, the entrance to the barrow can be unearthed in a few hours. If they do not have the proper tools, the Diabolists must spend at least 20 man-hours unearthing the door (thus, five Diabolists could do the job in four hours). Remember that the Diabolists have spent time traveling to the barrow, and when the sun rises, they will either sleep or burn, depending on their location.

## The Nature of the Barrow

Wooden braces support this earthen barrow. The first part of the barrow contains the various traps and tricks the Britons installed at the direction and design of Tiamat. All of the mechanical traps are maintained by Tiamat's powerful magic, causing them to age very slowly. While even very simple traps would keep mortals out of her tomb, Tiamat was much more concerned about Cainites who would seek her for the power of her blood. As a result, she made many of her



## The Barrow

1. The Entrance
2. The Spear Trap
3. Pit Traps
4. Primitive Napalm Trap
5. The Wolf
6. Hall of Razors
7. Pit of the Sun
8. Hall of Fire
9. Fool's Gold



10 Feet

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traps magical in nature to dissuade the more determined. In those days, before the rise of the Tremere, a vampire with knowledge of magic was an exceptionally powerful creature.

The contents of the barrow have also been affected by centuries of exposure to the mind of Drakonskyr. Ordinarily, this demon's wishes and imagination would be magically imposed on the world as it wished. Demons often work magic subconsciously, and only Drakonskyr's confinement to Tiamat's body has kept it from doing as it pleased. However, the demon's long existence within the barrow has allowed some of its psyche to spill out into reality, changing the very physics that bind the world together.

The rooms and corridors created by Drakonskyr's mind are not completely real. In fact, the entire second section of the barrow, which is its creation, is contained in the long corridor that connects the false tomb of Tiamat to the real tomb (sections 9 and H, respectively). When Tiamat built the barrow, it was a simple tunnel. However, under the strange influences of Drakonskyr's sleeping mind, the tunnel has become a nightmare reality that is only partially physical. For the most part, those who enter the corridor will be journeying through the terrible, horrific mind of a demon.

This area does not follow ordinary physical laws. A map to this area is included, but it is important to understand that there are no set spatial relationships among the various chambers and corridors. When characters leave a particular

chamber, there is no guarantee that they can return to that chamber. Turning around makes no difference. They are traveling through a demon's mind, and such a mind has no set direction. Thus, forward is just as good as backward, and they may encounter any chamber in any relation to any other chamber.

Rather than follow our map, it might be a good idea for the Storyteller to draw her own maps and, whenever the vampires come to a chamber, decide what lies within that chamber. That way, the vampires don't have to miss a single encounter. They can have all the "fun" of every encounter and not have to worry about missing something if they go in the wrong direction.

## The Encounters

The encounters represented by numbers delineate those areas created by Tiamat and the British tribe she used for her manual labor. The areas represented by letters indicate those areas that have been affected by Drakonskyr's mind. Physically, all of the lettered events take place in the final corridor between the false tomb and the real tomb.

### 1. The Entrance

Buried under two feet of earth, these five-foot-tall double doors (each is four feet wide) block the entrance to the barrow. They are made of wood, and are sealed with lead clamps; these must be pried away (Strength Feat of 7

required, or 5 with a good crowbar) or melted off. The doors themselves weigh nearly 500 pounds apiece and have Latin text scrawled across them. The text reads (should anyone take the time to attempt to decipher the dull and worn carving), "Let sleeping sleepers lie if the wakers do not wish to die."

There are also hundreds of runes and glyphs carved all over the doors. A successful Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 7) indicates that all or most of the runes are wards of protection against evil, spirits, curses, etc. A vampire who scores three successes on this roll realizes that the glyphs have no real power.

On the inside of the door is a large rune shaped like a sun with a crescent moon inside it. This symbol does have some power over evil, as an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 8) will ascertain. The fact that it is pointed inward means that the evil is expected to approach the door from the inside. It is not designed to affect vampires, however, and it is not powerful enough to keep the demon in the barrow should it escape Tiamat.

## 2. The Spear Trap

This was designed by Tiamat to kill humans and weaken vampires before they got deep inside the barrow. It was originally designed to fire three sets of iron-tipped spears from the walls when a tripwire was pulled. The wire is

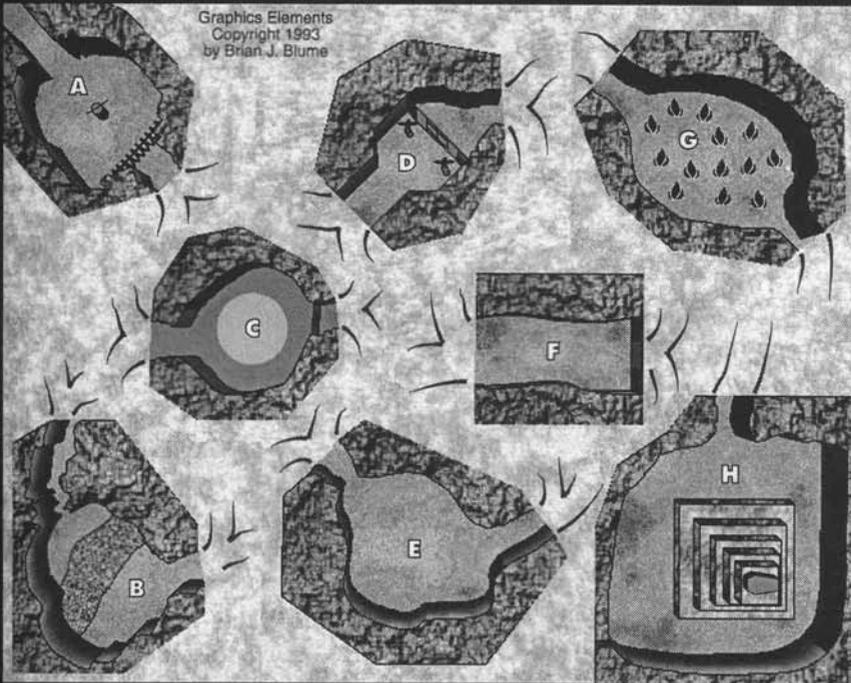
difficult to spot in the darkness [Wits + Alertness (difficulty 8)]. Have each player make the roll when his character approaches the wire.

The spears are connected by a single bar to give the weapons (seven spears in each group) stability. Two sets of spears fire from the left wall and, between those two, one set of spears fires from the right wall. Each set is about five feet from the next set.

All of the spear sets are controlled by counterweights set deep in the walls, and the spears on the left wall have lost a great deal of speed because their pulleys have rusted. Thus, these two sets of spears will not spring fast enough to inflict any real damage; however, they may trap vampires between them. The character who tripped them must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 8) or be trapped when the spears imbed themselves into the earthen walls.

The third set of spears (the one on the right wall) still works, but its triggering mechanism is a little rusty and it will take an extra three turns for it to activate. The characters should be concerned with freeing their comrades trapped between the spears. Each time the characters pass the right spear trap, it may go off (at the Storyteller's discretion) and it will definitely go off if anybody touches the tripwire again (which crosses the passage right below the unsprung spear trap).

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## Drakonskyr's Domain

- A. Web of Bodies
- B. Vision of Hell
- C. Test of Patience
- D. Gargoyles
- E. Room of Silent Screams
- F. Portal of the Future
- G. The Black Flames
- H. The Ziggurat

The spears will hit the character(s) who set it off unless that character can score three successes on a Wits + Alertness roll (difficulty 8) and then three more on a Dexterity + Dodge roll (difficulty 9). The spears inflict seven dice of damage upon anyone hit. The Storyteller should roll one die for each character hit by the spears; on a roll of a one, that character has been impaled through the heart by the wooden shaft.

### 3. Pit Traps

Each of the numbers indicates an area where the floor gives way, rotating on a central axle and dumping whoever steps on either end into a 30-foot pit. In addition, the floor will rotate around to reseal the pit, making it difficult to rescue a character inside and making it impossible for a character to free himself. The traps are impossible to spot, and the characters will only spot them by probing the floor ahead of them or by falling in.

The bottom of the pits are covered with two-foot wooden spikes. The fall will inflict four Health Levels of falling damage, which may be soaked (difficulty 8), and the spikes cause an additional four dice of damage. In addition, on a roll of 1 or 2, one of the wooden spikes has impaled the vampire through the heart, immobilizing her.

Once the characters have located all the pits, they may maneuver around them by making a successful Dexterity +

Athletics roll (difficulty 8). Failure means a character cannot get past the pits, while a botch means she falls into one.

### 4. Primitive Napalm

Several wooden poles block the passage here. Each is an inch thick, and they form bars no more than four inches apart. Removing the bars triggers a trap door in the ceiling, from which tar will pour upon all those standing underneath. Originally, flint and steel were included in the trap, to light the tar on fire and cause the person underneath to ignite like a Roman candle.

Like many of Tiamat's traps, the years have done their damage (despite Tiamat's spells to protect them) and the flint and steel no longer work. Thus, the character(s) will only be covered in sticky, smelly tar. However, if a vampire so attacked just happens to be carrying a fire source or is later hit with flames, he will ignite, taking three Health Levels a turn. These may be soaked with Fortitude only (difficulty 5). The tar may be scraped off, but this will take at least 10 rounds and a vampire immersed in burning tar is likely to go into frenzy.

Vampires seeing their comrade in flames must roll their Courage (difficulty 5) to avoid Röttschreck. Only an exceptional Courage roll (four or more successes) will allow a vampire to attempt to scrape burning tar from a friend. The



Storyteller should set a target number based on the characters' friendship (or lack thereof) for one another. Good friends will have a much easier time helping one another.

It is possible that several vampires are examining the bars when the trap is triggered. If any of them is holding a flame source, the whole group should catch fire.

The tar itself will cover the entire width of the hallway five feet before the door. Even if the characters somehow avoid being drenched in the foul stuff, they may still have to walk through it to get to the next room.

## 5. The Wolf

This chamber is filled with bones of all kinds. Horse, dog, rodent and human bones lie everywhere. In the center of the room the bones are mostly those of small rodents and are only a few inches deep, but in the corners the piles reach four feet or more in height.

Hiding among the bones, waiting in ambush, is a large Lupine skeleton animated by Tiamat before her long rest. It will only emerge once the characters have entered the room. Once inside, the creature will arise and attack the characters. It cannot pass beyond the entrance to the barrow, though it is free to move within the confines of the barrow. It knows how to avoid the pit traps in the first corridor.

The skeleton does not have sentience as such. It is no more than an automaton, a large bone robot, and it can only do what it was magically programmed to do. It is in wolfman form and cannot shapeshift. Furthermore, its attacks are limited in their creativity and, given the same tactical situation, it will do the same thing over and over again, no matter what the consequences.

After four rounds of hand-to-hand combat with the skeleton (if anyone can last that long), the characters may make Wits + Brawl rolls (difficulty 9, but the difficulty decreases by one for each extra round the fight continues) to see if they notice a pattern in the creature's movements and attacks. A character who makes this roll gains an additional die in her Dice Pool for each success scored on the roll. After very prolonged combat (10 rounds at least), the Storyteller may rule that particularly fast or skilled vampires have memorized the pattern of the skeleton's attack, enabling them to avoid all attacks.

**Attributes:** Strength 7, Dexterity 7, Stamina 7

**Attacks:** Claws — six-dice attack (seven dice aggravated damage), Teeth — six-dice attack (nine dice aggravated damage).

**Health Levels:** OK/OK/-1/-1/-2/-2/-5/Incapacitated

The skeleton begins each turn with the equivalent of three initiative successes and can make one claw attack and one bite attack each turn. It uses its Stamina to soak damage, aggravated or not, but cannot regenerate. All missile weapons have their difficulties to hit increased by one, and

bullets do only one die of damage (they only chip bones), though shotguns do two dice. Silver bullets and melee weapons do normal damage to the skeleton.

If the skeleton is somehow lit on fire, its bones will crack and become brittle. This will reduce its Physical Attributes to 3. However, it takes at least 10 minutes for the fire to have this effect. In addition, the skeleton continues to attack even if immolated, only now it will light vampires on fire if it hits them. An ordinary torch waved in its face has no effect.

## 6. Hall of Razors

This long corridor is very narrow, only about three feet wide. The entire length of the corridor is covered with long, thin razors on the ceiling and both walls. Each razor extends for a foot into the corridor. The blades are magically enchanted by Tiamat to remain extremely sharp and free of rust despite years of neglect. They are also extremely difficult to break (Strength Feat of 6 to make any progress down the corridor at all), and even then the broken razors will still be sharp and jagged.

A character wishing to traverse the corridor by breaking razors in front of him must move very slowly in order to break all the razors in his path. Because there are many razors (each is 10 to 20 feet long and runs horizontally down the corridor), and because each razor immediately follows the last one, this can be very slow, taking at least four hours.

For every 10 feet of corridor a character travels, he will take three dice of damage. This may be resisted in the usual way. If a vampire tries to run through the razors, he will take five dice of damage per 10-foot distance. If a character has broken the razors; he may make a Dexterity + Dodge roll (difficulty 7) every 10 feet to avoid taking any damage.

A Courage roll (difficulty 7) is required simply to enter the corridor. The Storyteller may wish to require Courage rolls for every 10 feet traveled. If a character fails the roll, she simply stops from the pain and refuses to move.

Being cut by paper-thin razors is a very painful experience and can easily cause a vampire to frenzy. For every two Health Levels a character suffers, he must make a Self-Control roll (difficulty 5) to avoid frenzy. Should a vampire frenzy amid the razors, he will take five dice of damage per turn until he is free of the hall. Most frenzied vampires will attempt to move backward, because this is the last place that they were safe. If the exit is clearly visible, a frenzied vampire may move forward. Of course, there may be other vampires following a character when he frenzies, and this could have unfortunate consequences.

Doing anything unusual (like stopping a frenzied vampire or fighting a skeletal Lupine) in the Hall of Razors can be extremely painful. The Storyteller may want to award extra damage for special actions, though few things will inflict any more than five dice of damage and most extra actions should probably inflict one or two dice of damage.



The easiest way to cross through the razors without high levels of Protean would be to walk sideways, but this requires the character to make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 8) or take the normal damage. A character could also wrap herself in a thick leather hide or similar armor. If the hide is thick enough, the character might not take any damage at all. This is how the barrow's builders used to pass through this area. Note that the fear of being cut by the terrible blades may be enough to cause a frenzy roll, even if a vampire is so protected (at the Storyteller's discretion).

## 7. Pit of the Sun

This ingenious little trap is designed solely to kill vampires. Like the other pits, this one is covered by a revolving trap door that rotates on a single axle halfway across the pit. Those who fall in cannot see the corridor. This pit is 30 feet deep, like the others, and vampires who fall in will take the usual falling damage.

The pit's walls are covered with flat sheets of mica, a common and reflective rock. There are also several baseball-sized holes in the walls. If a character looks deep inside one of these holes, she will be able to see moonlight or perhaps a plant or two. In fact, she is not looking directly at these things. These holes lead to complex passageways going all the way to the surface. They also have mirrors inside of them, and these reflect light into the pit. Naturally, this is extremely dangerous should any vampires be down here when the sun rises. The reflective mica walls will permeate the room with sunlight, frying any vampires unfortunate enough to be trapped here.

Fortunately, many of the holes and mirrors designed to bring light into this pit have been blocked by rubbish and are no longer working. Thus, sunlight will not enter the pit until at least 10 a.m., and the sunlight is considered indirect (difficulty 3 to soak, though characters must have Fortitude to attempt a soak roll). It causes three Health Levels of damage.

This should not be too bad, but remember that this damage occurs every turn, not once in a while. Vampires may have to rush to escape from the sunlight because eventually they are going to botch a roll, no matter how tough they are.

## 8. Hall of Fire

This long hall is magically kept warm — very warm — by Tiamat's power. Originally, the hall was full of roaring flames. Now, after centuries of sleep, Tiamat's spell has grown weak and the room is simply very hot. The temperature is about 350 degrees Fahrenheit and it will remain at that temperature no matter what the characters do.

All vampires traversing this corridor must make three Stamina + Fortitude soak rolls (difficulty 6) to avoid taking damage from the heat. The base damage is three Health

Levels. If the Diabolists wrap themselves in wet blankets or something similar, they may make it through this corridor with little or no damage.

## 9. Fool's Gold

Here is the false tomb of Tiamat, set up to deter any grave robbers who might have gotten this far or any vampires who might be distracted by wealth. A large, gold-plated sarcophagus rests in the center of the room, while scattered all around are hundreds of items of immense value to collectors and antiquarians. Golden plates, cups, tapestries, weapons and many other artifacts from the glorious days of Rome lie about, all well preserved and in good condition. It is an archaeologist's dream come true.

Inside the sarcophagus is a vampire — a villager Tiamat Embraced and forced into torpor. The vampire is a Ventrue, but she is only of fifth generation. The Ritual of the Bitter Rose will not work on her because her generation is a little too high, though she is still a target for diablerie in the normal way. She is old and withered, and she looks virtually dead.

If, for some strange reason, the characters give her blood, she will awaken from torpor and, using broken Latin, plead for help from the Diabolists. She will not recognize the

characters' dress and will thus assume they must be Romans, as Romans always wore strange clothing.

Most vampires will simply drink from her, which will allow one of them to lower her generation in the usual manner. Thinking their quest finished, the Kindred may simply take the Roman artifacts and leave. This is just what Tiamat hopes, of course.

In fact, underneath the sarcophagus is a stairwell leading down and into the final corridor — and Drakonskyr's domain. The sarcophagus can be moved (Strength Feat of 6, or 5 if the vampire is removed).

If the vampires have the proper contacts for such things, the artifacts can be sold for a great deal of money. If they have contacts in this area, they could sell the goods for several million dollars; if not, they might be able to sell them to a museum for at least a few hundred thousand. Of course, if the characters are feeling very generous, they might simply give the artifacts away to a poor museum that never could afford to purchase such things.

The golden goods are the results of one of Tiamat's spells. If the Storyteller does not want this much loot in the characters' hands, she may declare that the treasure reverts to clay pots and wooden plates when the characters leave the tomb.



# Domain of the Demon

As discussed previously, this entire section is physically located in the tunnel that connects the false tomb with Tiamat's real tomb. The areas are ordered by letters so there will be no confusion with Tiamat's traps. As stated before, these rooms can appear in any order that the Storyteller likes, except for the final encounter (H), which should be saved for last.

## The Rules of Drakonskyr's Halls

As befits an area constructed by the crazed imagination of a trapped demon, Drakonskyr's domain operates according to its own unique laws. Generally this has the effect of making the characters more emotional or prone to internal conflicts of all sorts (or anything else the Storyteller desires).

Specifically, the Storyteller should increase by two the difficulties of all frenzy rolls. This represents the anxiety inspired by this place. Courage rolls are often required as well, and these are included in the text, though the Storyteller may require any more that she likes. Once a character has seen something truly terrible, it is possible that something simple may frighten him terribly even if there is no danger. When the Storyteller believes that the characters should be scared, have them make Courage rolls. Failed Courage rolls often result in the character becoming paralyzed with terror, though they can cause a frenzy under certain circumstances.

Once the characters have entered Drakonskyr's halls, there is no escape until Drakonskyr is dead or has fled Tiamat's body. Because physical space has no meaning in Drakonskyr's halls, characters cannot simply turn around and walk out. Instead, they enter another section of the demon's psyche.

Because this area is illusory, however, characters who take enough damage to meet their Final Deaths herein are not destroyed. Should the other characters succeed in slaying Tiamat, they will find the characters in the corridor (which will revert to its normal state). The damaged characters will be in torpor, and they will have neither Willpower nor Blood Points, having spent them trying to heal nonexistent damage. They remain in torpor for as long as their Humanity dictates.

### Betrayal

Drakonskyr has always been obsessed with betrayal, and this obsession has grown over the years. The demon feels that it was betrayed by Tiamat when she refused to release its spirit after it had finished helping her with her

problems. Betrayal should become a serious problem for the Diabolists, a group that has probably never been trustworthy in the first place. When the characters enter Drakonskyr's domain, the Storyteller needs to encourage them to betray one another.

This can be done by breeding distrust among the players. Write notes back and forth between them and instruct players to write notes to you, even if they have nothing to say. Limited blood can also cause distrust among the vampires, as can jealousy. Storytellers can add small treasures throughout the corridors, and allow the characters to bicker over them. The items are not real, of course, but vampires may become jealous of each other's treasures, sowing the seeds of distrust and suspicion.

## The Corridors

Note that the corridors of Drakonskyr's area of the barrow vary widely in appearance. Returning along a previously traveled corridor does not guarantee that the passage will have the same appearance. You, as the Storyteller, may decide what each corridor looks like. Below are a few suggestions to inspire your own ideas of what the various passageways and paths through the mind of a demon might look like. These are not the areas described on the map; those come later.

A. The corridor appears to be the inside of a living creature. The soft, pink walls undulate gently. The air is humid and the walls are moist. Perhaps muscles, bones or organs are visible. The interior does not need to be anatomically correct for any known organism.

A twist to this theme is to make the interior of the body dead. The walls of the esophagus (or whatever) have turned gray and cold and the stench of death fills the air. Perhaps the walls are ruptured in places and bones can be seen showing through. Little spiders and worms scuttle and wriggle across the floor feeding on the decaying matter.

B. The corridor is filled with primitive torture devices, many of which Drakonskyr has invented. They are all hard iron things, covered in spikes and rust. Perhaps there are dead victims in the various instruments, or perhaps the victims are still alive and they froth and beg silently as the characters pass by.

C. The corridor is filled with countless bits of personal junk, glasses, clothing, wallets, loose change and watches. All of the items are broken or torn to shreds and some have blood on them. The items come from all time periods — some wallets are made of synthetic leather and some are pouches of fine felt that might have been worn on the belt of an 18th-century noble. The demon draws any anachronistic items (i.e., items from a period after Tiamat entered torpor) from the memories of the characters.

D. The walls and floors look like they are made of skin and the skin has several fresh gashes located here and there. If anybody touches the wounds, faraway moans are heard.

E. The walls are black and crumbly like volcanic rock. Gasses spurt from fissures, making the air reek of sulfur and other poisonous gasses. All along the walls are the shapes of humans, their mouths open as if to scream and their hands reaching out toward the middle of the corridor as though they had been covered in lava where they stood. If a statue is broken, no human corpse will be discovered inside — only black stone.

F. The corridor is made of cool marble and the walls are covered in exotic decorations. Statues and gargoyles adorn the hall in classic Gothic style. Suits of armor, complete with weapons, decorate the walls. Candles hang along each wall, and perhaps a candelabra can be dimly seen dancing down the corridor ahead of the characters.

G. The corridor changes into a pathway through the woods or another outdoor location. In order to stay in the true tunnel, one must stay on the path. Should the characters stray from the path, they must find their way back to it before they can enter another chamber and continue with their search for the resting place of Tiamat.

Who knows what terrible creatures or strange events the Storyteller might conjure up to drive them from the path? Perhaps a group of mounted knights suddenly appears and rides down the path, expecting the vampires (obviously peasants) to step aside. When the knights are confronted, the knights refuse to talk; if they are forced to open a visor, the characters realize that the knights have no skin.

The trick to all of these corridor ideas is to keep them creepy, not just gross or disgusting. Keep the players off balance — when they think things are starting to make sense, throw them a curve that makes no sense whatsoever. Perhaps coming down the other end of the path opposite the knights (from idea “G” above) is an M1A1 main battle tank. The tank is a figment of Drakonskyr’s imagination, so the Storyteller doesn’t need to explain it. Drakonskyr can sense the Diabolists entering the tomb through the murk of its sleep. Their fear feeds the demon’s mind and its mind instinctively provides the terror to enhance their fear.

## The Damned

Many people roam the halls of Drakonskyr’s imagination. None of the people are real, for all have been reinvented from Drakonskyr’s memories. The demon tortures and slays them in its own version of hell, but because the victims are not real, they never die. These characters can appear anywhere — simply add them as desired or make a random roll to determine whether one is encountered.

1. Cleopatra walks the halls in all of her Egyptian finery. An asp clamps each of her breasts and her skin peels away as she slowly rots. Needless to say, such terror is enough to drive anyone screaming and moaning to the brink of insanity. She believes that she is still beautiful and she will throw herself at male vampires in hopes of getting their attention.

2. Augustus Caesar is also in a degenerate state. He is forced to crawl around on his hands and knees with a chain around his neck. He is led about by a small, perfect little child not more than eight years old. Every now and then the child stops and orders Augustus to do something pointless and demeaning; Augustus grudgingly obeys.

3. A beautiful woman and a handsome man are chained to the wall opposite one another. Each screams and watches as the other is eaten alive by snakes and beetles. The chains are made of a hard, cold iron and are unbreakable. The two cannot be killed, though they will show the effects of wounds.

4. Socrates has his tongue cut out and lies in a pool of simmering fat. He is pierced with many spears and has wounds all over his body. Not very imaginative of Drakonskyr, but his hatred of Socrates runs deep, as Socrates made a fool of Tiamat (and thus the demon) in public once.

5. A fat Roman man (Nero) runs around in circles, screaming and gibbering hysterically as his entire body burns. This is a bit of a joke on Drakonskyr’s part; Nero was often blamed for a major fire in Rome that did great damage to the Kindred and kine of that city.

6. Tiamat appears many times in a variety of terrible places. Drakonskyr cuts, burns, bleeds, maims, slices and dices Tiamat in hundreds of different ways. The Diabolists may be surprised when they face Tiamat at the end of the adventure and realize she is the woman they have seen so often in Drakonskyr’s cursed halls.

## The Zombies

As explained above, many of the “Damned” roam through Drakonskyr’s domain. Most of the time these creatures will not be aggressive, but under certain circumstances the vampires may wish to attack them. In this case, the dead have the following stats: Physical 4, Social 0, Mental 1. The zombies also have a Brawling Talent and a Melee Skill of 2. For the most part, the zombies will not attack the characters, but will defend themselves if necessary. They have no Blood Points, though they may appear to bleed.

## The Mouth Doors

Doors shaped like mouths are common among Drakonskyr’s halls. Sometimes they are made of stone; other times they are made of flesh and blood. These mouths may bite, doing five or six dice of damage, depending on what the Storyteller prefers at that point. They may be avoided by a successful dive through the doors using Dexterity and either Acrobatics or Dodge (difficulty is variable, but should be at least 7). These doors appear whenever you like. If the door is made of stone, it may be slower (making the test to jump through easier), but it may inflict more damage.



## The Rooms

### A. Web of Bodies

This chamber contains approximately 50 human bodies blocking the large (30-foot-wide) exit on the other side of the room. The bodies are held together like paper dolls; each body's arm and leg are grafted to the arm and leg of his companion to either side. They are joined to the walls of the exit by extra limbs that grow directly into the wall. The humans are all nude and barely conscious. They stare straight ahead without saying a word.

In the center of the room is a large, black scimitar on a stone pedestal. The only way to get past the human wall is to cut a way through. Once all of the characters are in the chamber, the doors through which they entered close (or snap shut) with a crunch, prohibiting any escape.

The bodies are too close together for any but the smallest person to squeeze through and the ceiling to the exit is extremely low, making it impossible to crawl or vault over them. The only option is to heft the heavy sword and cut through while blood spurts everywhere and the human paper dolls scream and wail in agony. Blood Points can be gained from these bodies if any vampire has the guts to feed from these abominations.

If the characters opt to cut their way through, the humans will cry piteously as they are sliced by the blade. Unless the vampires have Humanity scores of three or lower, they must succeed in Conscience checks (difficulty 6) to avoid losing Humanity. Several limbs must be hewn to clear a path to the exit, as the bodies are arranged several rows deep.

### B. Vision of Hell

This room contains terrible images of hell straight from the mind of Drakonskyr. A 25-foot-wide river of boiling blood flows across the path. All sorts of people stand in this river. Some are in the shallows while others are up to their necks in the hot, thick blood. All are howling in pain, to a greater or lesser degree depending on how deep in the river they stand. They are, of course, all naked so they can properly feel the pain.

It is unlikely that the characters will recognize any but a few of those being punished. All are murders and killers. The amount of killing they did (or ordered done) determines how deep in the river they are. Sulla, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great and Brutus are all here, along with countless other killers who committed their own private murders up to the time when Tiamat went to sleep.

The characters are also present here. Duplicates of the characters can be found in the river in proportion to the number of people they have killed. Because the vampires

have entered the tomb, they have affected this nebulous area of reality and imprinted part of themselves upon it. Any character who has committed diablerie (an act of cannibalism), murder or betrayal, will be in the river at least up to her waist. If a character has been especially brutal, she may not even be fully visible, being immersed over her face.

Vaulting across the river requires a Dexterity + Acrobatics roll (difficulty 7) and at least two successes. Rolling only one success indicates that the character has only gotten halfway across and has managed to grab onto or stand on one of the people in the river. At this point another test (also difficulty 7) can be taken. This time one success is enough to cross the rest of the river. Failure means the character has fallen in.

Any character who falls in takes three Health Levels of damage, which can be soaked normally. The damage is not aggravated because the river is not quite hot enough. Drinking the blood is not a very good idea; it is very hot and will inflict one automatic Health Level of damage (this time aggravated) to any character who drinks it. If the characters collect some blood and wait for it to cool, it will coagulate, making it undrinkable.

### C. Test of Patience

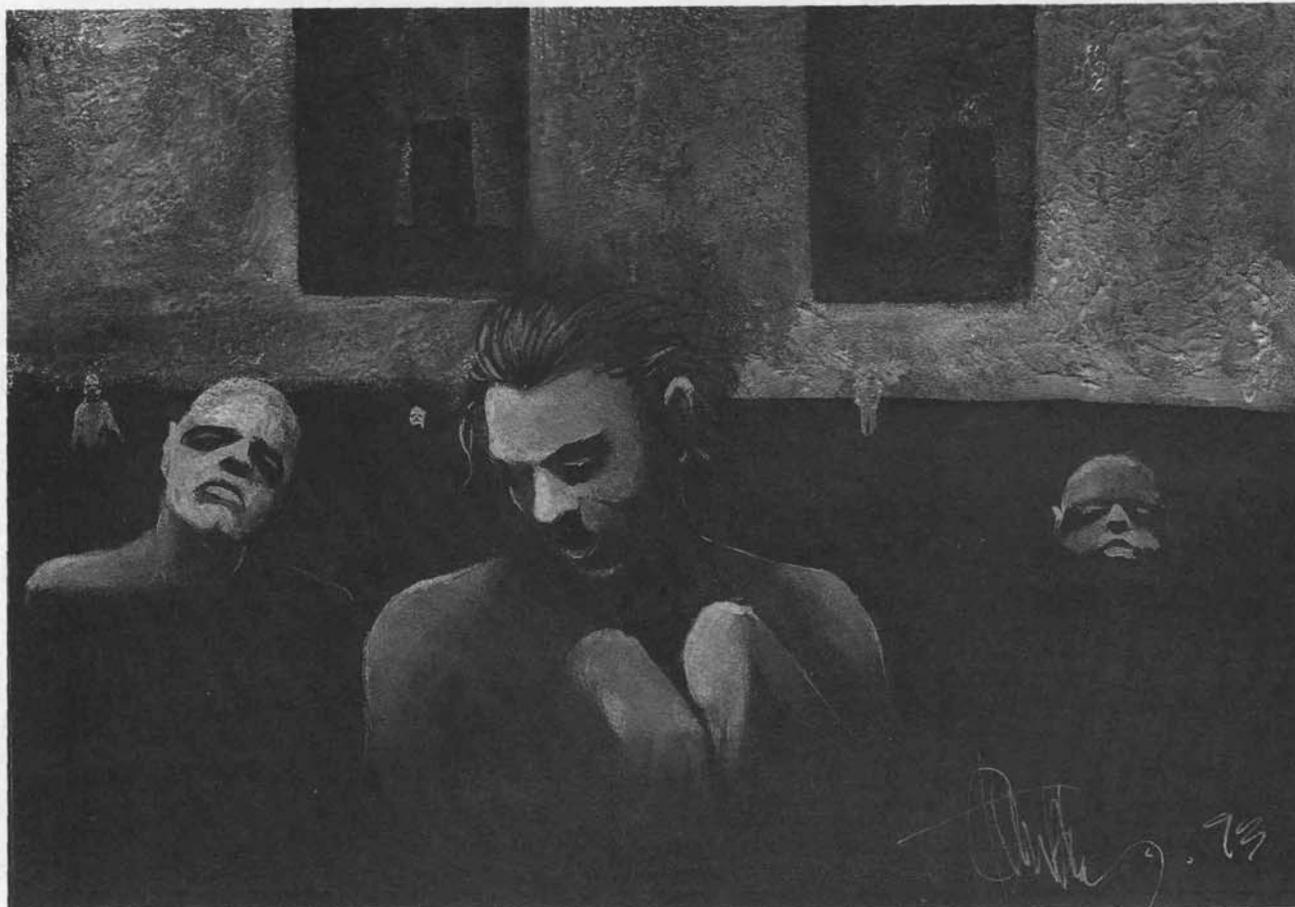
Drakonskyr delights in torture and its imagination enjoys pain. This room is obviously made of flesh and it looks like the inside of a human organ. In the middle of the

room, a light diffracts from a membrane overhead. The rest of the room is very dark. There is a very large mouth on the opposite side of the chamber.

As soon as any character steps into the light the mouth speaks: "Cross the light and be destroyed." At this point, pseudo-humanoid creatures made of uncovered muscle will start to emerge from the fleshy walls. They have no real faces or eyes, and seem to be made of living masses of tissue. They begin to attack the characters. The characters inside cannot leave (at least according to the mouth) and those on the outside cannot enter the room.

The fleshy creatures should win. Make sure of that. As long as the characters do not cross the light, they will be killed by the fleshy creatures, while their comrade inside the light watches on, screaming and shouting warnings but unable to do anything about it.

In fact, the entire scene of the characters outside the light being killed is just an illusion. If the one vampire stays inside the light until the end, the light will dim and he will see his friends staring at him strangely — not surprising considering he has spent the last couple of minutes jumping around and shouting warnings to them about things they could not see. If the character did not leave the light until the end of the illusory combat, the mouth on the opposite side of the room will open and the characters can leave by that exit.





If the light is crossed, the illusory combat will suddenly halt, at least from the point of view of the character inside the light. Suddenly, several fleshy creatures will erupt from the walls and begin to attack the party. These creatures are quite real. They have no drinkable blood.

### **Fleshy Creatures**

**Physical:** Five dice in all Physical Attributes. Other Attributes are unimportant.

**Attacks:** Claw — five dice to hit and five dice damage.

**Health Levels:** OK/-1/-1/-2/-2/-5/Incapacitated

### **D. Gargoyles**

This small “chamber” is really only an extension of the corridor, and ends in a large door. The entire area looks like an old Gothic castle, complete with black marble floors and stout wooden doors with iron fittings. Across the room, crouching atop pedestals on either side of the two large double doors, are two huge gargoyles. They have been carved to look like winged demons, with four arms and grimacing faces. Both have large fangs and what look like razor-sharp claws — sharper than any stone ought to be.

As the characters enter, have all of them make Perception + Alertness rolls (difficulty 6), and tell the character with the most successes that he believes he saw one gargoyle’s wing twitch a little bit as the characters entered. The doors are both closed and the characters will have to pass by the gargoyles to reach the doors.

The characters must make Courage rolls (difficulty 8) in order not to feel any fear. Otherwise, they become frightened and quake a little as they stand between the two hulking sculptures. These gargoyles are alive, and they sense fear. In fact, they can sense nothing save the emanations of fear. They can always find someone who is afraid. Thus, the only way to get past the creatures is to feel no fear at all. If the characters feel any fear at all, the gargoyles will animate and attack. Fortunately, the gargoyles are extremely slow, attacking only once every other turn and taking at least a turn to cross the chamber if the characters retreat from them.

Once the characters start moving, they must continue to make Courage rolls (difficulty 9), accumulating three successes to stop fearing the creatures. A Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 8) will reveal that the gargoyles cannot see in the conventional sense. They do not turn their heads when guns fire at them, nor do they even seem to notice when they are attacked. They do notice shouts of pain, fear or terror. The gargoyles ignore all others in their attempt to destroy the character who is most afraid (either the first one to fail a Courage roll or the one who has scored the fewest successes once the gargoyles have become active).

Any character who realizes this fact, either because she figured it out or because another character tells her, may reduce the difficulties of all subsequent Courage rolls (to 6). However, nothing provokes fear like pain, so each Health Level a character suffers causes her to lose one of her accumulated successes on the Courage roll. Characters can gain negative successes in this way; these they must first remove before they can accumulate the three required successes.

Once all the characters have accumulated three successes, the gargoyles can no longer see any of them and they return their perches. They ignore anything else that happens in the room, either to themselves or to the door.

## Gargoyles

**Physical:** Strength 9, Dexterity 4, Stamina 9

**Mental:** Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 5

**Attacks:** Claws — six dice (nine dice of damage)

**Health Levels:** OK/OK/-1/-1/-2/-2/-5/Incapacitated

No other stats have any importance. They scowl and hunt for scared vampires. They have no Blood Points. Their claw attacks are not aggravated. The gargoyles are extremely tough and cannot be hurt by firearms. The only practical way to pass them is to notice how they fight and to take courage from it.

## E. Room of Silent Screams

This room is filled with approximately 20 people. All of them are covered in terrible wounds, and their mouths are open wide in screams of pure agony. Actually, the characters can only assume the victims are screaming, for the room is as silent as a crypt. When the characters try to speak to one another, they discover that they cannot make a sound. Do not let the players speak aloud to one another and do not let them write notes to one another unless their characters brought pen and paper into the barrow.

Lurking in this room is a terrible creature that looks much like Drakonskyr might look were it corporeal. Big enough to dominate the room, the creature has deep red skin, several arms and a long, barbed tail. Its face is like a man's, only more sinister and pointed. It has a great mane of hair flowing down its back and a sinister goatee on its face. In its hands it carries a great flaming sword, which it uses to deadly effect. Unfortunately, the creature is invisible when the characters enter.

In fact, the creature will never attack unless its assault will only be noticed by one of the characters. Because the room inhibits noise, the characters will not be able to hear it and because it is invisible, they will not be able to see it. The creature usually attacks those in the rear of the group. The creature appears for only a second, strikes and then disappears again.

If a character attempts to communicate with the wounded people, she notices that the wounds are sur-

rounded by burn scars, and that the people are mouthing something (in Latin) between their screams. In fact, what they are saying over and over is, "The thing which will not be seen." This may inform the characters of what is going on, but to decipher the message they must speak Latin, make Perception + Linguistics rolls (difficulty 9) and accumulate three successes. If they spend a lot of time in the room, the Storyteller may want to reduce the difficulty, but characters should not spend too much time here.

In order to keep from getting attacked, the characters may form a ring with each character facing out and then try to cross the room in this fashion. However, this will allow the creature to strike at its choice of targets from inside the ring. The best method is to form a ring facing inward. That way, everybody is always visible to everybody else. The creature will not attack a target being watched by another.

The creature does five dice of aggravated damage with its sword. The creature cannot be harmed by bullets, and because it always gains surprise and first attack on its target, it is not really possible for the characters to kill it. They can keep it back if they wave weapons of some type in front of themselves, but the creature likes to attack from behind anyway. Unless there is a reason it cannot do that, it always strikes from the rear. It appears with a shimmer of light, silently slays its target, and is gone before anyone is the wiser. Indeed, wounded characters may not even be able to get their friends' attention if they are at the rear of the group.

## F. Portal of the Future

This large doorway is made of a black, shiny, obsidian-like stone. Nothing but smoke and darkness can be seen through the doorway. "Portal of the Future" is written in English (or whatever language the characters speak) over the doorway. When the Diabolists enter, they see a vision of the future — or so they assume.

The image is very clear and shows Tiamat's ziggurat, located in Room H. Each character sees a different vision, but the theme of each vision is the same. Each character sees himself about to drink from Tiamat. As he stoops to drink, he is attacked from behind by one of his comrades, who mortally wounds him. The attacker then fights the other members of the coterie while the character expires quietly in a corner, the victim of betrayal.

As mentioned earlier, Drakonskyr is obsessed with betrayal. The demon thus encourages the characters to fight one another. If Drakonskyr were fully conscious, it would help them find Tiamat, of course. It yearns to be free and would do anything to further that cause. However, the sleeping demon's cruel subconscious can only hinder others.

When describing the vision (best to tell each player privately or via note), concoct the most likely scenarios. If two characters argue frequently, each should see himself being slain by the other. If one character has threatened the others, those threatened should see themselves being slain

by the first character. Follow the natural conflicts of the party to give these lies a certain amount of possible truth; that way, they will be much easier to believe.

## G. The Black Flames

Here is Drakonskyr's final trick. Large, frightening black flames fill this chamber, but they do not radiate any heat. Vampires must make the usual Courage rolls (difficulty 6) to draw near the flames, but even if they put their hands in the fire, they are not burned. The characters can easily walk through the flames to the other side of the room without taking any damage. There is a catch, of course.

Each character who walks through the flames gains power over another, and the character instinctively knows it. As each character walks out of the fire, he sees his hands burn with the black flame and he knows that, if he wishes, he can use this flame on another character to kill her. The flame will work on only one character — a character named by the Storyteller. It will automatically destroy that character — no attack roll is needed and no soak will save the victim. The Storyteller should name characters who are already suspicious of one another, usually the ones seen in the "Portal of the Future" encounter above.

## H. The Ziggurat

Here is Tiamat's resting place. The room looks like a large black cavern, complete with stalactites and bats. The chamber is very large (at least in Drakonskyr's mind) and contains at its center a small ziggurat with five tiers, each five feet high. Resting atop the final tier is a plain stone sarcophagus with no ornamentation or inscription. The ziggurat looks very old and very worn. It is, in fact, an exact copy of a ziggurat in Ur where Tiamat spent a great deal of time and that Drakonskyr remembers well.

The lid to the sarcophagus is very difficult to open (Strength Feat of 6 to move it). Once this is done, a grinding and cracking can be heard from the ceiling. Suddenly a torrent of dark liquid floods down over the now-open sarcophagus and douses Tiamat's withered body in fresh, warm blood. Vampires who are on the ziggurat may drink from the blood and regain up to four Blood Points. While this is happening, however, Tiamat will awaken, gaining 20 Blood Points from the magically stored blood that just flooded from the ceiling.

Tiamat shows no mercy. She knows only that her eternal battle with Drakonskyr has turned for the worse and that the demon has gained powerful allies in these Diabolists. She has struggled so long and has come so far that she does not dare to negotiate. Only combat can win her war with Drakonskyr now, and the Diabolists must die. Even were they to flee, she would have to pursue them in order to ensure that they do not tell others of her barrow.

In combat, Tiamat uses all of her Disciplines to best effect, trying to conserve both her Blood Points and her Willpower. However, she must also conserve her Willpower

for another reason. Each turn she must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9). Failure indicates that Drakonskyr gains control of her body, though for that turn only.

If or when Drakonskyr gains control, it will completely drop Tiamat's guard, making her as vulnerable as possible. The characters will see Tiamat's face twist with emotion as she desperately tries to maintain control of her own body. Unfortunately, Tiamat also subconsciously wants to lose. It is said that older Cainites cannot truly be slain unless they allow it to happen. Tiamat is so tired of her battle that she hardly wants to live. She wishes for oblivion and, with the Diabolists disturbing her sleep, she has realized that she will never truly have oblivion. There will always be those who would violate her sleep and take her blood. Worse, they would release Drakonskyr on the world, something she has dedicated her life to preventing. She grows very tired of holding the demon, and even her sleep is tiring. There is no true rest for her and she secretly yearns for death.

If Tiamat dies, Drakonskyr is freed. Its first action is to possess the body of one of the Diabolists, enabling it to learn how the world has changed during the last 15 centuries. Once this is done, Drakonskyr will leave the Diabolist and escape to work what evil it can on the world. The Diabolists can perform the Ritual of the Bitter Rose (if they know it) or can have one of them drink the blood of Tiamat and go home.

Once Drakonskyr has left Tiamat's body, it will take the sword, simply teleporting it away from the characters and retrieving the blade later at its convenience. Without Tiamat to restrain it, the demon has great power, though somewhat diminished by centuries of inactivity.

## Aftermath

If the Diabolists get lucky, they may survive the barrow and flee with Tiamat's power. In this case, the Storyteller will have a powerful demon loose in her chronicle. If she does not want Drakonskyr there, there are several things she can do.

For instance, Drakonskyr has the power to destroy itself. Thus, if Tiamat's last Health Level is taken by the Sword of Nul, perhaps Drakonskyr's reign of terror ends with her. The Sword, forged by the demon's own hand, can banish its spirit back to the plane from where it came.

On the other hand, Drakonskyr can make an interesting addition to any chronicle. Whenever anything terrible happens around the world, the Kindred might wonder if the creature that possessed one of them is responsible. Because possession is a very intimate experience, the Diabolist who was possessed by Drakonskyr will know a great deal about the demon. He will know what Drakonskyr was and how long the demon was held by Tiamat. He will also understand who Tiamat was and what she was trying to do by holding onto Drakonskyr.

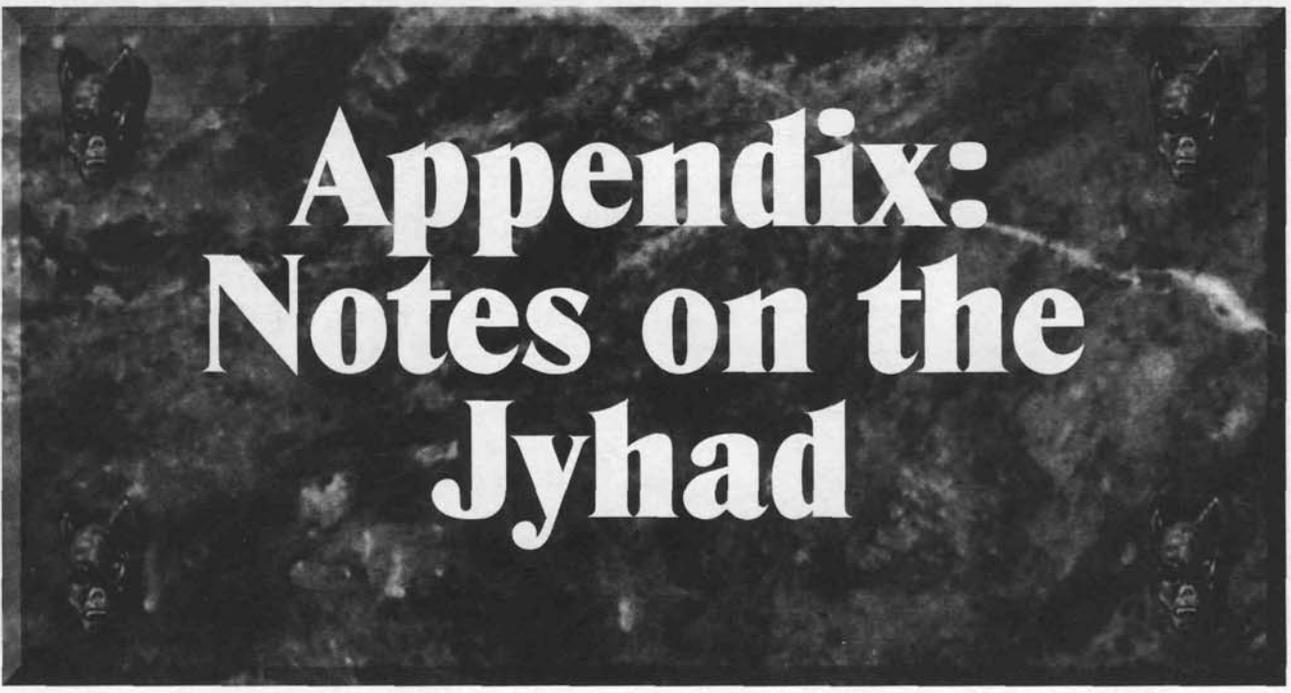


Drakonskyr can show up later in your chronicle or the characters could make it their mission to hunt the demon down, thereby cleansing themselves of their sin (and regaining some Humanity, but what do Diabolists care about that?). It is entirely their fault that it is free, and they may feel responsible for it.

How such a being can be killed is up to the Storyteller; perhaps the only solution is to trick it into possessing one of the characters. The character then holds onto its spirit,

much as Tiamat did, and thereby keeps Drakonskyr from running wild. Perhaps a vampire so possessed might return to Tiamat's barrow and sleep away eternity, in a living prison for the most terrible criminal the world has ever known. Only a great hero could hope to accomplish this and Diabolists are not known for their heroism. The only other option is to let Drakonskyr go free, and wait to see when it will turn up next.





# Appendix: Notes on the Jyhad

*When the lamb opened the seventh seal, silence covered the sky.*  
— Enigma, “A.D. MCMXC”

All Kindred fear Gehenna, the time when the Antediluvians shall awaken from their centuries of sleep. None are sure when this will happen, or even if it ever will. Many Kindred have made conjectures, voiced opinions and even performed scholarly research on the subject. Below are the notes of Clan Tremere’s Doctor Mortius concerning Gehenna, and a translation of a text known as *Das Buch von der Grabkrieg*, which was written in the early Middle Ages. It is included here for the Diabolist, for Diabolists often study the Antediluvians and the Methuselahs. Hunting such creatures in ignorance is a sure recipe for destruction.

This text is not commonly available to Licks, for the Tremere have tried to restrict access to it. Several copies have been secretly circulated among the Kindred, however, and the text has gained a following among many anarchists, who find the text fascinating. Most elders dismiss the writing as the ravings of a madman. Still, some read it and wonder.

Dr. Mortius himself was Embraced in 1566, several centuries after the book was written, and he wrote this current translation in the middle of this century. He is

currently on assignment for Clan Tremere and his whereabouts are unknown.

## **Translator’s Notes**

Loosely translated, *Das Buch von der Grabkrieg* means “The Book of the Grave-War.” It was written by a Malkavian in the 12th or 13th century A.D. The author’s name has been lost to the ages, and he does not mention his sire except to refer to him (not her; the gender is masculine) as a “vampire-father.” Little else is known about this writer. The writer refers to his clan as Malkavian, or so it would seem. He uses a variety of invented symbols to denote the various clans; certain symbols do not seem to relate to any particular clan extant today. It is possible that they refer to minor bloodlines.

He occasionally writes in an archaic Greek dialect that disappeared from use 3,000 years ago. Otherwise, nothing else is known. It is this translator’s opinion that our anonymous Malkavian was more disturbed than most of his ilk, to say the least. The text is almost unintelligible in its structure and style, no matter how many languages one speaks. The writer also obsesses upon several points and repeats them for



pages, sometimes repeating the same paragraph or stanza (some of the book is written in verse) several times, word for word.

Most of the text is written in a combination of German and an apparent dialect of Linear A, which neither Kindred nor kine has ever been able to translate. Fortunately, the Linear A is confined to the middle portions of the text. The author of the work does not split sentences between Linear A and German, though paragraphs are sometimes split and some pages alternate between both languages.

Physically, it is an unremarkable book, appearing to be an illuminated manuscript of poor quality, and was probably made in a monastery. The cover bears no title but the first page displays it in the scribbling German hand that can be found throughout the work. The style of the hand does not change, which has convinced many that the book is the product of one author and not several (as the poor organization would suggest).

*Das Buch von der Grabkrieg* is divided into seven cantos. Each canto varies wildly in length and structure, and some are entirely in verse form. Other cantos are part poem and part prose, while others are entirely prose. Because of the difficulties of rhyming in English, I have translated the sections below only in prose, preserving the stanza structure when it was used by the author himself. I have also done little to cleanse the disorganized style from the text out of fear of sacrificing meaning for clarity.

Each canto covers an age in the history of the world and describes the Jyhad during that period. The author places himself in the fourth age of history, with only three ages to follow. Many attribute this to his own egocentric madness, which dictates that he stand in the middle of all.

The following passages are pulled from many parts of the book and I have placed them in as logical an order as possible. In some cases I have rearranged the text in chronological order. The third canto is almost unintelligible (much of it is written in Linear A) and I have taken what I could from later cantos to give some ideas of the events this canto was meant to describe.

## Das Buch von der Grabkrieg

So we are told in the *Book of Nod* that Caine made but three and we are also told that these were slain during the first war where Caine's grandchilder arose and made war upon their parents. Thus were the first and second ages of the world of the grave. These grandchildren knew not the word of God. They divided themselves from the tribes and they knew not his word, for all they knew was death. Such was their madness as it was the madness of my grave-father ....<sup>1</sup>

It was during this great warring [of the second age] that the three children of Caine were slain, or so it was believed, but I fear that they shall reawaken in the last age of the Kindred and surprise all, the greatest masters of the Jyhad.

<sup>1</sup> Here the author goes into one of his many tangents about madness and hatred. The text continues two pages later when the author returns to the description of the first two ages.

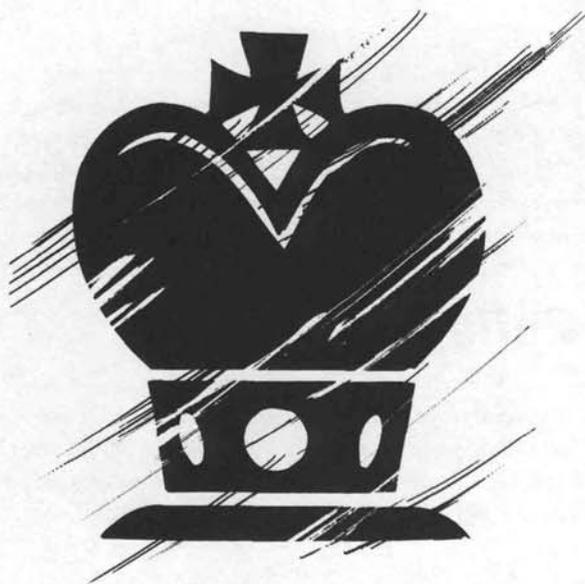
What they shall do I cannot say. The voice<sup>2</sup> does not tell me. Yet we may wonder. They obeyed Caine first and made no more childer. It was not until Caine had left them that they disobeyed him and produced the grandchilder. What they shall do I cannot say. Perhaps it will not be something terrible.

It was during the great warring that the tribes were scattered and the Kindred<sup>3</sup> came into their own. Here many of the tribes were born, but this is all spoken of in the *Book of Nod* and my voice tells me that is not my purpose, for I will tell of things to come, not things that have been and are known to the many sleepers who rest under the earth.<sup>4</sup>

After the warring, there was a third age of the grave-war. Known as “the sleeping,” this was a time of peace for many. Such a peace as is possible for those who drink from life. Here many slept, scattering all over the world to avoid the black Diabolist who would drink from their power. They could be found everywhere, for their power was considerable. As they rested, they gathered their power and manipulated those whom they had bred to do their bidding. Rather than a time of peace it was truly a time of preparation; it was peaceful only because the sword had grown dull and the lance was broken. Once reformed it would begin again.

The eaten one<sup>5</sup> had come and so with him the fourth age of the grave, the time of gathering. Now that the old ones sleep, they fight and duel with one another, yet they still gather strength and wait for the real battle to begin. The death has come and soon new clans will be formed — clans that would wish to destroy the world and make it all as the grave. From their birth shall come other ages.

There will be a time when the mortals grow to be strong. They will no longer be children but they will grow until they can hunt us. They will discover us and hunt us to the final death. This will happen when we grow careless and allow them to discover us, not realizing the danger they will present. The black ones will also be born at the beginning of this fifth age, the age of discovery. The black ones will be the eternal enemies of all the clans that exist. They are unnatural and terrible and should not be allowed to walk the earth. They are just pawns in the great game. Created by an ancient Kindred, perhaps even one of Caine’s first children, they would turn the earth into eternal night.<sup>6</sup>



In the sixth age of the world there will come a time when the children will not listen to their elders. When this happens look to see the end, for it is nigh. The children will gather in great numbers. Their elders’ long centuries of uncontrolled Embracing will have made many, and many will not have wisely bestowed the living-death. These childer will run through the streets of great cities and they will not listen to reason. They will break the laws time and time again.

There will be many vampires in each city, so many vampires that blood will become scarce and the kine will dream of us in their sleep and know in their hearts that we are there though we may still hide from them, deceiving them in the dark. Rebellion will be common. The black ones will gain control of the greatest city on the earth and the ruler of a mighty city will fall, slain by his own madness. A mighty prince will be rescued from death by childer and a great city will be consumed in flames. The Lupines will helplessly rage against us. The humans will discover a

<sup>2</sup> The author often speaks of a voice that tells him how to write and what to say. I should translate it as “Muse” but poetry seems to have little to do with this voice’s purpose.

<sup>3</sup> For the word Kindred or vampire, the author consistently uses the symbol of an ankh.

<sup>4</sup> “Sleepers” probably refers to Kindred in torpor, not the dead. Despite his comments here, the author goes on to talk a great deal about the *Book of Nod* and many events of human history.

<sup>5</sup> The “eaten” one does not appear elsewhere in the text though there is reference to “one without blood.”

<sup>6</sup> “The discovery” seems to refer to the Inquisition, which occurred 300 years after this text was written. The “black ones” are doubt the Sabbat, who also did not exist at the time this was written — at least, not in any numbers.

terrible fire which we will keep safe by giving it to all so that any who use it will be burned. Thus will the world fall into chaos.<sup>7</sup>

The last age of the world will last but for one year. The old ones, the Antediluvians, will awaken and they will drink the blood of their childer to gain strength, for the strength of mortals no longer quenches them and they need the blood of many Kindred to survive and grow in power. Strengthened by this blood, the Kindred will do battle with one another until only one remains. Thus will the Kindred be destroyed for none shall survive that year save the one.

## Epilogue

This is where *Das Buch von der Grabkrieg* ends. There are several more pages that appear to be a kind of epilogue, the author's notes or perhaps some of both. Most of it is nonsense or unreadable; however, two passages stand out from all of the others. They are translated below.

### Verse I

*Hunt the shadow-sleepers  
Think not on fear or hate  
Hunt them for blood  
for Kindred's sake*

### Verse II

*They must not awaken  
Slay the one  
and there shall not be a one  
when the sun sets*

### Finale

The voice will tell me nothing more. I plead, I beg for more so that we may know what is to come after and so we

shall not live in despair of Gehenna. The voice may not speak to any others and then this would all be lost. Still the voice will not speak of after. There is no after for us, and yet there is an after if kine survive. Yet the voice will not speak. Silence. Silence.

## Storytellers' Notes

Storytellers should feel free to use this in any way they desire. The first three lines of Verse I have been used as a Diabolists' creed, mumbled to give a Diabolist courage. Some Diabolists claim that they hunt the old ones as a sort of first strike against them so that their elders shall not hunt other Kindred when they awaken.

Scholars of Kindred history do not have access to the original text (only a select few of Clan Tremere do). Dr. Mortius's essay is often the only source for information on *Das Buch von der Grabkrieg*. This essay can be found in the hands of some anarchs, who use it to justify their attacks on the elders. They see it as an essay written by an elder, and the translated section of the book does not show the elders in a flattering light. It also foretells the coming of the anarchs, and they use this to justify their existence and activities.

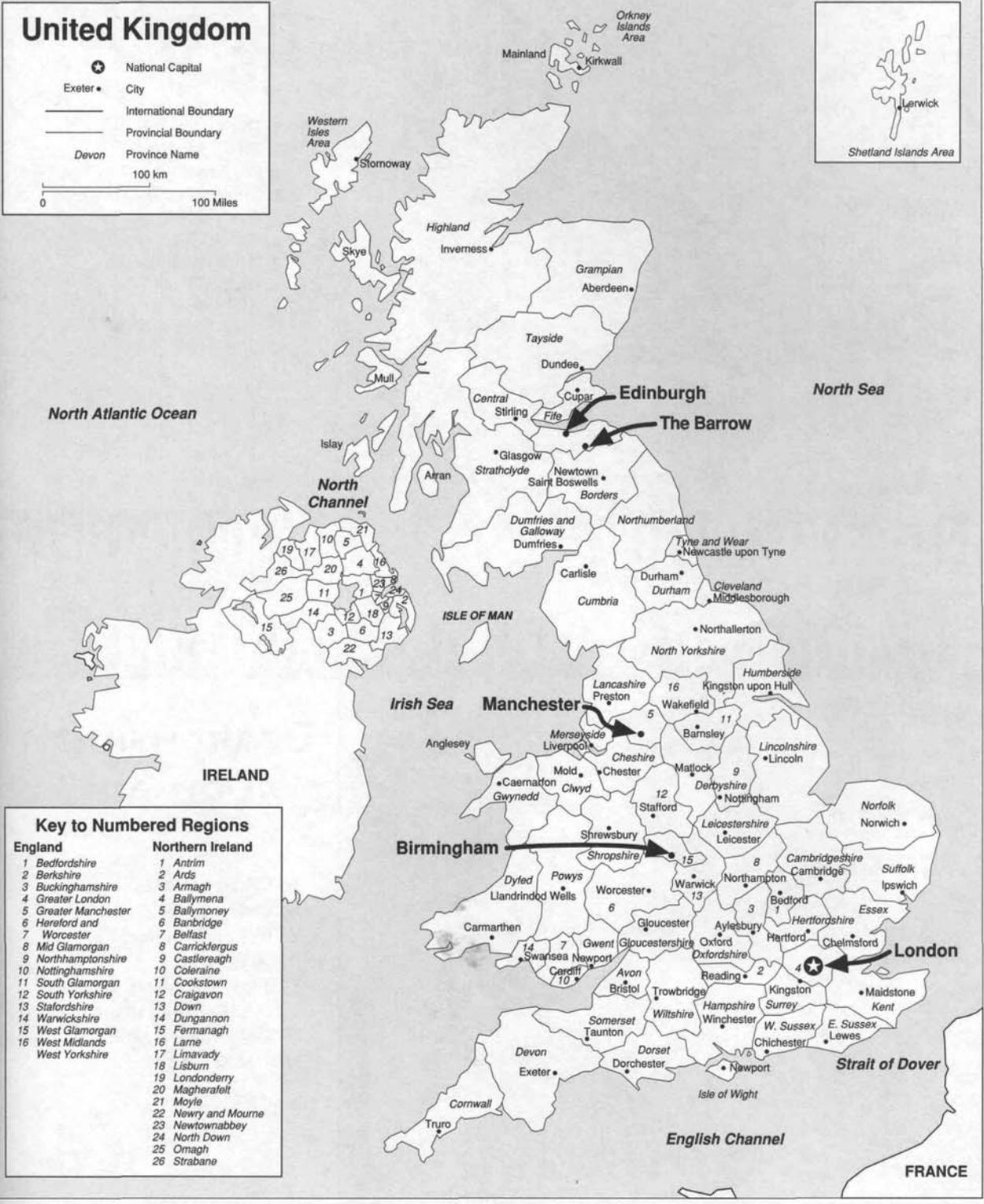
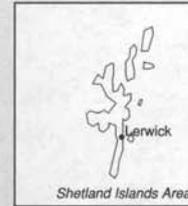
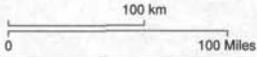
Many elders do not take the text and essay to be other than idle curiosities. The essay has been translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Italian and several Slavic tongues. Any copy the characters are likely to see has undoubtedly been photocopied several times and is hardly legible, or has been scanned or retyped onto a computer.

What use the above holds for the characters is up to them and the Storyteller. Gehenna has been foretold by a number of sources, but the exact date, or if it will come at all, is still a mystery. Storytellers may or may not wish to include Gehenna in their chronicles. The text is there, written by a mad vampire with some vision of things that may come, but whether his final vision is true is up to the Storyteller.

<sup>7</sup> Some of these prophecies appear to have come true. However, they are sufficiently general to make verification difficult, for no specific cities are named nor are specific Kindred or clans.

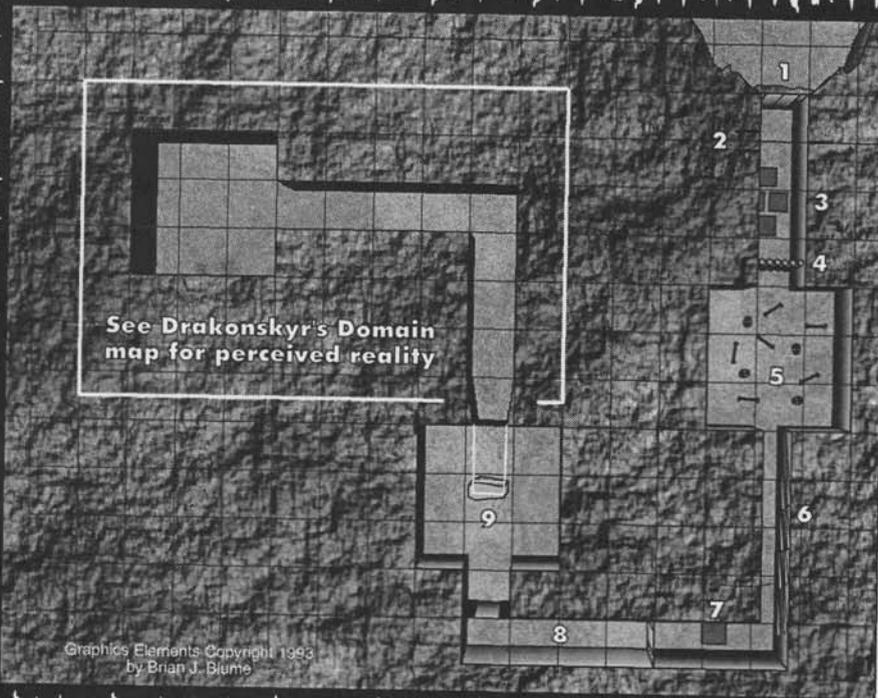
# United Kingdom

- ★ National Capital
- City
- International Boundary
- Provincial Boundary
- Devon Province Name



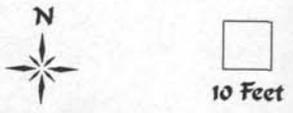
## Key to Numbered Regions

England	Northern Ireland
1 Bedfordshire	1 Antrim
2 Berkshire	2 Ards
3 Buckinghamshire	3 Armagh
4 Greater London	4 Ballymena
5 Greater Manchester	5 Ballymoney
6 Hereford and Worcester	6 Banbridge
7 Worcester	7 Belfast
8 Mid Glamorgan	8 Carrickfergus
9 Northamptonshire	9 Castlereagh
10 Nottinghamshire	10 Coleraine
11 South Glamorgan	11 Cookstown
12 South Yorkshire	12 Craigavon
13 Staffordshire	13 Down
14 Warwickshire	14 Dungannon
15 West Glamorgan	15 Fermanagh
16 West Midlands	16 Larne
West Yorkshire	17 Limavady
	18 Lisburn
	19 Londonderry
	20 Magherafelt
	21 Moyle
	22 Newry and Mourne
	23 Newtownabbey
	24 North Down
	25 Omagh
	26 Strabane

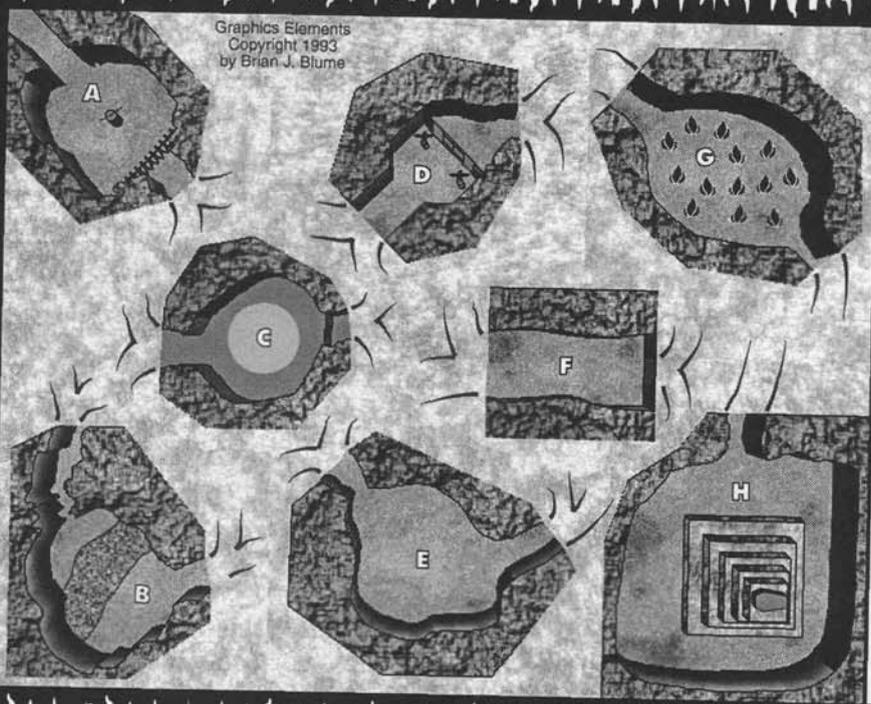


# The Barrow

1. The Entrance
2. The Spear Trap
3. Pit Traps
4. Primitive Napalm Trap
5. The Wolf
6. Hall of Razors
7. Pit of the Sun
8. Hall of Fire
9. Fool's Gold



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# Drakonskyr's Domain

- A. Web of Bodies
- B. Vision of Hell
- C. Test of Patience
- D. Gargoyles
- E. Room of Silent Screams
- F. Portal of the Future
- G. The Black Flames
- H. The Ziggurat