

A WORLD OF



DARKNESS
SECOND EDITION

A SOURCEBOOK FOR VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE®

A world of darkness second edition

by

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chapter one: Home of the BRAVE: North America by night

I'm a no-good coward, an American too. A North American, that is. I'm guilty of murder of innocent men, innocent women, innocent children - thousands of them. My planes, my guns, my money, my soldiers - it's my blood on my hands. It's all my fault. I must not think bad thoughts.

- X, "I Must Not Think Bad Thoughts"

No other continent is as much a battleground between Sabbat and Camarilla as North America. Then again, no other prize is as rich. New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. are all worth fighting over; the markets, the media and the missiles are all desirable. There are rich veins of silicon to be mined in the computer firms of California, Washington state and Massachusetts; there are also vast untapped natural resources in the Canadian north and in the wilds of Alaska. The Great Plains are still the breadbasket of the world, and starving an enemy's herds is as good as starving him directly. There are prizes well worth going to war for here, and the master strategists of both sides - as well as those who stand behind them - know it.

In Europe the battles have grown a bit stale and a bit predictable. Here they are still fresh and savage, as even the denizens of longest standing have been here for a mere handful of centuries. Things have not ossified the way they have in the Old Country, nor are there still-potent indigenous creatures strong enough to challenge the Kindred for rule of the night. On a stage mostly cleared of those pesky werewolves, and with the Antediluvian puppeteers not betraying their hands to their puppets, a bloody play is acted out every night by the vampires of North America. Even the bit players find the action intense and deadly.

Geography

Europe's Kindred population often exists along clearly delineated clan and sect lines. Spain? Lasombra and Brujah. Austria? Tremere... and so on. This is not so in North America. Repeated waves of immigration to and migration across the continent, not to mention a decided lack of wars to decide internal boundaries, have thoroughly mixed vampires of all clans and affiliations across the United States and Canada.

A Note of Format

For purposes of this book, "North America" refers to the United States and Canada. Furthermore, as there is so much internal diversity and inconsistency across those two countries in the World of Darkness, rather than doing a brief state-by-state and province-by-province breakdown, we provide brief overview of the major regions of the continent, with a special focus on two cities: one large, the other not quite so large.

BASIC stats

Canada

Covering nearly four million square miles, Canada has a human population of just 27 million mortals, and most of them live within 190 miles of the southern border with the United States. Most Canadian territory is putatively under Camarilla control, but in actuality anything above the magic 190-mile mark (and much that is below it) is left to the Lupines. There is a strong Sabbat presence in and bordering eastern Canada; parts of Quebec (including Montreal) and Ontario (including Toronto), as well as major portions of the United States bordering these regions, are under Sabbat control. The so-called Maritime and Prairie Provinces (including such cities as Alberta and Edmonton) and British Columbia are all essentially free from Sabbat taint, but are as sparsely populated by vampires as by humans. The two largest cities in Canada are Sabbat. After all, what do the antitribu care about the fishermen of the Grand Banks?

For Camarilla vampires, the question is whether or not the Masquerade can be maintained. Canada's violent crime rate is much lower than the States', mandating much more caution on the part of Canada's Kindred. In general, they are fewer, farther between and much more reluctant to take human life unnecessarily than their American counterparts. This is not so much an expression of morality as one of self-preservation; excessive violent crime shocks and mobilizes Canadian society in a way that no longer touches Americans. Fueled by public outrage, the search for a violent criminal will prove relentless until the perpetrator is found.

Canada has vast natural resources and a solid high-tech industrial base. The Prairie Provinces, in addition to Alberta's oil fields, have extensive agricultural industries. Edmonton houses, among other things, the world's largest shopping mall, home to its own criminal (and perhaps Kindred) subculture. On the east coast, the struggles over Quebecois independence and the depletion of the Grand Banks fishing shoals have severely damaged the economy of the Maritime Provinces. Quebec and Ontario, though, remain prosperous rivals in the heart of the country even as the one repeatedly threatens to secede and the other works diligently to get Quebec to remain.

The Quebecois separatist movement, countered internally by the Federalists and externally by the rest of the country, centers around the French-speaking minority's attempts to secede from the rest of Canada to form a Francophone republic. A referendum on secession in late 1995 showed the province's population to be narrowly in favor of remaining part of the Canadian union, for now.

As stated earlier, most of the vampiric population is concentrated in the cities and towns along the U.S. border. There is no Sabbat presence west of Lake Huron, meaning that the Camarilla rules the Prairie Provinces uncontested. The population is the usual mix of the seven main clans with a smattering of others, but all are on their best behavior. The miles between the cities are too long and too Lupine-infested

for ready travel from city to city on the ground. Blunders can lead to exile, and exile usually means death here. Plus, with such intense potential pressure from the kine, Canadian Kindred will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their princes in punishing offenders. After all, there's nowhere for them to run either.

Infiltrated by Japanese vampires, British Columbia stands outside the wars of the Sabbat and Camarilla. Ruled by the independent Prince Sigfried, the city of Vancouver is a model of efficiency for other princes. Effectively free of sect entanglements, the city is ruled by its prince alone.

The united states of America



New England

A region of contrasts, New England houses dead factory towns and the Green Mountains, has a reverence for tradition and boasts a Malkavian prince in its biggest city. Heavily infiltrated by the Sabbat, Massachusetts contains a large portion of the region's high-tech industry and population. Further north, Maine is entirely Sabbat, but this means little; most of the state's human and Kindred population is clustered "Down East," far from ravaging Lupines. Connecticut is the most prosperous non-Sabbat state in New England, but it does border on the Sabbat-controlled New York. The home of many insurance agencies and financial houses, as well as a great many wealthy ghouls who commute to New York daily, Connecticut is a staging point and supply dump for New York City's beleaguered Ventrue.

Mid-Atlantic States

Sabbat-infiltrated if not controlled, the most densely populated region of the country is also among its most



violent, particularly in the cities of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Camden. The last was purged of its Kindred population during the late '70s and early '80s by a band of hunters with a predilection for arson, but the last few Camarilla vampires in Philadelphia have since fled across the Delaware to take up residence. At the southern border of this region rests Washington, D.C., so far theoretically immune to the Sabbat's depredations.

The South

There is a difference between the South, which can be defined as the areas around the charming cities of the Atlantic Seaboard such as Charlotte, Charleston, Richmond and Atlanta; Appalachia, which rests to the west, nestled in the Appalachian Highlands; and the Deep South, consisting of the Florida Panhandle and states like Mississippi and Alabama. Southern Florida, with its dense populations of Cuban immigrants and elderly retirees from the Northeast, is not considered to be part of the South at all.

Unlike the other two regions, "the South" is relentlessly progressive, economically speaking, as jobs and industry migrate southward in search of lower costs and more relaxed environmental standards. With these industries, the Ventrue have moved en masse as well, attended by Toreador and Tremere who also sense opportunities.

The Deep South, on the other hand, is predominantly rural, with only a smattering of industry in cities like Birmingham. What Kindred exist outside the industrial areas tend to be Gangrel or Nosferatu. These vampires also predominate in Appalachia, though that territory is unquestionably Lupine-dominated. In the cities are ragtag Ventrue and Brujah in equal numbers; the former from the heritage of plantation owners, the latter from the convicts who were the original colonists of Georgia.

The Great Plains

Neatly purged of Kindred during the 1930s, the Great Plains have only rebuilt their unliving populations during the past three decades. Kansas City and St. Louis, in particular, have heavy vampiric populations. The large number of Kindred in Kansas City is at least somewhat understandable, given the wholesale slaughter of cattle that is one of the city's main industries. St. Louis, on the other hand, is more of a puzzle, particularly since its Camarilla contingent is heavily tilted toward Brujah and Nosferatu.

Further north, the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul are Ventrue-dominated to an extent unmatched anywhere else in North America. Current rumor holds that a nonaggression pact has been struck with the city's Glass Walker Lupines, leading to unprecedented cooperation between the two Awakened species. The effects of that supposed cooperation are potent indeed; the Twin Cities are prosperous, clean and popular hunting grounds.

There is a small anarch free state centered around Madison, Wisconsin, with a bare dozen or so permanent residents. Ruled by a balding, stooped and feathered Gangrel who goes by the nickname "Vulture," the Madison Free State is, however, a home base for more than 20 anarch gangs who use it to reload, refuel and recruit.

The Southwest

Much of American industry, when it relocates domestically, comes to the American Southwest. Phoenix in particular is a hub for Kindred-influenced firms. However, southwestern Camarilla Kindred tend to keep strictly to city borders for several reasons. Outside their cities are heavy Uktena and Wendigo presences, and the greater part of the Sabbat's strength rests just across the Mexican border. Indeed, part of western Texas has already fallen to the Sabbat, and certain of the more paranoid Kindred of cities like Dallas and Albuquerque wonder what's keeping them from taking more.

In all probability, those Camarilla worthies would be much happier not knowing the answer to their question: A council of six Lasombra antitribu, all under deep cover in the Sabbat, meets annually in Santa Fe to discuss ways to keep the border stable. All six of these vampires are at least of conquistador vintage, and no one has yet uncovered their motive for thwarting the persistent Sabbat initiative. After all, they are conclusively not linked with the Camarilla, having deliberately funneled the influx of new Kindred into Phoenix and Tucson rather than allowing it to spread across the entire region. Those few Inconnu who are aware of this council of six are watching them very carefully, and there has been some debate as to what these vampires uncovered so long ago that they are trying so hard to protect from others' influences.

A geographic oddity persists in the state of Utah: The entire state is devoid of Kindred. Camarilla, Sabbat, unaligned - it doesn't matter. There are no vampires anywhere in Utah. At least, there aren't any that anyone knows about.

California Free State

Home of the first and most successful Anarch Revolt in North America, the California Free State had its genesis in Los Angeles. However, the tide of revolt soon swept up and down the state, and today all of the Redwood State is either independent or contested. San Francisco in particular is a contested city, but the war there is more political than overt. Deals are made in clubs and boardrooms as the Camarilla attempts to purchase, rather than conquer, the City by the Bay.

The rest of the state is less than safe for most Kindred. While the freedom from Camarilla strictures can be exhilarating at first, the lack of structure provides room for bully-gangs of Brujah and Gangrel (most of whom, ironically, wander in groups reminiscent of Sabbat packs) to pick off visitors and immigrants.

The Pacific Northwest

While Oregon is firmly in Camarilla hands, Washington state is up for grabs. Threatened by the strong Technomancer presence outside Seattle, the vampires of Washington have turned in among themselves. Unsure of whom to ally with or which enemy is most pressing, they war among themselves in a constant series of anarch uprisings that unseat prince after prince. Many disaffected anarchs flee here from California, and their discontent helps keep the pot bubbling.



The biggest plum of All: New York City

Contrary to Sabbat propaganda, New York City is not entirely within the sect's iron grasp. Rather, New York, as befitting the incredible diversity of its mortal population, is divided up into a vampiric patchwork of influences, turfs, Elysiums and demilitarized zones. Furthermore, it's absolutely crawling with vampires, many of whom are either Caitiff or simply apolitical. After all, it is the city that never sleeps....

Sabbat Territory

The Sabbat holds more square miles of the Five Boroughs (and Yonkers) than any other sect, and has most of the mortal population in its sphere as well. The Bronx, Queens and Staten Island are all more or less under Sabbat control. The Archbishop of New York, a seventh-generation Lasombra named Francisco Polonia, rules from the heights overlooking the Harlem River, and brooks no interference with his plans for taking the rest of the city. However, he reserves much of Brooklyn as a sort of free zone for romper-stomper behavior, a safety valve for the more anarchic of his troops who survive long enough to have free time.

Polonia's plan is simple enough: Isolate the Camarilla stronghold in Manhattan from its constant supply of reinforcements and pick off those who remain, keep up detente with the Lupines of the Central Park Caern, and buy off the Giovanni and Setite presences in Brooklyn until such time as they can be crushed. To date, he has achieved all of the points of his plan save the first. The Camarilla continues to control John F. Kennedy International Airport, sections of Long Island and Westchester County (with their private airports), and a safe corridor through Queens through which new reinforcements can be ferried from the Island. Polonia also suspects (but cannot prove) that the Giovanni of Little Italy are taking his money and then continuing to ferry in Camarilla vampires anyway, using the Giovanni's ironclad control of the docks.

The Sabbat does control most of the ground routes into the city, with the exception of Grand Central Station. However, it is no coincidence that every train that pulls into Grand Central, both Metro North and Amtrak, makes at least one stop in Sabbat-controlled territory before its descent into the city. Delays at these stops are not uncommon, particularly if one or more Camarilla vampires happen to be seated on the train.

All of the automotive routes into the city from the west and north are firmly in Sabbat hands, as are Yonkers and the entirety of northern New Jersey. The Holland and Lincoln Tunnels in particular are closely monitored, as the cramped and dark conditions within are perfect for "extractions" of unwanted visitors. Many visitors to New York complain about the endless lines at the toll booths on virtually every artery

into the city; those lines are the result of methodical scanning programs instituted by the archbishop. Sneaking into the city via car or train is still possible, but the difficulty has increased exponentially since Polonia assumed control of the city's reins.

Francisco Domingo de Polonia

Background: Part of de Onate's expedition to found a permanent outpost in New Mexico, Polonia acquitted himself well on that failed journey and caught the eye of certain of de Onate's masters. When, a decade later, de Peralta succeeded where de Onate failed, Polonia was with him as well, albeit somewhat changed.

Polonia's role was as a stalking horse, obviously present to draw out the local Lupines so that his elders in Mexico City could gauge their strength. In 1680, he finally succeeded, and Santa Fe was burned to the ground by Pueblo Indians and the Wendigo to whom they were Kinfolk. To the surprise of his sire and many others, Polonia survived this assault, and he was immediately labeled as something special, or at least a lucky guy. He was given increasingly perilous assignments, which he pulled off with a daredevil flair and the odd bit of diablerie. By the time he was directed to lead the siege on Manhattan, he had lowered his effective generation to seventh and raised his abilities to something on the far side of considerable.

Image: Much to his embarrassment, Polonia was Embraced with a bit of a sunburn, which somehow has stuck with him through the centuries. Bringing the matter to his attention, or even staring too long at his slightly reddened countenance, is an exceedingly poor idea. Over 6'3" tall, the former conquistador has a soldier's carriage and bearing. He has straight black hair and his eyes are black as well. Polonia's hands are large and equally at home holding a sword or a submachine gun. Still religious, the archbishop wears a silver crucifix at all times, and has been to Madrid for a coveted confession with Moncada no fewer than three times.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the rarest of the rare among the Lasombra: a builder of networks. While you do have a certain flair for risk-taking, you're at the age where existence is



growing sweet indeed, and you prefer to have as much ammunition - particularly in the form of expertise - as possible before you head into battle. Your quick decisions are legendary; your hours of deliberation and analysis behind the scenes are not so well known.

Clan: Lasombra

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Gallant

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1600

Apparent Age: 30

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 6, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 6, Empathy 2, Intimidation 4, Subterfuge 5

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 5, Melee 5, Stealth 3, Torture 3

Knowledges: Computer 1, Finance 3, Linguistics 4, Occult 4, Politics 4

Disciplines: Animalism 1, Auspex 2, Celerity 2, Dominate 5, Obtenebration 6, Potence 5, Presence 5, Protean 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 5, Influence 4, Resources 5, Sabbat Status 4

Virtues: Callousness 4, Instincts 5, Morale 4

Path of Enlightenment: Path of Power and the Inner Voice 8

Willpower: 8

Dumpster Diving

The Verrazano Narrows Bridge is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world. Indeed, it stretches for such a distance that the curvature of the earth's surface had to be taken into account in the blueprints for its construction. It is a truly awe-inspiring accomplishment, and a spectacle to behold at night.

It's also the site of a Sabbat game unique to New York known as "Dumpster Diving." The game takes two forms: In the first one, a Sabbat Lick climbs onto the railing of the bridge and loudly threatens suicide. This causes traffic snarls and brings a horde of police a-running, thus lightening the law enforcement cordon on the rest of the city. Inevitably the Lick (having practiced the maneuver) throws himself off the bridge, only to swim to shore after a little while has passed. Meanwhile, up on the bridge, the police are being relentlessly grilled by news crews, making them less-than-cheerful public servants, and traffic, is hopelessly snarled. All in all, it's not a bad night's work.

The second way to play the game requires a bit more of a team effort. A Camarilla vampire (or Setite, or Caitiff) is kidnapped and hauled onto the bridge. The victim is then thrown off the bridge, as is one Sabbat vampire. Whoever survives the fall and makes it to shore in one piece is the winner. The only caveat is that one of the two must be destroyed before the other is allowed out of the water, and the banks of the Narrows are lined with Licks to make sure that there are none of those annoying ties.

Other popular games include deMentos, where vampires hop into cars stopped at traffic lights, feed upon the drivers and then hop out (leaving a piece of candy behind as well as a bloodless corpse); and Viva La Turista, which involves hijacking taxicabs for the sole purpose of picking up tourists and depositing them in inhospitable neighborhoods, then watching the fun.

Brighton Beach Memoriam

The Giovanni and Setites aren't the only vampires to take advantage of the organized crime networks that humans build for themselves. With the Balkanization of the former U.S.S.R., organized crime has become omnipresent in Russia and other former Soviet republics. Many mortals have fled the tendrils of the so-called "Russian Mob" by fleeing to the United States or Israel; others have journeyed to those same places to take those tendrils with them. The cities of the East Coast, in particular, have been targeted and acquired by this group, with Philadelphia and New York having been most thoroughly acquired.

Seeing in these new "mafioskis" a possibility for undermining the Giovanni stranglehold on organized crime, a ninth-

generation Tzimisce named Oleg Selivanov has taken it upon himself to utilize and direct the Russian mob. Selivanov himself has dwelt in the neighborhood now called Little Odessa (formerly Brighton Beach) since the 1930s, and his organization's operations have grown up around his haven. Always something of a shut-in, even for a Tzimisce, Selivanov has turned many of the more important Russian mobsters into ghouls, and through them he directs operations from legbreaking to shipping stolen cars back to Eastern Europe.

It is exceedingly rare for Selivanov to venture more than a block or two from his haven these nights; even his food is brought to him by trusted ghouls. Part of this paranoia developed during his living days as a mid-level Trotskyite; the rest stems from the shooting war that has developed between the Philadelphia and New York branches of the Russian syndicates. Ludmilla Kantor, another Tzimisce and a former refusenik, has seized control of the Russian mob in the City of Brotherly Love, and has started to attempt to wrest the New York mobs away as well. Determined to turn organized crime against the country that persecuted her while she was alive, Kantor has already tried to make inroads in Kiev, Izhevsk (home of the AK-47) and Moscow itself. Unfortunately, none of the childer she has sent to oversee such operations personally have remained in contact with headquarters for more than a month; for some unknown reason they keep disappearing.



Oleg Selivanov

Background: They say that deep in the heart of the Kremlin, there is a wall that has a steel plate sealed into it. Supposedly, behind that plate rests Iosif Stalin. This rumor is incorrect; behind that steel plate rests Oleg Selivanov's sire, piano wire wrapped around his wide-open eyes and a stake through his heart. This was Selivanov's thank-you present to the man who, when begged for sanctuary during the purge of the Trotskyites, offered instead the Creation Rites in the frozen Moscow earth. This was Selivanov's revenge.

After his Creation Rites, Oleg didn't stay in the Soviet Union. He fled immediately to America, to New York, where so many of his countrymen had fled. The pack with whom he traveled

in steerage was still tainted with some human notions of idealism, and it tried to mix these notions with its duties as a War Party. The experiment failed, and Oleg retreated to Brighton Beach when it became clear that his packmates' nights were numbered. Since the late '30s he has become increasingly reclusive, venturing out only for pressing matters: the chance to travel home and destroy his sire, the necessity to destroy some Camarilla upstart intruding on his territory, the chance to start weaving the new Russian mobs together under his control.

Image: Selivanov is rail-thin in a cadaverous way, his eyes bulging from his sockets in an expression of perpetual comic surprise. Completely bald, he always wears formal clothes that date back half a century. Selivanov's fingers are long and thin, and he compulsively rubs them together out of sheer anxiety.

Roleplaying Hints: Dour and pessimistic, you trust nobody and no one. Blood Bond anyone you can; there's feeding aplenty in this wonderfully violent city. Avoid light and stay in the shadows - let your enemies come to you, if they dare. Control is vital to you, and you hate going out simply because in doing so you relinquish absolute control over your environment.

The House that Ruth Built

Surprisingly enough, Yankee Stadium in the Bronx has become one of the hottest bones of contention between the Camarilla and Sabbat. Many of the remaining Camarilla members in Manhattan are old enough to remember the glory days of Mantle and DiMaggio, or even those of Gehrig and Ruth, and the Stadium holds great sentimental value for them. The Sabbat, while having no particular attachment to the Stadium per se, simply wishes to deny access to Camarilla members, and so bloody battles are often fought merely for freedom to attend the odd night game with the Red Sox or Orioles.

The fact that Boston and Baltimore are the two other heavily contested cities in the East Coast megalopolis is completely coincidental, of course.

The Camarilla Toehold

The Camarilla's hold on much of North America would crumble within days if they were barred from Wall Street and Madison Avenue. The consequences of losing control of the markets and the media are too terrible to ponder, so the Camarilla holds onto the heart of Manhattan with a grip as tight and terrible as rigor mortis. There are over 100 Camarilla vampires crammed into this zone, equally divided between those who manipulate the boardrooms, those who patronize the arts and those who are soldiers in a battle that simply cannot be lost.

The current "Prince of New York," a seventh-generation Ventrue known only as Michaela, has temporarily managed

to halt the rapid turnover of princes. She has also stabilized the borders of the Camarilla quadrant of the city (though not a night goes by without the Sabbat testing her defenses), and she has also received carte blanche from the Ventrué Justicar to create progeny for the defense of the city. It is not lost on Michaela's critics how closely this permission imitates the tactics of the Sabbat, and certain cynics among the seven clans wonder how hospitable a postbellum New York is likely to be if it's knee-deep in eighth-generation Ventrué.

The Tremere chantry, located on the grounds of Barnard College (Columbia University is too obvious a locale, City College doesn't have the space, New York University is co-opted by the Toreador and Yeshiva University has a disproportionate number of students and professors with True Faith), is located perilously close to several Sabbat strong points, as well as the small but potent Setite presence just across Morningstar Park in Harlem. In New York the Tremere have taken a much more active stance in defending the city than is their normal wont; even Vienna recognizes the value of the Big Apple and sends reinforcements regularly. Tremere are a particularly favored target of Polonia's shock troops, and the city's Tzimisce are all too eager to "discourse" at tremendous length with their Warlock rivals. Accordingly, the turnover rate at the chantry is appalling. At the moment, the head of the chantry is one Aisling Sturbridge, who was field-promoted when the previous chantry head was ambushed, staked and fed piece-by-piece to the fish of Sheepshead Bay.

Not surprisingly, the Gangrel presence in the city is miniscule. A few run on Long Island, but there the deadening sameness of the tract housing drives most of them out within weeks, screaming with boredom.

The secret masters of New York, however, are the Nosferatu. The Sewer Rats have their talons firmly sunk into the machinery of the city itself. The day-to-day (and night-to-night) operations of city government and services, particularly the all-important sanitation department, are completely under Nosferatu control.

Certain Toreador have made jokes about how the Sewer Rats must control the city, as former mayor Ed Koch is



obviously one of their own. The Nosferatu response is to smile politely, then to halt garbage pickup in the vicinity of the offending Poseur's haven for a month. Lunchtime fire hazard inspections are also a favorite ploy.

Gerard Rafin, A.K.A. Uncle Smelly

Background: The Nosferatu called Uncle Smelly is something of a Johnny Appleseed among the unliving. Using New York as his base of operations, he wanders from warren to warren, city to city and coast to coast, to find the Nosferatu of Canada and America and link them into the SchreckNET. A French tinkerer who was on the verge of starving among the thronging immigrants on the Lower East Side at the turn of the century, Rafin was instead Embraced and thoroughly Americanized by the Nosferatu of New York. Putatively Camarilla in his affiliation, Rafin grew obsessed with two things: technology and the legends of the Nictuku. It was he who came up with the notion of turning New York into a fortress against the other childer of the Antediluvian, he who kick-started the SchreckNET itself and he who came up with the Uncle Smelly persona as a way to spread the gospel. Now he hits the road for eight months out of the year with a sack full of boards and wires, returning to home base with a batch of new stories he didn't trust to go out online with and, inevitably, news of new links for the SchreckNET.

Uncle Smelly himself is something of a legend among the Camarilla vampires of North America. Everyone knows who he is and nobody bothers him for two simple reasons: One, he's reputed far and wide to be harmless; two, he's kicked the asses of the last half-dozen sheriffs who've tried to mess with him. That combination usually ensures Uncle Smelly entrance into any city he pleases, where he can tell stories and dirty jokes, bend the ear of the local prince a bit and coincidentally maintain the system that houses the local SchreckNET node.

Image: Uncle Smelly has ears that are large enough to cast distinct shadows, mismatched with an oddly shrunken head and no chin to speak of. He does have a straggly goatee and a few odd wisps of hair on his head, but the warts outnumber the hairs by about three to one. Rafin likes to affect a "dirty old man" pose, complete with a spattered trenchcoat and a battered fedora. He even keeps some candy in his pockets for little girls, just to keep up appearances.

Roleplaying Hints: When doing the Smelly shtick, take every stereotype of a bum you've ever seen and triple the affectations. Smelly is supposed to be a cartoon, and a noisy, harmless one at that. The whole pose is to deflect attention, so that the other vampires get bored and look away. This gives you time to drop back into Rafin mode and get down to serious business. Chip puller, please...

The Hidden Truth

The management of New York City, while a titanic task in and of itself, is merely a part of the agenda of the Nosferatu of the Five Boroughs. Their real project is what is affectionately referred to as the SchreckNET, a worldwide information network piggybacked onto the Internet which servo as a gigantic clearinghouse of information for members of the clan. Run from a node established at Cooper Union, the SchreckNET is also a constantly humming, heavily encrypted communications link between the Sewer Rats of cities from Down Under to Newfoundland. This discourse gives sub-, scribed Nosteratu access to a vast pool of experience and talent, and also provides the clan with tighter internal lines of communication than any other clan save perhaps the Tremere or Giovanni.

As far as the SchreckNET reaches, New York remains its nerve center, and with good reason. For it is New York, not the labyrinths dug into the Rockies and elsewhere, that the elders of the clan regard as the last, best hope for thwarting the Nictuku. By controlling the city's resources, greater than those, of any other metropolis in the world the Nosferatu hope to co-opt the 11 million or so denizens of the Big Apple into the war against the Nictuku as unwitting allies. Years and tens of millions of city dollars have gone into making New York a deathtrap to approach from below, preparing for the inevitable battle that will make-the wars of the sects look like children's squabbling at recess.

Newcomers and Low Profiles

The Giovarmi have been a part of New York since the 19th century. Arriving with the first massive wave of Italian immigrants, the Necromancers have quietly and methodically built their influence over the entire East Coast from the quaint houses and ornate churches of Little Italy. With their direct control of both the Gambino crime family and the Teamsters' Union, the Giovanni have influence disproportionate to their numbers. There are never more than six members of the family in residence in New York at any one time, and the clan makes a concerted effort to keep its collective head down lest either the Camarilla or the Sabbat take time out from their bloody war to lower the proverbial boom. The situation as it stands is perfectly to the Giovarmi's liking: The Sabbat takes great care not to offend them, while the Camarilla pays handsomely to ship various Kindred in on Giovanni-controlled freighters (and many of these Kindred, when they awaken, find themselves ravenously hungry). The only fly in the ointment is the ever-growing Setite presence, as there have been numerous clashes with the Snakes over the city's burgeoning drug trade. Pietro Giovanni is the ranking member of the clan in the city, but he has made no secret of his desire to return to Venice.

One cannot walk through Morningside Park without hearing the crunch of crack vials underfoot, without seeing discarded

needles pointing every which way or without noticing thin streaks of powder that mar practically every square foot of pavement. Names of those long dead are carved into the trees; someone has taken to memorializing the victims of drug violence on a particularly large oak at the south end of the park. A new name is added to that tree so often that it is beginning to die itself, its trunk marred too often to allow it to heal. This is Setite territory, and they like it like that. Fronted by the Jamaican posses and establishing a ring around Harlem, the Snakes are busily engaged in strengthening their presence. The constant influx of Haitian refugees to the city provides the Setites with both cover and an ever-increasing power base, and both Sabbat and Camarilla consistently take time from their busy schedules to attempt to prune the Setite presence. Those efforts have grown less successful of late, and the Setites have started laying claim to certain portions of Brooklyn (noticeably Bedford-Stuyvesant) and the Bronx as well.

Coney Island and the Caitiff

Once the home of the archetypal amusement park, Coney Island has fallen on hard times. Skeletal remnants of the once-proud rides and attractions can be spotted from the Belt Parkway as one wends one's way along the south side of Brooklyn, but most of the laughter is gone. Still, there are those who still take pleasure in what was once a cotton-candy wonderland: the Caitiff.

While the Caitiff walk practically every street in New York, it is the ruins of Coney Island that they scurry back to when one sect or the other gets too predatory. Many sooner or later become Panders, but there is a core who cling fiercely to their independence and who, conspicuous in their presence, will venture to the doorstep of the chantry or the lobby of Polonia's current residence.

Of course, while the Caitiff may wander into others' territory, they don't take kindly to being intruded upon themselves. All of Steeplechase is rigged with numerous booby-traps; the parachute drop in particular has claimed any number of victims.

Kingston, Ontario

At first glance, this town would seem an odd locale for a bloody conflict between vampires. After all, the so-called "Limestone City's" population barely reached 55,000 in the latest Canadian census; theoretically, this is less than is necessary to support a single Kindred. However, Kingston is home to two sorts of organizations that the Kindred love: universities and prisons. The universities offer easy feeding and early access to those who will someday ascend to positions of authority; the prisons provide safe feeding from a pool of potentially useful ghouls and servitors, and they also provide easy cover-ups for "mistakes." Canada's crime situation is a fraction of the States', but when criminal activities are called for, most Canadian Kindred prefer to use homegrown talent instead of importing.

Canada's pre-Confederation capital, Kingston sits at the northeast end of Lake Ontario by the St. Lawrence River. This positioning makes Kingston important in Kindred affairs for two reasons: Whoever controls Kingston can block the importing of Kindred through the Great Lakes, and the city roughly straddles the Camarilla-Sabbat border in any case. The current prince, Iain MacLaren, has a lucrative working arrangement with Lucian of Gary in regards to the ferrying of vampires down the St. Lawrence and into the States. The proceeds from this odd cargo allow MacLaren to maintain his position; that, and the occasional Kindred he diverts when desperately in need of reinforcements. Kingston also crouches by the 401 Highway, which runs from Montreal to Detroit. The city's four resident vampires are well aware of the havoc a precisely timed accident that blocks all of the westbound lanes could cause with a Kindred's night driving schedule, and they have been known to use this tactic on occasion.

The town's limited heavy industry is long gone; indeed, only the Alcan Factory remains. Apart from incarceration for criminal or academic purposes, summer tourism is the city's other main industry. However, for vampiric purposes, the colleges and prisons are quite enough.

Who's Who

There are only four Camarilla vampires in Kingston. MacLaren, a ninth-generation Ventrue, serves nominally as prince, helped tremendously by the largesse he spreads among his three "subjects." Serving as a sort of loyal opposition is Angelique Cormier, a Quebecois expatriate and 10th-generation Brujah who spends her time lobbying for Camarilla incursions into her Sabbat-dominated home province. Refusing to take part in the local political scene is Merrill Olsen, a Gangrel of indeterminate generation and great age who still nurses bitterness over the removal (more than a century ago) of Kingston's designation as capital. Rounding out the quartet is, oddly enough, a Camarilla-affiliated Samedi named Driscoll, who works as a janitor on the night shift at Kingston Penitentiary. Driscoll controls access to the

prisoner population, which includes such luminaries as child rapist Clifford Olson and multiple rapist/murderer Paul Bernardo. However, Kingston does have a high turnover when it comes to vampiric visitors: Periodic Sabbat assaults require frequent reinforcements, and other Canadian vampires also want to get in on the fun at Queens, the Royal Military College and the local prisons.





Iain MacLaren

Background: A successful banker of Scots extraction, MacLaren was plucked from his home in London and tossed willy-nilly into the world of the Kindred by a Ventruë who felt that the clan was decidedly short on people familiar with modern methods of handling money. This was in 1874, and for over a century MacLaren was one of the Ventruë's best investment counselors, targeting industries to manipulate as well those in which it would be wise to invest. In 1979, however, things turned inhospitable for him back home as a result of a few financial missteps, and it was "suggested" that he take some time away. He agreed, crossed the ocean and landed in Kingston. As there was no one there more capable, he assumed the mantle of prince, and has been tap-dancing his way through assorted minefields ever since.

Image: MacLaren is a short, wiry man with black hair and an enormous Adam's apple. He is a passionate devotee of the double-breasted-suit look, and as an affectation, he still wears the pince-nez glasses from his pre-Embrace days. However, he has adapted well to modern technology, and he never travels without a cellular phone, a laptop computer and other technogadgets of the business world.

Roleplaying Hints: Sorry, you're too busy to talk now, what with what's-his-name from Charlotte coming in to inspect that Yankee student who's gone to Queens and the latest flimflam over the prisons between Driscoll (must remind yourself to keep a closer eye on his drug trafficking - the man's getting unconscionably sloppy) and Olsen (damn him for frightening the tourists again), and in any case, Lucian's late with the most recent payment which was supposed to go to...

Angelique Cormier

Background: A native Quebecois who attended Queens University in the early 1950s, Cormier was Embraced by a visiting (and more than a little drunk) Brujah from Calgary. Derek Rothery was enough of a gentleman, once his life-threatening hangover subsided, to remain in Kingston long enough to indoctrinate Angelique fully into the ways of the Kindred, and the two formed a bond that was more than platonic friendship if less than romantic. However, Rothery also had explain to Cormier why she could never return to

Quebec, which she flat-out refused to accept. Since then, she's devoted the bulk of her unlife to lobbying the Camarilla to take Quebec; when she's not in Kingston she's roaming the continent trying to drum up support for her crusade. In 1995, Rothery was caught and destroyed while trying to infiltrate the town of Van Kleek Hill, just across the border from Ontario. Cormier sees him as a martyr to her cause, and has redoubled her efforts since her sire's demise.

Image: Cormier is short and slender, with a hint of Native American to her features. She has long, raven-black hair, and she's fond of silver jewelry. A business student at the time of her Embrace, Angelique tends toward business suits and conservative hairstyles.

Roleplaying Hints: Never mind the political implications of the Camarilla taking Quebec; you want to go home again. On most matters you're easygoing, if a little cynical, but your crusade is, well, a crusade. Deep down you feel some responsibility for Rodiery's destruction, and you're determined that his death not be in vain. Success is the only way to ensure that....





Reg Driscoll

Background: A career officer in the British Army, Driscoll was also an excellent war profiteer. Serving during the War of 1812, Driscoll funneled wanted luxuries to his men and also served as a conduit for the vices of his fellow officers. He dealt with the local Indians, his fellow Brits, the Americans on the other side of the lines - anyone with coin or product to sell. However, all good things come to an end, and so did Driscoll's life. While rummaging through the pockets of the dead behind a field hospital, he caught the attention of a vampire who introduced himself as Baron Samedi. Impressed by Driscoll's facility with the dead, the vampire who claimed to be Baron Samedi recruited Reg into the bloodline.

Since then, Driscoll has wandered North America, following the wars between whites and Native Americans, Americans and Mexicans and Yanks and Rebs wherever they led. Eventually the fighting died out, and he started to affiliate himself with prisons - either as a jailer or a janitor, occasionally as an executioner. He's been attached to Kingston for 26 years now, and he shows every sign of having settled in for the long haul.

Image: Driscoll is remarkably handsome - for a Samedi. With a little Obfuscate, he can even pass for human in dim light, and the fact that his employment surrounds him with ammonia and other noxious fluids helps to cover his appalling odor. To most of the inmates of Kingston, Old Man Driscoll is a familiar, even welcome sight; just another wrinkled old man pushing retirement age who looks like he has maybe been sniffing his Mr. Clean a little too often.

Roleplaying Hints: The entire world is out to screw you, and you've got proof. You like the college kids; they're too dumb to know what they've gotten themselves into and as such you see them more or less as pets. People often assume you're stupid because of your size, but that's all right - you often assume people are breakable because of their size. You're right more often than they are, in the end.

Merill Olsen

Background: A colonial trapper and hunter, Olsen came to Canada in the heady days of the French and Indian War. Markedly apolitical, he was shot while crossing English lines and was severely wounded. Though Olsen escaped the British pickets, he would have soon bled to death had he not been Embraced by a French Gangrel who'd been watching him and who mistakenly assumed he'd switch allegiances. Ornerly even in death, Olsen accidentally killed his sire in the struggle that ensued when she pushed the issue of his allegiance too far; he's carried that guilt with him for centuries.

Olsen survived as a trapper for as long as he could, following the frontier west. He kept a soft spot in his heart for where he'd been Embraced, however - taking pride in his sire's triumphs and feeling her tragedies. When the capitalship was taken away from her, he felt it keenly, and when trapping was no longer an option, it was Kingston that he decided to call home.

Image: Olsen is every bit the wild man, only vaguely spruced up for city living. Over six feet tall and 250 pounds, he sports a huge blond beard and a fascinating variety of tattoos. These nights he most often works in prisons on riot control or in bars as a bouncer, and he has become something of a local fixture.

Roleplaying Hints: Although you didn't come from the streets, you still know your way around them. A social chameleon, you can relate to the prisoners and their jailers, the high and mighty of the Kindred and the occasional Sabbat pack member who feels like dealing instead of fighting. Unfailingly polite, you nevertheless take full advantage of the discomfort others feel in your presence.



Discipline...

Highest on the list of targets that vampires favor is Queens University. Comparable to Harvard University in status, influence and reputation, Queens is a magnet for Canada's best and brightest. Many students from south of the border trek here as well, as the cost of a Queens education is minuscule when compared to that of an education obtained from an American private university. Many of Canada's business leaders come from Queens, and no small number of these come out of college already bound to one of the local Kindred. In fact, through a dummy corporation, MacLaren sponsors an award program through the college for outstanding political science students. Called the Culloden Prize, it's become known as "The Ottawa Express" among students, as a disproportionate number of its recipients end up in government service. Of course, winners of the Culloden show a great deal of school spirit, often returning to their alma mater for speaking engagements or just for campus social visits. Also, they make a point of visiting the headquarters of CullodenCorp to personally express their gratitude for the prize.... Plus, as Queens' engineering program is considered one of the best in the world, a great many alums head out to Seattle to lucrative jobs in the software industry. This gives the Kindred of Kingston a finger in that pie as well.

The other college of note (from a vampiric point of view) is the Royal Military College, which serves as a combined West Point and Annapolis for the Canadian military. Contrary to popular American belief, Canada does have a sizable modern military, and it is one with an extensive conventional weapons capability. MacLaren, under pressure from powerful Kindred of such cities as Ottawa, Calgary and Victoria, has reluctantly declared a sort of "bag limit" on ghouls from Royal Military College: no more than two at a time for any one Kindred. While MacLaren himself isn't powerful enough to enforce this ban, the Kindred of the larger cities police each other thoroughly in order to prevent any from gaining undue advantage.

And Runish...

The local prison scene is undergoing a bit of a change, as allegations of sexual impropriety by prisoner-control teams are the impetus behind the imminent shutdown of the Prison for Women. The impending closure has Olsen in a positive tizzy; decidedly old-fashioned in his sexual mores, he finds the notion of feeding from men to be "unnatural." Olsen actually was a member of the infamous prisoner-control teams, and he used his position to gain ready access to the prison during times when a little extra blood wouldn't be noticed. It is his not-entirely-unfounded suspicion that Driscoll is behind the prison's closing in a ploy to control the food supply for all of Kingston's Kindred.

As for Driscoll himself, he controls the gates of the Kingston Penitentiary and serves as maitre 'd of its inmate population. Listed on payroll as one of the installation's janitors, Driscoll makes the greater part of his income by smuggling. He smuggles in hungry vampires, drugs and other contraband for prisoners, and the occasional spouse for a conjugal visit of the sort the warden frowns upon; he smuggles out messages, other illegal substances and objects, and the occasional prisoner deemed worthy of turning loose. Of course, Driscoll exacts a percentage on each and every one of these transactions, and a careful audit of his assets would indicate that his wealth is comparable to, if not in excess of, MacLaren's.

As for Driscoll's employer, Kingston Penitentiary is the highest-security installation in Canada, and it houses the nation's most notorious male criminals. While there are a grand total of eight prisons in Kingston - including the fortresslike Collins Bay, PFW, Millhaven and Joyceville, all of which are more easily accessible than Kingston itself - the Kindred generally prefer Driscoll's operation because the quality of inmate provides for few moral qualms should an "accident" occur.



Eating Well in Kingston

For a small urban area, Kingston supports an inordinate number of vampires. Yet it has never seen a breach of the Masquerade, even during the worst of the multiple Sabbat attacks on the city. The secret lies in the fact that the vampires of Kingston know how to eat properly. They have three favorite sources of nourishment: the schools, the prisons and the tourists.

A massive student population (especially one slanted toward the Type-A personalities of Queens and Royal Military College students) leads to a massive population of student drinkers, many of whom excel in instant unconsciousness. Vampires who aren't too persnickety can feed easily from students who are too drunk to remember, and even those vessels who remain sober can usually later be convinced of their insobriety without resort to the use of Disciplines.

The prisons, especially for those willing to pay Driscoll's price, are an easy meal at any time of the night. While the security on Kingston's eight installations is more than adequate to handle mortal intruders, it isn't up to the task of dealing with the undead. Besides, a little extra blood in a place like PFW (notorious for its gory prisoner riots) is hardly going to look out of place.

The final leg of the triad that supports Kingston's vampires is the tourist trade. While there aren't that many living visitors to Kingston, many who do come wish to take the historical bar crawl around the city made famous by Canada's first prime minister. Cormier catches the vast majority of these, with an assist from the MacLaren-owned Threestar Cab Company.



chapter two: The caribbean in darkness

introduction

In the Caribbean, darkness is not always feared - not even by its mortal inhabitants. Scattered across the myriad islands, the Caribbean's vampires maintain an unorthodox existence and foster an uncommon peace among themselves and toward their kine brethren. Here, Kindred laws are different and the influence of both the vampiric sects and the clans is minimal. The area is of little political worth to Camarilla or Sabbat, and both sects' attempts to exert control in the islands have failed. There is no central authority here, and tranquility is maintained by silent consensus. The vampiric laws of the Caribbean are not spelled out in any charter, nor are they enforced by any organized authority, but all the region's Kindred how the rules and follow them or else face punishment from the community as a whole.

The many nations of the Caribbean are greatly varied, both in size and in population. They range from Cuba, Haiti and Dominica (formerly the island of Hispanola), with populations in the millions; to Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados; down to the much-smaller Antigua, Montserrat and myriad other nations too tiny to mention.

Climate and Geography

The island-rich Caribbean Sea stretches from the Florida and Yucatan Peninsulas to the Venezuelan coast. The average annual temperature of the area is 80 degrees Fahrenheit, and the wet season runs from June to November. It is during

this time that hurricanes and monsoonal rains can be expected. Conversely, during the dry season, catchments dry up and water is often in short supply.

Central mountain ranges dominate most islands, producing short, fast-flowing rivers. Much of the level coastal land is taken up by farms and settlements. Indigenous vegetation is lush and tropical, supporting an expansive variety of birdlife. With the exception of bats, few other native mammals inhabit the islands - but the introduced rat and mongoose populations have reached pestlike proportions. Three poisonous species of snakes - the coral, fer-de-lance and bushmaster - exist on the islands.

The Radical Nature of the Caribbean

The Caribbean islands house a vampiric society that is unlike any other in the world. Here a vampire might rule a domain that stretches only a few kilometers in each direction from his seat of power, and he might never meet another Kindred. Alternatively, a Kindred unconcerned with power might spend existence among her mortal family (who believe themselves blessed to live with their ageless great-grandmother), in a house on the sugar plantation where she was born and which she now owns. There is no central power structure in the islands: no prince and no primogen. The Masquerade is given only tacit attention by the Caribbean's vampires, who often move openly among the population and brazenly advertise their nature.

Some vampires claim territories that have been theirs for several centuries. Such claims are generally respected by other vampires, and conflict is minimal. This peace is maintained through consensus among the more powerful Kindred of the isles, who value their own privacy and fancy themselves above - or at least outside - the Jihad. Also, because the Masquerade is not considered important, any foreign vampire who desires his own territory in the Caribbean need only find a small island somewhere, where no Kindred yet dwells, and set himself up as an openly vampiric benevolent ruler. If he makes no trouble for other vampires, he will usually be left to his own devices - at least until those other vampires need a pawn or scapegoat.

A place so seemingly free from strife is attractive to the Inconnu. No one knows how many of these elder vampires reside here, but Kindred observers of the region believe that the Inconnu is the reason behind the fragile peace. On the larger islands live vampires uninterested in secrecy or dominion, beside drug barons and the Caribbean's power brokers. Vampires formerly from the Sabbat or Camarilla (of any clan) and of wildly varying generation and age mix in society parties and festivals, and they drink indiscreetly from flocks of willing hedonists in the streets. In fact, the rush of the Kiss has become something of a drug among members of the islands' underground, and Kindred seldom want for a feed.

Caribbean Atmosphere

Few places in the world are as colorful and historically rich while simultaneously as dark and filled with death. The impact of European culture on the islands of the West Indies has left countless traces - some beautiful, some macabre.

Slavers, missionaries, buccaneers and modern military dictators are the stuff of these isles. Crumbling forts, almost medieval in their design, lie atop the hills of Haiti amid dripping tropical forests and flowering vines. In places such as Dominica and Barbados, rainswept taverns, fitted with intricate iron filigrees and balustrades, simulate the oppressive appearance of a French street corner - though their interiors are painted in carnival pinks, greens, yellows and blues. White, Spanish-style chapels and churches have a commanding presence in the towns and villages. With a Communion procession one day and a voodoo ceremony the next, religion in one or several forms remains at the center of many of the islanders' lives.

Indeed, an almost ubiquitous belief in magic and the supernatural permeates these parts. The worship of ancestor spirits abounds, and death is not something to be feared. This is no accident; the fervent strength of the islanders' supernatural beliefs has been carefully cultivated by vampires intent on freeing themselves from the shackles of the Masquerade. Here, while one vampire dines on willing kine, another finds herself invited to sit with a family of mortals to impart knowledge to the young.

Characters and the Caribbean

Characters traveling to the Caribbean may be under pressure from the Camarilla, Sabbat or, direfully, both. Tales claim that the Caribbean is a safe haven from the threats of both these sects. However, it is not unheard of for Justicars, archons, templars or hired assassins to travel to these isles in search of wanted Kindred. Characters may travel to the Caribbean in these roles - though they risk the wrath of the territorial native Kindred.

Alternatively, characters may come from the Caribbean itself, having been sired on one of the many islands. This can lead to an interesting, alternative mindset-one whose beliefs about unlife have blossomed free from the stifling dogma and propaganda of the sects.

Travel to the Caribbean can be by air, by freight or by sea. Each of these travel methods presents its own threats and



difficulties. Aside from the obvious mortal-based complications, there remains the possibility of resistance from the vampires who control various means of travel. Alternative routes exist, as pirate and illegal vessels make night flights from Florida and from Venezuela to the isles. Personal vessels owned by wealthier characters may also allow characters safer passage. However, no travel measure, however safe, can account for a "greeting" by suspicious native Kindred fearful of sect pawns entering their domain.

Haiti

Haiti differs from the other islands of the Caribbean. This poverty-stricken, voodoo- and coup-wracked island is controlled exclusively by the Followers of Set. Though individual Setites constantly strike at one another's heels, the Followers, as a whole, closely control what goes on in their domain. Haiti has no prince or even any well-defined central authority, but nothing occurs in the country without the Setites' tacit permission.

Haiti is a Setite paradise. Hordes of impoverished, faceless people provide effortless hunting, while the miasma of superstition that shrouds the island makes the Masquerade virtually unnecessary. The country is the center of a drug-cultivating and exporting business, which the Setites control and supervise. Other Kindred in Haiti are carefully followed and, if their corruption does not seem possible, tend to disappear. Generally, given the liberal nature of the rest of the island chain, non-Setite Kindred choose to live elsewhere in the Caribbean.

Cuba

Once a Lasombra playground, Cuba fell to Fidel Castro's communist regime decades ago, forcing the wealthy families and their Lasombra parasites into exile. A couple of Idealist Brujah still hold a feeble reign here, but rumor has it that the Sabbat will move in immediately upon Castro's demise.

Cuba's Brujah are not a very active or communicative lot, and seem to know that their nights are numbered. An aura of gloom permeates these Brujah, and many vampiric scholars claim that Cuba is actually the Idealists' failed attempt to build a new Carthage.

Ancestors in the Outlying Islands

Perhaps, Gabrielle, my strangest experience in the Caribbean took place on the Cayman Islands. It was in 1956, in the village of St. Bartholomew. Some of the local kine had begun to suspect that I was one of their ancestor spirits, as their oral histories recorded my presence from 200 years ago. To my great surprise, I was invited to one of their town meetings to act as a representative of their ancestors. The meeting was held one evening in the town hall, where I found the local Catholic priest and several villagers assembled. For several hours we debated theology spirituality and the nature of the changing world with respect to the village people. An interesting night was had by all.

- Julia, Lasombra antitribu

Jamaica

Jamaica, in contrast to many other Caribbean isles, is a bustling island of neonates. Few older vampires reside there, most having left to set up their own domains on smaller islands elsewhere. Jamaica's atmosphere is one of constant merriment among the newly sired Kindred and whichever mortals they choose to patronize. Visiting Kindred often find the free and easy atmosphere of Jamaica off-putting. It is here that the Masquerade is most openly disregarded, and it is here that the Camarilla and Sabbat are most flagrantly snubbed.

other inhabitants

Mages

While almost no Garou roam the islands, the Caribbean has become home to a few groups of mages. The Cult of Ecstasy derives no small amount of its imagery and iconography from the easygoing way of life so prevalent in the popularized view of the Caribbean. A small number of these mages actually live in Jamaica and on some of the other islands, and they tend to cooperate with the resident Kindred. The mages follow a lifestyle which is a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy; they seek enlightenment through indolence, drugs and contemplation.

Elsewhere in the islands, Dreamspeaker mages move among the voodoo cults, teaching their knowledge to and learning from the houngans (voodoo priests) and mambos (voodoo priestesses). These voodoo practitioners often display insights into the nature of spirits and spirituality, which is the kind of knowledge that the Dreamspeakers crave. Consequently, many of the mages flock to some of the less-developed islands, residing in lodges and in schools for two- or three-year periods.

In general, the mages tend to stay out of the way of Kindred, admitting openly that the isles belong to the undead. Sometimes conflicts of interest can develop, however, often involving Dreamspeakers affiliated with voodoo temples. Such skirmishes are usually short-lived and not fatal, with the offending mage being politely but forcefully asked to leave the islands.

Mortals and Near-Mortals

The Caribbean contains many different cultures and traditions, its people united only by their initial contact with Western nations and by their geographic location. It is thus hard to categorize Caribbean islanders into a single group, or to make generalizations about their cultures and lifestyles.

Nevertheless, it would be fair to say that Caribbean islanders are a colorful lot, living under a vast spectrum of economic and cultural conditions. From the poverty and desperation of places like Haiti, to the fantastic glamour of Cuban casinos



and island resorts, each islander's experience is unique.

Spices, lush fruits, plenty of fish and some cash crops make up the diet of these people. Colorful fetes and Mardi Gras, cricket games and armed dictatorships constitute much of their cultural life. Though motor vehicles and the accompanying emissions are uncommon, heavy deforestation and cash cropping have raped many of these once-beautiful isles. Despite their color and ambience, the Caribbean islands are a desperate place.

In the World of Darkness such problems are heightened. In certain places armed soldiers patrol the streets, curfews are enforced and political activists are taken in the dead of night. Some of the smaller islands consist of villages made up entirely of ghouls under the sway of vampires. Magic and myth are as much a part of Caribbean islanders' lives as science and technology; curses take place every day, and juju bags and tea leaves are common accessories. These are a people who can and will believe in their darkest nightmares. The Kindred often seem welcoming by comparison.

Tourists, on the other hand, tend to be loud and brash, little inclined to heed the suffering of the locals about them. They provide ready sources of vitae, though cautious Kindred are reluctant to drink tourists' blood, for fear of stemming the islands' financial lifeline.

Hunters

Though die Caribbean houses few Garou, and though most of the other supernatural inhabitants are allied with or neutral toward the Kindred, witch-hunters scattered among the islands occasionally cause significant trouble. Most hunters are isolated, solitary and religiously inspired. There is a very strong Catholic tradition throughout much of die Caribbean, and not all of its inhabitants accept the mostly out-in-the-open vampirism. Such hunters are usually ill-equipped and ignorant of the true potential of their foes, but occasionally a newly sired vampire, equally ignorant, falls victim. Few of these hunters survive long enough to pose serious threats to older vampires, although those who are true to their faith and who call upon it when beset by ghouls and vampires have met with some success.

There is one organized group of vampire hunters: an obscure, underground cult dedicated to the mongoose. An extremely small and secret organization with unclear origins, this group desires the destruction of the Followers of Set and die cessation of the drug trade. Though it cannot hope to accomplish its endeavor outright, the group has scored some small successes. In its six years of operation, the cult has taken and destroyed two Setite Kindred, including one who was quite old. From information gained while torturing the vampires, the cult knows a great deal about the operations of the Haitian drug ring, but its members have as yet done nothing with the information. The cultists fear, quite justifiably, that a major move against the Setite cartel would

result in their own demise. Currently they bide their time and jealously guard their secrets.

Voodoo

The term "voodoo" actually encompasses a wide variety of traditional magics. Indeed, "voodoo" itself is a word created by our popular culture, rather than through any accurate anthropological or religious data. Terms such as hoodoo or voodoo refer to the Haitian practices of hoodoo and spirit magic, "This is called Mintena in the Spanish Caribbean and obeah in the British West Indies. Hybrids of Catholicism, Afro-Caribbean belief and Native American animism, these forms of voodoo have many commonalities, such as the use of blood, salt and rum in their rituals and the ubiquitous belief in possession and the spirit world.

In the World of Darkness, houngans, mambos, santeros (santeria practitioners) and bokkors (obeah practitioners) are a dangerous lot. They have power over blood and spirits, a deadly combination with respect to vampirism. Putting anthropological accuracy aside, all the classic symbols of voodoo popular culture can be used to great effect in Caribbean stories. A sorcery foreign to Kindred is intimidating enough, but when combined with the suspense of finding blood-soaked chicken feathers, gutted animals, wax dolls or juju bags in one's haven, the fear may prove unbearable. Don't forget that much of voodoo's real-life power relies on its ability to instill fear in its followers - an important element in Caribbean chronicles.

Alain exists tonight as he always has. Occasionally he takes on the tutelage of young Kindred, attempting to relive lost youth through his proteges' skill and creativity. These attempts usually end disastrously, as Alain loses his temper and kills the fledgling vampires. Consequently, he has earned the hatred of several Kindred worldwide, who would like nothing better than to avenge the deaths of their childer.

Alain travels from island to island in the farthest reaches of the Caribbean, transported in canoes and small motorboats by his native ghouls. When at rest, he dwells in any of a number of ancient slavers' mansions. Their dank and musty corridors provide only momentary shelter before Alain moves on once again.

Image: Alain is a striking figure. His skin is bone-white and paper-thin. Alain's lips are thin and wan, and the darkness of his deep-set eyes is rivaled only by his coal-black hair. He has a strange, otherworldly beauty, as though the angel of death were truly angelic. Alain dresses as he did when mortal. French velvet, flowing robes and white ruffles adorn his body from sunset to sunrise, and when he sleeps he wears only a white funeral shroud.

Roleplaying Hints: Be cordial at first, remaining polite and pleasant. Keep your face as stationary as possible, using only your lips to speak. Should anyone provide the slightest offense (remember, Alain is incredibly anachronistic), fly into a rage. In more somber moments, talk of the dead and reminisce about the faces of those you have slain, as though they were your children.

some notable vampires

Alain de Laigle

Background: Alain was once a talented sculptor; his nearly naked figures graced the noble gardens of both Paris and Versailles. For this reason he was Embraced, like so many Toreador before him. However, upon entering unlife, Alain became increasingly power-hungry. His interest in worldly pleasures took precedence to his love for the arts, and, in a daring coup, Alain slew his sire and fled to the Caribbean. Here, he pursued his desire for the blood of innocents, which was given wholeheartedly in death rather than stolen in increments. Alain's rebellion against the Masquerade saw him denounced as a Sabbat member, though he has never met with a member of this sect in his entire unlife.

In the Caribbean Alain surrounded himself with a 2000-strong herd of slaves. He fed upon their bodies night after night, year after year, unchanging though the world changed around him. Eventually, Alain lost contact with the world of Kindred and kine. He Embraced few and isolated himself on lonely islets with the inbred descendants of his original herd.





Charles Vane

Background: Charles Vane was a pirate and, in his day, a famous one. Not as well-known as Blackbeard or Bartholomew Roberts, Vane was nevertheless a successful and feared marauder. He sailed through the Caribbean, taking ship after ship and subjecting their crews to uncommonly harsh treatment.

Vane's piratical career ended when his first mate, Jack Rackham, staged a mutiny on his ship and put him ashore on a small island off the coast of Jamaica. On this island, Vane met his sire, the Ventrue Redford, who was living as a god-king among the Carib Indians. Vane, another white man and one familiar with European superstition, was able to pierce the mystique a little and make shrewd guesses as to Redford's true nature. Redford, unnerved, vowed to kill him, but found Vane a clever and ruthless opponent. He was so impressed that after he defeated Vane and broke his neck, Redford relented and Embraced the pirate.

Vane stayed with Redford only long enough to learn the basics of his new existence. Changing his name and appearance, the vampire pirate took command of a passing sloop and returned to the account, terrorizing shipping around Jamaica for two years until his ship was destroyed by a well-armed merchantman of the East India Company. Vane fell like a stone to the bottom of the ocean and lay in torpor for more than 200 years.

Since his Awakening early this century, Vane has struggled to come to grips with modern technology, preferring to fill his huge house in Jamaica with antique furniture and weapons. Never one to miss an opportunity for crime or profit, Vane has become involved in the Setite-controlled drug business, and has his fingers in many criminal pies throughout the islands.

Image: Charlie Vane is an imposing sight, and not above employing his considerable Presence Discipline to enhance and enforce this fact. He stands 6'2" tall and has a weathered, scarred face, with a look in his eyes that only 250 years of dark deeds can inspire. Despite all this, Vane is not a monster, and if given the proper respect, he can be a

charming companion. Vane is a strange mix of anachronisms and modern affectations. He wears a leather jacket and jeans, but always carries an old black powder pistol displayed proudly on his belt.

Roleplaying Hints: Be jovial and brash, ready with a crude joke or remark - always in good fun, but never in good taste. Although seldom enraged, be quick to reply to any threat or insult in kind, and never shirk action or a fight.

Abo

Background: Born into slavery and misery, Abo never had any expectations. From a very young age she performed backbreaking work. Early in her life she knew that she had to escape. In the forests of Hispanola dwelt a community of escaped slaves who called themselves buccaneers, and Abo fled to this group, living with them for some years until the Spanish authorities drove them out.

The leader of the troopers was a tall, weathered man, a veteran of many military campaigns for his native Spain, and a Follower of Set. It was not mercy that led him to Embrace the young buccaneer, but desire and lust.

Abo learned the rules of unlife from her sire and served the clan faithfully. She was instrumental in the establishment of the Setite monopoly in Haiti and took a controlling interest in the drug trade there. Consequently, she has become a powerful figure among Haiti's Setites.

Lately, however, Abo has become bored. Her background of struggle and triumph over adversity has left her with a desire for challenge and hardship, while her current life of indolence and luxury has become tarnished and unfulfilling. Abo yearns for a new challenge and has set her sights on the huge island of Cuba across a narrow strait in the Caribbean Sea.

Image: Abo is an exotic beauty; her mother was a Carib Indian and her father an African slave. Her features are very African for the most part, but her mother's Carib Indian heritage adds a bronze sheen to Abo's skin. Abo's natural attractiveness was much enhanced by her Embrace, and



Abo the vampire is a striking figure indeed. Her deep-set olive eyes stare out from beneath her prominent brows, and she has high cheekbones and a pointy chin. Her black hair is cut very short and has the soft consistency of feathers.

Roleplaying Hints: You are unconcerned with almost everything, for you have not been seriously threatened for some time. You are blase in your speech and action, uninspired by what people have to say to you. Bored by subservience on the part of your underlings, you welcome defiance, although you see the need to crush it.

Elsbeth Tabituda

Background: A native Jamaican, Elsbeth cannot remember her mortal years; these have somehow been lost to her, perhaps due to the trauma of her Embrace. Some rumors hold that the strange Caitiff is not a Kindred proper, but a loa-possessed body that was accidentally Embraced. Elsbeth believes otherwise, averring that she is the blood-drinking spirit of a slave girl who was raped and mutilated many years ago. She further believes that she will be continually reincarnated until she finds the current incarnation of her murderer. Unfortunately for her prey, Elsbeth re-creates the image of this murderer each night she wakes. Sometimes the man she seeks is mortal; other times he is Kindred.

Image: Eternally young and beautiful, Elsbeth dresses in flowing floral dresses and travels barefoot. She is dark-skinned with wild green eyes, and her beauty is marred only by her feral gaze and the constant expression of trepidation on her face.

Roleplaying Hints: Stare crazily at all who engage you in conversation. Look over your shoulder constantly and never speak at length. You are always on the move, remaining quite flighty. If you do "mistake" a character for the man you seek, wait until he is vulnerable before you discreetly attempt to disembowel him.



places and events

"The Masquerade"

To fly in the face of sect authority is deemed the greatest deed of all by the Caribbean Kindred. This motley group of vampires, united solely by its dislike for all things sect-oriented, meets in order to celebrate its freedom and good fortune. "The Masquerade" is the tongue-in-cheek name given to this celebration—a Mardi Gras that begins at the stroke of midnight. Just like its name implies, "The Masquerade" is a masked ball. Its location varies from year to year, as does the time that elapses between celebrations. At the Mardi Gras itself, retainers, ghouls, prized mortals, Kindred and other creatures of the night revel with one another on an equal footing. Blood is exchanged freely, passions are unleashed and rivalries are forgotten. At the end of the celebration, newly Embraced Kindred are introduced to all present and taught the nature of their unlife.

The event is not always as successful as its hosts hope. Kindred who live on remote islands rarely come to the event. Additionally, as no prince exists in these parts, no census of the islands' Kindred is available. Some vampires have been known to bring along 20 children; in other cases new arrivals turn out to be Sabbat War Parties interested only in bloodshed. It is not unknown for "The Masquerade" to disintegrate into a series of bloody battles. As some elder vampires have pointed out, perhaps the name is more insightful than rebellious, the festivity embodying a microcosm of worldwide Kindred relations.

The Peculiar People of the Little Village of Baptista

Stranger things, dear Catherine, than unnamed islands exist throughout the Caribbean. I have seen with my own eyes a villager transform himself into a flying fish and skirt across the water. So you will understand that when I first heard of the village of Baptista, I was truly afraid. I needed no evidence, no firsthand contact with this place of dread. Others of our kind who have experienced these events claim that they, at first, expected nothing when the little colored rowboats appeared out of the predawn mist. Few expected the large, brightly dressed islanders to be anything more than travelers in search of fresh water. To our horror, it was not fresh water they sought, but fresh Kindred blood. Scoff not, Catherine; there are mortals who worship blood spirits and who would take our unlives in order to drink of our life fluid.

Some among our kind, radical voices, claim that the villagers of Baptista are merely taking back what is theirs. Were these young radicals to stare into the berserk eyes of these /cine, or to receive a wound from one of their sharpened paddles and fire sticks, they would be less hasty to make such claims. Despite all my efforts, I have been unable to uncover a Kindred behind their control. I fear that these cannibals represent the very worst of a vampire's nightmares - a blood

cult that is beyond our control, a blood cult that seeks only the blood of Kindred.

- Julia, Lasombra antitribu

Houngan Trouble

Next to vampires, voodoo houngans represent the most powerful supernatural entities in the Caribbean. Sometimes allies, sometimes foes, such traditional magicians provide fodder for an ongoing series of encounters or stories. Possessing power over blood and spirits, a magician can be of much service to a vampire. However, deals wrought with houngans can often turn against the participants.

One possible story may involve the characters seeking the aid of a magician and signing a bargain to serve him for one night. This may lead to the characters being sent into particularly dangerous situations; or, alternatively (or in addition), the houngan may claim that the characters live an

endless night and must be his forever. This will lead to further complications - a dangerous enemy being only one.

Escaping such a houngan is not easy. His ability to capture loa (spirits) and force them into others' bodies allows for complete strangers or friends to suddenly turn against the characters. The only escape is to outwit or outlive the magician, though it is said that the caress of sunlight on a victim's body ends any houngan's curse....

Conclusion

Vampiric existence in the Caribbean is unlike the dance of night anywhere else in the world. Kindred, whether sired there or immigrant, experience the pleasures of unlife within a rich context of superstition, true magic, religion and local color. A Caribbean segment will add spice to any chronicle, and the setting is perfect for those who tire of gray cities and aging princes.



chapter three: El Baile de Sangre: central and south America

South and Central America are not as developed as their neighbors to the north. In some areas, the jungles and mountains remain almost untouched by Kindred and kine alike. Despite numerous claims by the Sabbat and Camarilla, neither group truly holds power over more than a fraction of the continent. Most sect activity here is far less organized than in North America and Europe; many vampires operate as individual predators, only loosely beholden to the dictates of Regent of Inner Circle.

Central America is certainly a major Sabbat stronghold. The sect makes its main home in Mexico, and the nexus of Sabbat operations is Mexico City. Still, the sect's grasp is far from unchallenged: Camarilla pockets and independent bloodlines (particularly the Samedi) exist and hold their own, as Central America's tapestry of revolutions and coups evinces.

South America is a crazy quilt of supernatural influence. Here, the Camarilla and Sabbat war incessantly, while the Setites and Giovanni lurk on the fringes, waiting to strike. Lupines and other shapeshifters stalk the wild places, battling creatures stranger still, Mages roam South America's cities and mystic sites, basking in the raw energy of santeria ceremonies and exploring long-lost Mayan pyramids. Native changelings hold ancient secrets for those cunning enough to bargain for them - and ancient curses for the unwary.

Los Vampiros De La American Del Sur

As developing regions, Central America and South America both have much to offer the strong vampire who seeks power and opportunity. Many neonates and ancillae, weary of centuries-entrenched power structures and lack of opportunities, flock to the uncultivated lands of the south. There is a flip side, however: The region is rife with potential foes, vampiric and otherwise, and the loose grasp of the sects means that a vampire in trouble may not have recourse to the protection of a prince, archbishop, archon or dominion.

It is also unwise to underestimate the region's kine. South America's people spring from all manner of stocks. African myths, native legends and Catholic doctrines simmer in a bubbling cauldron of belief, and many of the old stories still echo through the humid tropical nights. It is no surprise that literary "magical realists" such as Garcia-Marquez hail from this area; the supernatural makes up an integral part of the South American world view, and the kine prepare accordingly. Cainites may be less cautious of the Masquerade, true, but they must keep an unliving eye open for resourceful kine all too familiar with the powers - and weaknesses - of los vampiros.

the clans

Brujah

Brujah infest the guerrilla-ravaged "republics" of Latin America, having immigrated during the nights of the

conquistadors and multiplied since. Many Brujah see the region as an ideal place to carve out another Carthage—perhaps with the blade of a machete. Revolution, oppression and coup d'etat are magnets for Brujah vampires; Brujah find the kine's tumultuous politics as heady as their blood. Not that the clan can agree on any particular tenet, of course; for every Brujah in league with a would-be El Presidente, another fights alongside the rebels. Some Brujah are also active in the region's santeria cults, living up to the clan name's alternate meaning of "witch." Rumors of a secretive coven of indigenous Brujah sorcerers - with their own paths and rituals - disturb the region's Tremere to no end.

Gangrel

The Gangrel thrive in South and Central America's vast forests; indeed, a few lines of Gangrel are rumored to have dwelt here since pre-Columbian nights. Here, as in few other places, they feel truly at home. Flocking with the vampire bats indigenous to the continent, Gangrel soar freely across the untamed expanses. But these idyllic wildernesses house other creatures as well, creatures around which even the Gangrel must tread warily. There are strange and wonderful things hidden in the depths of the rainforests, true - but many of those wonders have claws long enough to decapitate an unsuspecting Kindred.

Malkavian

Central and South America's Malkavians remain largely indifferent to the sect wars. Most wander where they will, taking advantage of the turbulent, unstable atmosphere in order to act as they please. The kine's spasmodic merry-go-round of junta and revolt, however, interminably intrigues Malkavians. Indeed, some Malkavians are known to support radical political movements, or even instigate coup d'etats, simply for fun. (Truly wacky Malkavians often, courtesy of Dominate and Obfuscate, act as demagogues for several political parties and send them careening into each other on Election Day.) A few Malkavians dress in gaudy quasimilitary uniforms, bedecked with dozens or hundreds of ridiculous

medals, epaulets, badges and other dross; these Malkavians often take such ludicrously ornate titles as "El Gran Generalissimo, Commander-in-Chief and Presidente-for-Unlife (fill in name here), Jefe de los Todos Sanguijuelas y el Guapo Caballero de Libre."

Nosferatu

Nosferatu are uncomfortable in South and Central America. Most would prefer to avoid the area entirely, for the exact same reasons that draw the Gangrel to the turbulent region. Only one thing drives the Nosferatu ever deeper into the unexplored territories: curiosity. There is simply too much to learn and too many places that could hold valuable secrets for the Nosferatu to stay away.

Nosferatu are somewhat more at home in the cities, many of which are built atop the ruins of old Spanish forts and thus offer many subterranean hidey-holes. Even here, however, the kine's increased willingness to accept their presence (and respond accordingly) keeps Nosferatu from swarming in any significant numbers.

Toreador

The Toreador had their chance in Central America. Somewhere along the way, their schemes fell apart. Mexico City was once a world-renowned Mecca of the arts, but is now little more than a ruined pesthole. Few Toreador remain to revive fabled Tenochtitlan, and the turbulence of the other Central American nations is hardly inviting to the Clan of the Rose.

In South America, however, the clan is strong indeed; many Toreador dwell among the fabulously rich upper crust, their every need satisfied by retinues of adoring slaves. Some Toreador, emulating the Brujah, have become central figures in santeria cults, adapting the rituals to their sanguinary needs. Brazil and Argentina both boast sizable Toreador populations: decadent, wealthy and as colorful as the tropical



birds of their environs.

Tremere

The Tremere have a strong presence in the region, spearheaded by Inner Councilor Xavier de Cincao. Central and South America, with their ancient civilizations and lost empires, surely house forgotten secrets valuable to the Tremere. A few intrepid Warlocks have ventured into the interior; most are lost forever, but occasionally a Tremere emerges bearing some lost artifact from pre-Columbian days.

Ventruie

Ventruie are often involved in the northern corporations that exploit the area's "banana republics," but relatively few Ventruie make their homes here. The ambience is much more suited to their Lasombra rivals, and the pervasive Sabbat presence makes the area dangerous to them. Some Ventruie dwell here, administrating the scattered Camarilla holdings, but they are outsiders here and know it; they seem less like princes and more like provincial governors.

Assamites

Assamites find little of interest in the region. But they do find any number of vampires in need of their services, and that is enough.

Giovanni

Where others see wilderness, the Giovanni see promise. The profit potential in the region is very high, and there is no reason to leave the easy pickings to the Ventruie or to the Lasombra. There is money to be made and power to be wrested away from others who are too weak to hold their erstwhile birthrights. Then, too, many of the pre-Columbian cultures practiced intriguing necromantic customs, customs which the Clan of Death would be all too happy to assimilate into its own rites.

Setites

Followers of Set are strong here, having long ago gained a following among the region's African immigrants. Moreso than even the Brujah and Toreador, Setites have riddled the area's santeria cults, and thereby attempt to turn the kine away from the Catholic Church and its Lasombra scavengers.

Needless to say, Setites are heavily involved in Colombia's, Bolivia's and Chile's notorious drug cartels, though they face stiff competition from the Sabbat and Giovanni. Setites are also entrenched in much of Central America's political unrest; their "missionaries" often introduce elements of Set-worship into existing Mayan beliefs, turning the natives into blood cultists intent on violent overthrow of the Europeans.

Ravnos

The nomadic Ravnos enjoy a great deal of freedom in South America. Where everyone is a potential ally, even the Ravnos are treated with a certain amount of courtesy. Ravnos often act as smugglers, moving items or persons across national boundaries and sect lines. Finally, some among the Ravnos remember that many Nazis came here to hide following the Second World War. These Ravnos eagerly sup on the fiends who killed their mortal families, relishing the screams of once-proud soldiers who claimed merely to be doing their duty.

Lasombra

South America is both a staging ground and a playground for the Keepers. Through the steamy tropical nights they glide, reveling in the hot blood of the prey-swarms surrounding them. Nowhere else, save perhaps in Spain, are the Lasombra more at home. Here the clan is strong and vital. Here these proud scions of the conquistadors can rule as they were meant to rule, with no one to stop them. Few regions are entirely bereft of Lasombra, and the clan is arguably the strongest on the continent. Furthermore, Lasombra have infiltrated the region's Catholic hierarchy, the better to strike at the Setites.

Tzimisce

The Tzimisce enjoy Central and South America: The repressive governments make it easy to set up private fiefdoms and to rule without fear of retribution, yet the wealth disparity ensures a variety of services and luxuries unavailable in, say, Africa or Asia. Tzimisce have infiltrated many of the region's governments; certain infamous tales of what transpires in the dictators' political prisons are in fact garbled accounts of Tzimisce pastimes.

The Bloodlines

Many of the region's Kindred belong to no known clan. Samedi are known to roam the area, serving any who will pay their fees. Other, stranger bloodlines are rumored to exist, products of ancient survivors left to go their way amid the selvas, pampas and gorges. Indeed, few European Kindred can state with certainty exactly what dwells here.

others

Lupines

Though few Lupines are native to this region, the Amazon is the battleground for a massive Lupine assault against the forces of the Wyrn. Other Lupines breed with the indigenous maned wolf and constantly harry vampiric operations across the continent. Lupines generally play second fiddle, however, to a variety of other shapeshifters.

Bastet

Balam werejaguars are native to Central and South America. They are savagely territorial and often attack any who dare to trespass on their land. They harbor little more love for vampires than their Lupine cousins do, and vampires would be wise not to intrude on a Balam Den-Realm.

Mokole

The Amazon houses several nests of Mokole. These reptiles participate in the war against the Wyrms, but prefer to do so on their own terms. Though Mokole are never plentiful, there are probably as many werelizards here as there are anywhere in the world, and their presence could well turn the tide of the war. They have little to do with vampires, but are rumored to have parleyed with one Axolotl, a notorious Gangrel Autarkis whose scaly hide and alligatorlike teeth no doubt make the Mokole feel at ease.

Ananasi

In these lands, where spiders grow huge enough to eat birds, the Ananasi thrive. There are more Ananasi in this region than anywhere else in the world. Most of the region's werespiders dwell in the rainforests of the Amazon and Yucatan, but a few travel through places like Rio and Mexico City. In those vampire-haunted strongholds, one more bloodsucking predator is hardly noticed.

Mages

Mages of the Dreamspeaker and Cult of Ecstasy Traditions often congregate in Central and South America: the former to explore the Mayan pyramids, Nazca Lines and Incan ruins; the latter to lose themselves in dancing, Carnival, native rituals and native drugs.

Changelings

Several varieties of changelings dwell in the less-settled areas, though even the North American Nunnehi know little of their powers or ways.

central America

Mexico

Mexico is the true seat of power for the Sabbat. Here the sect holds almost absolute sovereignty. While the Camarilla holds some sway over the Yucatan Peninsula, the sect's influence is fading fast; only the Camarilla's vast wealth allows it any influence at all in Mexico.

But while the Sabbat holds near-total political dominance of the region, the Camarilla's use of money as a weapon has taken a powerful toll on Mexico. Before the Sabbat wrested

complete control of the area, the American dollar and the Mexican peso were fairly well balanced in value. However, the Camarilla has worked diligently to ensure the decline of the peso's financial power. Over the years, the powerful seat of the Sabbat has been sucked nearly as dry as a vampire's victim. Rampant political corruption and electoral fraud only add to the malaise.

Recent Sabbat attempts to bring about a more concentrated source of power in the area have failed, despite the best plans the sect could design. NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), the carefully proposed plan conceived by the U.S., Canada and Mexico, has so far proved ineffectual, despite the Lasombra's hopes. The kine of Mexico are largely opposed to the NAFTA agreement, and a combination of kine corruption and Camarilla manipulation has undermined the planned fiscal resurgence of the Mexican peso. Despite the sheer numbers of Sabbat vampires in Mexico, the Camarilla has managed to keep the sect from expanding, at least on one front, while increasing its own wealth by taking advantage of the new NAFTA regulations.

Mexico City

Built in a valley surrounded by mountains, Mexico City is a seething hive of kine. The city is one of the fastest-growing in the world; only Calcutta and Tokyo rival its expansion. Over 20 million people call Mexico City home, and the number rises daily. Most of these kine live in poverty that is almost incomprehensible. The air is choked with smog; the water is too filthy to drink without fear of disease or poisoning. Even the most poverty-stricken kine must purchase water imported from less-polluted areas. Three-quarters of the city's population live in a vast ghetto, often dwelling in hovels built atop the overflowing toxic landfills in the southern and eastern portions of the city.

In this environment the Sabbat has grown powerful, and Mexico City's kine have become a herd in truth. Education, even basic math and literacy, is nearly nonexistent. Sabbat vampires freely swagger through the nocturnal streets, taking what they will; and the dense blanket of smog obscuring the sky allows certain brave vampires to hunt after daybreak!

Ever since the coming of the conquistadors, struggles for ultimate power in Mexico City have raged time and again. Though the city was held by the Camarilla on a few occasions, the Sabbat has decisively won the territory. Indeed, so confident is the Sabbat in its imperviousness that the bishops allow limited internecine strife and "turf wars": such games, claim the leaders, keep the packs hungry and strong.

Recent events in Mexico City have prompted a massive increase in the number of Sabbat in the city. During a recent conflict with mages from the Technocracy, the Sabbat was forced to sire hundreds of new vampires in order to preserve its power. Over 300 vampires currently haunt the city.

However, the continuous migration of over 1000 people a day into Mexico City allows the Sabbat to function normally.

The sheer number of vampires in Mexico City is a great boon for security. Large, roving packs of Sabbat constantly scour the airports and main roads that lead into the metropolis, searching for and often finding any would-be infiltrators. Only the wildest Kindred have a prayer of sneaking into the city.

The greatest threat to the vampires of Mexico City comes, ironically enough, from their increased numbers. With so many vampires, and such a high turnover, it is almost impossible to keep track of who belongs and who does not. So long as a vampire knows the proper gestures and signs and obeys the bishops, there is no way to confirm or deny that he belongs. Additionally, many of the older, more powerful members of the sect have begun acting strangely, and some have simply disappeared. Some vampires believe that a new threat has come to Mexico City, one that replaces Sabbat vampires with puppets who do as they are commanded.

Belize

Formerly known as British Honduras, Belize achieved self-government in 1964, but only in 1991 did Guatemala cede ownership of the region. A wide variety of races - African, mestizo, Mayan Indian and Creole - live in Belize. The supernatural population is equally heterogeneous; vampires, shapeshifters and mages all traverse the region, though few stay for long.

While there are vampires in Belize, they are few in number. The kine population is simply not large enough to maintain a high number of Kindred. What vampires exist here, however, are largely friendly toward the Camarilla, and the country is unusual for Central America in that a Ventrue prince claims sovereignty over its nights.

The greatest threat to the vampires of Belize is the Sabbat

vampires who surround the nation. Mexico borders Belize to the north and Guatemala borders it to the south and west. The Prince of Belize, Arturo San Gerande, remains convinced that a full-scale assault is inevitable, and he has placed himself deeply in prestaton debt to his European clanmates in exchange for financial and military aid. Additionally, Arturo has hired three Samedi bodyguards who double as enforcers. The Samedi, allegedly the largest concentration of the bloodline in any one area, are loyal and deadly; the rest of Belize's Kindred hold them in respectful terror. The large Creole population in Belize assures that the Samedi hear about almost everything that occurs within the area - and the Zombies' gruesome tactics ensure that any threat is ended swiftly. All three claim Baron Samedi himself as their sire and allegedly deal in dark sorceries.

Guatemala

The people of Guatemala war against their leaders in an endless dance of blood and death. Ever since the Spanish conquest, strife between the native Mayan Indians and Europeans has wracked the country. Add to this rampant corruption, tyrannical dictators, near-continuous coups, terrorism from left- and right-wing factions and incessant human-rights abuses, and it is not difficult to see why Guatemala's kine live in misery - or why Kindred flock to the country....

The Sabbat holds putative sway in Guatemala, but only through the control of the kine military in the area. Sabbat hold Guatemala's leaders under powerful Blood Bonds and promises of immortality. Guatemala is something of an experiment for the Sabbat: In an effort to study the Camarilla's strategies, the sect has resorted to similar tactics for the first time in its history. Instead of deciding to simply ignore the kine, the Sabbat of Guatemala have chosen to mimic their enemy and use mortals as their allies.

Led by a powerful Tzimisce archbishop who has adopted the colorful nom du guerre of Xipe Totec, the Guatemalan



Sabbat stages incessant raids against Guatemala's guerrillas and terrorists. Constant retaliation by well-armed and well-trained forces takes it toll, however, and the Sabbat are almost always recruiting new members.

The main cause of the Sabbat's grief stems from the deadly manipulations of the Followers of Set. Setite influence in the area is twofold: Setites riddle the native cartels of drug traffickers, and the Followers have also ensconced themselves among Guatemala's native and highly disaffected Mayan population. Guatemala's Mayans oppose most of the government rules established under the current regime, just as they opposed the previous leadership of the country. Fearing the continued destruction of their heritage, the Mayans have turned to violence to resolve their conflicts, thus inadvertently gaining the aid of the Followers of Set. At times when the guerrillas fear they can no longer endure the strife, the Setites provide desperately needed food, medicine and weapons.

Other Kindred, including indigenous Gangrel and footloose Ravnos, also travel through the area. For the most part, they ignore the Sabbat-Setite war, but are occasionally drawn in by choice or happenstance. Xotli the Toad, a particularly powerful and repulsive mercenary Gangrel, is rumored to have sold his services to both sides.

In recent months, Xipe Totec has begun capturing groups of natives - associated with the guerrilla factions or not - and turning them to his cause through a combination of brainwashing, torture and Blood Bonds. He then sends these unfortunates out against their own people. Of course, Xipe Totec first improves his hunters' effectiveness via Vicissitude, which ensures that they seldom resemble anything remotely human. The Setites, fully aware of what he is doing, make a point of working through native "blinds," thus assuring their anonymity.

As if this bloodbath weren't enough, a new danger has recently loomed against the vampires of Guatemala. Several of the archbishop's hunter ghouls have recently been found destroyed, and three Sabbat scouts have failed to return from routine missions. While Xipe Totec is doing his best to keep this news a secret, the disappearances of three well-known Sabbat will inevitably be noticed. Thus far, the only clue to the disappearances and murders is the presence of salt scattered in strange patterns around what remains of the victims' bodies.

Honduras

The country of Honduras is effectively a no-man's-land as far as Kindred are concerned. The lush tropical forests still grow densely, and the population is too sparse for a large number of vampires to survive unnoticed. Honduras is primarily an agricultural country, producing bananas and coffee as its primary exports. In a few locations, gold, silver, iron and coal are mined.

While the vast majority of the land remains unclaimed by vampires, the cities of Tegucigalpa (the capital) and San Pedro Sula are both sufficient to support modest vampiric populations. However, neither the Camarilla nor the Sabbat has a hold in Honduras; the area is claimed by other vampires who aren't beholden to either sect.

Little is known of the two ancient vampires who emerged from the jungle 30 years ago with their broods; however, the ease with which they disposed of the warring Camarilla and Sabbat forces in the area indicates that these entities are easily Methuselah-class. They are rumored to be Inconnu, though no direct evidence of this has been garnered.

Other vampires are generally free to travel through the region, though any who attempt to stay are summarily slain. The two Methuselaha seem content to exist in peace with the shapeshifters and changelings indigenous to the region, letting the kine do as they will. All things considered, a little



vampiric manipulation might actually prove beneficial to Honduras' kine; illiteracy, poverty and military depredations plague the populace. Though the Camarilla land Sabbat still smart from their undignified ejection, most agree that the Methuselahs and their childer can have the place.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua, "the land of lakes and volcanoes," is the largest nation in Central America. Bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea and on the west by the Pacific Ocean, the land is bisected by the Cordillera Mountains, a large line of active volcanoes. Central America's two largest lakes are also claimed by the Nicaragua borders.

Nicaragua is a hotbed of both mortal and Cainite political activity. Though the days of warfare between Somoza's contras and Onega's Sandinistas have ended, true political stability is still a pipe dream. Thus is doubly true for Nicaragua's vampire inhabitants. The land is claimed by everyone and owned by none.

Nicaragua's capital, Managua, is a particularly dangerous place for inexperienced vampires. Because Managua is crucial to Nicaragua's nascent industries, any breach of the Masquerade-by any vampire, regardless of sect - is met with immediate punishment. Furthermore, Managua is the staging ground for a tripartite nocturnal skirmish between Sabbat, Camarilla and Giovanni.

Camarilla vampires have spent a fortune maintaining their tenuous foothold, but the Sabbat constantly wages a brutal Jyhad against them, using mortals as weapons and fodder. Numerous Sabbat attempts to seize complete control of the area (via agents in the Sandinista government) were thwarted by the use of Camarilla Hinds and weapons passed illegally into the country by the United States. Still, the sect's grip on the area is flimsy.

Just why the Camarilla fights so viciously to maintain its power in the impoverished country is a mystery, but one that both the Sabbat and the Giovanni wish to solve. Speculations about Nicaragua being the home of an Antediluvian cycle through the area, often leading to a dangerous influx of vampires willing to risk everything for a chance to sup on one of the Third Generation. No one has found any solid clues to make a case for this claim, but almost everyone continues to try. The Giovanni remain convinced that the Camarilla fights to hold the area as a buffer for the Panama Canal to the south. Nicaragua does have its own canal, and the constant struggles for domination of the area make sense when placed in this light.

There are three major cities in Nicaragua, each held by a separate faction of the Kindred. Managua is the main financial center for the entire area and contains many budding industries, which the Ventrue and Tremere cultivate at great expense. Prince Alicia Penobscott of Clan Ventrue holds power over the area, as a result of her careful

manipulation of the country's leaders and her sway in the elite social circles of Managua's kine. She is almost always accompanied by the elderly form of Janson Albright, a powerful member of Clan Tremere who is rumored to be her consort.

Granada, a large city near the edge of Lake Nicaragua, is only a third the size of Managua. The city's massive plantation homes and ancient cathedrals are often used as vacation spots and meeting sites by Granada's Giovanni rulers, who are reputed to have a strong interest in Aztec and Mayan beliefs regarding the afterlife. Dark suspicions about Giovanni burial sites and rituals interest both the Sabbat and Camarilla, but none of the numerous Kindred spies sent to investigate has ever returned. More than one Kindred is alleged to have met Final Death while visiting in the area, and Lake Nicaragua ensures that any corpses are never found.

Leon is smaller than the other two cities, but is a very important site in the eyes of the Sabbat. The bishop of the area, a Brujah antitribu by the name of Antonio Veradas, has used his powerful military connections to cause no end of grief for the Camarilla and the Giovanni alike. His brutal methods of maintaining control have earned him the respect he demands, and his personal skills in both combat and espionage have kept him in power for the last century. Unlike many Brujah, Veradas always maintains his cool, preferring to seek revenge later rather than in the heat of the moment. Rumors that he is of the "True" Brujah have never been verified, but many have claimed that the bishop has access to knowledge that almost no one in his position should have, and that he seems capable of being in two places simultaneously.

Lake Nicaragua is home to a large number of ravenous freshwater sharks. Some vampires believe that the waters house a demon; certain shapeshifters, however, claim that the lake and its environs support a small group of Rokea weresharks, who use the waters to survive and to allow their Kinfolk to breed.

Costa Rica

Geographically almost identical to Nicaragua, Costa Rica is as different from her northern neighbor as Kindred are from kine. The area is lush and the primary exports are coffee and tropical fruits. Turbulent earthquakes often rock the country, which rests on a junction of tectonic plates.

Costa Rica is set apart from neighboring countries primarily by the political stability in the area. As turbulent as the land is, the government of Costa Rica is placid. Costa Rica's populace is predominantly European, with a small population who are of African descent. There are very few Native Americans in Costa Rica. The Guaymi Indians disappeared at almost the same time that the country became a colony of Spain, and to this day no one is certain exactly where the indigenous people went. Most of the kine believe the natives

simply migrated to avoid the incoming Spaniards. The Kindred, however, believe otherwise.

The Kindred population of Costa Rica is almost entirely Toreador and is ruled by a powerful Methuselah of the clan. This Ancient, Theresa del Babillone, emigrated with Christopher Columbus and decided she liked the coastline enough to call the area home.

What she did not count on was a group of Kindred in the area. While the details of the encounter are understandably suspect, Theresa del Babillone insists that the strange vampires attacked her the very moment she set foot on the coast. While substantially outnumbered by the odd-looking vampires, Theresa insists that her attackers were "easily felled and actually quite tasty." No evidence exists today that any Kindred even passed through the area before Theresa set foot on the coast.

Costa Rica's Toreador tend to avoid influencing the people of the area, save in the subtlest ways. Their presence is believed to be the main reason that Costa Rica's past has remained calm in comparison to the surrounding countries. Certainly, Theresa's rule in Costa Rica has always been remarkably benevolent to the indigenous kine. Though she spends most of her time in San Jose, Theresa tends to move among the few major cities to make certain that her orders are executed properly. So far she has succeeded: In comparison to most Central Americans, Costa Ricans live amidst plenty. The average family has a car and a television, rarities throughout most of the continent. While Costa Rica still relies on financial aid from the U.S. and several other countries, the amount of assistance required is minimal.

Large areas of the country are still covered by heavy tropical rainforests and have never been fully explored by the vampires of Costa Rica. As a result, the local Balam and Mokole populations remain mostly untouched. Additionally, many Toreador and Gangrel insist that the strange vampiric creatures which initially attacked Theresa still dwell in the deeper parts of the forest, waiting for the appropriate time to strike back against their unwanted neighbors. For that reason alone, the Kindred of Costa Rica - even the area's Gangrel - avoid moving too deeply into the jungle areas.

The greatest threat to the vampires of Costa Rica, however, comes from the north. The Sabbat often sends raiding parties into the area in an attempt to take the country from the Kindred who have existed here for centuries. Fortunately for Babillone's brood, few Sabbat ever manage to reach them before encountering the entities lurking in the jungles.

Panama

As with Costa Rica, the humans of Panama maintain a far better lifestyle than most of their neighbors to the north. However, the Kindred cannot take responsibility for the prosperous lives of the kine. The Panama Canal and the expansive drug-trafficking operations in Panama are solely

the result of human greed, though the Kindred have certainly taken the liberty of making a profit for themselves as well. Not surprisingly, Panama has suffered through several corrupt administrations, both Kindred and kine.

In an effort to stave off vast debts owed to many other nations, Panama's people and certain members of the government have added cocaine and marijuana to the numerous foodstuffs that are exported from the country. While the Panama Canal has been a boon to Panama, providing jobs and 25% of Panama's income, the steady decrease in the use of the canal requires additional revenue that is best earned illicitly.

There has always been a vampiric population in Panama, but it was not until the building of the Panama Canal that the country achieved major importance in the eyes of the Kindred. From 1914 to the present, the area has remained a major point of Cainite conflict.

The Sabbat has never managed to gain a strong foothold in Panama, though not for lack of trying. Its efforts have normally consisted of attempts to take by force what the Camarilla and Giovanni seized by greed. The one brief success of the Sabbat came in the form of General Omar Torrijo Herrera and his military faction, the Panama Defense Force. Using the general as their pawn, the Sabbat seized control of the area in 1968 by means of a military coup. Later, the general became hard to control and was replaced by General Manuel Antonio Noriega, who led the country from behind the scenes even when others won in the general elections held every five years. Noriega managed to maintain control until he became arrogant and tried to keep power even after being voted out of office. Seeing a chance to remove the Sabbat's puppet leader, the Camarilla influenced the U.S.'s decision to force the man out of office and have him arrested on drug-trafficking charges.

However, the road to complete domination has not yet been cleared for the Camarilla. The Giovanni and the Sabbat work separately but diligently to ensure that the cost of keeping Panama is too high for the sect. Since the government of Panama decided to crack down on the export of illegal drugs to other countries, specifically the U.S., the cost of living in Panama has increased tenfold, and attempts at restructuring the finances of the country almost always fail.

Making matters far worse for the Camarilla is the steady growth within the Setite population. While the numbers of kine under their influence is small, the Followers of Set have managed to fan racial tensions between the people of Panama, adding a constant undertone of danger to any and all negotiations. Phillip Marcon, the Setite leader in the area, hints dryly that little enough effort was needed on the clan's part to increase the racial aggressions. The Gangrel who once roamed over much of Panama have moved farther south in an effort to avoid the rapid growth of industry in the area.

There are four major cities in Panama. Panama City is home to over a third of the kine population and is the official seat of power. Among the Kindred, Prince Vojta Arminov of Clan Tremere holds sway at the present. Colon, Portobello and David are all major ports surrounding the openings to the Panama Canal. While Colon - held by Prince Maria Genovese Donate of Clan Ventrue - and David-ruled by Enrico Arvador of Clan Toreador-are both held by the Camarilla, Portobello is now in the clutches of the Setites. A rash of sudden disappearances and strange murders has recently removed most of the officials in the area and decimated the Camarilla population there as well. With the unexpected void in power, the Setites - under the rule of Phillip Marcon - made their move and took the city by storm. The new replacements in the city's government are all bound to the Followers of Set, and they are all very careful regarding their public appearances. Every attempt to reclaim the city has failed, and the Setites are believed to house a very large number of their clan within Portobello, preparing to seize the neighboring city of David. While the Camarilla holds power over most of Panama today, the near future does not guarantee that the sect can keep what it has claimed.

South America

South America is a study in contrasts. The continent's physical terrain includes some of the world's highest mountains, the planet's largest expanse of jungle, three major river basins and hundreds of miles of flat plateau land. The climate ranges from tundralike conditions to sweltering tropical heat.

South America's kine are equally heterogeneous. Four strains predominate: the native American peoples; white Europeans (mostly of Spanish and Portuguese ancestry), descendants of early explorers and colonists; people of African descent, most of whom were imported to the region as slaves; and people of mixed native, African and European ancestry (called mestizos if of native-European descent and mulattos if of African-European descent). These manifold ethnic backgrounds have blended together for centuries, combining to create a rich melange that is uniquely South American.

This diversity is reflected in the continent's Kindred. Vampires of all clans drink from South America's kine and resources. South America has something for everybody, and its vampire mix reflects that fact. Ancient Methuselahs, some dating from pre-Columbian nights, exist alongside hungry neonates from other continents, newly arrived to seek their fortune. Brujah agitators stir up an already turbulent political scene, while Gangrel prowl amid the selvas and the campesinos. Gorgeous Toreador, bedecked in gold and gaudy silks, glide through the tropical nights, trailed by cadres of adoring, love-struck retainers. Lasombra conduct their affairs with a refined, casual ruthlessness unknown in more northerly latitudes. Some vampires seek only to find a safe haven; others seek to make a name for themselves by taking what they can at any cost.

Many of South America's Kindred are concerned about the surprising number of Caitiff presently migrating into the area. Certain Kindred view this as a sign of impending Gehenna, and some have even taken to killing Caitiff on sight, to ensure their own safety.

Brazil

Brazil is the largest country in South America, stretching almost 2700 miles from the foothills of the Andes Mountains eastward to the Atlantic Ocean. In area, Brazil is the fifth-largest country in the world; it borders on every country of the continent except for Chile and Ecuador. Despite dwelling within borders almost the size of the United States', the country's population is barely half as large.

Brazil gained independence from Portugal in 1822, and during the 19th century enjoyed a political stability unusual for Latin America. As the 20th century dawned, however, the area fell into social turmoil. Brazil's vampires claim no part of the chaos; the violent overthrow of a dozen different administrations is entirely the work of the kine. Brujah, Gangrel and others were, of course, more than happy to



batten on the turmoil.

Brasilia, the capital city, was built in the highlands beginning in 1957 in order to encourage development of the interior. Brazilian Nosferatu took advantage of the construction, and have a well-fortified warren hidden deep beneath the city proper. The Amaganti Warren is well protected by the natural geography of the area, and this protection is supplemented by specially designed vault doors designed to withstand the blast of a hydrogen bomb. Amaganti is allegedly guarded by land mines, flame-throwers and phosphorus grenades. The Nosferatu speak proudly of their impenetrable fortress, but seldom make mention of why they felt the stronghold was necessary. Those who have asked have simply been informed that "She Who Screams in the Forests" has arisen.

Brazil's lowlands are composed primarily of undisturbed sedimentary rocks and harsh terrain. For this reason, much of Brazil's interior is still uninhabited, despite advances in technology that would allow for easy access. Brazil's kine prefer to remain concentrated along the coast or on the major rivers. This lush panorama of untamed forest has made Brazil very popular with the Gangrel. No one is certain just how many members of Clan Gangrel dwell in Brazil, but most suspect the numbers are high. Fear of the havoc the Gangrel could wreak if antagonized has prevented Brazil's other vampires from pushing harder for expansion into new areas.

The Amazon

The Amazon is the second-longest river in the world, extending 3900 miles from the Andes Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean. It supports a jungle of such size that parts of it remain unseen even today. This jungle houses 30% of the world's flora and fauna, and its trees, which are disappearing at an alarming rate, produce 40% of the planet's oxygen.

The Amazon's myriad varieties of fauna include 30 million species of insects; 15-foot boas, 30-foot anacondas and deadly poisonous vipers; peccaries; spider and howler monkeys; enormous jaguars; alligators and caimans; sloths and tapirs; giant pirocuru fish, schools of vicious piranhas and electric eels. As for the plants-one hectare of rainforest supports an average of 300 trees. In some places the trees grow up to 200 feet high and are so thick that sunlight cannot reach the ground. These trees in turn support lianas, clinging vines, wildly colorful flowers and fungi of all sorts.

Few vampires dare to venture into the Amazon Basin. The Amazon is a battleground between the Lupines and their enemies, the creatures of the Wyrms. The continuous corporate destruction of the tropical rainforest has sparked the Lupines to Rage, and vampires are wise to avoid the conflict.

The strange and savage war for the Amazon has precipitated several unpleasant surprises. Reports of odd, nocturnal migrations away from the jungle have alarmed many of Brazil's vampires. Great winged beasts, half-human and half-

bat, have reportedly been seen flapping away from the rainforest. Those few who claim to have seen the creatures aver that the bat-things drink blood. Some even whisper they prefer the flavor of vampiric blood over all others. No proof exists, but vampires seldom leave behind evidence after they've been drained of their unlife. Stranger creatures still are supposedly moving toward the coastline, and thus the cities, but their descriptions are so fantastic that most tend to discount them as myth. Efforts to halt the destruction of the rainforests - just in case the rumors about monsters are true-have had no real effect to date.

Cariocas y Carnival: Rio by Night

Rio de Janeiro is a city of contradictions for both the living and the dead. Its name is synonymous with sybaritic luxury, but the poverty of most of its seven million people is staggering, and tons of pollutants and human waste are dumped into its picturesque Guanabara Bay every day. Even the city's name is deceiving: It means "River of January" in Portuguese. There is no river here, though; the explorer Goncalho Coelho mistook the bay for the mouth of an estuary in 1502 and no one ever bothered to correct the mistake.

Rio is a major financial center and a focal point for business and domestic commerce. Many South American corporate headquarters are located in the city, and most foreign companies have their primary headquarters within the city limits. The addition of the Galeao International Airport on nearby Governador Island has done nothing but add to the chaos.

No longer Brazil's capital, Rio de Janeiro has spent 35 years slipping into a sort of luxurious lassitude. Its upper classes live in nigh-imperial splendor, supported by a booming tourism industry, which in turn fosters a glittering potpourri of nightclubs, discotheques and festivals. Vampires also flock to Rio: The countless tourists ensure that feeding in Rio is virtually effortless. And if elegant seduction of the innocent fails, vampires of less-choosy palates can always stroll down to Rio's expanses of squalid shantytowns and drag faceless victims out from corrugated tin shacks.

Lasombra influence in Rio stretches back to Coelho's discovery of the site; after all, it was the legendary Archbishop Moncada who bankrolled his expedition. The Toreador arrived scant decades later, with the first exiled Huguenots to build a permanent settlement along the bay. Until gold and gems started flowing through Rio from Minas Gerais in the 1690s, the two clans spatted intermittently. With the money, however, came the real wars, wars which lasted until 1807 and the arrival of the exiled Portuguese court fleeing Napoleon. The influx of powerful Kindred of both clans ground the conflict to a quick stalemate, while the city's immense wealth and large transient population made peace a very appealing notion. Eventually, the truce grew into something that bears occasional resemblances to an

alliance, based on the sacred tenet of not disturbing the goose that lays the golden (and emerald) eggs.

So it is here, of all places, that Sabbat Lasombra and Camarilla Toreador have made an unspoken peace. The city has been tacitly declared Carnival for the Kindred: a free city, outside the sect wars and the Jyhad. All vampires are welcome here, provided that they leave their politics behind for the duration of their stay. That is not to say that Rio is safe for vampires - not by any stretch of the imagination; but rather that if a vampire kills another here, it is much more likely to be for reasons of business - or pleasure - than for political gain.

Vampires of all stripes stroll through Rio's torrid byways, but certain clans are predominant. The Lasombra and Toreador still dominate Rio, conducting the city's affairs (or simply existing) with a style and elegance unknown to more staid regions. Brujah also walk here in abundance; some are descendants of slaves or holdovers from the nights of revolution, while others are drawn by Rio's santeria rites and subversive blood cults. Malkavians cavort through the riotous night streets, their excesses ignored by the laughing herd; Tremere slink through the shadows, spying and selling their services; Setites hiss from alleyways, offering diversions to satisfy any and all tastes; and even Assamites can be found here, as assassins or as students of capoeira (a Brazilian martial art).

For Rio's mortal population, Carnival is the legendary festival that takes place four days prior to Ash Wednesday; for vampires, Carnival is something entirely different. It is the official code of Rio, enforced by centuries-old vampires who, perhaps weary of the wars of their kind, have made the city a playground. In a city where death squads roam the streets to exterminate excess street urchins, there is certainly plenty of food for all. The city is a free port for vampiric goods and services, where deals can be struck and assignations can be made away from the watchful eyes of sect elders. It is in Rio that a Toreador can hire a Tzimisce to fleshcraft his dream lover, or a devout Lasombra can pray at the statue of Christ the Redeemer on Corcovado alongside a Wee Kirk Gangrel.

As one might expect, such freedoms come at a great price. While the battle lines of the Jyhad have been temporarily erased here, for many vampires that simply means that now their own side can attempt to off them without retribution as well. Some of the child-hunting death squads are actually mercenary gangs of Kindred hunting others of their kind, taking bounties in vitae and gold from anyone willing to hire them. Still, that is part of the exhilaration of Rio: The samba-school dance-parade can hide a half-dozen murders, and Tzimisce "cleaners" take pride in how long they can prolong the process of feeding their victims, one dollop at a time, into the noisome sewage lines that run into the bay.

Octavia

Background: Octavia is a familiar sight on Rio's night streets and club circuit. Many vampires have seen her in passing, though few have spoken to her. Most presume the beautiful siren to be Toreador or perhaps Caitiff.

In truth, Octavia is an Ananasi: a spider shapeshifter, related to the Lupines. Born in the Brazilian jungles, Octavia came to Rio years ago and was delighted by the whirling carnival of city life. Her delight grew when she discovered she had Kinfolk in the city. Now Octavia nests at the center of a web of excess; she is surrounded by adoring mortals and devoted Kinfolk, all of whom would do anything for the pleasure of giving their blood to her.

Octavia is intrigued by Rio's vampires, fellow hemovores, and observes them from afar. Of late her playful curiosity regarding the taste of vampire blood has grown.

Image: Octavia exemplifies Brazilian beauty, taking the best traits of several races and melding them into one stunning whole. She is 5'9" and has the build of a model. Curly, shoulder-length dark-brown hair falls in lush waves over her cafe au lait shoulders and chiseled face. The flash of her dark eyes is enough to melt most viewers - though, if she wishes, her stare can also paralyze people with terror. She is usually seen in elegant evening wear. In her spider-hybrid and giant spider forms, Octavia is brightly colored in patterns of red, emerald and black.

Roleplaying Hints: You are always smiling, always laughing, but behind the smile is something sad and terrible. You do so love the mortals and their world, and they love you. You politely dismiss most admirers, but a few dearest beloved you take home to your world. You love them still, even after you drain them to desiccated husks. You occasionally wish it were not so, but what are you to do?



Breed: Homid Ananasi
Nature: Survivor
Demeanor: Bon Vivant
Physical: Strength 3 (6), Dexterity 5 (8), Stamina 3 (5)
Social: Charisma 3 (0), Manipulation 5 (0), Appearance 5 (0)
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3
Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Dodge 4, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 3, Stealth 4
Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Rio) 4, Linguistics 1, Occult 3, Rituals 2
Disciplines: Animalism 3, Auspex 1, Celerity 3, Dominate 2, Fortitude 1, Protean 2
Backgrounds: Herd 5, Kinfolk (Retainers) 3, Resources 3
Virtues: Conscience 3, Self-Control 2, Courage 2
Humanity: 4
Willpower: 7

Notes: Ananasi are fully detailed in *The Werewolf Players Guide*; if you have that book, replace Octavia's Disciplines with appropriate Gifts and Rites. She can assume a variety of forms: Homid (human), Lilian (bipedal, six-armed spider-woman; roughly equivalent to a "wolfman" Lupine, including increased stats), Pithus (giant spider, complete with poisonous bite), and Crawlerling (a mass of tiny spiders - cannot attack, but is virtually indestructible). Octavia, as a blood-drinker, has a Blood Pool of 10 and can spend blood just as vampires can.

Colombia

Colombia is connected to the Central American continent via the Panama Canal. It is also a major stumbling block for the U.S. and its Camarilla parasites. The region is a free zone for all manner of hostile vampires: Sabbat, Giovanni and Setites have all established outposts in the area, openly supporting Colombian drug traffickers such as the Medellin Cartel.

Colombia has been a mortal and Cainite battleground since the coming of the Spaniards in the 16th century. Battles between native vampires, Balam werejaguars, Camarilla Kindred and Sabbat Lasombra have stained the Colombian earth for hundreds of years. In 1819, the hero (and, some whisper, Ventruue ghoul) Simon Bolivar defeated the Spanish and won independence for the nation of Gran Colombia, a coalition of several areas that later dissolved into the countries of Colombia, Peru, Panama, Ecuador and Venezuela. During this brief unification, Camarilla Kindred held complete control. However, a subsequent influx of Sabbat and neutral Kindred (including several vengeful Lasombra) catalyzed a rapid and volatile blood war, which prompted the disintegration of Gran Colombia. The change happened so fast that even the Camarilla was caught off-guard. Gran Colombia dissolved in 1830, and in the tumultuous period that followed, many Camarilla vampires were destroyed or forced to flee.

Even after the dissolution of Gran Colombia, Panama and Colombia remained as one nation. However, following the

Panamanian War of Independence (1899-1903), Panama became a free nation with help from the Camarilla-held U.S.

Violence in Colombia continued over the next decades, as strife between Kindred of all sorts spilled over into the mortal world. Finally an unexpected attack by the Setites, using General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla as their proxy and pawn, ended the conflicts. From 1953 to 1957, the Followers of Set ruled Colombia with a dictatorial fist. Only the united forces of the Camarilla and the Giovanni managed to bring down the brutal army the Setites founded, just when the Camarilla was convinced that the "sand snake revolution" was over, however, the Giovanni and Setites came to a last-minute agreement that drove the Camarilla out of the country. The unexpected allegiance caught the powerful sect by surprise, and in a matter of weeks the vampiric fate of Colombia was sealed.

Never one to take defeat lightly, the Camarilla began using its powerful influence in the U.S. to cause Colombia grief. Embargoes and preposterously high export taxes almost brought the joined clans to their ruin. However, the Setite and Giovanni coalition retaliated by abetting Colombia's kine in their production of illegal and very cost-effective drugs, which, in cooperation with U.S. Setites, provided the neutral clans with ludicrous amounts of cash. Though the Setite-Giovanni coalition has since gone the way of most vampiric treaties, and Camarilla- and Sabbat-affiliated Kindred have crept back into the nation, the sects as a whole keep their distance.

Currently, Colombia is a violent and unstable land. Camarilla and Sabbat vampires (most of whom give only tenuous loyalty to their sect) jockey for control with Setites and Giovanni. Many of the conflicts stem around gaining control of the cocaine cartels that infest the nation.

Indeed, Colombia's druglords often wield more power than the Colombian government, to the point of ordering assassinations against "uncooperative" (i.e., honest) officials. Though most of the cartels' evil is strictly human, such powerful and ruthless criminal organizations have certainly attracted their share of Leeches. Lasombra, Setites, Brujah, Giovanni, Ravnos and the occasional Gangrel have all infiltrated this or that cartel, using a mix of manipulation and muscle to turn the gangs to their ends. Recently, government officials have scored some successes against the cartels - but the swift escape from justice of Medellin Cartel leader Pablo Escobar Gaviria bears mute testimony to the fact that many Cainites desire the continued health of the drug rings.

Bogota by Night

Bogota is one of the largest cities in South America. It is also one of the most contested. Camarilla Kindred walk alongside Setites, Lasombra and Giovanni in this city of almost five million kine. While there is a peace of sorts, numerous clan skirmishes sporadically rock the city. The city is not the most

substantial economic power base in the country, but Bogota still generates over a third of the nation's capital.

Ironically, neither the Giovanni nor the Setites control Bogota's wealth. That privilege belongs to the Toreador, who have remained in the city despite the loss of Camarilla control. Considered the Athens of America, Bogota houses several prestigious publishing firms that supply materials to Europe and South America alike. Bogota's Toreador have resisted the best efforts of the Giovanni and Setites to expel them.

Bogota is the only city in Colombia to have a vampiric prince. Prince Marcos Belegrad holds enough financial and political sway in Bogota that even the non-Camarilla clans are forced to listen when he makes a demand. Four attempts to end the prince's existence have all met with failure, and even the Setites are reportedly impressed with the "Spanish Dandy's" ability to avoid Final Death.

Ecuador

The small nation of Ecuador is of little concern to the Kindred. Most vampires avoid the majority of the country, preferring to think of the Ecuadorian borders as a sort of no-man's-land between Setite-controlled Colombia and Sabbat-held Peru.

Ecuador's Kindred population is very small, consisting of only a handful of Setites and Gangrel. For the most part, there is little worth fighting for in Ecuador, especially if one listens to the myths in the area-myths of gargantuan reptilian beasts that roam through the swampy jungles and that have acquired a taste for the flesh of vampires.

A number of Autarkis Gangrel are reputed to roam Ecuador's dark, primordial forests. Some Sabbat claim the Gangrel have reached an agreement with the monsters dwelling in the area. Most agree the Gangrel can keep the place.

Peru

Peru is held by the Sabbat, but is used more as a place to conduct business than as a major source of revenue or power. The mostly undeveloped lands in Peru are considered far too dangerous as a result of the Lupines and Bastet in the area. Most vampires stay away from Peru's expansive jungles, though a number of powerful Gangrel Autarkis are known to wander there.

Peru has been beset by a vicious guerrilla movement, a Marxist organization called the Shining Path. A few Sabbat Brujah run with this group, whether from idealism or (more likely) for fun. The other Sabbat overlook their sectmates' indulgences; the deaths of kine mean little to them, and the fall of the Peruvian government would mean even less to the country's undead.

The only place fully developed enough for the Sabbat to use as a source of food and protection is Lima, the capital city, which houses over four million people. Lima is a vast and heavily industrialized city, but one that poses dreadful risks to the Kindred. Rumors of a Dreamspeaker mage chantry near the prehistoric Nazca Line Monuments have recently been confirmed, and even the boldest Sabbat are cautious when moving about. Overall, Peru is simply too raw for the Kindred. Most prefer to avoid the dangers presented by Lupine and sorcerer alike.

A small handful of Sabbat Tzimisce have made it their mission to infiltrate the Dreamspeaker covens and to learn their secrets. For the most part they have had little success, though the Tzimisce have learned that the mages periodically gather at both the Nazca Lines and the Incan ruins of Machu Picchu.

Venezuela

Once part of the nation of Gran Colombia, Venezuela broke away in 1830, declaring itself an independent nation. Rich in minerals and oil, Venezuela is considerably more prosperous than many of its neighbors, though uneven distribution of this wealth has prompted considerable civil unrest.

Venezuela is firmly in the grasp of a Toreador-Tremere coalition, as are the Kindred protectorates of Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana (this last nation once housed the notorious prison colony and Kindred feasting ground of Devil's Island). Sabbat, Setites and others have attempted to oust the Camarilla vampires from their strongholds, but to date have failed miserably. This is in no small part due to the presence of Tremere Inner Councilor Xavier de Cincao, who has proved to be a highly proficient guardian of the area. Xavier has allied with all manner of supernatural entities - even, some claim, faeries and shapeshifters.

But, though reasonably secure from outside threat, Venezuela is beset by internecine feuds. The area's Brujah, chafing under the "stifling" rule of their conservative brethren, constantly incite Marxist revolt. Moreover, it irks Venezuela's Toreador to have the powerful Tremere dictating orders to them; unlike the Brujah, however, the Toreador acknowledge (in private) that any attempt to rule without the potent sorcerer by their sides would likely prove disastrous.

Caracas, the capital of Venezuela, houses over two million kine. Prince Tomas Marcello of Clan Tremere rules the city, though the Brujah and Toreador of the area constantly attempt to remove him from power through proper channels. So far, accusations of Marcello's consorting with the Sabbat and endless snide remarks of how strongly he resembles certain Giovanni clan members have failed to get him ousted. Marcello's skeleton-in-the-closet is that he is actually a bastard son of the Giovanni, and indeed served the Necromancers as a ghoulish retainer for several decades. Marcello was Embraced by de Cincao as a slight against the

clan. He has also proved very valuable in providing the Tremere with information about their necromantic rivals.

For obvious reasons, Giovanni aren't permitted within the city limits of Caracas.

Bolivia

Bolivia was once a much larger nation, but near-constant attacks by other South American countries devoured much of its territory; now only a small portion of the original country remains. Just as with Venezuela, Bolivia remains under the watchful eye of Xavier de Cincao. The Sabbat has made several attempts to seize power in the country, with varying success, but the sect is always driven back by de Cincao and his numerous supernatural minions. The Sabbat's last successful attempt, in the late 1960s, ended when the sect's puppet ruler, General Rene Barrientos Ortuna, died in a helicopter crash. Rumors that Xavier de Cincao caused the helicopter to explode in midair have never been confirmed.

Bolivia serves a dark purpose for South America's vampires. Bolivia's land is situated at an extremely high altitude, and its native populace has developed certain bodily compensations. These include larger-than-normal hearts, expanded lungs - and additional red corpuscles in their blood. Bolivian vitae is renowned as a vampiric delicacy, and certain unscrupulous vampires (predominantly Ravnos and Setites) have taken to abducting native Bolivians; these unfortunates are then sold as vessels, for the pleasure of refined palates across the world.

Constant aggressions on the part of the Chilean and Paraguayan governments have taken their toll on the country. The Kindred have suffered far less damage than the kine as a result of these wars, but rumors of a powerful pack of shapeshifters moving into the area may very well change that.

Chile

The Sabbat's control over Chile is a constant source of frustration to the Camarilla. Despite numerous attempts on the Camarilla's part to wrest control from the Sabbat, Chile remains beyond its grasp. Chile is particularly annoying to the Ventrue because the Sabbat managed to beat them at their own game. Instead of merely using swarms of neonates and a blatant disregard for the Camarilla's Masquerade, Sabbat Lasombra purchased most of the industrial mines that make up most of Chile's natural resources and aided the kine in ousting Chile's Marxist government.

Learning from its mistakes in Mexico, the Sabbat then began industrializing the country in ways that would not destroy the main population centers. In a matter of less than a decade, the Chilean people were introduced to the industrial age and educated on how best to avoid virtually every major setback plaguing Mexico. Despite numerous human-rights abuses committed under the Sabbat-supported Pinochet dictatorship, Chile's increasingly prosperous middle class has remained largely content with the status quo. Most importantly, national control of all the vital resources exported from Chile ensures that Camarilla-operated U.S. companies cannot come back into Chile and recapture the lands and mining operations that they sold to the Marxist government.

However, the Sabbat still cannot control the native population to the south, and they have not discovered a way to keep ecoterroristic Lupines from savaging their industrial complexes. Many Sabbat in Chile rumor that Camarilla or Autarkis Gangrel are working in unison with the Lupines to bring an end to the Sabbat's rule. Additionally, Setite-backed drug traffickers still operate in the region, though they are not so much of a threat as in Colombia or Central America.

Chile's capital, Santiago, is a rapidly growing metropolis with over five million inhabitants. Due to loose regulations among the Sabbat, the area harbors a reputation for violence. Indeed, the very Sabbat packs that helped establish



dominance in the region are beginning to threaten Santiago's stability. From afar, Camarilla vampires watch the growing chaos and fervently hope for Chile's continued implosion.

Argentina

One of South America's most advanced and prosperous nations, Argentina is a vast expanse of mountains, forests and pampas (prairies), complete with gauchos (cowboys). The pampas sustain enormous cattle and sheep-herding industries, while the capital, Buenos Aires, supports strong chemical and automobile businesses.

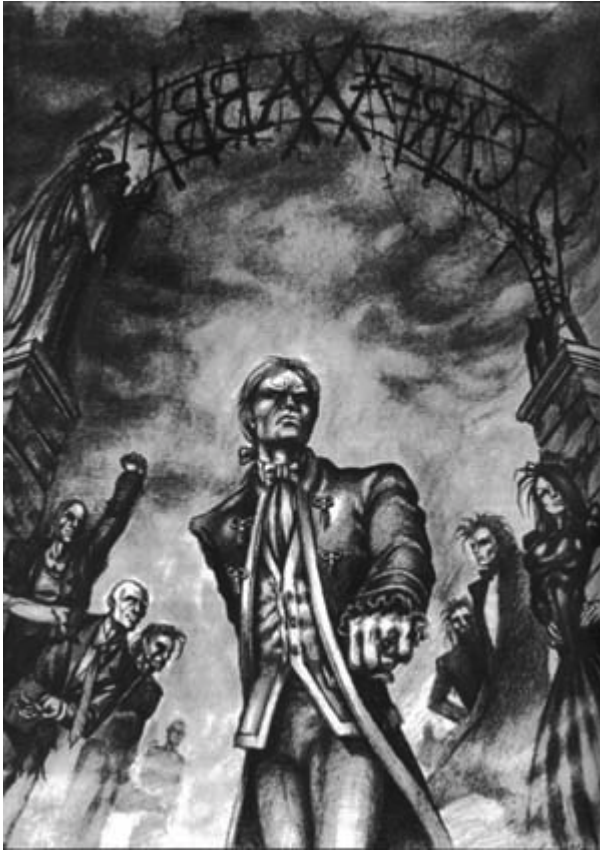
Like most South American states, however, Argentina has suffered through a turbulent and often violent history. Many of Argentina's 20th-century crises stemmed from the reign of the charismatic, reformist but dictatorial Juan Peron. His wife, the gorgeous and popular Isabel Peron (immortalized in the musical *Evita*) also briefly ruled Argentina, but was overthrown in 1976. In between and after the Perons' rule came a flurry of civilian governments and military juntas, none of which had much better luck than Peron in solving the nation's problems. In particular, the military junta that succeeded Isabel Peron became infamous for its "dirty war," in which an estimated 30 thousand alleged subversives disappeared.

Despite this history, however, Argentina is successful as far as South American nations go. Its upper classes, in particular, live in a splendor rivaling their counterparts in Europe and the U.S. A moderate regime has sponsored the rise of industry, and Argentina leads the region in prosperity and literacy.

Perhaps this relative stability is in part due to the placid facade of the region's Kindred. Vampires have come and gone throughout the nation's history; currently, Argentina's Kindred population comprises Lasombra, Toreador and a few Ventrue, most of them immigrants from Europe. Most of Argentina's vampires are more interested in advancing their own agendas than in serving their sect, and it is not unknown for a Ventrue and Lasombra, deadly rivals in more northerly latitudes, to stand together on the veranda of an exclusive Buenos Aires club, smoking cigars, pretending to drink brandy and contemplating mergers.

Uruguay

Uruguay's population is over 85% European. The lush tropical area has become a popular resort getaway for many wealthy Europeans, and it has also become a fortified stronghold for the Toreador and Giovanni. Most of the industries in Uruguay are controlled by or at least partially owned by the Giovanni. Just when exactly the Necromancers seized power is something the Camarilla Toreador in the area have yet to figure out. All that is known for certain is that the Giovanni rule with a benevolent hand and seldom cause grief to Camarilla Kindred who are willing to follow their demands.



Introduction

This chapter cannot hope to cover the entire history and geography of the British Isles, nor give an exhaustive listing and description of the islands' Cainite population. Instead, the following pages present a summary of places, personalities and events, hoping to give the reader a broad overview. Those interested in reading *Umber* will find travel guides to Britain and Ireland (available in most bookstores) a convenient way to pick up key information about an area; to look further into a particular period of history, there are few better starting points than *The Pelican History of England* paperbacks, which are inexpensive, written for ordinary people to understand and available in most good bookstores.

chapter FOUR: The British Isles

Geography

There is often confusion over the distinctions between England, Britain, Great Britain, the United Kingdom and the British Isles. Needless to say, the inhabitants of these islands guard these distinctions jealously and react to foreigners' confusion with a mixture of amusement and contempt. The differences are actually very straightforward.

England is one of three nations which (together with Wales and Scotland) makes up the island of Britain, which is the largest of the British Isles. The geographical term "British Isles" includes Ireland, although the Irish often dislike any implied association with Britain. Great Britain is the term used to refer to the political entity which consists of the island of Britain and various small offshore islands, such as Anglesey, Mull and the Isle of Wight. The United Kingdom is the political entity which consists of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Despite their disgust at foreign confusion over this issue, very few Britons use these terms consistently. For all but the most doggedly pedantic, the terms "Britain," "Great Britain" and "United Kingdom" are more or less the same; the important thing is to keep in mind the distinctions between English, Welsh, Scots and Irish. Asking a Scot what part of England he is from is one of the most dangerous things you can do in these islands, with the possible exception of asking an Irishman the same question.

Physical

England consists mainly of fertile lowlands in the south and east, with hills and moorland in the north and west. The highest point is Scafell in Cumbria, at 978 meters (approx. 3180 feet). Major river systems are the Thames in the southeast, the Severn in the southwest, and the Humber, Tees and Tyne in the north.

Wales is a mountainous country, with fertile ground only in the deep east-west valleys which run down to the Irish Sea, the narrow strips of coastal lowland and the rich island of Anglesey. The highest point is Mount Snowdon, at 1085 meters (approx. 3525 feet).

Scotland consists of southern lowlands and northern highlands, with many islands, especially on the rugged west coast. The highest point is Ben Nevis, at 1343 meters (approx. 4365 feet).

Ireland is a mixture of rugged mountains, peat marshes and fertile lowlands. On the whole, it is the wettest of the islands. Its highest point is Carrauntoohil, at 1041 meters (approx. 3383 feet).

In addition to the two main islands of Britain and Ireland, there are various smaller islands and island groups. The Hebrides, Orkneys and Shetlands are west, north and northeast of Scotland respectively, while the Isle of Man sits in the Irish Sea between Britain and Ireland. Anglesey lies off the northwest coast of Wales, close enough to be connected to the mainland by a bridge. The Isle of Wight is off the south coast of England, and the Scilly Isles lie to the southwest. Physically part of France are the Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Sark and Alderney; politically connected to the United Kingdom, they are all that remains of the feudal lands of the Norman kings. There are many other islands, too numerous to mention.

More than anything else, Britain is famous for its gray skies and rain. The climate of the British Isles is actually fairly mild for their latitude, partly because of the temperature-moderating influence of the sea and partly because of a warm current known as the North Atlantic Drift, which originates in the Gulf of Mexico. The British Isles are the first land encountered by rain-bearing winds from the Atlantic, and rainfall is year-round but seldom as torrential as some Hollywood moviemakers like to think. The wettest months are in late spring and early summer - the term "April showers" is a typically British understatement.

Of more significance to the Kindred population are the hours of daylight. In the southern half of the islands, winter sunset is around 4:30 P.M. and sunrise around 8 A.M., while in summer sunset can be as late as 10:30 P.M. and sunrise as early as 4 A.M. In the extreme north, summer nights are shorter and winter nights longer. The northern isles of Scotland experience midnight sun in the summer; owing to

the isles' high latitude, the sun grazes the horizon but does not actually set for a few days at the height of summer.

Throughout most of the year, there is an appreciable period of twilight between light and dark; combined with overcast weather, this weak light can enable stronger Kindred to extend their period of activity by as much as two hours per night. In winter and early spring, it is even possible to go out at noon on a particularly overcast day, provided that one takes reasonable precautions to avoid direct light on the skin. Since most people are thoroughly wrapped up against the weather at these times of year, a Cainite can often walk among mortals without being noticed.

The British have a saying that they have weather while other people have climate, and it is certainly true that the weather of the British Isles can be unpredictable. Hail and sleet can fall in July, while a March or April day can suddenly turn from



overcast gloom to brilliant sunshine. The British reputation for talking endlessly about the weather arises from this uncertainty, and it is not unjustified; like most things to do with the weather, however, it has become somewhat overgrown in the minds of other nations.

History

The written history of the British Isles is generally accepted as beginning in 55 B.C., with the first expedition of Julius Caesar. Earlier Phoenician texts mention the "Tin Islands," and it is known that traders from the Middle East came to southwestern Britain for tin. The prehistory of the British Isles stretches back much further.

Farming came to the British Isles around 4000 B.C., having spread across Europe from the eastern Mediterranean. Although there is some archaeological evidence for small-scale, short-distance migrations, it seems certain that ideas did more traveling than people. Nearly all of the British Isles were under cultivation when the Bronze Age dawned, around 2000-1500 B.C. Archaeologists believe that the Bronze Age saw a series of social changes which permitted the rise of ruling classes and a warrior caste from the basically egalitarian Neolithic farming communities. By the beginning of the Iron Age (around 500 B.C.), society seems to have reached the form which the Romans encountered: tribes of farmers and herders, protected and ruled by a warrior elite.

Roman Britain

Caesar's two expeditions to Britain, in 55 and 54 B.C., were little more than reconnaissance missions, and they did not lead up to an invasion. Augustus was more concerned with consolidating and organizing the Roman Empire than extending its boundaries, and although the mad Emperor Caligula made one attempt at a British expedition, this ended in a farcical scene on the coast of Gaul as he ordered his troops to collect seashells, which he took back to Rome and tried to pass off as the spoils from the conquest of the ocean. It was not until A.D. 43 that Caligula's successor Claudius undertook the conquest of Britain.

The lowlands of the south and east were quickly taken, some by politics and some by force of arms. The Celtic tribes and kingdoms were a fractious lot, and it was easy to play on their rivalries and feuds and prevent their uniting against the common enemy. Things were harder going in the north and west, where terrain was rougher and the tribes were more independent. For a while, the southern leader Caradoc (also known as Caratacus or Caractacus) seemed to have a chance of uniting the Britons, but he was defeated in battle and subsequently betrayed to the Romans by another tribal ruler.

The conquest of northern and western Britain took another generation, and was never fully completed. A governor was drafted in from Asia Minor, where he had had experience of

fighting in the hills of Afghanistan, and given the task of conquering Wales. Guerrilla-fighting in the hills and mountains was too much for the Romans, who contented themselves with razing Anglesey and pinning down the coast with a chain of forts. In the north, the talented governor Agricola may have reached the northern shores of Scotland, but the only sustainable frontier was the line of what later became Hadrian's Wall.

Britain was more or less peaceful from the end of the first century A.D. Roman towns sprang up (the place-name ending -chester or -caster indicates Roman origin), trade flourished, and the province gradually became "civilized." Trouble on the northern frontier was intermittent. But by the end of the third century, trouble was brewing elsewhere in Europe.

Germanic peoples from the north were on the move: Goths pushed southward across the frontiers in Germany and the eastern provinces, Franks moved into Gaul, Vandals headed through Spain to North Africa and then doubled back to Sicily and southern Italy, Lombards pushed across the Alps into northern Italy, and Saxons began to put pressure on the eastern coast of Britain.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes were three Germanic peoples living in what is now northern Germany and southern Denmark. They began making raids on the eastern coast of Roman Britain, and later they came to settle. Rome adopted the short-sighted policy of giving land to some Saxons on condition that they kept others out; word got around that there was free land to be had in Britain, and settlement increased. In the north, the Scots had moved from the north of Ireland, and were forcing the native Picts eastward as they settled western Scotland.

Being a frontier province, Britain was one of the first places to be stripped of troops in order to defend the rest of the Empire, and sensing Roman weakness, the Picts and Scots overran Hadrian's Wall and ravaged the north. Remaining Roman forces in Britain mutinied repeatedly, and there were some attempts to set up an independent Empire of Britain, but no one could hold back the Saxons. In A.D. 410, a request for help was answered by a letter from Rome stating that Britain must look to her own defense from now on. Roman Britain was dead, and the Dark Ages had begun.

The Dark Ages

The Dark Ages are so called because of the collapse of Roman civilization in Britain, and because of the gap in written history. This became a time of legend, with leaders like Vortigern, Ambrosius (who may or may not have been Merlin) and Artorius Riothamus (who may or may not have been Arthur) fighting a losing battle against the incoming flood of Saxons. The Romano-British population was gradually pushed back into the north and west as the Saxons took the lowlands. Some Britons set sail for the continent, and established the province of Brittany.

The Saxons were a pagan people, worshipping gods who were closely related to the later deities of the Vikings. The Britons had become Christian along with the rest of the Roman Empire, and Christianity had even conquered Ireland where Rome could not - according to legend, Saint Patrick was a Welshman by birth, taken to Ireland by slave raiders, who proceeded to convert the whole island to Christianity in addition to driving out the snakes. Now, Ireland set about converting the Saxons. Island-monasteries at Iona on the west coast of Scotland and Lindisfarne on the northeast coast of England formed the bases for missionary activity, and by the time Saint Augustine came from Rome to convert the people of Kent in A.D. 597, Irish and Scottish missionaries had already made great advances in the north.

Over the next few decades, the Saxons-or English, as they called themselves - gradually converted to Christianity. Missionaries used a "top down" approach, targeting rulers and having them enforce Christianity on their subjects. Much of what later became witchcraft and faerie lore was a garbled folk-memory of pre-Christian Saxon belief.

England at this time consisted of a number of distinct kingdoms. The most prominent were Northumbria in the northeast, Mercia in the Midlands and Wessex in the south-central region. Kent, Essex and Sussex were smaller kingdoms that generally sided with Wessex, and in the northwest the Saxon kingdom of Cumbria bordered on the tiny surviving British kingdom of Elmet. The lands of East Anglia were mainly reed-marsh, and apparently were only sparsely settled - by the Angles, who gave the land its name.

The Vikings

In A.D. 793, the first recorded Viking raid struck the undefended island-monastery of Lindisfarne, off the Northumbrian coast. Christian England was rocked to the foundations by the ferocity of these pagan raiders; it is ironic that they were so similar to the Saxons' own pagan ancestors. For the next 50 years, raiding continued along the

coasts of England and on the mainland of Europe as well. Some saw it as God's punishment for the sins of the people.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, the Scandinavians began to colonize instead of raiding. Around 840, Norwegians in Ireland founded a city which became Dublin. In 866, the Danes took York and began to colonize the north of England. In 911, Norwegians in France were granted land and the Duchy of Normandy was born. Mercia and Wessex fought a series of losing battles, buying time with Danegeld ("Dane-money": in effect, protection money) as they tried to muster troops, and it was not until 878 that Alfred the Great of Wessex stemmed the tide at the Battle of Edgington and forced the Danes to agree to a frontier - now the land was divided into Christian England and the pagan Danelaw.

With occasional battles and other problems, this situation remained stable for a century or so. By the year 1000, the entire Viking world had accepted Christianity. England and the Danelaw were subject to intermittent attacks by Scandinavian rulers who wanted to add this new Viking land to their realms. The most successful was Cnut the Great (the legendary King Canute) who in the early 11th century ruled Norway, Denmark and the whole of England; for the first time, England was a unified country under a single ruler. As is so often the case, Cnut's achievements died with him. His son Hardacnut became king of England, but upon his death was succeeded by the Saxon Edward the Confessor.

Meanwhile, a Norwegian prince called Harald Hardrada returned to his homeland from Byzantium, where he had served in the elite, ethnic-Scandinavian Varangian Guard. He demanded a share of the throne from his brother Magnus, and a shaky deal was arranged. Two years later, Magnus fell off his horse and died, leaving Harald in control. He took Denmark within a decade, and then turned his eyes to England.

By now, Edward the Confessor was on his deathbed, and other eyes were on the throne of England. Edward's



nominated successor was Earl Harold Godwinson, but Duke William the Bastard of Normandy had extracted a promise from Harold that he would help him to the throne of England in Edward's death. When Edward died in 1066, Harald Hardrada attacked the north; Harold Godwinson defeated him at the Battle of Stamford Bridge, and then had to force-march the length of the country to Hastings, to face the invading forces of Duke William. At the Battle of Hastings Harold was killed and the English forces routed; William the Conqueror became the first Norman King of England.

Norman and Medieval England

Within 20 years, William I had subdued all of England, and the Normans mounted campaigns in Ireland. Norman rule varied from firm to tyrannical, and this is the background for the early Robin Hood legends. The nobles who had helped William were rewarded with grants of land, and form the oldest of England's noble families. The barons built castles to awe the peasants and keep them in line, and the king built castles and forts to keep the nobles in check.

William's successors strengthened the position of the ruling classes, and also began to organize the administration of the kingdom. As Dukes of Normandy, the Kings of England also had lands in France, which had to be maintained and defended. These lands presented the king with a dilemma, which characterized much of the Middle Ages. Fighting endless wars in France drained the kingdom of money and manpower and necessitated unpopular taxes which sometimes led to revolts; on the other hand, failing to fight in France threatened the barons' interests there, gave the king a reputation for being weak and could lead to a coup by the nobility. When King John signed the Magna Carta in 1215, it was under the threat of just such a coup.

England's holdings in France gradually dwindled. Wales was conquered by Edward I, but border conflict and raiding with Scotland were constant problems. Campaigns in Ireland were inconclusive and bloody.

The Tudors

The Wars of the Roses lasted from the 1460s to the succession of Henry Tudor as King Henry VII. England was divided into two factions, led by the noble houses of Lancaster (whose badge was a red rose) and York (whose badge was a white rose). When the dust had settled, the Lancastrian house of Tudor had gained the throne, but only had a very weak claim to it. Henry made the most of people's fears of renewed civil war, and was able to bring peace and stability to the kingdom despite various rebels and pretenders.

Henry was succeeded by his second son, Henry VIII, an enthusiastic scholar who dreamed of bringing Renaissance glory to England. He encouraged the arts and sciences and reorganized the administration for greater efficiency, but desperately needed a male heir to secure the succession

and prevent a fresh set of civil wars from breaking out on his death. He had a healthy daughter, Mary, from his marriage to the Spanish princess Catherine of Aragon, but she could not deliver a live male child.

Henry applied to the Pope for a divorce on the grounds that the marriage was incestuous; Catherine had been married to Henry's older brother Arthur, but Arthur had died shortly after and Catherine maintained that the marriage had never been consummated. Relations with Rome became strained, and eventually Henry founded the Anglican church with himself at the head, placing all temporal and spiritual authority in England in the hands of the king. The Reformation was in progress elsewhere in Europe - in fact, Henry had earlier written a denunciation of Luther for which the Pope had given him the title "Defender of the Faith" - and Henry began the systematic destruction of Catholicism on the grounds that it could become a focus for rebellion.

Henry VIII is best known for his six marriages. After divorcing Catherine of Aragon he married the English noblewoman Anne Boleyn; they had a healthy daughter, Elizabeth, but again there was no male heir. Anne's fiery temper was a match for Henry's own, and after a marriage of just under three years she was tried for adultery and treason and was beheaded.

Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, was a gentle and devout soul, and gave him what he had wanted for so long: a son, Edward. She died soon after the birth, however, and Henry was persuaded to marry the German Princess Anne of Cleves, as part of plan for a grand Protestant alliance. The marriage was never consummated, and it ended in divorce after a short while.

Now aging, Henry was persuaded into a fifth marriage by the ambitious Duke of Norfolk, who proposed a match with his niece Catherine Howard. She was later found to be entertaining a string of younger lovers, and executed for adultery and treason. Henry's last marriage was to twice-widowed Catherine Parr, and according to tradition it was the happiest.

Edward V was nine years old when Henry died, and Edward was a sickly child. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 15. He was succeeded by Mary, the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon; still a devout Catholic, she married King Philip of Spain and reestablished Catholicism in England, suppressing Protestants with the same ferocity that her father had suppressed Catholics. She earned the nickname "Bloody Mary." A group of Protestant nobles tried to put 16-year-old Lady Jane Grey on the throne, but she lasted only nine days before Mary had her imprisoned and subsequently executed.

On Mary's death, her half-sister, Elizabeth, who had done well to survive the turmoil since Henry's death, came to the throne as Queen Elizabeth I. She reestablished the Church of England and suppressed Catholics once more, as potential rebels. Her rejection of a marriage with the King of

Spain insulted that nation, and led to plans for an invasion which came to fruition in the abortive mission of the Spanish Armada in 1588. She never married, remaining wed to her nation and people. Under Elizabeth's rule, England first began to explore the New World (the colony of Virginia was named after the Virgin Queen), and English privateer/explorers like Drake and Hawkins harried Spanish shipping and explored the world. Shakespeare wrote many of his plays during her reign - and most of the historical plays have been slanted to favor the Tudor dynasty.

The Stuarts

Elizabeth died unmarried and childless, and the prospect of more civil wars could not be discounted. King James VI of Scotland was one of several people with a claim on the English throne, and when he was crowned James I of England, the mainland of Britain was united under a single rule for the first time.

The Stuart dynasty was for the most part a time of growth and optimism. The merchants of London, in particular, were bringing enormous wealth into the country, and English merchants and explorers were paving the way for the later development of the British Empire.

As elsewhere in the world, this period also saw a boom in witch-trials; among the more notorious were the trial of the Berwick witches, accused of trying to summon a storm to drown the king; and the Pendle witch-trials in Yorkshire, which have been compared to the trials of Salem. James I wrote a slim volume on Daemonologie (sic), whose reprinting inspired Shakespeare to write Macbeth; the victorious Duncan of the play was one of James' distant ancestors.

Political trouble was brewing, for James I believed in the divine right of kings, a feudal idea which had been tacitly ignored since the 13th century. He insisted that he was answerable only to God, and quarrelled with Parliament on several occasions. His son and successor Charles I continued in this vein, and the result was the English Civil War.

The Civil War

From 1642 to 1652, the crown was in constant dispute with Parliament. Open war broke out between the Royalist "Cavaliers" and the Parliamentarian "Roundheads" led by Oliver Cromwell. Charles I was executed in January 1649, and Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector during the period known as the Commonwealth. His rule was harsh, particularly in Ireland where his memory is still hated. Cromwell died in 1658, and two years later the Stuart King Charles II came to the throne. There was still a great deal of tension between Royalists and Parliamentarians and between Catholics and Protestants, and a Catholic plot nearly ruined the succession of James II. In 1666, London was almost completely destroyed by a great fire, but it was soon rebuilt. The period after the Civil War is known as the

Restoration of the Monarchy, and was a time of some decadence if the so-called Restoration Comedies are accurate mirrors of society.

The Stuart kings were dogged by political instability, and in 1688 James II was faced by a caucus of nobles who invited William of Orange to invade England. James was defeated by his own troops and fled, and William married James' daughter Mary, with whom he was declared joint monarch. They were succeeded by Queen Anne, in whose reign England and Scotland were formally joined by the Act of Union, creating Great Britain.

The House of Hanover

Arising from the Electors of Hanover in Germany, this dynasty consisted of George I-IV, William IV and Victoria. It was during this period that the British Empire reached its height, Napoleon Bonaparte rose and fell, the American colonies declared and won independence, and - during George III's madness when his son (later George IV) ruled as Prince Regent - the "Regency" period, a very fashionable time with an active town life, the time of Beau Brummel and the fictional "Scarlet Pimpernel," Sir Percy Blakeney.

The Victorian Era

Queen Victoria ruled from 1837-1901 - the longest reign of any monarch in British history. The Victorian era saw Britain rise to its greatest power, with an empire covering one-quarter of the Earth's land surface. Immense fortunes were made, especially in industry, but wealth tended to remain concentrated in a few hands. Various attempts were made to improve working conditions and the lot of the poor, starting with the socially conscious novels of Dickens and culminating in the formation of the Labour movement.

The 20th century

The 20th century was more or less a period of decline in Britain. The reign of Edward VII continued the glory of the Victorian era, but World War I changed British society radically. Most Victorian generals had been fighting wars which matched single-shot Martini-Henry rifles against spears and arrows, and the Crimean War and the heroic but futile Charge of the Light Brigade represented the warfare of a bygone age. Few European military thinkers had paid any attention to the carnage of the American Civil War, and at the outbreak of World War I most commanders looked back to the era of Napoleon.

The bloodshed was appalling. Improved artillery, aerial bombardment, and above all the water-cooled machine gun decimated soldiers who were ordered to advance in ranks at walking pace, and shot for mutiny if they refused. Thousands of lives were exchanged for a few yards of ground, which was won back later at a similar cost.

The brutality and senseless bloodshed of the Great War, as it was called, widened the gap between the classes. The upper classes, who formed the officer corps, became characterised as feckless, uncaring and incompetent - leading to the upper-class twit caricature which had its golden age in the 1920s. Revolution in Russia led to the fear that it would spread across Europe, while the lower classes increasingly saw their true enemy as the industrialists and officers rather than their counterparts in the opposite trenches.

After the Great War, society was changed forever. Women had entered the workforce in significant numbers for the first time, and won the vote in Britain in 1918. Fewer and fewer households could afford servants; accordingly, domestic staffs - and consequently houses - became smaller. Industrial reforms led to a slightly more even distribution of profits, encouraged by the growth of the Labour movement after the war and events like the General Strike of 1926.

The 1920s and 1930s were a time searching for a meaning, in many ways. In the aftermath of the Great War there were many social changes, and society was feeling its way into the new order. Britain was still a major world power, but its hold was slipping; empire began to give way to commonwealth as former colonies began to agitate for home rule.

The euphoria of the 1920s, when the young tried to forget the experiences of the war, gave way to a different feeling as the Depression began to bite. Britons watched with a mixture of bemusement and laughter as a funny little man with a Charlie Chaplin moustache came to power in Germany. Germany's power began to rebuild, and suddenly-or so it seemed-Hitler was laying down terms to the rest of Europe. People wanted to avoid another war, but after a series of broken treaties and ignored threats, it became inevitable. For Britain, World War II began in September 1939, when yet another warning was ignored and German forces invaded Poland.

The Second World War was different from the first. The lessons had been learned well, and although Germany demonstrated a better command of modern military theory and technology than its opponents in the opening years of the war, there was no repeat of the carnage of World War I. Germany continued to sweep all before her, and when France fell in 1940 allied forces evacuated under fire from Dunkirk in just about every vessel that was capable of crossing the Channel. In the words of Prime Minister Churchill, the Battle of France was over, and the Battle of Britain had begun.

For the next three years, Britain was under almost constant aerial bombardment. For the first time, civilian targets suffered significant damage as London and other cities were bombed. There had been a few bombing raids by zeppelins during World War I, but they were few and mainly for propaganda; this time it was total war. While fighting to prevent a German invasion, Britain also had to face Japanese advances in her Asian colonies, and fight Germany in Africa. Refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe came to

Britain and fought valiantly, but things looked bleak. America was giving aid, but would not enter the war, and the Atlantic supply routes were patrolled by deadly packs of U-boats.

In December, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and America at last entered the war. It was to be some time before U.S. forces committed themselves to a second front in Europe, but when they arrived a new hope seemed to dawn. American bombers flying from bases in Britain enabled round-the-clock bombing of targets inside Germany, and helped cripple the industrial base of the German war machine. A vast influx of men and machines made it possible to reenter Europe, and allied forces landed in Normandy in June, 1944. After over a year of hard fighting, Hitler was dead and Nazi Germany had collapsed.

Britain was exhausted. Most of her major cities were in rubble, but offers of economic aid from America were declined. America had established herself as a superpower, and was gaining a strong grip on Europe in the growing cold war with Soviet Russia; like France, Britain wanted to maintain a measure of independence. The years after the war were characterized by the official word "austerity": Everyone had to pull in their belts, work to rebuild the nation, and not expect too much.

World War II also dealt a fatal blow to the British Empire. The two decades after the war saw more former colonies than



ever gaining independence, and Britain tried to reconcile itself to being a minor power once more. Labour governments after the war were ideologically opposed to the idea of an empire, and there was much to do at home; the foundations were laid for a welfare state, where every citizen would receive economic and medical assistance at need from the cradle to the grave, regardless of ability to pay.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, some of the euphoria of the rock'n'roll era spread across the Atlantic from America. Ever since the invention of moving pictures, British audiences had been firm devotees of the Hollywood dream factory, and now American music swept the nation in a big way for the first time since Glenn Miller. British music made its own way in the world, too, with names like the Beatles, the Animals, the Kinks, the Yardbirds, Cream, Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple and Black Sabbath arising through the '60s. An economic boom in the second half of the decade convinced people that the bad times were over, and it was time to party.

The party came to a sharp halt in the mid-'70s when recession threatened once more. Economic decline hit traditional industries like coal, steel and shipbuilding, and even the normally safe havens of banking and insurance services suffered. Conservative governments were constantly thwarted by the increasingly powerful unions, and Labour governments seemed unable to a void running up massive deficits. Even the developing exploitation of North Sea oil did nothing to change the general downward trend. The euphoria of the '60s was wearing thin, and out of the resulting frustration, hopelessness and sense of betrayal was born a fashion and music movement characterized by anger, inverted snobbery, crassness and violence. It never gave itself a name, but those who cashed in called it punk.

In 1979, a Conservative government was elected, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first female prime minister. Desperate ills required desperate cures, the country was told, and things would get worse before they got better. A ruthless economic policy destroyed many "lame-duck" industries and weakened the unions; there were strikes, protests and violence as the police were deployed in force to keep order. Unemployment soared, reaching almost 10% nationally and according to some sources rising above 90% in some of the hardest-hit areas. Simultaneously, the welfare system was reduced, and people were told to look after themselves instead of expecting the state to look after them.

In 1982, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands, a small group in the south Atlantic that still belonged to Britain. The government seized the moment and mounted a huge military campaign to liberate the thousand or so islanders. The campaign - for war was never formally declared - briefly united the nation, and took people's minds off problems at home. Shortly afterward, the U.S. bombing of Libya from bases in Britain and the installation of cruise missiles in the same bases led to a wave of anti-American feeling, fueled by the personal friendship between Thatcher and U.S. President Ronald Reagan; Britons began to wonder who ruled the country.

Those who survived and thrived in Thatcher's Britain became yuppies; the commercial south of the country fared reasonably well, while the industrial north was hardest hit. Opposition parties were torn by internal strife and made themselves unelectable, handing the Thatcher administration a second and third term - one of the most unpopular administrations of the century, but, in her own words, "There is no alternative."

For a while, it began to look as though these desperate measures might work. Financial deregulation led to a Yuppie Revolution and an increase in wealth in the mid-'80s, but the rich got richer and the rest stayed more or less the same. Many were caught up in the materialism of the age, but the trade deficit only got worse as they bought imported prestige items. The tax system was altered to reduce the crippling tax burden which Labour governments had placed on the rich, but when local governments were instructed to enforce the Community Charge - effectively a poll tax, for the first time since the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 - there was widespread and violent protest.

When, after 10 years in power, the country was once more in much the same state as before, Margaret Thatcher was toppled by a coup within the Conservative party. Her supporters retained enough power to ensure that her nominated successor John Major became prime minister, and apart from a slight softening of policies very little changed.

The Rine

The mortals of Britain do not differ much from the mortals of any other place. They tend to be more private and respectful of privacy than those of other nations, and they are also more suspicious of change: Rather the devil you know than the devil you don't. Pessimism and cynicism have almost become national traits over the last couple of decades, but everything is expressed in a very understated way. It has been said that the highest praise from a Brit is to say that a thing is "not too bad," while the gravest condemnation is "not much good."

The class system effectively died in the social changes that took place between the two World Wars, but its traces still remain in the way blue-collar workers and white-collar workers regard each other, and in the differences between regions. London and the southeast are largely commercial and light industrial areas, with heavy industry - such as remains - being based mainly in the cities of the Midlands and North. To the northerner, the southerner is effete, affected and entirely untrustworthy; to the southerner, there is no civilized life north of the Watford Gap (a service station on the M1 motorway, about a half-hour north of London).

The British Isles have a surprisingly wide range of regional accents, subcultures and outlooks; much of this is rooted in the old Saxon kingdoms, and in the differences between

England and the Danelaw. Put an East Ender in a pub with a Geordie, and they would have to work to understand each other. Accents and dialects are not quite so pronounced as they were in the past, because contact between regions has become more widespread at all levels in the last century.

Types of Kine

Workers of most types are not too much different from their American counterparts. Britain once had a bad name as the strike capital of the world, but union-management conflict has lessened since the '70s, partly because of the fear created by constantly threatening recession and partly because of extensive legislation by the Thatcher government to weaken union power.

The British police (sometimes called "Bobbies" after Sir Robert Peel, who founded London's Metropolitan Police in 1829) are best-known to foreigners for the fact that they do not routinely carry firearms. Some officers are trained in the use of firearms and maybe issued with them if the need arises, and there are some branches (notably the antiterrorist and diplomatic protection arms of Special Branch) whose officers are normally armed. Most police forces - especially in urban areas - compensate for this by training their officers in unarmed combat; Shotokan Karate is a favorite.

The basic unit on the street is the two-man car (some are called "panda cars" because of their black-and-white or blue-and-white markings), and officers normally go everywhere in pairs or multiples of pairs. Mounted officers and dog handlers are used in many cities to keep order on Friday and Saturday nights, at soccer matches, and in the event of riots.

Riot units are equipped with coveralls of ballistic material or other heavy cloth; full-head helmets with ear-to-ear, brow-to-chin plexiglas visors; rectangular full-body shields of the same material; and batons. Some officers may use grenade launchers to fire tear gas in extreme situations, and in the troubled province of Northern Ireland both police and the army use plastic or rubber bullets in riots.

Punks may still be seen in many of Britain's cities, but they are neither as numerous nor as flamboyant as they were in the late '70s and early '80s. In London especially, they exploit their newfound status as tourist attractions, sometimes begging money in exchange for allowing themselves to be photographed.

Skinheads are a small but constant presence, but are not as politically motivated or well organized as they are in many parts of the U.S.A. Some have links with racist groups - especially the right-wing National Front Party - but many are just in the movement for the fighting, especially at soccer matches.

Headbangers are a growing part of Britain's youth culture; they've been around since the '70s, but the rise of thrash, speed and death metal during the late '80s and early '90s

has led to something of a rebirth. Bands like Anthrax and Napalm Death are favorites. More mainstream heavy rock has a smaller but equally loyal following. Apart from music and the rock'n'roll lifestyle (i.e., sex and drugs and...), little unites this group; they only normally come together to organize a party, and have few political or other interests.

Hippies have seen something of a rebirth in the latter part of the '80s, with the growth of environmental concerns and the rise of the New Age movement. Ripped military pants, heavy military boots, greatcoats, tie-dyes and wild, matted hair (sometimes shaved high at the sides) are the current uniform. This group has a large anarchist contingent, and was at the forefront of many of the Poll Tax riots.

Goths are the youth culture of most interest to the world of Vampire. Most dress in stark black and white, and both sexes wear heavy makeup most of the time. Big hair, normally dyed jet black, is the main trademark. They are at their most impressive when they go out for the evening - even the



dowdiest of them could outshine the photo-session outfits of their musical idols the Mission, the Cure, Siouxsie and the Banshees and so on. The tabloid press occasionally writes sensationalized stories of behavior in this group which closely mirrors that of the Blood Dolls of the U.S.

A group which attained some notoriety in the late '70s and '80s are the so-called Hooray Henries. These are the offspring of wealthy families, often around college age, whose parties have an unfortunate tendency to dissolve into drunken hooliganism and destruction of property. They are quick to offer to pay for damage, and seem to think that this takes care of everything - indeed, many of them insist that they have a perfect right to behave as they wish so long as they are prepared to pay, and accuse those who disagree of having no sense of humor. Many '80s yuppies-especially those in high-pressure, high-income jobs like currency dealing - behaved in much the same way. This group has become less visible since the end of the '80s, but can still be found in any of Britain's more prestigious universities, especially Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Bristol.

Perhaps the most lasting legacy of the days of Empire is the ethnic mix which has turned most of Britain's cities into cultural melting pots (and, occasionally, powderkegs).

Immigration was not common before the end of World War Two. In the 19th century there were Chinese communities in London, around Soho and Limehouse, and in Manchester, with smaller communities elsewhere. But it has been in the latter half of the 20th century that Britain has seen the most immigration. After World War Two, people flooded in from the Indian subcontinent and from the Caribbean. Indians, Pakistanis, Bengalis and Sri Lankans constitute Britain's largest ethnic minority, with West Indians (or Afro-Caribbeans, to use the official term) a close second. Most of Britain's larger cities now have at least one mosque, and Islam is the nation's fastest-growing religion. In West Indian communities, Rastafarianism is the religion/culture of choice for a large part of the younger population, although American rap and street culture are much copied, especially among teenagers.

The Midlands have a small but appreciable Eastern European population, founded mainly by refugees from Nazi invasion in World War Two. Other ethnic groups include Arabs and Persians (mainly concentrated in London's West End), Irish (London and Liverpool have the largest communities), and - especially in London - a dash of every other nation on Earth.

Race relations in Britain are normally peaceful (if somewhat reserved), but a flareup is never far away, especially if there is a confrontation with the still predominantly white police force. In the early '80s, many of Britain's cities were rocked by riots that exploded in minority areas after brutal, tactless or just plain unfortunate incidents involving the police. Britain has a body of well-intentioned race relations legislation that never quite seems to work as well as it was planned to, and

as much as ever things boil down to the personal attitudes and prejudices of the individual. Anti-Semitism is comparatively rare in Britain; the Jewish population is largely integrated with the white Anglo-Saxon majority. The bulk of racial attacks since the 1970s have been directed at the Indo-Pakistani population.

Transportation

American characters will find driving an interesting experience in the British Isles. The most obvious difference is that the British drive on the left, but there is far more. The motorways are kept in reasonable repair, but are much more heavily used than most American highways - except possibly those around the great Eastern cities and the Greater Los Angeles area. British drivers move faster (the speed limit on most roads of any size is 70 m.p.h., and the average speed is around 85 m.p.h.) and are less courteous than many of their American counterparts. Drivers from the Eastern cities will feel right at home.

Minor roads tend to be narrow, with just about room for two compact cars to pass each other, and especially in the countryside they wind constantly and are often fringed by dense hedges eight or more feet high - the result being that forward visibility is rarely more than 30 yards or so. This generally does not discourage both local and strangers from going everywhere at a minimum speed of 60 m.p.h. In London - and increasingly in other large cities - the over clogged roads reduce traffic to around 15-20 m.p.h., much the same speed as was attained by the horsedrawn transportation of the Victorian era. Parking in London is an absolute nightmare, even if one survives the traffic, and the best way to get anywhere in London and the southeast is by train.

Like most European nations, Britain has a railroad system which is far superior to anything in the New World. Although Brits delight in moaning about the delays and irregularity of the trains, it has to be said that on average they are only a few minutes late, and every community of any size in the whole of the United Kingdom has its own railway station. Note the word "railway"; railroads are an American invention, and quite different. Some cities also have internal rail transit systems - the London Underground or "Tube" and the Tyneside Metro of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne are the two best-known.

Most of the larger cities have regional airports, and London has three. Heathrow is the best-known, and still handles the majority of Britain's air traffic; Gatwick is growing fast, but is hampered by the fact that it has only one runway and the development of surrounding housing has left little room for growth. Stanstead is small compared to the other two, and is used mainly by charter operations, package tour operators and private aviation. A London Docklands airport was opened in the heart of the city as part of an effort to rejuvenate the declining Victorian dock areas and turn them into a yuppie paradise, but it is severely limited in the size of

aircraft it can handle (30-odd-seat commuter jets like the de Havilland Dash-7 are the upper limit), and by noise abatement regulations in the densely occupied surrounding area.

The Kindred of Britain

Britain is a realm in conflict, and the struggles among the Kindred have occasionally made themselves felt in the mortal world, especially over the last two decades. The British Isles are small and relatively densely populated, and friction arises between fiefs as well as between clans.

Endless Conflict

For centuries London has been racked by a power struggle between the Ventrue and Tremere, which constantly threatens to spill over into the rest of the country. Though recent years have plagued Britain with many new threats, including a volatile anarch situation and a growing Sabbat presence, the Ventrue/Tremere rivalry continues apace.

As far as anyone knows, the rivalry between Tremere and Ventrue dates back to about the 13th century - the time, some say significantly, when the fief of Winchester moved from Glastonbury. The powers attributed to Winchester's Tremere elders are immense. However, no direct connection has ever been proved between Winchester and subsequent events in London.

The growing power of London over the rest of the country, through Ventrue control of the monarchy, led to various of the smaller fiefs sponsoring the Barons' Revolt of 1258. Efforts to circumvent the effects of Ventrue power over the king - of which the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215 was one result - had come to nothing, and although the revolt was not planned or orchestrated by the lesser fiefs in concert, one by one almost all of them encouraged their mortal pawns to join in. Vampiric support of Simon de Montfort's institution of the English Parliament was a clear message to the Ventrue of London that expansion would not go unchecked.

The Black Death of the mid-14th century helped create more distrust among the Kindred. London's ancient prince, Mithras, and his followers had already decided that the Barons' Revolt was a nationwide conspiracy against London, and rumors that the plague had been created deliberately by an unholy alliance of Tremere and Setites raised Ventrue feelings in London to the pitch of paranoid hysteria.

The situation became even worse when it was discovered that the Black Death could affect Kindred directly, as well as threatening their food supply; the ninth and 10th generations in London were all but wiped out when they caught the plague by feeding on tainted mortals. A few of earlier generations also succumbed, but the thinner, younger Blood

was most susceptible. As the country's largest city, London was naturally hardest hit by the plague, and reports of extensive damage in other fiefs were largely ignored as conspiracy panic ran wild.

Mithras seized the opportunity to rid himself of an obstructive Tremere faction on the London primogen, and through pawns he orchestrated a popular outcry against the Tremere. In a major military and political coup, Ventrue agents instigated a series of witch-trials. These trials robbed the Tremere of most of their mortal agents, and although appeals for aid were sent to Vienna, the Council of Seven did nothing. For a century or so, the Tremere of London went into hiding; some, it is said, made their way to safe exile in Winchester.

For the next couple of centuries, the Ventrue grip on London - and thus on much of England - was secure. The Tremere were too weak and scattered to fight openly, but they followed the example of the rest of their clan in Europe by subtly gaining control of a number of important trade guilds as the middle classes rose in power. Their most notable success throughout Europe was with the stonemasons. The Ventrue had concentrated their efforts on the throne and the nobility, and as the feudal system declined they found the economic power of the middle classes an ever-present annoyance. The Tremere continued to shape the craft guilds into more flexible organizations, creating a potent political weapon as guild membership became instrumental in selecting the Lord Mayor of London and various other mortal dignitaries. Eventually, the power of the crown and nobility in London was effectively short-circuited.

In mainland Europe, the Reformation was in full swing as nation after nation broke from Rome and embraced Protestantism. Henry VIII of England did so for his own reasons and without any Kindred involvement, although elsewhere in Europe the Reformation was encouraged as a means of beaking free of a growing Ventrue stranglehold on power, articulated in the breathing world through the Church. London Brujah seized the chance to remove a number of Ventrue and their mortal pawns, and strip others of their power, through the Act of Supremacy which made the king - ironically now abandoned by the London Ventrue - head of Church and State at once, and held Catholic sentiment as treason. European connections were also held to be suspect, weakening the Tremere further as all hope of aid from Vienna was cut off.

A further dimension was added to the turmoil as Clan Toreador formally entered the fray. With London's Ventrue weak, local Toreador recruited help from their traditional stronghold of Edinburgh; as Brujah and Ventrue fought each other to place their mortal pawns on the throne, the matter was suddenly settled when James VI of Scotland became James I of England. Both Brujah and Ventrue suspected each other of complicity in this move, but it was simply a naked move for power by the Toreador.

The Toreador coup had been well planned, and for a while all was comparatively peaceful. The Ventrue lay low and regrouped, while the Brujah were divided by suspicion and recrimination and briefly lost all unity and cohesion. Fresh witch-trials, fuelled by an antiwitchcraft tract published under King James' name, held the Tremere down, although the Catholic Gunpowder Plot of 1605 is believed by many to have been backed by the Tremere.

Toreador rule came to an end mainly because of political naivete. Clinging singlemindedly to their control of the king, they found themselves outmaneuvered and isolated by a popular antiroyalist movement. The Ventrue had learned the bitter lesson about the power of the commons, and were able to deal Toreador power a severe blow with the execution of Charles I and the rise of Cromwell's Roundheads.

The English Civil War was fought by night as well as by day. Ventrue specialists had assisted in the creation of a near-unstoppable force in the New Model Army, and in the person of Oliver Cromwell they had their most effective mortal agent for some centuries. The Toreador continued to fight for the throne, and the flamboyant Royalist Cavaliers reflected their idea of an army as much as the Roundheads reflected the Ventrue preference for effectiveness at any cost. A decade of struggle ensued, with early Ventrue gains being effectively consolidated until the death of Cromwell in 1658.

The Toreador-now said to be backed by the regrouped power of the Tremere - were able to restore the monarchy after a series of tense peace negotiations with the Ventrue, but the peace was fragile and conspiracies were exposed among Kindred and kine alike. The Great Fire of London in 1666, though widely suspected to be the work of anarchs, was thought by some Kindred to have been Tremere-inspired. The plague which swept the city in the previous year raised the spectre of a Tremere-Setite alliance. Both Toreador and Ventrue were weakened by the events of the past century, and the time was ripe for a coup. It was the Ventrue, however, who prevailed with the founding of the House of Orange, and the Act of Union which joined Scotland to England and Wales and created the United Kingdom was a clear signal to the Edinburgh Toreador that London was not to be trifled with.

The 1693 Treaty of Durham will not be found in any mortal history books, but was a turning-point for the Kindred of the British Isles. The Toreador were effectively routed, and in exchange for Ventrue guarantees not to attack their stronghold in Edinburgh they agreed to seek no power in London beyond Elysium, and never to conspire with or offer support to the Tremere. The Toreador emissaries in London were deemed to have the status of hostages to guarantee the treaty, and a smaller number of Edinburgh Ventrue were likewise agreed to stand surety against any Ventrue attack or encroachment. The Tremere, for their part, were thought to have been broken by the witch-trials of the previous century.

But certain factions within Clan Toreador chafed at the humiliation of this forced treaty, and in 1715 several Edinburgh Ventrue were slaughtered and a Scottish uprising sought to put James Stewart, "The Old Pretender," on the throne of England. This rising failed, but the Toreador tried again 30 years later and came closer to success with Bonnie Prince Charlie in 1745. The Ventrue of London had their hands full at this time, trying to repair an incident two years earlier in which an anarch named Rutherford had made a misguided attempt to take over a prominent Masonic lodge by openly revealing himself and a certain amount of Kindred lore. While the uprisings were put down, London made no move against Edinburgh, and although a few of the Toreador hostages in London were destroyed in reprisal, most renounced any attachment to Edinburgh and some even voluntarily Blood Bound themselves to Mithras.

The end of the century saw a great influx of French Kindred into London. The French Revolution decimated the mortal aristocracy, and the chateau havens of many French Kindred had been destroyed. Most of the refugees were Ventrue and willingly swore allegiance to Mithras, strengthening the Ventrue in London even further. With Mithras in undisputed command of London, a period of stability began which was to last almost until the end of the 19th century. The growing industrial towns of the north developed into lesser fiefs, and many looked to London rather than nearby York for a lead; some were even colonized from London by Mithras' own progeny. Britain reached the height of its imperial power, and Mithras became one of the most respected Kindred in the world. The anarchs were growing in power throughout the islands, but their main strength remained in the industrial north, where they had a part in the early history of the Labour movement, cashing in on the disruption caused by the Luddite and Chartist movements. London was largely untouched.

Though cowed, the Tremere were far from defeated. In the latter part of the 19th century, there was a surge in popular interest in spiritualism and other occult matters, which Britain's Tremere (and Britain's mages) did much to encourage. Table-rappers and palm-readers flourished, and so many small organizations grew up that it was impossible to tell the genuine from the charlatans, much less discover which group -if any-was Tremere-sponsored. This effective smokescreen kept the genuine Tremere operations largely safe from Ventrue agents, and before long chantries were established in all but the smallest of the new fiefs.

Mithras was enraged by the resurgence of the Tremere, and frustrated by their tactics which made his agents search through hundreds of suspects without finding a trace of Tremere involvement. After a few abortive actions in which it was clear that the Masquerade would fall before the Tremere did, Mithras changed his tack, and used a Malkavian pawn to Embrace a rebellious occultist named Aleister Crowley. Convinced that he belonged to a clan of vampires called Tremere, Crowley ran wild, appalling mortal society, threatening the Masquerade at every turn and sickening the

Kindred of Britain. His actions seriously embarrassed the Tremere and weakened their political position severely.

The occult revival was stalled, and even after the truth of the matter was discovered, the ruse had done its work. The Tremere ceased most of their activities, and by the end of World War 1 they were once more almost invisible.

The rocky economic history of the interwar years was entirely a mortal phenomenon, but it had an effect on the Kindred in most parts of the world. The Ventrue tried to maintain their grip, but anarchs saw their chance and staged an impressive show of strength which left the Ventrue unable to stop the General Strike of 1926. Over the next decade Mithras tried to reverse the trend, but by the outbreak of World War 11 London was torn by dissention. The Ventrue suspected that the Tremere lay behind the anarch gains of the last 20 years, but were unable to find evidence of direct involvement.

London suffered terribly in the war, being not only the capital but the largest industrial city within range of German bombers. Much of the heart of the city was razed, and Mithras has not been seen or heard from since the bombing began. Some think he was destroyed in his haven, while others suspect that he is lying in wait, ready to pounce when the Tremere reveal themselves openly.

Theme And Mood

The overall mood of the setting is uncertainty and instability. The prince has disappeared, several factions are struggling with each other more or less openly, order is breaking down, and there are other threats which are not completely understood, such as the Sabbat and the Hunt Club.

Rebuilding relations between the warring clans will not be easy, but would provide a very challenging theme which could last through an entire chronicle.

In the absence of Mithras, the throne of London is vacant, although several lesser Ventrue have their eyes on it, as do the more cautious Tremere. Even so, a strong, skilled and determined individual or coterie might be able to take London and hold it, and then try to keep the troublesome fief under control while making moves to extend authority to neighboring fiefs. Unifying London and Birmingham under a single prince would create a fief of enormous power, and once Birmingham is taken the way is open to expand control to York, and ever onward. Mortal kings spent centuries trying (and failing) to unify the British Isles under a single stable rule; why should some ambitious Cainite not try the same?

If this is too tall an order for neonates, then they might become involved as soldiers or emissaries, and uncover more than they expected. No one truly knows what goes on in the mysterious fief of Winchester, but it is recognized by those in the know to be ancient and powerful. Certainly no one has disputed its exclusive claim to its hunting grounds in Portsmouth and Southampton and survived to tell the tale.

And then there is the feud between Ulster and Connachta, which has been raging for over 2000 years. And the ambitious fief of Bristol, with its designs on Wales.

With the Ventrue, Tremere and Malkavians locked in a three-cornered civil war, and anarchs and Sabbat sniping from all sides, there is an incredible range of plots, flareups and other incidents which can embroil an incautious group of neonates. The Masquerade is wearing very thin in many places, and even the most cautious of characters can find themselves implicated in some outrage or other. In this war, one needs to be strong and lucky to stay neutral.

Outside Intervention

Neither the Kindred nor the kine of the British Isles exist in a vacuum - however much they might like to think so. Events in Britain affect the rest of Europe, and eventually the rest of the



world; if anything, this is more true of Kindred than kine. The Tremere elders in Vienna will be keeping a close eye on the course of the war, and so will other interested parties. One or more archons - and perhaps even a Justicar - may be sent to investigate the disappearance of Mithras and try to bring the warring clans back into line. The Inconnu, too, will at least have Monitors in place, keeping track of the situation. They may even be taking action themselves if their members or interests have been threatened.

The Fiefs

London

London is by far the largest fief in the British Isles, and many Kindred think of it as the oldest. (In fact, the small fief of Winchester is older.) London has a resident population of over 15 million kine in its 610 square miles, and a commuting population which also numbers in the millions. Founded, according to legend, in Roman times, the fief of London regards itself as the most important (indeed, the only important) Kindred community in the British Isles. The Prince of London used to be one of the most powerful Cainites in the world, but over recent years the fief has been torn by instability and strife.

Since Prince Mithras' disappearance during the London Blitz, London has been ruled by Lady Anne, a Ventrue elder backed by a slight majority of Ventrue. Her position is far from secure, for there are would-be princes among her Ventrue Kindred as well as in other clans. The Queen of London, as she styles herself, is desperately trying to consolidate her position and restore some kind of order to the fief. After some initial setbacks, the Ventrue have reestablished their control of most of the city's governmental and commercial apparatus, but the damage done by anarchs has been considerable.

The Anarch Movement has become extremely strong in London, and so well-organized that if it is stamped out in one place it immediately springs up somewhere else. At the same time, the Tremere have established a measure of control in the police forces and judiciary of London and other fiefs through their infiltration of the Freemasons; while they themselves are elusive, the Tremere can pull strings to reverse Ventrue gains and embarrass Ventrue interests.

Birmingham

Britain's second-largest city in terms of mortal population, Birmingham is a comparatively modern fief, and its Kindred are regarded as upstarts by their cousins in London-many of whom can remember the nights before the Industrial Revolution when Birmingham was a village with pretensions of being a local market town. It is a little more peaceful and better organized than London, and the rapid growth of its mortal population over the last century, together with careful

regulation by its prince, has helped Birmingham avoid the unfortunate incidents in London.

Birmingham is currently in the throes of an establishment crackdown organized mainly by the Ventrue. Unwilling to allow a civil war to arise as it has in London, the Prince of Birmingham is taking active steps, with the full support of his small primogen, to crush any dissent and instability. An attempted anarch rising in the early '70s was ruthlessly put down, and the city has been ruled by an iron hand ever since. Small, isolated cells of anarchs still plot and fret in various parts of the city, but all are too nervous and distrustful to organize. However, Sabbat agents in the area have made recent overtures of aid, and Birmingham's anarchs have tentatively expressed interest.

Manchester/Liverpool

Originally separate and very small fiefs, Manchester and Liverpool united in the mid-1970s, when it became apparent that they would shortly become one continuous urban sprawl. Unifying the two fiefs was a major political coup, creating a new domain with a sufficient population of Kindred to be reckoned with.

Liverpool is exceptional - some say unique - in the fact that its prince is from the Brujah clan. The Ventrue presence in the city has always been small and weak, and many Ventrue have chosen to leave the fief, seeing no possibility there to further the interests of their clan. This has had a deep effect on the character of the city, on both sides of the sunrise. Liverpool has always been an eclectic, creative and freewheeling city, and it has also been wracked by tremendous internal conflicts from time to time. Practically ignored by the authorities "down south," Liverpool has had to make its own way in the world, and has developed a strong personality in the process. Its people - "Scousers" to the rest of Britain - are known for their quick wits, eye to the main chance and sly humor.

Manchester grew up as one of many northern industrial cities in the 19th century, and is still seen as a city of factories. It has one of the largest Chinese populations in Britain, with an extensive Chinatown which would not look out of place in San Francisco. For some time the city was a free domain, without a prince or primogen; Kindred could come and go there as they pleased. By the end of the 19th century, though, so many Cainites had been attracted by the city's growing mortal population that some kind of organization was necessary. The freedom of the city had attracted a large Brujah contingent from all over Europe, and while princes of various clans came and went, they always ruled at the pleasure of a primogen which was largely Brujah-controlled. This Brujah dominance was one factor which made the unification of Manchester and Liverpool a comparatively peaceful affair, and the fief now attracts Brujah and anarchs from all points of the compass.

Edinburgh

Once powerful, Edinburgh has declined over the last few centuries as more and more power has become concentrated in London. Today it is more or less a ghost town, and only Clan Toreador is present in any strength. It has earned the contemptuous nickname "City of Elysium" among the Kindred of other fiefs, but this is not entirely fair. Toreador from across the British Isles look to Edinburgh for leadership, and although both Ventrue and Tremere have tried to force their rule on the city over the years, the Toreador have maintained their grasp on power and their independence.

While not as freewheeling as the new Liverpool-Manchester fief, Edinburgh encourages any freedom which does not threaten its independence. The fact that the Toreador Prince of Edinburgh is apparently secure enough in his power to allow anarchs to reside openly in the city is taken as an indication that any trouble could be crushed swiftly and effortlessly.

Toreador domination of Edinburgh has created a remarkable effect upon the city's kine. Edinburgh's extensive Elysium fosters a cultural life which can be compared favorably with that of any city in Europe. Still, tremendous social and political problems wrack the city. Ventrue have been known to comment smugly that Edinburgh is a classic example of Toreador values in action.

Glasgow

Founded in the 19th century by a breakaway group from Edinburgh, Glasgow achieved a short-lived prominence before being effectively destroyed. The daylight city grew up largely around the industries of shipbuilding and heavy engineering, attracting a mortal population that in turn attracted Cainites. With no apparent way to break the Toreador hold on Edinburgh, ambitious elements of several other clans flocked to the growing port city. The fiefs history consisted mainly of power struggles between Brujah and Ventrue, in which both sides were careful not to let their conflicts spill over into the breathing world and jeopardize the city's health. Finally, the frustrated Ventrue used government contacts to weaken and then destroy the industries on which Glasgow depended.

York

The fief is still called York, and it is one of the oldest in the land. Effectively, though, it has shifted to the Leeds/Bradford metropolitan area, following the expansion of the mortal population there. The fief of York was founded, according to tradition, less than a century after London, as the Roman fortress-city of Eboracum began to attract a large population. Once briefly the capital of the Western Roman Empire, the city was one of the few Roman settlements to survive into Saxon times - as Eoforwic, a thriving riverport. When the Danes took over northern England, this port was a natural

choice for their capital, although they had trouble pronouncing the Saxon name and changed it to Jorvik. After the fall of the Danelaw, York continued in its prominence - the second archbishopric after Canterbury, and the capital of the powerful county of Yorkshire.

The Kindred of York strove constantly to live in harmony with the fief of London while maintaining their independence. One local tradition maintains that the Danes were invited to York as a buffer to the Ventrue-sponsored expansion and consolidation of the southern Saxon kingdoms. Through the Middle Ages, the two fiefs of London and York were the main powers in the land, and the others - save Winchester - always looked to them for a lead.

Even today, York is a fief of considerable influence, blessed with a stability which dates back centuries. To some, York is conservative - even reactionary - but it prides itself on having weathered almost two millennia without serious strife. The Ventrue Prince of York has achieved a masterly balance and harmony with the city's primogen, and so far each clan has been able to pursue its interests in harmony with all the others.

Industry and security are almost exclusively in Ventrue and Tremere hands, with a significant Toreador contingent - mostly resident in the "old city" of York - busying itself with all manner of artistic events. Gangrel are said to have the run of York's extensive and beautiful countryside, and there are even rumors of a nonaggression pact with the Lupines of the area. The Malkavian population is small and for the most part easily amused, and in a major diplomatic coup the Brujah of York are in full support of the established system, acting as tribunes to check any unseemly growth of power in any faction, and as guardians to prevent outside problems coming in. Anarchs are not welcome in York, and even the younger Kindred are more or less in agreement that the system works and should not be changed.

It is said that there is a small Assamite base somewhere in the fief, probably sheltered by the area's large Indo-Pakistani population; some are worried by this news, but others believe that the Assamites were invited here by the primogen, to help maintain the fiefs stability.

Ulster

The largest fief in Ireland has been torn by terrorism and civil war for over two decades, and the roots of the crisis go deeper than mortal historians imagine. Much of the troubles are of mortal making, though, and the Kindred of Belfast spend as much time trying to control situations as they do vying for power among themselves and prosecuting their millennia-old war against Connachta.

It is said that this war started around the first century A.D., but others believe it goes back to the time of the mythical invasions; this latter theory is strengthened by the Prince of Ulster's adoption of the name Milesius, but there is little

actual proof. Those who would remember have nearly all been destroyed in the centuries of fighting, and many others are said to be in hiding.

Appeals for help from London have largely backfired, splitting the Kindred of Ulster into two violently opposed camps and in one case leading to an attempted takeover of the fief by Mithras. Fighting Connachta on the one hand and London on the other has all but exhausted Ulster, and the conflict has reached such a pitch recently that the Masquerade is almost constantly threatened. Some say that a significant Sabbat presence is already inside Ulster, fanning the flames and preparing for the fiefs eventual fall.

Connachta

Confusingly to mortal perceptions, the fief of Connachta is based in the city of Dublin rather than the Irish county of Connaught, far to the west. The older Kindred of Dublin moved to the city in the ninth century, attracted by its growing mortal population; they kept their traditional name partly out of habit and partly (it is said) lest their traditional enemies of Ulster should think they were trying to hide from them.

The fief is deceptively peaceful, considering the turmoil in Ulster. An attempted takeover by London was thwarted in 1918, and since that time Connachta has been able to prevent outside interference and carry the war against Ulster right into the enemy camp. The primogen of Connachta is ruled by an alliance of Brujah and Toreador - strange bedfellows, it may seem, but the arrangement has worked for almost a century.

Severn

Another recent fief, Severn embraces the mortal cities of Bristol, Newport and Cardiff, and effectively controls the lesser fief of Swansea. Acid comments are still made about the would-be "Prince of Wales." The fief is expanding its influence, although like most others it has been weakened by recent strife. The Prince of Severn is rumored to be a progeny of Mithras, although this is hotly denied in the fief. The primogen is Ventrué-dominated, with a small but growing Toreador contingent.

Winchester

The oldest fief in the British Isles is one of the smallest. Estimates vary, but it is thought that the fief of Winchester currently numbers no more than seven Kindred. The fief moved to Winchester from Glastonbury in the 13th century, and in the last century has declared the nearby cities of Southampton and Portsmouth to be its exclusive hunting park; Kindred who have hunted there in defiance of this decree have found themselves watching the sun rise while staked and chained to the quayside.

The Prince of Winchester has declined to become involved in the civil war in London and elsewhere; the fief keeps so

much to itself that many rumors are current about what actually goes on there - ranging from tales of a coterie of Methuselahs to wild reports of institutionalized diablerie. Although it is not known for certain, it is thought that the prince is a powerful Tremere, ruling with a primogen of Tremere, Gangrel and Malkavians; whatever the truth may be, it appears that this Cainite is old and powerful enough to guarantee that the neutrality and privacy of the fief are respected.

The clans

Brujah

Despite the Brujah's claim to revel in anarchy, recent events have left them scattered and disorganized - they don't even trust each other anymore. Always ready to fight authority and often politically naive, the Brujah have been used time and again as pawns and patsies by the Tremere, the Ventrué and others. Routed in the miners' strike of the '80s which failed to bring down the Thatcher government (this was the Tremere using them as a diversion), they regrouped briefly for the Poll Tax riots of '89-90, but this was just an act of spite, undirected by any plan. At present the Brujah exist in small, isolated groups, paranoically suspicious of outsiders.

Gangrel

The increasing urbanization of Britain over the last 150 years is not to the Gangrel's taste, and the strongest groups of Gangrel are in the north-especially Yorkshire, Northumberland and the Scottish Highlands - and in the southwest, around Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Brecon Beacons. Several prominent Gangrel have contacts among the Lupines, and are regarded at least with neutrality by them. While not formally organized, Britain's Gangrel keep in contact with each other on a more-or-less regular basis, and messages pass quickly among them by word of mouth.

Malkavian

The Malkavians are as much victims in the present situation as the Brujah, but for a different reason. Pursuing their own agendas with their own (often incomprehensible) reasoning, many Malkavians have been suspected of siding with one or another of the factions ripping Britain's Kindred apart. Periodic murders and blood hunts arising from these suspicions have forced the Malkavians of the British Isles more closely together than is the case elsewhere, and they now make terrorist raids against all sides - usually tinged with characteristic Malkavian weirdness. This, of course, reinforces the hostility and suspicion on all sides, and fans the flames even higher.

Nosferatu

The Nosferatu of London, once largely underground, have begun to reemerge. Nosferatu factions have made naked power plays against Ventrue and Tremere holdings, and one large brood, ruled by a shadowy figure known as the "Underprince," has made significant headway in infiltrating various lower-echelon bureaucratic and political groups.

Toreador

Clan Toreador takes little part in politics. The situation is so unstable and confusing, and there is just too much to lose. The Toreador's consistent refusal to help either side has led first to hostility and then to respect, and on rare occasions prominent Toreador have been asked to assist with negotiations, in the role of neutral brokers. Mainly, though, they concentrate on looking after themselves and their interests. The Toreador control the Elysium throughout the land and normally exert themselves only to ensure its sanctity. In London, they have uncontested mastery over the South Bank arts complex (comprising the Royal Festival Hall and its smaller brethren, the National Theatre, the National Film Theatre, the Hayward Gallery and the Museum of the Moving Image), the West End theatre district and the museum districts of Bloomsbury and Kensington.

Tremere

Clan Tremere is at the head of one of the warring factions, fighting for control of the British Isles with an opposing faction led by the Ventrue. Despite representations by high-ranking visitors from the Camarilla, the Tremere show no inclination to stop the war, claiming that they are merely defending their traditional domain from encroaching Ventrue. The Council of Seven in Vienna have made no comment and do not seem inclined to take action at this time.

Ventrue

Locked in civil war with the Tremere and besieged by anarchs and Sabbat, the Ventrue desperately try to keep control of a situation which constantly threatens to tear the Masquerade to rags. They currently take the position that anyone who is not with them is against them, and scarcely a week goes by without the announcement from London of another Blood Hunt.

Caitiff

There are very few good times and places to be a Caitiff, but this is one of the worst. The Clanless are regarded as spies and saboteurs by some, and as disposable pawns by others. It is possible to be Embraced, betrayed and killed all in the same night, without ever knowing why.

Anarchs

Anarchs have always been active in the isles, but recent years have seen an unprecedented resurgence in their numbers. Crackdowns by the Tremere and Ventrue only enrage them, and acts of violence and subversion have multiplied dramatically.

The Sabbat

Recent years have confirmed the ruling clans' fears - the Sabbat has a definite presence in the islands. Often masquerading as anarchs, Sabbat packs keep primarily to London, but may be found anywhere. Sabbat War Parties have already taken down uncautious ancillae, and even a few elders have been victimized by minions of the Black Hand.

Assamites

In such a fluid and confused situation, it is perhaps not surprising that each side accuses the other of using Assamite assassins, but the truth is almost impossible to establish. A persistent rumor claims that a small group of Assamites have set up a secret base in one of England's fiefs-London, Birmingham or York, according to whom one listens to-but most Kindred discount these rumors as hysterical imagination.

Setites

At one time, the Followers of Set were all but driven from the British Isles. In the 1960s they made a concerted effort to establish themselves in London, but after initial success they merely caused the Tremere and Ventrue to combine forces briefly to expel them. Recently, Setites have begun insinuating themselves among England's minority populations, stirring them to discontent. Both Tremere and Ventrue accuse each other of having made alliances with the hated Setites.

Lasombra

Lasombra rarely come to Britain, and many Lasombra elders have harbored an animosity toward the isles since the sinking of the Armada. Britain is the antithesis of the Lasombra's preferred environs -chill, rainy, damp, its people reserved and taciturn compared to the clan's Mediterranean and South American herds. Indeed, some Lasombra have made idle talk of turning Britain into a Ventrue "zoo" after the Jyhad is won.

Tzimisce

The Tzimisce have become more active in the isles of late - perhaps as a prelude to striking at the loathed Tremere, perhaps simply because the climate appeals to them. Britain's large goth underground provides ample cover for

"traditionally" dressed Fiends, and the people's widespread respect for etiquette, privacy and manners is balm to the black souls of older Tzimisce trapped in a churlish sect.

Giovanni

The Giovanni maintain a correspondence with certain British Tremere, but have shown no inclination to become involved in their struggle. They are an inward-looking clan, with very little interest in the rest of the Kindred.

Ravnos

The past several years have seen a resurgence of the clan. Ravnos bands occasionally travel the countryside, and one group of Ravnos has begun frequenting London's East End.

characters of note

Mithras, Former Prince of London (Deceased)

He had been a soldier in the army of a king, sent into the mountains to deal with a rebellion. The rebels were backed by magic, and it took many days and many lives before he could prepare to return with the heads of the leaders-all but one, who had escaped.

The night before the expedition was to return, he received a visitor. He tried to cry out, but was unable to move or speak. He could only listen as the stranger spoke.

The stranger, he soon discovered, was the rebel leader who had escaped. But far from wanting revenge, he was impressed with Mithras and wanted to make him an offer. Those who had died in the fighting were inferior, he said-made to be thrown away in a greater cause. But he could give Mithras the gift of everlasting life, and a place of honor in an army such as he had never dreamed of. Or, he could kill him where he lay.

Mithras remained in the hills for a few years, gathering strength and learning about his new life. Then, with certain companions, he went to the city of the king he had formerly served. It was a small matter to convince the people that they were entertaining gods, and soon the old temples were torn down and offerings of every kind were laid before the newcomers.

Centuries came and went, and kingdoms rose and fell. The balance of power shifted westward, and the companions found it meet to move to a growing city between two great rivers. Directed by their wisdom, the city became the capital of a great empire, but as the centuries passed, another empire arose among the barbarians of the west, and its soldiers came to give battle.

Mithras was impressed by these barbarians. Their leaders were able, and their soldiers each did their part without question, like ants ensuring the success of their colony. Their armies were almost living things. Their equipment, too, was interesting - every piece was designed for its function with great care and thought, and helped make the army an integrated, highly efficient whole. Nothing could stop the barbarians from conquering the whole world.

Mithras left his companions secretly, and went with the barbarian armies. As a soldier himself, he knew what soldiers wanted of their gods, and soon there were images of Mithras in every army camp throughout this Imperium Romanum. He who rules the soldiers rules the empire, Mithras knew - and with such power among mortals he would command great respect from others of his own kind.

He traveled throughout the empire, turning things to his liking as he went. Because daylight troubled him, he would rest in the day and wake by night; his followers wondered at this, until he told them that by day he was guiding the sun through the heavens. The irony pleased him, and the mortals believed every word.

At last, he came to a small, gloomy and troublesome island at the edge of the world. The soldiers had been sent there to conquer it, but the fighting was hard. Mithras encouraged and advised them, and found the place much to his liking. There was little sun, especially in the far places where the fighting was, and he was far from rivals who had begun to seize control of the empire. At several of the stone frontier forts, he had temples constructed for his use - half-underground, and out of reach of the sun. His followers served him with rituals of a false death and rebirth, and this pleased him. He would build his strength among these armies of the frontier, and bide his time. The rituals also allowed him to stay in touch with his own nature, which was important. A god should never believe the same things as his followers.

The empire fell, but Mithras remained secure on the northern frontier. The soldiers were called away, and he did not stop them. The time was not yet right; there was too much confusion in the world. He sank into the earth and rock and rested.



The clash of arms disturbed his dreams, and he awoke more than once. Barbarians from across the sea to the east came in ships; they slew and burnt, and then made farms of their own. Petty kings came and went, until one strong man was able to force his rule on most of the island. One of his descendants made further conquests, and armies began to march north across the old frontier.

Waking, Mithras made his way south to a temple he had used in the island's largest city. The city was very different, but he found the temple by the stream easily enough. He acquainted himself with the times, and discovered that the empires he had known were lost forever. Barbarian soldiers had forged new kingdoms, trying to recapture the old glories.

There were others of his kind in the city, too. When he tried to reopen his temple, they had his followers destroyed by fire. There was only one kind of temple now, and only one god.

Mithras moved around the country, never staying long in a place for fear that these others might destroy him. He tried to throw them off the scent by encouraging mortal nobles to fight each other for the throne. One by one, he was able to divide his enemies and destroy them.

When he returned to the city, it was to place a mortal servant on the throne. None remained with the strength or inclination to resist him, and visitors came from abroad naming him prince. For a while he ruled in peace, and the island nation grew steadily in power. It threw off the rule of foreign priests, and became its own master.

There were others of his kind, he discovered, who had ambitions to be gods. They were scholars rather than soldiers, and relied on books full of mumbo-jumbo. They were ruthless, for they had carved their way to power over the ferocious Tzimisce and gentle Salubri alike. They were organized, too, exchanging information and forming alliances over the whole world. The Tremere, as these upstarts called themselves, seemed intent on ruling everything. It was necessary to suppress them, destroying them and their followers by fire as others had once done to him. But the witchfinders could not root out all of them.

The war dragged on, sometimes involving mortals and sometimes completely unknown to them. There was fire and gunpowder, rebellions and plots, but slowly the tide of battle turned. The growth of science and industry undercut the support that the Tremere had gained among the superstitious. With a strong coterie of lieutenants and some astute political maneuvering, Mithras ruled London through the height of Victorian magnificence.

The bombing of World War II destroyed many havens and brought many of London's Kindred to Final Death. Mithras has not been seen or heard from since, and some Kindred believe him destroyed. Others claim that this is just a ruse to bring Tremere sympathizers into the open.

In fact, Mithras was forced into torpor when his haven was destroyed by German incendiaries in 1941. Loyal followers moved him to a secondary haven, in a forgotten cellar which is now part of the foundations of the Centre Point office building near the junction of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. The building was kept empty by various subtle means, and Mithras recovered his strength while his trusted pawns relayed information and orders back and forth. Mithras reawakened in 1991, but decided to let the world believe him destroyed while he reconnoitered Britain's current state.

However, other parties learned of Mithras' awakening. The rise of the Methuselah set off alarms in Britain's Lupine community. Fearing that something "of the Wyrms" was rising, a massive temporary pack of Fianna and Bone Gnawers converged on Mithras' haven. Guided to their target by unerring Wyrmsense, the Lupines ignored Mithras' demands for parley, and battle rang through the Oxford Street night.

In the end, Mithras stood alone; his retainers and the entire Lupine pack lay dead and bloody at his feet. The Methuselah himself had suffered grievous wounds and by battle's end was virtually in torpor. Thus it was that the Assamite antitribu Monty Coven found him. Not knowing just who the ancient vampire was, but sensing the power radiating from him in near-tangible waves, Coven leaped on Mithras and sank his fangs into the Methuselah's neck, stealing his life, power and soul.

Image: In life Mithras was of medium height, with a compact and slightly muscular build, swarthy skin for a vampire, classically handsome features, dark eyes and dark hair worn shoulder-length in loose curl. Mithras normally wore a soft cloth hat of some sort, preferring the ancient Persian "phrygian cap." He preferred loose clothing that did not impede movement.

Anne Bowesley ("Lady Anne")

Background: Anne's family - one of the most prominent in Warwickshire-had surprised many people by siding with Cromwell. The fact was, they would not support a king who claimed a divine right over the nobility, especially when most of the noble families were older and more distinguished than the upstart Stuarts. Let Cromwell bring Parliament to unrivalled power, then-and then let the nobility rule Parliament. Her father and his friends met in secret and called themselves Optimates-Anne absorbed enough education from her brothers to recognize the term and know what it meant. Once the struggle was over, her family would be part of the ruling elite.

Cromwell died, and his son died too, and back came the monarchy. Anne's father died without seeing his dream realized, and her brothers followed the herd and became fawning courtiers and town fops. But Anne never forgot. Her father had made her a good marriage, and although she never loved her husband, she found him useful for his wealth and contacts. Soon she was introduced to a group of nobles who had friends in the Netherlands, and an idea that her father would surely have approved. If England must have a king, let it be a king who could be ruled by Parliament - the group had already sounded out a Dutch prince who seemed ideal for the task.

In 1688, William of Orange landed, James faced a mutiny among his own troops, and the following year William became king, married to James' daughter Mary as a precaution against pretenders and rebels. That year, Anne became married in a way, for her planning and executive skills had impressed one of the nobles deeply. His name was Valerius, and he had made more kings than the Earl of Warwick.

Anne's family believed her lost at sea while on an embassy, and she installed herself in London, rapidly discovering the true powers and events behind the civil war. She learned of enemies - rebels and sorcerers - and applied herself to thwarting them. Her rise within Clan Ventrue was rapid, and she dealt with rivals as she dealt with enemies. Woe betide the fool who thought her frail because of her sex.

She began attending the prince, and her natural ability led him to give her charge of Parliament. (If only her father had been alive to see it.) Through two centuries, she built Parliament into the ruling force of the nation and made it a powerful weapon against the prince's enemies. She rose in power along with her clan, her prince, her fief and her country, until it seemed that there could never be a rule so glorious.

Wars came and went, on both sides of the sunrise. Plots were discovered and efficiently crushed. Then events in Europe led to conflict among the kine. Bombs rained down on London, and fire blazed everywhere. The prince was missing. Anne did not think twice. Her followers quietly

removed a few prominent rivals-many of whom were also thought to have fallen to the mortals' bombs - and she announced her succession. Not liking the male term "prince," she gave herself the title "Queen of London."

Her rule was not unopposed, nor had she expected it to be. Still in control of the mortal Parliament, she took advantage of the ruin and economic disruption that the war had caused and used them to starve her new subjects of resources. Thus weakened, they were unable to resist a series of crackdowns and assassinations which left her rule somewhat more secure.

While opposition within her own clan had effectively been stifled, there was trouble from without. The Anarch Movement was on the rise once more, and in London it had been backed by the skulking Tremere. They never acted openly, but she had learned to read their hand in their actions. An increase in mysticism, coupled with a growing lack of respect for authority - though they called themselves "Flower Children," Anne knew a Tremere dupe when she smelled it. For a while, she let them be, remembering the situation her prince had faced a scant few decades earlier. She would not make herself look foolish by chasing shadows, and in time the enemy would surely show themselves.

Her response was subtle and indirect, again using Parliament as her weapon. Under the guise of social reform, she sowed the seeds of ruin in the nation's recovering economy, aiming to cut away the basis of her enemies' power as she had done before. The Age of Aquarius ran out of money and collapsed in a sea of recrimination. She placed a pawn-one whom she regarded almost as a daughter-in charge of Parliament, and kept up the pressure on the economy. The smaller fiefs had become less obedient of late, and the destruction of their economic base would teach them their place.

Meanwhile, London must learn to be ruled, willingly or otherwise, and Anne took steps to keep the primogen weak. Upon her succession, she had filled the primogen with Ventrue faithful and Toreador whose neutrality she bought by extending the Elysium. The Tremere who had sat on the primogen were either destroyed or missing, and the few Brujah were soon manipulated into withdrawing in protest.



Mithras had kept the primogen weak, and it was an easy task to fill it with her supporters. She no longer feared the anarchs' voices - let them howl and rage, so long as they were powerless.

A revolt among the northern fiefs was put down with the help of allies, and although relations with York were strained London was once again in control of Britain. But Parliament was slipping away from her. Her pawn had succeeded almost too well, and despite careful sabotage of any rivals her leadership of Parliament was in jeopardy. The kine were becoming restless, and the frustrated anarchs were setting about harnessing that frustration. Anne's pawn became the focus for all discontent, and regretfully she had to remove her from power.

She now faces a dilemma, as criticisms of her rule are growing even among her own clan. Three decades of harsh rule have failed to extinguish the Tremere threat and have apparently given the anarchs more support instead of starving them into submission. Rivals are jockeying for power, the Sabbat has sprung underfoot like fungi, and the crown feels loose upon her head. Is there any way to hold onto power without another series of purges? Has she the power to undertake such purges, or will she fall to a coup which may even now be brewing?

Image: A slightly built, brown-haired woman whose blue eyes betray enormous force of personality.

Roleplaying Hints: You are in charge - let no one mistake that. You are brusque and peremptory with underlings, but charming with equals and those you wish to influence. Your main motivation at present is to let no one know how slight your grip on London has become. Exude relaxed self-confidence as much as possible.

Clan: Ventrue

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Autocrat

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1688 (born 1635)

Apparent Age: 50s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 7, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 6, Brawl 3, Diplomacy 5, Dodge 6, Intimidation 4, Intrigue 7, Leadership 6, Sense Deception 4, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Bribery 5, Dancing 3, Debate 5, Drive 3, Etiquette 4, Fast-Talk 4, Interrogation 4, Masquerade 5, Meditation 2, Police Procedure 3, Public Speaking 5, Speed Reading 3, Stealth 4, Style 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge (London) 5, Bureaucracy 6, City Secrets (London) 5, Economics 4, Finance 6, Investigation 4, Kindred Lore 4, Law 6, Linguistics 4, Mage Lore 5, Occult 7, Politics 7, Psychology 4

Disciplines: Auspex 4, Dominate 6, Fortitude 4, Presence 7

Background: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Herd 4, Influence 5,

Resources 5, Retainers 5

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

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 8

Merits/Flaws: Concentration, Self-Confident, Charmed Existence, Political Ties, Enemy (Tremere), Magic Susceptibility

Montgomery (Monty) Coven

Background: Don't worry, be happy - the stereotypical mantra attributed to Jamaicans. Monty Coven was far from happy - growing up with his immigrant family in a Hammersmith ghetto, he despised the patronizing whites who forced him to live in squalor, looked at him sideways on the street, hauled him into the station for no reason at all. Not that he liked blacks much, either... or Indians, or Pakistanis, or just about anybody, really. Monty began running with youth gangs not so much out of rebellion as out of sheer meanness.

Coven, though indifferently schooled, was a bright and ruthless lad and soon rose to positions of leadership in his ragtag bands. He enjoyed his "work" - it meant freedom from the whites' rules, freedom from his own shoddy excuses for relatives, freedom from just about everything. He was the one who decided the activities, directed the crimes, ordered the assaults.

Until the night someone made a very, very grave decision for him. The Sabbat was establishing a beachhead in Coven's slum, and the young hoodlum seemed a perfect candidate for the Creation Rites. Indeed, Monty rose from the earth and assumed a position in a pack - but proved an indifferent Sabbat member. It wasn't so much that he didn't enjoy the power - he did - or that he couldn't stomach the violence - he most certainly could. It was more the fact that a particularly tepid Vaulderie, combined with Coven's innate cynicism, left him cold to Sabbat ideology. The hooliganism-that was fun. The Ventrue and Tremere - well, he had no problem killing Dead White Vampires. But Monty did things when Monty wanted to, and for all the Sabbat's talk about freedom and Power to the People, it was just another bunch of old farts



telling him what to do.

Still, Monty kept his eyes open, and he learned a few things about London after dark. So when he noticed a rabid pack of werewolves, obviously on the warpath, cutting through his turf, Coven knew some game was afoot. He followed - at a safe distance - and witnessed the Methuselah Mithras' last stand and the pack's decimation.

Hmmm-now Coven was no rocket scientist, but he knew an opportunity when he smelled it pumping hot and red and juicy onto Oxford Street. Cautiously approaching the borderline-torpid Methuselah, Coven sank his fangs into the millennia-old neck, and drank, and drank, and drank....

Or maybe the vitae drank him. Something happened-power dwarfing his Embrace a hundred times over geysered inside him. And something else expanded inside him, too - something old and wise and terrible. The vitae was not so much a gift as an invader, and the Monty Coven that heaved itself out of the 3000-year-old ash heap was irrevocably changed. But that was okay. Because now it was time to stick it to everybody - the whites, the blacks, the Pakistanis, the Ventruue, the Sabbat, everybody. No one would ever talk down to Monty Coven again, that was certain.

For the past three months Coven has been practicing in secret, honing his powers and trying to understand what has happened - is happening-to him. Assimilating Mithras' vitae hasn't been easy, but Monty has made a fair go of working through the trauma-and the end result may spell doom for Ventruue, Tremere and Sabbat alike. The combination of Coven's street smarts and Mithras' tactical genius may produce a modern-day Moriarity-not so much a Napoleon of Crime as a Genghis Khan....

Image: Coven is tall-6'1" or so-and lean. His light-brown skin now fairly crackles with inner fire, and his dark eyes gleam red when he stands amid shadows. He dresses sharply, remembering his days of poverty in the slums.

Roleplaying Hints: You are almost two separate beings - Mithras' vitae is sweeping you along like a tidal wave. You don't know exactly what has happened to you-sometimes the memories literally drive you to your knees. What you do know is that whoever you sucked was ancient and... well, ancient. You know a lot now - a lot about the Kindred and even more about the kine. Your Vaulderie, already weak, was eroded into nothingness by the diablerie, and you're ready to strike out on your own. You'll show the world a thing or two....

Clan: Assamite antitribu

Nature: Conniver (Autocrat)

Demeanor: Rebel

Generation: Monty was 11th generation before his diablerie of fourth-generation Mithras; now he is effectively sixth, though he is not always capable of controlling his blood. Many of his Attributes, Abilities and Disciplines were enhanced by the diablerie, and there's more to come....

Embrace: 1990

Apparent Age: 21

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 6

Talents: Area Knowledge (London) 7, Alertness 3, Brawl 5, Dodge 5, Intimidation 6, Leadership 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Drive 1, Etiquette 2, Firearms 5, Melee 6, Security 3, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Finance 4, Linguistics 4, Military Science 6, Politics 2

Disciplines: Dominate 4, Celerity 5, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 5, Presence 4, Potence 4, Quietus 4

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Herd 2, Resources 3, Retainers 3

Virtues: Callousness 3, Instincts 3, Morale 4

Path of Enlightenment: Path of Power and the Inner Voice 5

Willpower: 8

Merits/Flaws: Dual Nature

A Werewolf in London: Colina Sheehey

Background: Sheehey, a Fianna Lupine Philodox (Bard) of some renown, has come to London from her native Ireland to investigate the mysterious disappearance of half her werewolf sept. The last she or anybody heard, Fianna and Bone Gnawers of all stripes were converging on London, where Theurges had reported the arising of a mighty minion of the Wyrms. Then.. .nothing. Not a peep, not an Umbral flicker. It was as if her septmates had been swallowed up by an abyss. Well, now she's in the abyss called London, and if their vaunted Scotland Yard won't help, perhaps she'll have to play Sherlock on her own.

Image: Sheehey is in her early 30s and quietly pretty, with auburn hair, glasses and fair skin. She favors plain, casual attire and would not seem out of place behind a library desk. This is, of course, in human form; in "wolfman" shape, she's a nine-foot-tall, ruddy-furred terror.

Roleplaying Notes: You are quiet and somewhat grim for a Fianna. Raised in a loving Kinfolk home and respected by your sept, you will do anything to discover the whereabouts -



or avenge the murders - of your septmates. You are perfectly capable of navigating London's seedier side - as a child you roamed through Dublin neighborhoods that'd make the East End look like Kensington Park.

carfax Abbey: an Anarch rendezvous

Headquarters for London's resurgent goth scene, this recently opened dance club also serves as a meeting place for London's swelling population of anarch vampires. Even as it houses the lace-and-facepaint set, Carfax Abbey provides a rallying ground for disaffected neonates (and wannabe disaffected neonates-Ventruue and Tremere occasionally stop by for a "nibble," and the Abbey is open to all of the Blood). Feeding is ridiculously easy here, and accidents, while frowned on, are discreetly covered up by the management.

Carfax Abbey is owned by Hortense Holden, a Toreador ancilla who looks back fondly on the glory nights of Oscar Wilde, Stravinsky, Johnny Rotten and Bauhaus (not necessarily in that order). Censured by Lady Anne for endangering the Masquerade, Holden rebutted that what better place for vampires to hide among kine than a place where the kine are pretending to be vampires? For now, Lady Anne has acquiesced; she has more important matters to attend to, and anyway it's nice to know that most of London's anarchs congregate in one easily accessible, easily torchable place.

And what a place! Built in the shell of an old church, the Abbey is a multistoried labyrinth of passageways, alcoves (with black cushions for liaisons of various sorts), murals, statuary (much of it erotic or obscene, depending on taste), fetish gear (rentable by the hour) and other nocturnal knick-knacks. Three fully stocked bars, a state-of-the-art sound system, an expansive dance floor, a stage for live bands and a V.I.P. balcony complete the dark Xanadu.

Rowdies are ejected courtesy of Holden's ghouls, all of whom have rudimentary training in Celerity. For serious (i.e., Kindred) problems, security head Ian Corso, a hulking Brujah, takes a personal hand.

Business, for now, is booming; Carfax Abbey plays an eclectic mix of goth, darkwave and industrial. Strangely enough, reggae and ska are occasionally heard; Holden caters to all tastes, and even the most defiantly sullen goth is hard-pressed not to kick up her heels to Madness' "House of Fun" played at 80 decibels.

Most of Carfax Abbey's clientele is, of course, human; and this is true of the bands who occasionally perform there. Children on Stun, Das Ich, Corpus Delecti, Leaether Strip, Psychic TV, The Wake, Gitane Demone and other acts have played in Carfax Abbey's tenebrous recesses, their melodies reverberating through the club's cavernous vaulted ceiling

and rounded alcoves. One local band of rising fame, however, distinguishes itself not only by its unearthly music, but by its Kindred members.

Kine who know of the group Persephone Seed think of it only as an up-and-coming, particularly eerie goth band. Persephone Seed also draws the local vampire population, who come to see two of their own flout the Masquerade right under the elders' noses.

Persephone Seed is the brainchild of two undeniably talented Kindred musicians. Frontman and bassist Glass is classic Toreador- pale, emaciated, histrionic, drowning fans and lyrics alike in waves of emotion, feedback and Presence. His counterpart, female vocalist and keyboard player Elizabeth Westcott, is more enigmatic, preferring to express herself through her haunting bridges and whispered verse. Most Kindred presume the quiet, waifish Elizabeth to be Toreador or Caitiff, and she says and does nothing to dispel that misconception. In truth, Westcott is Tzimisce, and Sabbat at that.

Sent to infiltrate the anarch population, Westcott instead found common ground with Glass. He knows she is Sabbat, and cares little - though her depictions of unlife in the Black Hand provide him with ample fodder for morbid lyrics. For her part, she prefers being in the band to indulging in Fire Dances and War Parties and the like. When confronted as to her loyalties by bishops and the like, Westcott gently reminds them that the Sabbat is first and foremost about freedom-and what better way to turn the anarchs than to be in their favorite band?

The Hunt Club

The Hunt Club is a flamboyant group of diabolists. Some believe them to be anarchs, others that they are decadents from a variety of clans, probably led by Toreador. Although Mithras is missing and a Blood Hunt has not formally been called in London, all the other fiefs and coterie of the British Isles have let it be known that membership in the Hunt Club is a capital offense.

For around 30 years now, Kindred-normally of ninth and older generations-have been disappearing. Occasional bloodless remains have been found, and often an item such as a riding crop, a rider's cap in hunting pink, the tail of a fox, or some similar item has been found in the victim's haven. On at least one occasion, a victim has found the tail of a fox in his haven a night or so before disappearing.

The Hunt Club is an informal coterie of brash and mostly young Cainites, who have taken to diablerie for several reasons. One, of course, is the promise of power to be gained by drinking the blood of their elders, but equally important in their eyes is the chase itself. A vampire is the most dangerous prey of all, and the challenge of bringing down a more powerful vampire is perhaps the ultimate test of one's own ability. Recently the Hunt Club has become more

audacious by leaving warnings for its intended victims - increasing the sport by giving the quarry a headstart.

At present, nothing is known of the whereabouts of the Hunt Club or the identities of its members. It strikes all over the British Isles, wherever there are Cainites of early generations to be found. So far, victims have been of the sixth through ninth generations, but the choice of quarry is tending toward the earlier generations.

Further Information

The information in this chapter can only scratch the surface of the possibilities for using the British Isles as a setting for Vampire.

As mentioned earlier, tourist guides are recommended to Storytellers outside the British Isles as a means of obtaining basic information about an area quickly and digestibly, and there is a range of popular paperbacks for researching particular historical events and characters. Very little modern vampire fiction has been set in the British Isles, but Barbara Hambly's *Immortal Blood* could form the basis for a worthwhile story, or at least a source of interesting characters.

Those who have a taste for such things could research real crimes in the British Isles and weave them into their chronicles; the Ripper killings of 1888 will be considered in more detail below, and other possibilities present themselves. Basil Copper's *The Vampire in Legend, Art and Fact* covers a few cases.

Where's Jack?

The Ripper murders of 1888 have left a lasting mark on British popular culture as well as the nation's criminal history. In a reign of terror lasting several weeks, an unknown killer murdered five prostitutes in the poorer parts of London's East End, mutilating their bodies in a horrifying way. Jack the Ripper-or someone claiming to be him-sent taunting letters to the police, even claiming to have cooked and eaten some of his victims' organs (which were missing when the bodies were discovered).

Speculation over these killings continues to this day, and scarcely a year goes by without another book being published with new information, a fresh perspective or even a handy summary of previous books.

A popular theory claims that the Ripper was a gentleman. The letters betray some education, and some commentators believe that the mutilations were done in such a way as to indicate medical experience. Other aspects of the killings, they say, have links with Freemasonry, and some have suggested that the killings were ritual in nature, pointing to the Masonic connection and sagely reminding the reader that there were five killings and a pentacle has five corners. In at least one film version of the case, it was noticed that there

was far less blood in and around the bodies than might be expected.

Prominent suspects have included the court physician and a distant member of the royal family, but to this day the case remains unsolved.

In the world of Vampire, these killings could very easily take on a new significance. If the killings were ritual in nature, was Clan Tremere involved? If so, why were the bodies not disposed of properly, and who wrote the taunting letters to the police? Were they the work of some deranged Malkavian-perhaps set up by Mithras to discredit the Tremere? Or was the killer simply a mortal-an insane and vicious one to be sure, but a mortal nonetheless? How were the Kindred of London affected by the killings? It must have been of great importance to discover the killer's identity, and what action - if any - did the Kindred take? Why did the killings suddenly stop, and if the killer is still in existence, where is he? Or she?

For the present, nothing further will be said about the Ripper murders, and the "facts" behind them in the fictional Gothic-Punk world of Vampire. The interested reader will be able to find an enormous amount of literature on the case in any good bookstore or library. In the words of Fagin, wait and see, my dears, wait and see....



chapter five: tales of the old country: europe by night

introduction

Any attempt to generalize about Europe would be a mistake. Two major features link the people of Europe: geographical proximity and descent from Indo-European peoples who migrated from the East. Geographical proximity ensured competition for arable land, minerals and coastal gateways through the years. These conflicts in turn caused the frequent shift of national boundaries and exchanges of cultural resources.

Europe birthed many technological marvels through the years, which spawned the Industrial Revolution, printing and advanced nautical techniques that provided a means for world exploration. Europe also became a center for banking and trade. One noteworthy benefit of Europe's technology is the transportation system that crosses the Continent; everyday, thousands of trains connect cities and towns, providing fast passenger service as well as a rapid means of communication.

The European landscape is highly diverse. The Alps cut across Switzerland, Italy and France and into Austria. The Carpathians make a graceful arc from the Slovak Republic into Belarus and Romania. Famous rivers such as the Rhine, Danube, Seine and Don wind through Europe's valleys and serve as inspiration for many musicians. Primeval forests

also dot the landscape, albeit less so than in years before the onset of heavy industrialization.

Continental weather varies from near-desert to Arctic extremes. Along the Mediterranean coast, the weather is warm in the day and cool at night. In the mountains, the far north and across the plains of Russia, the howling wind brings a short, pleasant summer but freezing temperatures for many months of the year. Most of central Europe is blessed with a temperate climate that brings warm summers and cold winters.

Certain features of daily life set Europe apart from America. Some shops close down for a long lunch, reopening for business from late afternoon until early evening. This is ideal for those who don't venture out during daylight hours. Shops often pick one day a week to stay closed entirely. Another enjoyable part of the European shopping experience is the plethora of open-air markets. Most towns of any size have a "market day" during which local farmers or craftsmen sell goods in the town square or other suitable open area. Fresh produce and baked goods, however, are often available on a daily basis, and this is a careful consideration for Kindred who wish to entertain their mortal guests with only the finest foods.

Drinking at a local bar or restaurant is a popular pastime in small villages as well as in large cities. In most casual establishments, especially fast-food restaurants or food stalls

at public transit stations, privacy is not expected. If a couple are seated at a table with additional chairs, others may freely join them. In some countries, well-behaved dogs are welcome to join their masters at the table, which can be a problem for certain Kindred.

Vast amounts of walking and use of public transportation networks are facts of life (and unlife). Every large city has an international airport, but for Kindred and kine alike, there is perhaps no better way to traverse the Continent than by rail. Trains connect large cities and scenic villages, and first-class travel is plush and exciting. Traveling by train affords the privacy necessary to protect the Masquerade, as private compartments can be arranged with the right contacts...and the right amount of money.

Many Europeans are bilingual. It is not unusual to find a citizen who can speak another language as fluently as her native tongue and also carry on a short conversation in a third language. International travelers can usually find some way to communicate while on the Continent.

Currently, Europe is in transition. The past few years have seen the fall of many traditional alliances and the redrawing of several national boundaries. Often, lives pay for the emergence of a new nation. As Europe enters the 21st century, parliaments seek to unify the Continent economically. However, situations such as ethnic cleansing in Bosnia dash hopes that unification of traditional cultures, languages and peoples will occur in the near future.

The Kindred of Europe

If a common thread runs through the Kindred of Europe, it is respect for tradition. Many of the vampires of this land are truly ancient; some have been elders for centuries and many can remember mortal lives before the birth of Christ. The years have formed unbreakable alliances among some and bitter enmity among others. Certain elders have spent decades plotting revenge on Kindred who wronged them centuries ago. The wrath and vengeance of these wise and terrible vampires is frightening for younger Kindred from the West to behold.

Laws are strict, operating by the Lextalionis principle; among the Kindred, an "eye for an eye" has quite a literal meaning. The Traditions are sacred; breaking any of them has serious consequences. Manners and morals define daily existence. Calling cards, respect for ladies and adherence to "all things right and proper" define Kindred existence on the Continent. Most serious is the matter of progeny; with Kindred in such high numbers, having extra childer to feed is not taken lightly.

Unlike their Western counterparts, Europe's vampires still hold lineage in the highest regard. It is all well and good to be Embraced as a Ventrue, of course, but if one's great-

grandsire committed diablerie, fled the Gangrel at the Battle of Hastings and fed exclusively on chambermaids, well, that just will never do, will it? Deeds committed centuries ago - well, in most cases bad deeds committed centuries ago - return to haunt childer and grandchilder until their own Final Deaths. Revered lineage is, of course, vastly rarer (it is so difficult to drag oneself up and so easy to fall); those who have it may influence councils and Conclaves with but a word, based on the doings of an honored ancestor whom the vampires in question may never have met.

Princes are viewed as supreme authorities. Unlike their counterparts in the New World, many European princes do not have primogen councils. They rule their domains with the iron fist of a feudal lord (which many were in life). While trusted advisors or companions are not unusual, the princes of Europe generally disdain the concepts of democracy and shared governance and view them as tools of anarchy and disobedience. Many princes are of fifth or sixth generation and have the personal power to enforce their rules. Few who value their unives speak against what many perceive as downright tyranny...especially when princes are not at all reluctant to call Blood Hunts for the most minor of offenses.

The strong rule of the princes, the reluctance of the elders to invite change and the changing face of European realpolitik have created a bizarre stratification of Kindred society. Beneath the princes and elders are a group of reformist ancillae, who are often viewed by their elders as pseudoanarchs. These young (Embraced during the Age of Enlightenment and later), idealistic Kindred want enlightened change and a voice in matters of government. For the most part, they wish to win their say by peaceful means in the halls of power, rather than with blood and bullets on Europe's streets. Beneath these ancillae, however, seethe the neonates and true anarchists. These vampires chafe under the yoke of elder rule and want to win what they perceive as freedom by any means necessary. Among other tactics, these anarchists often join with terrorists and youth gangs among the kine to engage in bombings and other forms of civil unrest. As the world prepares to enter a new millennium, Europe stands at the brink of a severe crisis, with the princes and elders, the ancillae and the anarchists, each ready to face off for what surely will be a climactic battle.

The mood of Europe connotes a fear of the unknown future hidden under layers of polite civility. Rome and Paris may be consumed in the flames of anarchy, but while clucking in sympathy, princes elsewhere will be conducting court and passing judgment as viciously as ever. Yet hidden in their hearts is fear that such flames might leap to consume their own fiefdoms.

Many themes are possible for European chronicles. One might involve the characters working to link the elders in an alliance with the ancillae and the anarchists, playing upon their mutual instincts of survival and a desire for peace. Another chronicle might involve discovery and travel, where neonates not only discover their birthrights as Kindred but also wind through a maze of old customs and exciting lands. For

players and Storytellers interested in historical research, a game set in a European city at some point in the past can highlight the courtly manners and morals of the Old World Kindred. An ambitious Storyteller might like to explore the theme of disaster, allowing players to discover what would happen should Europe's Kindred fall into unchecked anarchy and destruction. This could lead to long-term play for the rebuilding of Kindred society as well.

The clans

The Camarilla

Europe is the birthplace of the Camarilla, and it is here that the sect's power is at its apex. The West may fall to ruin, the benighted Third World may be overrun with Lupines and other horrors, but Europe's elders will not suffer the depredations of uncouth Sabbat and the unruly young. Most of Europe's elders view the Camarilla as the vessel that preserved them through the storms of the Inquisition, the Anarch Revolt and the Sabbat wars. Though they find the Camarilla's protocols and bylaws occasionally irritating and often impeding, they will not see the Camarilla tossed aside in favor of democracy or some other new-fangled rubbish.

Brujah

European Brujah differ drastically from their American counterparts. More than one New World Brujah has been shocked to find European clanmembers who act like Ventrue. The Idealists predominate; they enjoy intellectual debates over chessboards in salons or all-night cafes. The failure of the ancilla-inspired Communist Revolution is the most grievous disappointment for the European Brujah since Carthage. These embittered ancillae are the loudest advocates for changing old-style governments.

Gangrel

Where once the Gangrel lived in unchecked forests and wilderness, "progress" is rapidly consuming the free-standing woodlands left in Europe. Some Gangrel have resignedly moved into urban areas; others join with the anarchs in acts of ecoterrorism. Europe's Gangrel are fast approaching the night when they must decide to either wage all-out war against the Lupines or somehow make a separate peace; the Continent's few remaining forests will soon be too developed to contain both Kindred and Lupines. Gangrel with money and political influence have aided the Green Party in France.

Malkavian

Eccentricity is acceptable in polite society. With the exception of gross excesses, the Kindred of Europe generally tolerate Malkavians. Perhaps most unnerving to the unsuspecting visitor, a few European cities even have Malkavian princes of low generation. Such powerful and potentially dangerous

Kindred are treated gingerly by elders, ancillae and neonates alike. A few Malkavians have made dire predictions about impending strife among Europe's Kindred, and though loath to admit it, most vampires pay careful attention to these ravings.

Nosferatu

Although Nosferatu are numerous in Europe and have ample hiding places among the old ruins, catacombs and underground transportation systems, they are also at a disadvantage. Most European Kindred scorn and loathe the Nosferatu, viewing them as cursed and wicked. To many of Europe's Kindred, the Nosferatu are irredeemable, no matter how honorable their deeds. This may be due to their horrid appearances, their self-images as damned beings, or both. In some ways, the Nosferatu might hold the key to the success or failure of any of the three competing factions on the Continent. Whoever accepts the Nosferatu to their cause has a valuable ally.

Toreador

Europe is the center of the art world and naturally attracts innumerable Toreador. Their society's rules are unspoken yet intimately understood by insiders. Toreador elders living in centers of art such as Paris, Florence and the Netherlands scoff at the influx of foreigners insinuating themselves into the Kindred art scene. Most European Toreador are particularly disdainful of American artists; these Kindred cling vainly to the old rules of order and social nicety, preferring to immerse themselves in their art rather than acknowledge the chaos that surrounds them.

Tremere

Vienna is the city of the Tremere. From here, the clan's power and influence stretch over Europe and the world. Because Tremere are required to keep in close contact with the elders in Vienna, European Tremere differ little from their clan members elsewhere. Thus far, the Tremere have steered clear of the tensions building up between the elders, ancillae and anarchs.

Ventrue

Clan Ventrue is the largest and most powerful clan in Europe, yet the clan is divided, much like the European Brujah. The clan elders believe that only strong authority and strict adherence to tradition can quell the current unrest and prevent disaster. The clan's ancillae seek to unite Europe's vampires in a coalition (under their centralized control, naturally). The hubris of Clan Ventrue is their belief that only they can solve the current problems in Europe. Ventrue elders are not willing to listen to the elders of other clans as to the methods and measures necessary to stop upstart ancillae. The faction that achieves hegemony among the Ventrue may determine the course of action for the other clans of Europe.

Caitiff

European Caitiff rank even below the anarchs and the Nosferatu in status; their chances for long unives are limited. In Europe, blood, family, wealth and age mean everything. All clans and factions shun Caitiff. The best a Caitiff can hope for is to either escape to America or find some place to dwell in anonymity.

Assamites

With the exception of Turkey, the Assamite presence is relatively small in Europe...but that could change at any time. Using Istanbul as a launching point, Assamites are slowly insinuating themselves in small enclaves across the Continent. They stand in the wings, cordially waiting to step in when tensions between the European Kindred reach a boiling point. A few European elders and princes have already begun to seek out the Assamites - and more than a few of the terrorist activities in European cities have resulted from Assamite contracts.

Followers of Set

Setites are relatively uncommon in Europe, though with the easing of drug-law enforcement in the Netherlands, the clan's elders are considering expansion into the Low Countries. A slight expansion into Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean has allowed them to become involved in gang activity. Similarly to the Assamites, the Followers of Set watch the shifts in the balance of powers in Europe and have sent out cautious rumors that their services are available for a price.

Giovanni

As with all else, the Giovanni remain staunchly neutral in the rumblings among the European Kindred. They continue to expand their wealth, seeking entry into Switzerland, Germany and the Low Countries. They look toward the night when they can offer assistance to Kindred on all sides of the European conflict, thus gaining favors to bring other clans under their sway. Their control of Venice is absolute, and most Kindred tend to stay clear of the city.

Ravnos

The Ravnos migrate all across Europe. Today they are found in most countries with the remaining Gypsy clans. The elders of the Camarilla tolerate these "rabble" only slightly more than they tolerate Nosferatu; they see the Ravnos as common thieves and troublemakers. Ravnos can be seen at most of Europe's major festivals, entertaining with sleight-of-hand tricks, blood-stirring music and wild dances, stealing from Kindred and kine alike.

The Sabbat

The Sabbat is not nearly as strong in Europe as it is in the Americas-but the sect is slowly growing. France, Germany, Italy and Scandinavia all have small but expanding cells of Sabbat, and Eastern Europe faces a serious Sabbat threat in the next few years. Spain still harbors Sabbat in great numbers. Camarilla dominance in Europe remains too strong for a direct Sabbat assault, but the first trickles of advance scouts bode ill for the Camarilla in the coming millennium.

Lasombra

This clan has its historical origins in Spain and asserts its dominance there. Many Spanish cities, and a few Italian ones, are ruled by Lasombra archbishops. Some Lasombra antitribu are established and respected in Camarilla cities, and though their numbers are small, there are more than Sabbat Lasombra would like to believe.

Tzimisce

Much to the frustration of their Sabbat rivals, several ancient Tzimisce still maintain havens in Eastern Europe. Regardless of side, however, Europe's Tzimisce lean more toward scholarly pursuits than toward the Jyhad. Some Tzimisce elders have connections with the Inconnu of the Carpathian Mountains. Sabbat Tzimisce, particularly those homesick scions of the Neofeudalist persuasion, use the collapse of communism and the genocidal strife in Eastern Europe as smokescreens to gain new ground on the Continent. A Domain war is brewing, one that may well make the strife in Bosnia look like a playground squabble.

Inconnu

Europe is a haven for the Inconnu. Most seek solitude in the isolated mountain valleys of the Carpathians and the Alps or on tiny islands in the Mediterranean or Baltic Seas. A very few live in large cities, remembering wondrous nights of the Classical Age when cities such as Paris were mere villages. Europe's Inconnu are among the most ancient Kindred in the world, and they jealously guard their privacy. Their two driving goals remain as they have been for centuries: Achieve fair treatment for humankind, and avoid taking part in the Jyhad. The Inconnu have placed loyal ghouls and childer in locations throughout Europe to keep an eye on the conflicts between elders, ancillae and anarchists. They are also closely watching the Sabbat stormclouds in Eastern Europe.

other beings

Werewolves

Lupines from all tribes save the Uktena and Wendigo have a pervasive, though dwindling presence across Europe. The Continent serves as the traditional home for Silver Fangs, Black Furies, Shadow Lords and Get of Fenris. Members of these tribes and their Kinfolk still live as family units in villages. While the Gangrel occasionally have some peaceful interactions with these proud beings, the fires of hatred for the Kindred burn particularly strong in the hearts of Europe's Lupines. An encounter between a Kindred and a Lupine is likely to end on a bloody note.

Mages

As a center of learning for well over a millennium, Europe harbors numerous mages, both from the Traditions and from the Technocracy. Infernal cults still exist in dark, forgotten grottos, and more than one mage has gone mad in this ancient land. Gateways to ancient Chantries lie in many mystical locales. Despite precautions, it is possible that a Kindred visiting Europe may have to contend with True Magick. If European Kindred can boast of ancient lineage and power, so too can European mages. Any Kindred should exercise the utmost caution when dealing with these sorcerers.

Wraiths

War and death have been the legacy of Europe for thousands of years, and a legion of lost souls is the result. Battlegrounds, prisons, death camps and places of torture across the land house spirits who linger on instead of passing. Most Kindred don't have any concept of the existence of these beings and therefore have little interaction with them.

Changelings

Europe is a center for fine art as well as magnificent craftsmanship, and many changelings have found the Continent to be a bountiful source of dreamers and Glamour. Counterbalancing this is the overcrowding of cities, the violence in the Balkan states and the dwindling of wild places. The Kithain of Europe, clinging to their precious sources of Glamour, avoid the Kindred at all costs, finding their cold ways and worldly lifestyles to be horribly Banal.

The Society of Leopold

Europe's Kindred have good reason to fear the Inquisition. Centuries ago, inquisitors lit the first bonfires to dispose of heretics and witches. Times have changed, but the methods of the Society of Leopold remain regrettably medieval. The Society's store of knowledge about - and defenses against -



the Kindred is growing. Troubling reports of Kindred disappearances are circulating among European princes, and though the anarchists scoff at the idea of a bunch of fanatical mortals being responsible, the elders and even the ancillae take such claims quite seriously.

The Arcanum

Arcanum Chapter Houses exist in all major cities. Most Arcanum members dream of receiving posts in Europe; the resources are nearly infinite. A few members of the European Chapter Houses want to meet with a vampire to add to their repertoire of knowledge about the undead. If this has already occurred, no Kindred has spoken of it.

A Final Word

Europe is changing rapidly in the political arena, and no one can predict what will occur by the next century. What is provided here is a mere taste of what Europe has to offer the Kindred; these words should not be taken as an absolute tourist's guide. The Kindred presented herein represent either major political players of the country or interesting regional examples. They do not represent the entirety of Europe's Kindred population, but instead provide the Storyteller with ideas so that she can create her own plots and plans within a specific region.

FRANCE

The history of France's Kindred is entwined with that of their kine. The French enjoyed the bliss of many golden ages because of the never-ending cultural patronage of the Toreador, not just in Paris but also in Cannes and along the Cote d'Azur. Likewise, Idealist Brujah quietly sponsor France's numerous great philosophers. In most European countries the Ventruue hold the reins; this is not true in France. The Blue Bloods chafe at their inability to gain more than a toehold here. The large cities are havens for the

despised Nosferatu and - though the Toreador are loath to admit it - hiding places for a few Sabbat. Malkavians have great sport as inspirations among the bizarre artisans. The southern and eastern mountains are home to a number of Gangrel, and Tremere in search of rituals and ancient texts lurk in rural, as well as urban, libraries and universities. France, with its love of culture, beauty and joie de vivre, seems the perfect place for Kindred.

Yet in many ways, Kindred society in France is insular and stagnant. The elders talk about the glorious past but they seldom look toward the darkening future. The Toreador jealously guards its absolute rule from the other clans. Even though a foreign Kindred visitor may receive royal treatment to all appearances, strong xenophobia runs through native vampires. The Kindred of France stride down a dangerous road in their pride, and the few enlightened voices among them fear for continued peace.

Paris

The Eternal City, Paris is as central to the psyche of France as any capital city in the world. Built on the banks of the Seine, Paris is divided into 20 sections called Arrondissements. The city has hundreds of restaurants, museums, archives, theaters and quaint Bohemian-style neighborhoods haunted by artists and tinkers. Though the trend-setting capital of Toreador society, some Malkavians live here, inspiring mortals in their own bizarre fashion. The elders of Paris have both created and destroyed more artists than most American Toreador will ever meet.

Francois Villon is the Toreador Prince of Paris. He rules the City of Lights and his special pet interest, the fashion community, from the seat of Toreador power in the 1st Arrondissement at the Louvre. His words are absolute law with regard to art and culture, not only in Paris but throughout much of France and the "civilized" world as well. He is especially fond of beautiful women, and many famous



models have given of their vitae to Paris' prince.

Yet there are those who tire of the many centuries of Toreador rule. Brujah Idealists clamor for the influence that they feel they have earned. Nosferatu see Paris as a city where their appreciation of beauty should be acknowledged. The city is also home to a number of anarchs who want to bring down the current hard-line regime by violent means. Worse, a number of Sabbat dwell in the 19th and 20th Arrondissements amidst the lower-class neighborhoods and old slaughterhouses. They have recently made a few recruits among the social elite in Paris, and it seems that the city, so superficially perfect and serene, may well crumble, eaten away with rot from within.

Bordeaux and the Wine Country

Centered in Bordeaux and along the South Atlantic coast, the wine country of France is off the beaten path for most visitors. Yet here famous chateaux such as Latour and Margaux offer the best examples of the laid-back rural French lifestyle. People are friendly, but are cautious of outsiders and are superstitious as well. Members of Clan Gangrel tend to dwell here; as a rule, they are very old and often have ghoulish family members who are protective of the Masquerade.

Monaco

This tiny island principality has been under French protection since 1861, but the Grimaldi family, the oldest surviving European dynasty, have ruled here since the early Middle Ages. What few realize is the dynasty's connection - attenuated down the centuries, but still present - to the Sabbat Grimaldi family. Wielding great wealth, the Grimaldi's secret agents weave among mortal and Kindred tourists, making deals and linking the Sabbat with the mortal world. Perhaps because of these links, Monaco thrives from tourism. The most famous event here is the Grand Prix de Monaco auto race held in May.



Francois Villon, Prince of Paris

Background: Francois attracted the attention of the Methuselah, Helena, when she passed through the town of Paris looking for Menele. Francois was a linguistics scholar with aspirations to marry a noble heiress, and Helena gave him more than he could ever desire. Francois spent many of his early years of unlife at court shaping the French language. His elegant figure was especially beloved by the scheming dowager Queen Catherine de Medici in the 16th century. When Henri of Navarre became king, Francois took time to visit other Kindred throughout France and the Continent, and returned as a Villon descendant during the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV. Francois served as the chief lieutenant of his predecessor until the time of the Revolution, when he was forced to flee to a safe haven in Britain. When he returned during the rise of Napoleon, Francois rallied the Toreador, reclaimed Paris and declared himself prince in the process. He looks back with pain on his time of exile and has remained in France since the late 1790s.

Image: Francois is a tall, dashing man with black hair and brown eyes. He wears elegantly cut dark suits with wild neckties and he smokes the finest cigarettes in an ebony holder.

Roleplaying Hints: You are generally the epitome of proper behavior, and you insist on the same from your subjects, but deep inside, you are secretly amused by the antics of the anarchs as long as they do not pose a direct threat. You flaunt your French superiority over anyone who is not fortunate enough to have been born in your native land.



L'Epuisette

Background: A girl of humble means with the voice of a siren, L'Epuisette's life changed forever after she performed in Cavalli's opera *Senso* in honor of the marriage of Louis XIV. Audric St. Thierry, a confidant of the Prince of Paris, gained swift permission to Embrace this wonder from Provence, for never in memory had the Toreador elder been so moved by the voice of a mortal.

L'Epuisette did not take well to her new lifestyle; she survived only by taking joy in her music as the long years passed. When the French Revolution began, she sought refuge in England. But before she could gain passage at Calais, she was set upon by peasants. The girl fled, cloaked herself in the earth and fell into torpor for 200 years. Awaking in 1991, L'Epuisette tried to make her way to Paris to seek out her sire for aid, but just outside the city she again fell into the clutches of enemies, this time the Sabbat. Bewildered and unsuspecting, she was forced to participate in the *Vaulderie* before being allowed to enter Paris. Now, L'Epuisette is a perfect agent of the Sabbat. No one in Paris suspects that her true motives are to discover the city's secrets and to report dutifully back to her fellow pack members. As a

Toreador elder of Paris, she has a home in the 14th Arrondissement; she also has a place with her pack in the 19th Arrondissement near the old slaughterhouses.

Image: A petite beauty with ivory skin and ebony curls, L'Epuisette is riveting even in silence. But once she begins to sing or speak in her low, sweet tones, she is a marvel even among the Kindred.

Roleplaying Hints: Soft-spoken, sweet-natured and seemingly harmless, you usually let provocative remarks pass by without comment, believing it better not to get involved too deeply in the affairs of others. Yet hidden within you is a desire to be an accepted part of a group. At least among the Sabbat you have a direction to follow and friends who can give guidance.

The Low Countries: The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg

The Low Countries have few natural defenses and a location of strategic importance, making the area a natural highway for invading armies. Much of the land is below sea level, kept dry by massive dikes and by elaborate drainage systems. Whole towns are swept away when the dikes break. This valuable region has suffered occupation by nearly every major European power, and this history of oppression has made its people adept at feigning servitude and conformity even as they plot the fall of their oppressors.

The Low Countries boast many great artists: Holland's Van Eyck, Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Ruisdael; Belgium's Breughel, Rubens and Van Dyck. The area also is notable for its architecture; while much has been lost to the ravages of



numerous wars, the skylines of most cities feature Gothic spires of cathedrals and guild houses.

While each is autonomous, the princes of the Low Countries have formed an alliance known as the Consortium. Communication between domains is free and open, and aid is readily given in times of need. When threatened, the Low Country princedoms act almost as a single entity. The Low Countries' Kindred have learned from vast experience that they cannot afford to play petty power games; working together ensures them a place among the most powerful domains.

Though the area houses vampires from all Camarilla clans, the Ventrue dominate. The Toreador are also a major power, patronizing the arts in fashion, film, music and painting. Nosferatu are more respected here than anywhere else in Europe, primarily for their remarkable intelligence network.

The Netherlands

Although the government meets in The Hague, Amsterdam is the capital and financial center of the Netherlands. Amsterdam is built on nearly 100 islands connected by hundreds of bridges. Tourists are often impressed by the sense of order they find here, lacking in most cities this size. Holland's Ventrue prince, Arjan Voorhies, is a capable man, though he has proved unable to halt Giovanni incursions.

Belgium

Belgians are masters of the art of compromise, finding satisfactory answers to difficult cultural and political issues. In the de facto capital of Europe, compromising is a useful skill indeed. Notable cities include Antwerp, renowned for its diamond trade; Brussels, headquarters of N.A.T.O., the European Union and the Consortium; and Ypres, where a few Kindred sleep in torpor beneath the old battlefields. The resort town of Spa is internationally famous for the healthful properties of its spring water. Once it was the haunt of Europe's rich and powerful. Now it is a tourist center, containing fine hotels and elegant villas. The Toreador still maintain a presence here, though it is rumored that



Nosferatu lurk in the caverns and grottos nearby.

Luxembourg

The history of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg is one of stubbornness and freedom in the midst of oppression. The national motto is: We want to remain what we are. In the 13th century, the kine leader, Countess Ermesinde, centralized power, appointed court positions according to competency rather than heredity, and established many unheard-of rights for her subjects. The nation grew in power and influence until the 15th century; Luxembourg's strategic location and potential power ensured that it would be ruled by various European regents until the mid-1800s.

Neither its kine nor its few Kindred forgot the days when they enjoyed freedoms unknown elsewhere in Europe. During the German occupation of World War II, the people of Luxembourg braved Nazi retribution with bold acts of defiance. After the war, the survivors rebuilt the devastated country and created one of the most industrialized nations in the world. The steel industry is prominent, but banking and tourism are also thriving industries.

Prince Corrie lives in Luxembourg City, but claims the entire country as her domain, with lieutenants overseeing the various towns. Though of various clans, the Kindred mirror the kine's attitude that Luxembourg is not a country so much as a state of mind; at times they seem more loyal to their charismatic prince than to their own clanmembers abroad.

Corrie Tinbergen, Prince Of Luxembourg

Background: A native of Luxembourg, Corrie was barely released from childehood when she took control of the Grand Duchy in 1867; she is unusually young for a European prince. The desire to maintain freedom and autonomy for her kine drives her; her forceful personality draws all but the coldest Kindred to her cause. Though the Consortium exists by necessity, Corrie breathes life into the alliance and inspires a renewed strength of purpose among its members.

Image: Corrie has bright blue eyes and golden-blond hair that is pinned up in an elegant style. She is fairly tall, has an athletic build and usually looks directly at people when she speaks to them. Unless conducting business with the Consortium, Corrie favors a neo-Victorian style of clothing; on formal occasions, she wears fine French or Italian business attire.

Roleplaying Hints: If you were alive, you would live and breathe your idealistic passions. Whatever you say has power, no matter how controversial the topic. Your eyes burn with the intensity of your convictions. However, despite this zeal, you do not expect others to share your devotion; your surprising lack of naivete has surprised elders many centuries your senior.

Clan: Brujah
Nature: Visionary
Demeanor: Architect
Generation: 7th
Embrace: 1860
Apparent Age: 24
Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 4, Appearance 5
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4
Talents: Acting 2, Alertness 3, Brawl 4, Diplomacy 5, Empathy 4, Expression 4, Intrigue 3, Leadership 4, Masquerade 3, Public Speaking 4, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3
Skills: Debate 4, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Firearms 2, Melee 3, Music 2, Stealth 2, Style 2
Knowledges: Area Knowledge (Luxembourg) 3, Camarilla Lore 2, City Secrets 2, Clan Lore 3, Finance 3, Linguistics 5, Medicine 1, Politics 3
Disciplines: Auspex 3, Celerity 4, Dominate 1, Potence 3, Presence 5
Backgrounds: Herd 2, Influence 3, Resources 4, Retainers 5
Virtues: Conscience 4, Self-Control 5, Courage 5
Humanity: 8
Willpower: 10
Merits/Flaws: Iron Will, Unbondable, Calm Heart

Hendrik Van Dyck

Background: Many are unaware of Hendrik's clan, and all those who do know think that he is antitribu. In actuality, he is an eighth-generation Lasombra and a leader in the Sabbat. Though not entirely trusted by the Camarilla, he gives them no reason to doubt his loyalty. He works to gain power in the same way as most European Sabbat: incrementally and over the long term. Quickly achieving too many gains would surely rouse the Camarilla to action and leave the native Sabbat to bear the brunt. So Hendrik betrays newcomers to the Camarilla, improving his standing while diverting attention from the activities of "local" Sabbat. His agents in Amsterdam have reported possible Giovanni activity; Hendrik is emphatic that the hated clan not have a presence in the city.

Image: Hendrik exudes an image of quiet power. He is of medium height, with brown hair and blue eyes, and he is



good-looking in a classic way. Because of his slimness and proud manner, he seems to be a larger man than he truly is. Hendrik is never dressed in anything other than fine business attire.

Roleplaying Hints: You are thorough and precise in all that you do. Your mission is too important to allow room for errors that could cost everything. You always have information ready for the prince or for any elder who asks for it, lest they become suspicious of your true motives.

scandinavia: norway, denmark, sweden, finland and iceland

Of all the nations in Europe, Scandinavia's countries have perhaps the most enlightened governments. Enormous amounts of money are spent on education, social welfare and programs for the elderly.

Few vampires choose to live here due to the fact they spend about half the year in torpor because of the "midnight sun" effect. The earliest Kindred settlers were Gangrel who joined with the migrating Viking tribes. The early years of the Middle Ages saw the coming of the Ventrue, Brujah and Toreador. The princes worked well together and called informal meetings to discuss Kindred matters on a regular basis. Whether they served as the preliminary model for the Low Countries' Consortium, or if the situation is reversed, is unclear. Both groups have similar ideas that are being used to good effect, however.

The major threat to this pleasant coexistence is the alarming insurgence of anarchs into Scandinavia. Fueled by frustrated Brujah from the European mainland and led by a fearsome group of ancient Gangrel who call themselves the Valkyries, mortals and Kindred alike have engaged in senseless acts of violence and destruction. The self-styled leader of the Valkyries, Brunhilde, is rumored to have committed the 1986 assassination of Sweden's Prime Minister Olof Palme. Rather than acknowledge the growing problem, the princes hide their heads in the snow, hoping the anarchs will just go away.

All visitors are treated courteously and are made to feel like one of the family, even if bombs are exploding on the streets below. Soon, however, the princes will have to retaliate or else they will lose all they have worked to gain.

Finland, which has a larger and older Kindred population than the other countries, has another problem: a mad and ancient Malkavian named Louhi. Rumors circulated for a time that she sought to create a vile ritual to blot out the sun. While no such magickal rite has occurred, Kindred with knowledge of "The Land of Darkness" (as Finland is

sometimes called) haven't forgotten about Louhi. As with the anarchs and the Valkyries, no one seems to have any idea what to do about the threat she poses.

Germany

Germany is a land of small kingdoms and city-states that did not unify until 1871, under the guidance of Otto von Bismarck and the Prussians. Each of the Ventrue princes who rules a German city considers himself heir to the kings who swore fealty to the Holy Roman Emperor. Most of these Old Garde lack the scope of vision to understand today's world communities; they still think that they can manipulate events as they did centuries ago. Most still send messages by courier, though their ghouls and neonates now take trains or blaze along the autobahn instead of riding fast horses.

The ancient Ventrue see themselves as aristocrats and guard their bailiwick against intrusions by other clans. The Toreador claim a presence, but must confine their efforts to the zero-sum games of court affairs. Their advancement of the arts reflect this structure; German contributions to art, music and literature tend to be variations on the same theme, cleverly reworking what already exists or adding layers of meaning to a simple motif.

Berlin

Berlin is a city in transition. The division into East Berlin and West Berlin did not permanently affect the Kindred of the city; they just waited it out. Some Idealist Brujah tried to bring revolution to the West, but drowned in the flood of dollars from America. All sorts of influences compete in Berlin: Ventrue work to reestablish their spheres of temporal influence, Toreador work to reopen lines of communication to the West and East, Brujah cower from the death throes of the Revolution, Caitiff jockey for a piece of the pie and Malkavians and Nosferatu do whatever they want. The Tremere are notably lacking; they already own Austria, which to them is as good as Berlin, but without any negative

historical attachments.

The Black Forest

The last great tract of undeveloped land in Europe, the Black Forest is a refuge for both Gangrel and Lupines. They fled here in the face of the wars and during the postwar reconstruction. An uneasy truce exists between the two; neither is willing to initiate hostilities that might attract outside attention. A small Sabbat pack also operates out of the Black Forest, maintaining a haven near the town of Freiburg.

The Rhine Valley

Scenic castles are still popular tourist spots along the Rhine River, and for a Kindred who has business in Germany or who just wishes to vacation for a short while, this is a perfect rental spot. From here, a vampire can attend to affairs in German business centers such as Munich, Frankfurt and Bonn, or she can have easy access to such centers of culture as Heidelberg.

Austria

Austria is the heart of what was once the Hapsburg Empire. For centuries, the Hapsburgs held power throughout Europe through dynastic marriages and sophisticated alliances. Austria is also the home of the sorcerous Tremere clan. Since its disreputable inception, Clan Tremere has worked closely with the Ventrue, influencing the great Prussian Empire that, in its heyday, stretched across the breadth of Europe. The partnership worked very well until Germany's Ventrue clan decided to forcibly bring the rest of Europe under its rule just before the Great War. The Tremere went along with the war effort, but they would have preferred stealth and treachery. When it became obvious that the Triple Entente would defeat the Triple Alliance, the Tremere withdrew their support and turned their attention home,



fortifying their power bases and trying to cut their losses.

Vienna, which to the Awakened had always been an armed camp, became a city under martial law. Any nonresident had to provide documentation of their purpose lest the Tremere assume they were there to spy. Ghouls patrolled by day and neonates prowled the streets by night. Even the Nosferatu found their activities severely proscribed. When it became clear that the lion's share of the war blame would fall on the Ventrue and Germany, the Tremere relaxed their grip, but even today a Lick needs a better reason than visiting Mozart's house to pass through Vienna unchallenged. The Council keeps an especially tight leash on the Toreador, confining their effort to the arts and forbidding them any play on the political field. Consequently Vienna has become one of the greatest cultural centers of the world.

switzerland and liechtenstein

Switzerland has maintained a proud tradition of self-government since the 13th century, with long prosperity gained from strict neutrality. The Swiss have a strong sense of duty and ethics, and their efforts have made their country one of the most beautiful and well-maintained nations in the world. Famous for its scenery, banks, cheese, chocolate and watches, Switzerland is also a center of international politics; Geneva is a famous meeting place for the Inconnu and other Kindred associations. Historically influenced by the Germans, French and Italians, most everyone speaks at least a smattering of each of these languages. Elder Kindred speak the "native" tongue of Romansch, and Kindred and kine alike know English.

Still, few Kindred reside here because of the strict laws of Domain exercised by Prince Guillaume, a fifth-generation Brujah who rules the entire country. He insists on military training for Kindred and kine; in any citizen's house a rifle, helmet, gas mask and other soldier's equipment can be found. The "Gnome" Ventrue bankers of Zurich, while still a dominant force in world economics, now have to contend with Giovanni incursions from Italy. Some Kindred are wary of these newcomers, but thus far the Giovanni have behaved with decorum and adherence to the Traditions. Guillaume tolerates no violence in the banking industry, so the Ventrue gnash their fangs and wait for the Giovanni to make a fatal mistake.

Prince Guillaume, a respected voice in the Inconnu and a rare Kindred who has achieved Golconda, stays out of the night-to-night affairs of running the country, paying more attention to the "bigger picture" in Europe. He is now most interested in the Consortium; the growing rifts between elders, ancillae and anarchs; and the mysterious occurrences in Russia.

Liechtenstein is part of Prince Guillaume's domain. With its fine old castles, bountiful agriculture and light industry, it is a perfect vacation spot for many Kindred. The prince often allows visitors or vampires who petition for admittance to Switzerland to stay here while he ascertains their credentials.

Italy

Much like their counterparts in Greece and Spain, Italy's Kindred simply do not exercise any measure of cooperation or strategic planning. They prefer to bicker amongst themselves and keep up centuries-old squabbles over who invaded whose city and so on. The cities suffer as a result. The vast majority of Italian princes and elders are Brujah, Toreador or Ventrue (though Milan is ruled by a Lasombra archbishop). Nearly all of them live in the distant past, longing nostalgically for their youth. Many of these old Kindred even wear garments of yesteryear, and they babble



incessantly about past offenses and old treasures now lost to them. This leaves the running of the cities to the younger Kindred, many of whom are corrupt and incompetent, if not absolute despots.

While the old Kindred observe all of the charming proprieties of more "civilized" times, they also severely punish even the slightest faults. Even guests who make an inept or unintentional faux pas are held to this standard. Italy has vast beauty and ample scenery to offer the Kindred visitor, but these assets are almost outweighed by the risks involved with visiting the country. More than one visitor has made an off-color remark only to find himself staked and left for the dawn on a remote hillside.

The true power in Italy rests with the Giovanni. Other clans fear the Giovanni, though they are loath to admit this. The Giovanni are slowly taking over the financial realms of the elders and looking for more rapid expansion through the European Economic Community. No one is willing to question the Giovanni - much less oppose them - in Italy.

Venice

The dominant structure in Venice's skyline is the building colloquially referred to as the Mausoleum, the fortress of Clan Giovanni. Thinly disguised as a bank, this sprawling black glass skyscraper casts a shadow over the city's famous canals and ancient buildings. Kindred visitors receive hostile stares and cold shoulders at best; at worst, their reception by the Giovanni is much less pleasant. Kindred with their wits about them don't visit Venice on a mere whim.

Despite their fear of the Giovanni, though, the Nosferatu have a presence among the bowels of the city. Here, they traffic in secrets and try to stay hidden from the Giovanni, who hunt them on a regular basis. Venice has also served as a site for Camarilla Conclaves in past years, and whispers float among Europe's elders that Venice should once again be under their control.

Milan

The commercial and artistic nexus of Milan is, much to the chagrin of the Camarilla, ruled by a powerful Lasombra archbishop, Giangaleazzo. Giangaleazzo has come to an uneasy nonaggression pact with the surrounding Camarilla princes, which is fortunate for them, since any attempt to oust the ancient Keeper would prove exceedingly costly. For the time being, Giangaleazzo spends much of his time prowling the deserted nocturnal halls of Milan's famous cathedral, entertaining occasional Sabbat guests and keeping in epistolary contact with his long-time friend, Archbishop Moncada of Madrid.

Rome

If Venice is dangerous due to the Giovanni, Rome likewise holds danger in the form of mortals who belong to the Society

of Leopold. Rome is the headquarters of the order, and here rest their most sacred and valued texts, including fragments of the Book of Nod and records on some of the more powerful Kindred, Lupines and mages. More than a few individuals here possess True Faith, and many Kindred get "bad vibes" on their visits. However, as is true with Venice and the Giovanni, many Toreador risk the wrath of the Inquisition to come to the city to view the priceless works of art. The Nosferatu have a strong presence in the city, and the Camarilla hopes that the Sewer Rats will be able to ferret out more information about the Society of Leopold and its holdings.

Malta

A tiny but strategically important island, Malta was ruled by an order of knights during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and was a valued British possession until 1964. The Ventrue of the Mediterranean have long used Malta as a training ground for ghouls and for those whom they are considering Embracing.

San Marino

San Marino was an island haven for Christians who sought an escape from Roman persecution in the fourth century A.D. Today it is a tiny, thriving independent republic, earning income via industry, agriculture and winemaking. Moreover, San Marino is a bastion of the Arcanum; here the Arcanum maintains one of its strongest Chapter Houses. Both the Mafia and the Ventrue watchers on Malta have turned a curious eye toward this small state.

spain and portugal

The Iberian Peninsula is an odd hodgepodge of Kindred. Nearly every clan and philosophy is represented, from Lasombra elders to young Gangrel anarchs to firmly entrenched Sabbat members (who occasionally operate under the guise of anarchs or Basque separatists. Divisions among clan and age lines drive Kindred into constant squabbling; seldom does anything of value get accomplished. The Lasombra clan has historically had its roots here, and Spain is unique among European nations in that a fair number of its "princes" are in fact Lasombra archbishops.

One bright spot is the flourishing of the arts here. Toreador protection of the Prado Museum in Madrid has saved priceless works from the flames of the anarchs. Though members of Clan Toreador could never gather adequate proof, a few elders suspect that the Tremere, jealous of the might of Lisbon, collaborated to cause the great earthquake there in 1755.

Madrid

Spain's capital is the home of the mighty Lasombra Archbishop Moncada. The Camarilla stays well out of here; no one, not even a Justicar, would dare to defy Moncada in his lair. For now, he exists as he always has, warmly greeting visiting Keepers in need of confession and sending them on their way with a bevy of new sins to commit.

Barcelona

The largest city in Spain, Barcelona has experienced rapid growth and vitality, particularly due to the recent hosting of the Olympic Games. The city is a melting pot, tolerating a wide range of lifestyles and free expression (indeed, Camarilla Toreador and Sabbat Lasombra mingle here with only the occasional gruesome slaying).

Barcelona is famous among the Kindred for its celebration of Dia de los Muertes (the Day of the Dead). Social stratification and rules are thrown to the wind on this night, replaced with wild dances and an infamous costume competition, which is usually won by the Malkavians. A darker custom is the crowning of the "Prince of Vampires." Someone is Embraced at the beginning of the evening and given complete reign over Europe's Kindred. She may do anything or command anyone until the approach of dawn, when she is staked and left to burn in the first rays of the sun. Lasombra also celebrate the Palla Grande banquet and ball each All Hallow's Eve. Neonates consider receiving an invitation to this affair a mark of approval from the elders. Human guests often end up as the main course, though a few mortals of quality become marked as potential childer by those who hold permission to create progeny. In the past, the "Prince of Vampires" has occasionally visited the ball or has come from the ranks of human guests who were present.

Toledo

Famed for its fine weaponry, silk and wool, Toledo is also known among the Awakened as a seat of power for both mages and Tremere. The former have a Chantry at the Sociedad de la Luz, while the Tremere keep holdings at the Chantry de los Reyes. Over long centuries of battle, neither party has been able to gain the upper hand.

A small group of Nosferatu live in Toledo, staying out of the long feud. However, this situation may be changing rapidly. North of Toledo is the tiny town of Maqueda, where a Moorish castle stands alone and aloof. Lights have been seen there at night, and there are whispers among Kindred and mages alike that a new owner has taken possession of the place, someone who has come to make changes....

Andorra

Although technically ruled by Spain and France, this small mountain country has in fact been self-ruled for more than

700 years. The people rely on tourism for their great prosperity.

An ancient Gangrel of Basque extraction, named Rufus, stalks Andorra's nights. Living high in the Pyrenees, Rufus and his few allies watch the chaos that slowly devours Spain. In contact with both anarchs and elders among the Gangrel, Rufus is determined to help stop the madness that is taking hold of the Iberian Peninsula.

Greece

As in ancient times, the Kindred of Greece swear fealty to one city-state or another. The princes of such city-states as Athens, Corinth, Sparta and Thessaloniki have little real power, and the country is hopelessly divided. Most of the elders are Toreador, with a liberal sprinkling of Malkavians, Ventruue, Brujah and Gangrel; Tremere are rare in Greece. Nosferatu often find Greece to their liking, as most Kindred tend to be so busy squabbling over their own internecine politics that they have no time to pick on anyone else.

The Sabbat has cast an interested eye toward Greece, thinking an incursion here would take little effort and would remain unnoticed. Branches of the Tzimisce ghoulish families dwell here, waiting for their masters' commands to strike.

The Greek lifestyle is casual and carefree. Little excuse is needed for a party with lots of food and alcohol. Dancing is a passion among the Greeks, and the Kindred follow suit; this is the chosen art of many Toreador. Occasionally a dancer will be so engrossed in her music that she will forget about the sunrise and have to scurry to the nearest shelter available or else suffer Final Death.

Crete

Greece has hundreds of islands within its borders, but perhaps the most noteworthy is Crete. Visitors here can watch the fishermen while strolling along the beaches in the moonlight, or they can tour ancient Minoan palaces at Knossos and view the famous paintings of the bull-dancers. Kindred visitors may also want to pay a visit to the Oracle of Knossos to ask questions about their future and fate. Hidden among long-buried ruins, the Oracle doles out her prophetic dreams to those who can bring her something of interest and treat her with respect. The Oracle doesn't take monetary payment, but instead prefers pretty trinkets, old books or rare vitae. If angered, she has a very loyal bodyguard who won't hesitate to throw out offenders, whether prince or lowly neonate.

Erianthe, Oracle Of Knossos

Background: Female infanticide was a hideous but common practice among the Greeks. Erianthe was left to her fate on the steps of Knossos Palace, and her parents never knew

that she was taken in by an old woman who lived in the crumbling ruins. Theophania, a Malkavian prophetess, raised Erianthe and taught her the ways of the Oracle; the girl served as Theophania's ghoul for almost two centuries. When Theophania felt a call to leave Crete, she Embraced Erianthe and left her to serve as the next Oracle, guarded according to tradition by three Black Furies who saw the madness and undead status of the Oracle's position as divinely inspired. Erianthe lived in relative solitude, except for the occasional company of the Furies and visitors among the Awakened who came to seek her guidance. With the exception of Argus, no one stays around for very long.

Image: Dark-haired Erianthe usually appears as a pretty young girl in her first flush of youth. Depending on her visitor, she may also choose to use her Obfuscate to appear as a mature woman in her middle years or as an old crone, thus mimicking the Fates: Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos.

Roleplaying Hints: You always act with great dignity, yet you suffer from severe depression. After each successful prophecy, you fall into a deep gloom, refuse to feed and sometimes refuse to take shelter with the approach of dawn. There are times when you look out over the sparking waters of the Aegean and long to plunge into the waves. Were it not for Argus and the watchful Furies, this probably would have happened long ago.

Argus Theophilides

Background: A shopkeeper in Athens, Argus was caught in a terrible fire that swept through the poorest quarter of the city. Though he managed to escape the flames relatively unscathed, he suffered from breathing problems for months afterward; even worse, his meager livelihood lay in ruins. Drunk and desolate, he was ready to end his life in a dark alley when an old man grabbed him and bit deeply into his neck. Argus died but was given another existence, one darker by far than his life.

The Embrace and adjustment to life as a vampire did not suit him. He fled his crazed sire only a few months later, hearing rumors among the Nosferatu of Athens about a seeress on Crete. Sleeping in ruined temples by day and traveling on foot by night, Argus made his way to Crete...and fell in love.



In Erianthe, he saw someone who needed a protector, and though loath at first to accept his offer, the Oracle finally acquiesced. Argus has been her faithful guardian since the turn of the century, and the arrangement has worked well for both.

Image: Argus is a hideous monstrosity with scraggly gray hair and bulging dark eyes. He has a slight hunchback and a scarred, worn face. His limbs are gnarled like an old tree.

Roleplaying Hints: You will protect Erianthe at all costs, and this includes protecting her from herself. In your eyes, she is sacred, a true treasure among the Kindred.

Eastern Europe

No other corner of Europe has vampires of more ancient lineage and power than the eastern lands. Virtually all clans reside here, from old Nosferatu to wild Ravnos to packs of Gangrel who run (and have run-ins) with the Lupines. Eastern Europe is infamous as the ancestral territory of the terrible Tzimisce; it also houses many Inconnu and, unbeknownst to most, is the haven of Tremere, who founded his clan with stolen Tzimisce vitae in the Carpathian Mountains. Eastern Europe is a wilder place than the rest of the Continent, full of secrets to share and untold dangers for the unwary.

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe was more than a psychological blow to the Brujah. It created a power vacuum that the Sabbat were eager to fill - particularly, of course, the Tzimisce. The oldest Tzimisce remember the ancient nights of feasting and depravity they enjoyed as absolute masters of the east. Many are willing to do anything to reclaim their former power and glory. Some cities here are still ruled by non-Sabbat Tzimisce princes, and the subtle talons of the Fiends continue to stir boiling affairs in Eastern Europe as a means toward their ends.

Poland

Poland is a surprising haven for many of the Awakened. Numerous Lupines live near the Carpathian Mountains in the south, and a Chantry of mages dwells in the coastal town of Frombork, seeking to find any lost works of Copernicus. The city of Krakow is a delightful mix of old-fashioned sites and the constructs of a newly modernizing nation. Whereas only a few Kindred lived here before, many Toreador, Tzimisce and Brujah are now looking at the city with renewed interest.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia

The Czech Republic, which includes Bohemia and Moravia, is extraordinarily rich in mineral resources, mining and manufacturing. Its capital, Prague, is a center for culture and learning; the Czechs have made major contributions to music, literature, poetry and film. Operas, symphonies and

choruses are all well supported, making this a popular location for the Toreador; indeed, Prince Vasily himself is of that clan. Yet the country faces dire environmental problems. Most of the Republic is on the verge of ecological disaster, and the crisis is even worse in Slovakia. To assist in the cleanup, Prince Vasily has engineered close diplomatic ties with Germany and is looking for additional outside aid. While the Lupines would most certainly assist, it seems too risky for the Kindred to seek aid from the Lupines at this time.

The Sabbat, prompted by the Tzimisce, cast hungry eyes toward Prague. Tzimisce remember well the ancient nights of study in the Magic City, and the Fiends would give much to walk the corridors of Prmesyl-built Prazsky Hrad Castle once more....

Hungary, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria

These countries were ruled as Ottoman provinces until they won independence in the 19th century. Hungary boasts rich farmlands and silviculture, while Romania has valuable oil fields near Bucharest. Bulgaria, with its attractive coasts, has become a popular holiday destination, while Albania remains a very poor and desolate nation forced to ask for aid from its allies.

Hostility between Hungarians and Romanians mounts daily, and future warfare is an unpleasant but distinct possibility. Large sections of the Carpathian Mountains, including Transylvania, are in Romania, and yet in recent years this has been a terrifying place for Kindred and kine alike. Due to the insane policies of fear and intimidation practiced by the late dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who refused to acknowledge the possibility of AIDS in his country, the entire nation's blood supply has been contaminated. The suffering experienced during his regime was extreme and only after his overthrow and execution in 1989 could progress toward healing the country begin.

Most of the oldest Kindred in Europe live in this area, remembering ancient nights before the power of the Church, when Lupines howled in the nights and mages conducted arcane rituals in secret hovels. Indeed, Sofia and Bucharest are still ruled by Tzimisce princes, who are members of the Oradea League and connected to the Inconnu. As for the Inconnu themselves, most have chosen to hide themselves away and to avoid involvement in the volatile politics of the region. They look with concern toward Russia. Despite contacts among the numerous Ravnos in this area who serve as agents, the Inconnu can learn nothing about what is going on within the Russian borders. With mounting concern, they now ponder their next course of action.

The Yugoslavian Shinier States

The history of this region is long and complex. Horrible atrocities have recently occurred here, and there seems to be no solution in sight, despite attempts by numerous world leaders to impose peace on the region. When the new wave



of genocide began in the late 1980s, most Kindred fled and sought havens in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria. Worst of all, Sabbat Tzimisce and Gangrel antitribu have taken advantage of the death and chaos in order to infiltrate this region in small packs. The carnage here will only continue to rise as they attempt to gain firm footing.

Hedeon Yaroslavich

Background: This thoroughly evil and devious Kindred cares little about anything but his own power. Through the centuries, his schemes have led him to the pinnacle of majesty, only to bring him down again. Hedeon's influence declined drastically when communism fell, for he held many thralls among the communist elite. Now he is reluctantly renewing his contacts with Sabbat packs in the Balkan States in hopes of regaining his former power.

Hedeon holds all human life (and Kindred unlife) as useful only in relation to service to him. His chief haven, a castle in eastern Poland, is guarded by szlachta, guardian ghouls altered through Vicissitude. These foul creatures sport claws, have natural armor plating and possess superior physical traits. Workers in Hedeon's mines have likewise been altered to perform more effectively. The villages near his castle are populated to capacity with ghouls who drink from vitae-tainted wells, thereby becoming Blood Bound to Yaroslavich. Other less fortunate villagers are taken to serve as guinea pigs in various vile experiments. Some now function as living traps in his dungeons or as living partitions in the rooms of his fortress.

Kindred who fall under his power are lucky if they are drained outright, as Hedeon lives up to his clan's infamous reputation for torture. Survivors are Blood Bound to him; along with his half-dozen childer, he uses these victims to further his schemes. One of Hedeon's more recent successes involved tricking the Sabbat into calling a Crusade against Camarilla forces in Szczecin, Poland; this action resulted in destruction for both sides. As a bonus, Hedeon's childer, Elica, became prince of the city during the confusion.

The Inconnu have been moderately successful in blocking Yaroslavich's more obvious plots, but even they have no idea of the scope of his evil. Ironically, other ancient Fiends, especially the Oradea League of which he is a member, are responsible for slowing the expansion of Hedeon's power. With the chaos brought on by the Sabbat invasion, however, his opponents have little opportunity to block him. He is well on his way to controlling the League, and thus Eastern Europe.

Image: Hedeon has classic Slavic noble features. He is tall and strong-boned, and his dark hair hangs straight to his shoulders. His eyes flash in eager anticipation of the horrors that his hands can inflict.

Roleplaying Notes: You take unholy delight in causing pain and agony of both a physical and mental nature. However, you are a noble first and foremost, and you always remember your manners. Even while mutilating humans and Kindred, you speak in cultured tones and flowery turns of phrase, never raising your voice even to blot out the screams of your victims.

Clan: Tzimisce

Nature: Deviant

Demeanor: Autocrat

Generation: 5th

Embrace: A.D. 412

Apparent Age: 30s

Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 7, Appearance 7

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 6, Wits 7

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 2, Intimidation 3, Leadership 5, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Animal Ken 1, Body Alteration 7, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 6, Stealth 4, Torture 3

Knowledge: Area Knowledge: Eastern Europe (Hungary) 5, Kindred Lore 2, Linguistics 5, Military Science 3, Politics 6

Disciplines: Animalism 7, Auspex 7, Celerity 4, Dominate 7, Fortitude 4, Potence 4, Presence 5, Protean 5, Thaumaturgy 2, Vicissitude 8

Rituals: (1) Defense of the Sacred Haven, Wake with Evening's Freshness, Incantation of the Shepherd; (2) Bloodwalk, Ward vs. Ghouls

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Herd 5, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 5, Status 5

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 4

Humanity: 0

Willpower: 9

Russia, The Ukraine, Belorus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Moldova

The Kindred had a relatively small presence in Russia until the time of Peter the Great. Previously, Russia had been primarily used as a battleground between Tzimisce and Lupines, but during Peter's reign, many Kindred saw a golden land ripe with kine and resources. The Toreador in particular saw a chance to develop the Russian writers and musicians. The Kindred presence in Russia grew steadily, and the Lupines could do little about it.

In 1917, the Brujah proved to be on top of the situation. Latching themselves onto Lenin and his followers, they launched the Communist Revolution in the midst of World War I. While the coup succeeded, and the last czar and his family were eventually murdered, the Brujah plan backfired. Disagreement over the manner of government to be formed sent Russia into civil war for a time. The Brujah factions quarreled, and the people of the Soviet Union suffered.

Then suddenly, in 1990, something changed. Boris Yeltsin was in power. Reforms began. The Soviet Union collapsed into individual, sovereign states. The Brujah were shocked and baffled. Where were these changes coming from?

In 1991, they got their answer. One by one, influential Kindred began to disappear, and by the time the clans united in crisis, it was too late. The ancient Nosferatu Baba Yaga had arisen from her long sleep; she devoured the tasty flesh of her Kindred brethren and once again dominated the land of the bear and wolf. Thanks to her power, the Awakened find it impossible to leave Russia once they enter. As Baba Yaga and her forces seek to isolate Russia from the rest of the world, presumably for some sort of mystical ritual, communications coming out of the country grow increasingly scarce.

Baba Yaga's main opposition is Durga Syn, an old Ravnos who is rumored to be a former pupil of Baba Yaga. Durga Syn seeks to end Baba Yaga's yoke of terror and restore Russia to peace and prosperity. Kindred and even other Awakened beings have little choice in Russia; they can risk everything to join with Durga Syn to help her cause, or they can be damned and join with a seemingly victorious Baba Yaga. Those who try to hide and do nothing will not have much longer to decide before a choice is forced upon them.

Perhaps the saddest thread to this entire saga is that Russia and its adjoining states have so much to offer the Kindred visitor. Here are lands of beautiful lakes and rivers, majestic mountains and wide golden plains. The Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova are leading centers of agriculture; Russia and the

Ukraine also boast mineral deposits and industry. Estonia produces a variety of commercial goods including lumber and oil shale; Latvia also has significant light industry. Lithuania is a poorer cousin to Estonia and Latvia, but all three of these Baltic states have vast primeval forests that hide many dark secrets. The people of these lands of the former U.S.S.R. are famous for song, tales and a joy for life that lies hidden beneath long years of denied freedoms.

Two major rumors abound outside of Russia's borders: The first speaks of a hidden enclave of Brujah and perhaps others who managed to escape Baba Yaga's rampages; the second tells of a strange alliance between Lupines and Gangrel. Both rumors seem highly unlikely, and no one is sure of their source. It seems improbable that these rumors will either be confirmed or denied anytime in the foreseeable future.

Baba Yaga

Background: Many fearful tales are whispered about Baba Yaga; she is so old and legendary that no one knows the truth of her origin. What is certain, however, is that she is an ancient vampire of immense and terrible power. She awoke from a long torpor in 1990, and by 1991 the Brujah and their allies had fallen from power.

Baba Yaga seeks to make Russia into the land it was when she was young, and to this end she attempts to isolate the nation from its former satellites and potential allies. For now, she is biding her time, waiting and watching; to her, four or five years are but an infinitesimal fraction of the nights she has seen. No one knows what her plans may be, but even the most powerful elders shudder in fear at the mention of her name.

Image: Picture the most hideous hag imaginable, and you might be able to imagine Baba Yaga. She is an eight-foot-tall monstrosity with four-inch iron (yes, iron) claws, sharklike iron fangs, stringy hair, gray scarred flesh covered in pustules, rheumy eyes thick with cataracts and a long crooked nose marred by numerous hairy warts and moles.

Roleplaying Hints: You are the most powerful sorceress on Earth and the absolute ruler of the Motherland. Humans and



other supernatural beings, especially Kindred, exist only to slake your ravenous thirst. Generally coarse and crotchety, you keep your cunning hidden within, enjoying cat-and-mouse games with your prey. If anyone is brave enough to withstand your visage and call you "Little Grandmother," you might spare that one... or you might not.

Notes: Baba Yaga lives in a magickal hut. On the outside, it looks like a peasant hovel that stands on two scaly chicken legs about 10 feet off the ground; the legs walk or run when Baba Yaga wishes to move her haven. Inside the hut is a maze of magnificent rooms, grander than the rooms in any mansion. Noone, not even Baba Yaga, knows how large the chicken hut is. Baba Yaga also has a magickal mortar, large enough to sit in, which she steers with a giant pestle.

Durga Syn

Background: In ancient nights, Durga Syn was a priestess who served the Mother Goddess and all the Russian people. Offered a chance to serve Baba Yaga, she politely refused and found herself cursed and hunted for her disobedience. The Ravnos clan wove a great illusion of Christian warriors charging into Russia to occupy Baba Yaga's attention while they saw to it that Durga Syn was Embraced by one of their clan. She has used her new Disciplines and old magick to aid the Rodina ever since.

Image: Once beautiful, Durga Syn was cursed by Baba Yaga and is now withered and homely. Her skin is dried and wrinkled, and her once jet-black hair is scraggly and gray. But her eyes are still bright and lively, shining with an inner drive and purpose.

Roleplaying Hints: You are primarily concerned with keeping your people safe from Baba Yaga. The old one must not be permitted to succeed in her goals, for anything she touches turns to evil. Though it pains Durga Syn to see good folk dying to oppose Baba Yaga, such sacrifices must be made to end the evil witch's unlife.

Turkey

Turkey is a place in which to wheel and deal in grand style. Among the Kindred, Turkey is perhaps most infamous as the home of the Assamites. This clan maintains a secret haven in the Toros Dagliari, a range of mountains stretching from the south across eastern Turkey. The Assamites take little interest in the mortal running of government and only a passing interest in the regime of Prince Mustafa of Istanbul. They see the city as a place in which to conduct business, and if left free to do so, they are satisfied.

The presence of other Kindred is limited. Visitors come to the city to sample its splendors, but few stay. Setites seeking to bring an end to the extremely harsh antidrug laws are an exception to this. Rumors also circulate that ambitious Kindred have even found the means to contact the Inconnu through connections in Turkey.

Istanbul

A never-ending night of sensual delights awaits the Kindred who comes to Istanbul. The city promises an enormous variety of kine upon which to feed. Dancing is a perennially popular pastime, and Istanbul is thus packed with nightclubs and discotheques. For men, the *kahve*, or coffee house, is a premiere bargaining place. Indeed, Istanbul harbors a long-standing reputation among both Kindred and mortals as a place to make deals; more than one European elder has contracted an Assamite in a smoke-filled cafe along the Mesrutiyet Cad, one of Istanbul's main streets. The crowded Istanbul Grand Bazaar is also an ideal feeding ground, as intensive haggling often takes place well into the evening. Labyrinthine catacombs sprawl beneath the city, and visitors takes their existence into their own hands when journeying here. The catacombs are jealously guarded by the Nosferatu, who know more secrets than anyone else in this city full of mystery. For the true hedonist, there are the sumptuous Turkish baths, where the hiss of steam from colorful heated tiles keeps both Kindred conversations and interludes with mortals quiet and discreet.

Mustafa is the Ventrue Prince of Istanbul, but he is weak and largely ineffectual; in reality, the city is ruled by his Toreador



companion, Nakshidil. She maintains a truce with the Nosferatu and takes care to steer clear of the Assamites even while seeking to keep tabs on their activities in the city. Though she despises the Setites, Nakshidil's attempts to remove them from Istanbul have all failed.

Mustafa, Prince of Istanbul

Background: An insidious practice among the sultans who assumed the Ottoman throne was the slaughter of all male relatives who could pose a threat to their absolute rule. Thus, the women of the harem who had young sons feared for their children's lives. So it was with the mother of young Mustafa. Whether or not her son vied for the throne was immaterial to her; she simply wanted him to live a normal life. She spent a fortune in bribes to have her baby smuggled out of the harem and to have a dead child buried in his tomb.

What the woman didn't know, however, was that the boy was taken to a Ventrue stronghold on Malta, and then was groomed and raised by ghouls there, solely for the purpose of being returned to Istanbul to take the throne from John Paleologus, a powerful Byzantine Tzimisce who continued to rule despite the Ottoman conquest. The Ventrue wanted someone under their control in the city, and what better person than a prince of actual Ottoman descent? Mustafa was quite agreeable to the plan; he was Embraced and managed to retake Istanbul with the help of the Ventrue and a Toreador named Vashtai.

But then, his power and control started to wane. Mustafa grew content to sit on his past glory and let Vashtai handle daily affairs of state. She was more than happy to do this, and despite Vashtai's loyalty and later that of her child Nakshidil, the stark truth is that Mustafa is merely a figurehead for the true rulers of the city, the Toreador.

Image: A handsome man, Mustafa is nearly 6' tall, with dark eyes and chestnut-brown hair. His cheekbones are high, and he has a noble bearing. Unlike Nakshidil, he enjoys wearing fine suits and Western-style clothing at his serai.

Roleplaying Hints: You use your magnetism and good looks to make excellent short-term impressions. But when situations get tense, especially diplomatic situations, you tend to get nervous. You feel acutely uncomfortable when Nakshidil is not around to assist you.



Nakshidil

Background: When eunuchs who guarded the imperial harem wished to be merciful, they would first suffocate or drug the women who were to be thrown in the Bosphorus as punishment for trying to escape. Nakshidil made too many enemies in the harem to receive any kind of mercy; as she was sewn into a weighted silken sack and thrown into the cold waters of the strait at sunset, she prayed for a quick death. As the last tendrils of her consciousness faded in the dark waters, she thought she heard voices above.

The next thing Nakshidil recalled was the warmth of heated towels wrapped around her body and the soft yet powerful voice of a woman speaking. "My spies observed what transpired within the walls of the seraglio, and at my bidding they have saved you from a watery grave. You have presence, my child; you have grace and wits and talent. But you lack subtlety. This I can teach you. I can show you power you never dreamed possible if you will stay with me, if you will pay the price of never seeing the sun again, if you will be my child for eternity."

Nakshidil agreed and thus became the pupil and companion of Vashtai for the next three centuries. She learned about her sire's vast network of spies, her contacts with the Nosferatu and European Ventrue, the threads of power she manipulated in the mortal world - and her sway over Prince Mustafa.

Vashtai died at the hands of Setites near the end of World War I, and Nakshidil easily moved into the position of power held by her sire. Valued by Prince Mustafa, she is loyal to him as well, but first and foremost Nakshidil is loyal to herself. One reason she seeks revenge on the Setites is for their murder of Vashtai.

Image: Nakshidil is an incredibly beautiful woman, even by Toreador standards. She is petite of form; her thick, honey-colored hair hangs down to her slender waist, and her skin is fair and soft. Nakshidil's large brown eyes are perhaps her best feature; those who gaze into them feel as if they are drowning in delight. She dresses in very traditional garments around the prince's serai: baggy trousers, silk blouses and brocade overcoats. At her haven on the Black Sea, however,

she wears very modern evening and business attire imported from Italy.

Roleplaying Hints: In manner, you are the model of a gentle Turkish lady of long ago. You speak with a cultured tone, yet are always deferential to Prince Mustafa and his guests. You take care to make sure everyone enjoys themselves at your fetes. What not even your most trusted servants know, however, is that your air of civility hides great ambition and the desire to be in charge. In your mortal life, you were nearly drowned because you lost the upper hand. That will never happen again.

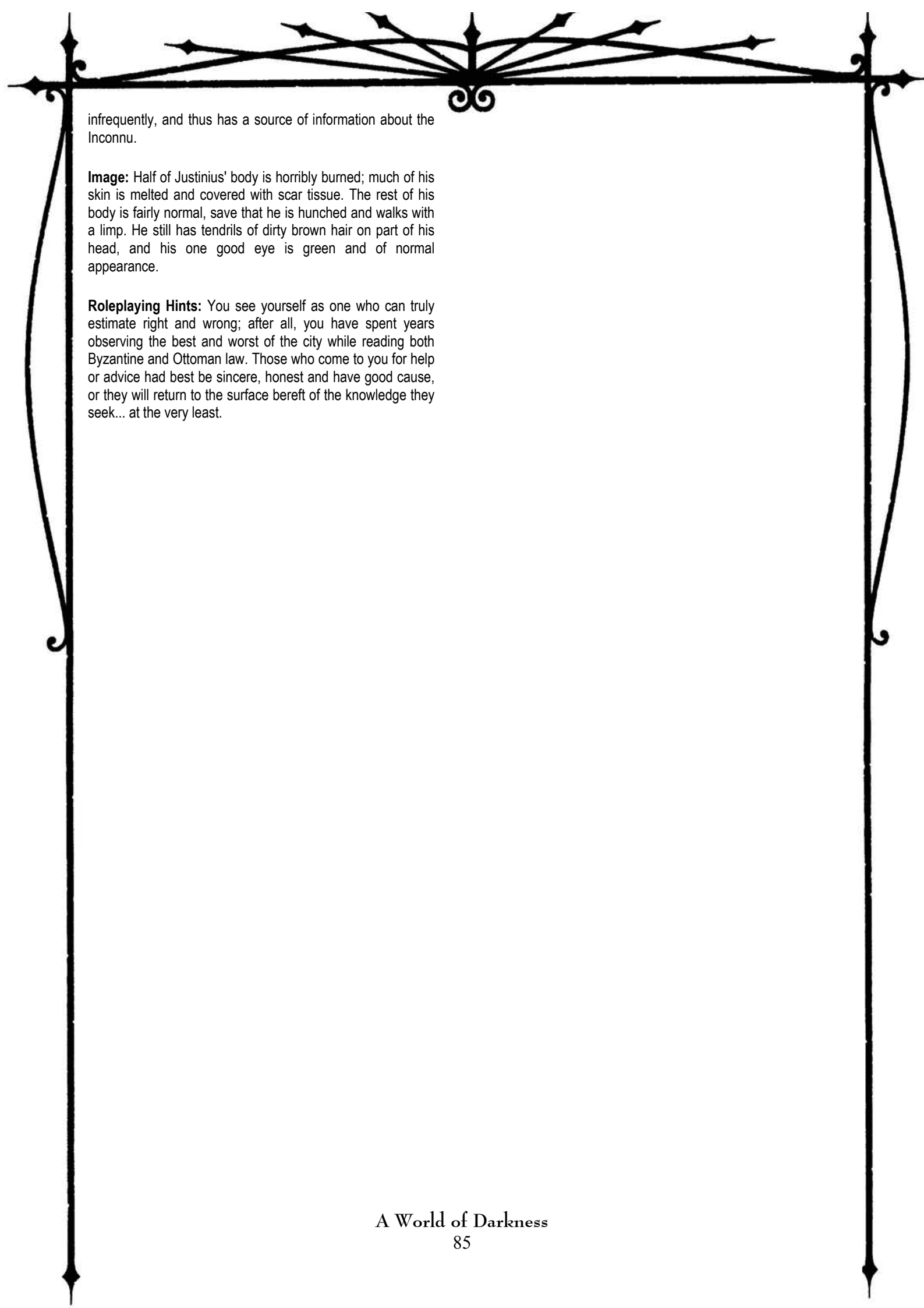
Justinus Theodoric

Background: Justinus was a humble fisherman who lived in a small village located near where the Sea of Marmara meets the Aegean. He led a simple but happy life with his wife and two small sons. Or at least, he did until the day the marauding slavers came. The slavers burned the village and tried to take his wife and sons. Justinus fought like a madman and was nearly slain. Badly burned where he had been clubbed by a lit torch, he lay dying near the outskirts of the destroyed village as the sun was setting.

Somebody dragged him into a cart, painfully, and this pain continued night after night. When Justinus came to his senses, he found himself in the company of a hideous creature who called itself Meletios. The creature explained to Justinus that he was now a vampire, and powerful enough to enact his revenge if he so chose it. Justinus mourned his family and his former life, but couldn't bring himself to murder in kind. He stayed with Meletios, learned to read and write, and the pair eventually made their way to Constantinople. There, they lived beneath the city in the catacombs and watched the deals and years pass by.

Meletios was, on friendly terms with Vashtai, but late in the 18th century he left to find the Inconnu. Justinus is more cautious in dealing with the Toreador, but he maintains limited contact with Nakshidil and attempts to spy on the Setites for her. Justinus also hears from his sire, though





infrequently, and thus has a source of information about the Inconnu.

Image: Half of Justinus' body is horribly burned; much of his skin is melted and covered with scar tissue. The rest of his body is fairly normal, save that he is hunched and walks with a limp. He still has tendrils of dirty brown hair on part of his head, and his one good eye is green and of normal appearance.

Roleplaying Hints: You see yourself as one who can truly estimate right and wrong; after all, you have spent years observing the best and worst of the city while reading both Byzantine and Ottoman law. Those who come to you for help or advice had best be sincere, honest and have good cause, or they will return to the surface bereft of the knowledge they seek... at the very least.

story seeds

- Legend has it that the sword of Charlemagne is forged from the lance that was used at the Crucifixion. The sword is presently held in the treasury of the Cathedral of St. Denis in Paris. The Society of Leopold seeks this weapon because of its reported powers against darkness. How will Kindred react to the theft of this fearsome sword? Will they directly confront the Society of Leopold or hide the sword before it is taken?
- A theft of diamonds occurs in a Kindred-owned bank in Antwerp, and the authorities are clueless; there seems to be no evidence of entry or exit. A group of Kindred could be sent by the Consortium to investigate this seemingly supernatural robbery. Could the thieves have been anarchists seeking trouble? Or could this be the work of a bored elder?
- A Methuselah rises from the earth at Ypres and wreaks havoc on a local town. Someone must stop this creature before all of the Kindred of the Low Countries are killed and the Masquerade is shattered. This common threat might create a temporary alliance between Kindred, Lupines, mages or other Awakened beings.
- The unthinkable occurs, and one of the Scandinavian elders is murdered just before sundown. Are the Valkyries or Louhi responsible? Or is it someone unsuspected who lurks among the respected Kindred of the north? To complicate matters, one of the PCs may have been at odds with the victim and may bear the blame for the crime.
- In Italy, a Kindred player character makes an innocent yet offensive remark to one of the elders and is sentenced to Final Death. How will his coterie assist him? Will the coterie try to handle the situation on its own or call for aid? Will the coterie resort to violence or use peaceful means? What if the Giovanni offer assistance?
- Who has taken over the Moorish castle at Maqueda? Is it a Justicar, or perhaps a Tradition Master, determined to stop the feud between the mages and the Tremere? A Methuselah masquerading as a Tremere might also be the new master of the castle, using Spain as a stopping point for Kindred blood before moving deeper into the Continent.
- Just before dawn in Barcelona, a frantic neonate comes to the players for aid. She has been crowned the "Prince of Vampires" on the Day of the Dead and, having escaped, seeks to avoid Final Death. Will the players help her (risking the wrath of the Lasombra hosts) or leave her to die?
- Seeking word of a lost friend, lover or sire, a Kindred comes to visit the Oracle of Knossos. What price will she exact from her visitor? Sending the Kindred off on a scavenger hunt for some obscure treasure could lead to a series of adventures. How

will the visitor react should the Oracle's Black Fury guardians be present!

- Using Eastern Europe as a base, a group of intrepid Kindred are sent to Russia to discover the fate of previous agents. What will they do when they discover they cannot leave? Will they join Durga Syn or will they fall under Baba Yaga's spell?
- A group of Kindred go to Turkey to seek out rumors of the Inconnu. How will they make contact with the Nosferatu? What if the Setites seek to use them as pawns in Istanbul to unseat Prince Mustafa and Nakshidil?

Resources and inspiration

Anything marked with an asterisk is particularly appropriate for Vampire: The Masquerade.

Films

The Tripods: This TV series by BBC follows a group of boys as they traverse Europe. The scenes of the French wine country and the Alps are particularly well done.

Citizen X: An excellent account of the life of Andrei Chikatilo, Russia's first documented serial killer.

Dr. Zhivago: A beautiful classic tale about the Russian Revolution.

The White Rose: A World War II story set in Munich, detailing the exploits of a college resistance group.

Soldiers of Orange: Shows the Netherlands in World War II.

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown: Gut-splitting yarn about the trials of a Spanish woman in love.

**Babette's Feast*: A French and Danish film about a single, glorious meal.

Anything by Ingmar Bergman

Murder on the Orient Express: Gives a good idea about first-class train travel.

**Queen Margot*: A richly detailed film showing 16th-century politics in France.

The Return of Martin Guerre: Shows life in a small French town.

Midnight Express: Epic about drug-smuggling in Turkey.

The Moon-Spinners: Shows village life on Crete, with beautiful scenery.

A Room with a View and Where Angels Fear to Tread: Set in turn-of-the-century Italy.

La Femme Nikita: Terrific film about French intelligence work.

Cabaret: Set in Germany during the beginning of World War II.

Nearly any *James Bond* movie has at least a few scenes from *Europe*: *The Living Daylights* and *From Russia with Love* probably have the most.

The Sound of Music: Has some fine scenery of Salzburg, Austria.

The Little Drummer Girl: Details terrorist activity, with interesting scenes from Greece and Germany.

Books

A Year in Provence: A lovely tale of life in southern France.

***Berlin by Night**

**Lace and Mistral's Daughter*: Don't laugh! These two, ah, novels give a good feel for the pace of life among rich Europeans.

The Kadin and Sultana: These historical romances are well researched and have crafty extrapolation about the imperial harem in Turkey.

The Melting Pot Book of Baby Names: An indispensable book to have when your players want names for everyone they meet. Covers Europe, Africa and Asia.

Travel Guides: *Let's Go*, *Fodor's*, and *Frommer's* are highly recommended for specific names of hotels, restaurants and interesting sites. *Europe by Train* is also useful.

**Comme il Faut/Castle Falkenstein*: A beautiful presentation of manners and morals in 19th-century Europe.

Music

For general background sounds, try a sampler of composers such as DeBussy, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, Schubert, Czerny, Bartok, Ravel and Handel.

Goth music such as Sisters of Mercy and Das Ich is ideal for Germany, Austria, the Low Countries and Scandinavia.

Greek and Middle Eastern dance music is good for Greece and Turkey.



chapter six: desert winds: arabia by night

LXXIV

*Yesterday this Day's madness did prepare
Tomorrow's Silence, Triumph or Despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.*

-The Rubaiyat, by Omar Khayyam, translated by Edward Fitzgerald

introduction

The Arabian landscape is a timeless forum steeped in tradition, history and above all, mystery. It is an ancient land with an ancient people who have forcefully, and at points reticently, embraced modern times. Century-old stone walls and prayer minarets lie within a shadow's fall of glass highrises and neon billboards. Ageless deserts are tattooed with brutal scars borne from a latticework of pipelines and concrete highways. Saudi Arabia is a nation of contradictions: politics and religion, dust and wealth. It is an empire with control over the world's largest oil stocks, where wars are fought on economic battlefields over the price of black crude.

Lexicon

Ahl-i-Batin: An Arabian mage Tradition whose members have vanished into the trackless dunes

Ananasi: Spider shapeshifters

ansar: Helper or ghoul

Ashirra: Brethren or Kindred

Bay't: house or clan (i.e., Bay't Majnoon: Clan Malkavian)

bedouins: Arabian nomads

Black Stone: Known as the "right hand of Allah on Earth," the Black Stone is a pre-Islamic artifact that is reputed to have fallen from the heavens. Imbedded in the corner of the Kha'ba, the sacred Black Stone is the greatest Islamic icon and the principal source of the Keening.

El Mathoub: Shapeshifters

Ghul: Ancient term for Ashirra

Hajj: In mortal terms, a Hajj is both a pilgrim who has journeyed to Mecca and a time of year when Muslims venture to the twin holy cities as part and parcel of their religious obligations. In Ashirra eyes, the Hajj are the Nosferatu defenders of Islam and wardens of the Keening.

Hijazi: Ventrue

iman: The Islamic faith does not use priests or ministers to act as intermediaries between Allah and mankind. The imans are, however, those individuals who deliver sermons and lead the faithful in prayer.

ins: mortals

khalifah: The caliph or "successor": the leader of the Islamic people who upholds the laws of the Quran. Because of the rift between the Sunni and the Shi'ite Muslims, each faction has its own caliph, as do many of the differing Islamic sects.

Kha'ba: Located in Mecca, this cubelike edifice is the central shrine of the Islamic universe, the first thing Allah created and the house in which the Black Stone is kept.

Majnoon: Malkavian

Malak: Ashirra King of Saudi Arabia

Mamluke: Toreador

Mushakis: Brujah

Mutasharid: Outcasts or non-Hajj Nosferatu

Quran: The Koran or holy book of Islam; the compilation of those teachings revealed to Muhammad the Prophet by Allah. The Quran is said to be the third and final revelation of God after he gave Musa (Moses) the Torah and 'Isa (Jesus) the Injil (the Gospels). The other two religions are therefore incomplete, making Islam the one true faith.

ruh: wraiths

sahir: mages

Saluki: Arabian Silent Striders

Shaitan: Tremere

shaykhe: The prince of any of the four provinces

Sheikha: Dreamspeaker Tradition of mages

vizier: assistant and aide to the shaykhe

Wah'Sheen: Gangrel

A Brief overview of Islamic practice

In order to understand Saudi Arabia, one must comprehend the fundamental aspects of the religion that guides her and how it affects the ruling body. Saudi Arabia is a monarchy. In a country whose religious majority is Shi'ite, the monarchy has always walked a tightrope between modernization and Islamic conservatism. Changes such as educating women or even considering the prospect of equal rights have always carried the threat of a popular revolt.

Islam itself is driven by the basic tenet of submission to Allah. The conduct of a Muslim's life in all of its facets is governed by the lessons of the Quran; the teachings of Muhammad the Prophet through the Sunnah; a concurrence of opinion known as the Ijma; and finally the Qiyas, or reasoning by analogy using the lessons of Muhammad and the Quran.

These four aspects constitute what is called the Shari'ah or Islam's divine law. In order to follow these teachings properly, however, a Muslim must fulfill the obligations that Islam demands. These are called the Five Pillars.

Shahadah (The Profession of Faith)

This first pillar is a Muslim's statement of complete devotion to Allah and the precept that there is no other than Him. This obligation is fulfilled by accepting and repeating the following statement over and over again: There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God.

Salah (Prayer)

The second pillar requires the devotee to pray to Allah five times a day. The prayer is broadcasted across the city through the prayer minarets at dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and evening. All life comes to a standstill during these times.

Zakah (Religious Tax)

The third pillar of Islam is the Zakah, a tax that reminds the wealthy that they have brethren who are less fortunate than themselves. This tax is used to pay for community facilities and to help the needy, whether they are Muslims or not.

Sawm (Fasting)

The fourth pillar is a fasting obligation that falls on the first new moon in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar (on the Western calendar, it falls 11 days earlier each year). During this month-long period, known as Ramadan, all Muslims (except the sick, elderly and young) are required to fast from dawn to dusk in order to bring themselves closer to Allah. It also serves as a reminder to Muslims of what the poor are forced to endure on a daily basis. At the closing of the day,

the dusk cannon (also known as "The Call of the Muezzin") is fired to break the fast. In the spirit of the joy it is meant to bring, dinner parties and other festivities are thrown for friends, family and neighbors (and even the less fortunate). These celebrations are well known for carrying on far into the early morning.

The remaining 10 days of Ramadan are particularly joyous for Muslims, for they include the Night of Power, which commemorates the fateful evening that Muhammad first saw the Angel Gabriel. Ramadan concludes with the commencement of the 'Id al-fitr (The Feast of the Breaking of the Fast), a three-day celebration that includes an exchange of gifts, parties and a required tax of either goods or money in order to help the poor partake in the festivities.

Hajj (Pilgrimage)

In the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, all Muslims must make a pilgrimage to Mecca in order to fulfill the fifth pillar. This is a time when thousands flock to Mecca and Medina in order to reenact Muhammad's flight and to touch the Black Stone within the walls of the Kha'ba.

Islam and the Ashirra

Unlike Christianity, where evidence of the supernatural is generally regarded as evil, Islamic lore is filled with both devout Jinn who follow the words of Muhammad and those Shaitan who chose to turn their backs on the one true faith. Even then, however, the lines between good and evil are ambiguous. The terrible Ghul, devourer of the dead, is the most charming and helpful of allies if approached in the right manner; conversely, faithful Jinn are known for their temperament and finicky nature.

Ashirra response to Islam can be summarized in the Syrian parable called "The Cat Who Went to Mecca." According to this fable, the king of cats had just become a Hajj following a pilgrimage to the holy city. The king of mice decided to pay his respects to the cat as a fellow brother of Islam, but instead narrowly escaped the supplicant feline. When asked about the incident, the mouse responded, "He may pray like a Hajj, but he still pounces like a cat."

While many of Arabia's undead adhere to the basic tenets of Islamic philosophy, actual practice varies according to both belief and the vampiric condition. The Five Pillars are, for the most part, respected within limits. The Shahadah and Zakah are widely practiced as shows of faith simply because they are the easiest to perform. The opulent Ashirra have always been more than happy to share their wealth with the local ins, an aspect of Middle Eastern courtesy that has survived to this night. Those Ashirra who still observe the Salah do so three times an evening: once upon awakening, once later at night and finally before sunrise. The Sawm and the Hajj tend

to be the most difficult and dangerous obligations to fulfill, and only the most stalwart of Ashirra practice these last two.

For the Sawm, many vampires fast well past midnight before they taste blood. A few determined individuals feed only on alternating nights, but their temperament is not a pleasant one during the interim. The obligation for the Hajj has been all but forgotten with the Nosferatu's control over the twin holy cities of Islam and it serves as a convenient excuse for the abandonment of certain practices.

The Keening

The Keening is a cry that can only be heard by Ashirra. It is strongest in the vicinity of Mecca and Medina, but it permeates the entire peninsula. Initially, the Keening extended throughout the region after the formation of Islam. With the theft of the Black Stone, however, the Hajj Tarique managed to create Thaumaturgic wards to dampen its scream. Many Ashirra are aware that Tarique could simply disband the rituals he emplaced around the Kha'ba and allow the full force of the Keening to seize the peninsula once again. It is this knowledge that lends weight to Tarique's position.

1. The Ashirra can hear the sun rise and move across the daytime sky. At dawn it begins as a muted rumble and slowly grows into a soft roar that howls at the Damned. While Arabian vampires have grown used to sleeping through it, foreign Ashirra must either spend one Willpower in order to sleep or add one to the difficulty numbers of all Rotsctreck checks for the following evening. Foreign Ashirra need a week to adjust properly, after which these penalties no longer apply.
2. Blood Point expenditure doubles on Arabian holy sites, including Islamic mosques. Unless purified by a Hajj, Ashirra cannot set foot in either Mecca or Medina because of the faith.
3. The difficulty for any Auspex ability used within 50 miles of Mecca or Medina increases by one, and any botch inflicts damage (the vampire takes five Health Levels of nonaggravated damage, minus one for each success scored on a Humanity or Path of Enlightenment roll vs. difficulty 7). Without the wards, the curse is capable of affecting all Disciplines in the manner listed above.

Ashirra unlife

Existence for Arabia's vampires is a paradox: They dwell in a state devoted to Allah, and yet they are the Damned.

One faction - the conservatives - advocates strict adherence to the principles of Islam and devotion to Allah. Only by so doing, this faction claims, can Ashirra ascend to Heaven. The conservatives frown on Western culture, Embracing (or

feeding from) women and a host of other cultural phenomena. Though this group is the smallest faction, many of Arabia's most important vampires belong to it.

A second group - the moderate faction - upholds Islam (or at least doesn't publicly denounce the faith), but remembers the more liberal era of Islam's Golden Age and sees the current strictness of the kine as a passing phase. These moderates emphasize Islam's devotion to learning and art and downplay the orthodoxy and dogma of Tarique's faction. Many moderates espouse a nation similar to that of the medieval Almoravid Empire, where Cainites moved amid luxury, intellectualism and refined pleasures. These vampires live quite opulently in their private estates, and often indulge in practices that would be frowned upon by their stricter brethren.

Finally, there are those wayward Ashirra who care little for Islam's tenets, either because they believe that committing



wicked deeds is their "proper" duty in the scheme of things, or because they simply don't give a damn. Consisting of more radical Mushakis, Mamlukes and Majnoon, these Ashirra are Ghuls in truth. Though the scrutiny of Tarique forces many of this faction's activities out of the public eye, members of this group often maintain secluded, palatial estates far off the beaten path. Here they congregate and bring their victims, engaging in orgies of blood and revelry that last far into the night. Additionally, many of these Ghuls keep slaves, which they use for all sorts of perverse purposes. Naturally, the Walid Set have infiltrated this group, and have made plans to use its members as a strike force when the time comes to make their move against the Arabian establishment.

Upon entry into a province, Ashirra must present themselves to the shaykhe immediately. Non-Hajj Ashirra cannot go anywhere near Mecca and Medina. If discovered, the Hajj will



send one of two Hashashin after them (both are sixth generation and have been with the Hajj for centuries).

The clans

Though other supernatural creatures make Arabia their home, the Kindred have had the greatest visible effect on the area. Arabia's Kindred call themselves the Ashirra. Due to the history of the region's political and religious institutions, clan names have changed along with the very nature of some clans.

The vampiric court of Arabia, though loosely associated with the Camarilla, became distant and somewhat autonomous following the First World War. The continuing rift is aggravating the relationship between the Camarilla and the Saudi court, and many fear that a permanent split may result. With Tarique's ability to disband the wards surrounding the Keening, the Camarilla has been reluctant to sanction any aggressive measures against the region's courts.

El Hijazi (Ventrue)

Politically the most powerful bay't, but the one in the most precarious position due to the concessions made by Shaykhe Muhammad during the recent Setite conflicts. Any more problems could not only discredit the rule of the El Hijazi, but also upset the precarious balance of Arabia's bay't.

The El Hijazi are well situated within most modern urban centers, particularly Al-Khubar and the capital city of Riyadh.

Hashashin (Assamites)

Of all the groups, the children of Haqim are the most powerful bay't in general influence. While the El Hijazi control the political hierarchy of Arabia and the Hajj dominate the religious, the words of Alamut are still heard and respected. The strongest ties have been forged with Tariq's Hajj, and it is no small secret that tensions have been mounting against the El Hijazi following that bay't's failed attempt to drive out the Setite cancer within the Eastern Province. While they are not present in great numbers, the Hashashin have powerful allies within the courts of the Middle East. The strongest alliance rests with the Hajj and is based on a deep sense of mutual trust. The Hashashin are thought to be one of the only bay't able to enter and leave Mecca at will, while the Hajj are rumored to be exempt from Hashashin assassinations. This, however, has not yet been confirmed.

Majnoon (Malkavians)

Before A.D. 800, Al Ussa, a Majnoon Methuselah and the self-proclaimed angel of pre-Islamic Mecca, prevented many Ashirra from settling in Arabia. Now, with Al Ussa presumed dead and her memory relegated to pagan status, the Majnoon are considered harmless and generally ignored.

Majnoon always travel alone and rarely stay in one area for any great period of time (much to the relief of the regional courts). They have been seen everywhere, from the court of Riyadh to the desert of the Empty Quarter. Their motives are a mystery, but it is they who are influencing the Mamluke Suzanne Kadim and they who continue the worship of Al Ussa.

Mamluke (Toreador)

Literally "owned" in Arabic, the clan's appellation is nonetheless meant to compliment the Toreador, since the Mamluke were the greatest patrons, creators and protectors of Islamic art. "Mamluke" has also come to serve as an insult since the term "owned" is often used as a reference to the Toreador being slaves to their own passions.

The Mamluke in Arabia are regarded as odd, since most Middle Eastern Toreador make their lairs in the artisan city of Damascus. Only two Mamluke are known to be in Arabia and they make Riyadh their home.

Mushakis (Brujah)

This bay't is the most politically diverse as well as the most active of the clans. The Mushakis run the gamut from pro-Western Ashirra to ardent anti-American advocates. It is from the ranks of the latter group that support for the overthrow of the Iranian Shah came.

The Mushakis can be found within the various courts, but they are particularly strong in the Central Province. The liberal Mushakis prefer the Court of Al-Khubar, while the conservative lot prefer Shaykhe Khaled's Court in Buraydah.

Wah'Sheen (Gangrel)

The Wah'Sheen of Arabia all have a common sire or grandsire, the fifth-generation Wah'Sheen named Zayyat. True to their nature, they support no political party and have no political aspirations. They are allowed to wander the desert in peace. No shaykhe infringes upon their rights as bedouins; none would dare.

El Mutasharid (Outcasts)

This is a reference to the Nosferatu who have not embraced Islam or have not been sired by Tarique, the leader of the Hajj. Despised by all, they scuttle from city to city. It is thought that there are virtually no Mutasharid in Arabia left due to extreme political pressure from the Hajj to have them ousted. That could prove to be false, however.

Walid Set (Followers of Set)

If any bay't is truly loathed, it is the Setites. Blood once spilled is never forgotten by Arabs, especially the immortal Ashirra. Blood spilt by a Setite is never forgiven. Setite

interest in the Arabian peninsula was largely limited to the lucrative trade routes through Mecca during the pre-Islamic centuries. Though Setites were driven out by the Keening, their interest in the region resurfaced following the discovery of the "Arab Formation" oil fields. This time, however, they found their path back into Arabia impeded by the Hashashin, Hajj and Wah'Sheen.

After decades of covert operations within the Eastern Province, the Setites failed to take the region under the cover of Operation Desert Storm. While they won little, they did prove that they could not be easily extracted. With a tenuous peace agreement in place, the Setites have taken to operating quietly once again. Based solely in the Eastern Province, the Setites are using their Majnoon allies to carry out their affairs. Their aim is to control the Eastern Province's oil fields.

Shaitan (Tremere)

The term "Shaitan" denotes an evil person or devil and is used to describe many, but particularly the Tremere. Tremere are generally disliked and have been unable to gain any control in Saudi Arabia due to the keen eyes of the Hajj and Assamites. The reason for this is unknown, but many suspect the Hajj are hiding something that they do not want the Tremere to discover. Cited as possibilities are rumors concerning a hidden Islamic Salubri, ancient Thaumaturgical texts from Queen Sheba and even the location of the hidden city of Wabar. As such, they have not had much success in establishing a chantry in Arabia. A single Tremere resides in Dhahran along with a few other foreign Ashirra.

Others

The Giovanni have only recently begun engaging in business with Arabia, but the court's general distrust of outsiders has made it difficult for these Necromancers to do business in the region. The Samedi and Ravnos are virtually unheard of, but there is one known Lasombra antitribu living in Saudi Arabia: Vizier Suliman, advisor to Shaykhe Muhammad of the Eastern Province. The Sabbath, to date, have not managed to establish any permanent covens or packs within the country due to the Wah'Sheen and Mushakis. Nor does the Tzimisce as a whole, Sabbath or otherwise, have any real interest in the region.

other denizens of the world of darkness

Sahir (Mages)

Though Arabia is host to many Traditions, only two have enough of an impact within the Arabian sphere to warrant mention. Technocratic Orders, while extremely influential within the evolving Middle East, have so far been limited to the cities and other islands of technology scattered throughout the desert.

Ahl-i-Batin

Long gone is this Tradition, swallowed by the net of Technocratic pipelines and highways that sheared Mount Qaf into so much rubble. At least that is what the Technocracy assumes. While direct evidence of the Ahl-i-Batin has long vanished, rumors still abound concerning enclaves of Arab Sahir in the hidden ruins of Wabar in the Empty Quarter, the only portion of desert still unclaimed by the Technocracy. Shi'ite schools across the peninsula still bear the fruits of knowledge assimilated by the master mathematicians and theoreticians. And just when the conspiracy gossip begins to die down again, a minaret appears in the empty desert and then fades with the blowing sand.

Sheikha (Dreamspeakers)

Of all the Traditions, the Dreamspeakers are the most prevalent and widely accepted mage order currently in Saudi Arabia. Their strength lies in the support of the desert bedouins who rely on the Sheikha as healers and as soothsayers. Most Dreamspeakers are female, the wise women of the tribe.

El Mathoub (Shapeshifters)

While the term primarily applies to Garou, El Mathoub is used as a catch-all phrase for all shapeshifters. The tribe known as the Glass Walkers has recently begun capitalizing on their interests in the region, and while Silent Striders are indigenous to the Middle East, constant skirmishes between them and Wah'Sheen bedouins have shattered the myth that Gangrel share a special rapport with the Garou. The only group with special status in Saudi Arabia is the Ananasi.

Ananasi

A thorn in the flanks for many of Gaia's tribes, the spider-children of the hostage-queen Ananasa are not only welcome in Saudi Arabia, but also hold special status with the Hajj of Mecca. Legend tells of an episode during Muhammad the Prophet's flight to Yathrib, when a spider covered the mouth

of the cave he hid within by Grafting a web. Muhammad's pursuers ignored the cave, believing it to be abandoned.

The Ananasi have been given custodianship of the intricate maze of underground rivers and streams that scour the belly of Saudi Arabia. Some Ashirra say that the Nosferatu Hajj are the masters of information not because of their own skill, but because of their spider allies.

Ruh (Wraiths)

The Mantaqat Khayal, or Arabian Shadowlands, is in the grip of an eternal sandstorm that obscures all, a byproduct of the Keening's inability to manifest in the world of the ins. Necropoli offer salvation from these Corpus-draining siroccos and the only way through them is to use the ancient caravan lines forged through a millennium of use by Nabatean traders and the devout living. These paths are controlled by ancient families of Ruh that prosper from the business of ferrying the dead safely along trade lines and pilgrimage routes.

History

Geographically isolated, Arabia is surrounded by three bodies of water, harsh terrain and an unforgiving desert. She has remained an unyielding enigma to all explorers and conquerors, defying explanation for her place of power throughout the millennia. Only those who forged her shadow history know what Arabia is, and it is partially through their experiences and eyes that aspects of her past are recounted.

Jahiliyya

The years before the angel Gabriel's revelations to the Prophet Muhammad are known as the Jahiliyya ("The Time of Ignorance"). Even before Muhammad's coming, Mecca was already an ancient nexus for the region's pagan worship. The city housed icons of various Persian deities, including an idol dedicated to an angel called Al Ussa. This self-proclaimed goddess was actually an Ashirra born within Bay't Majnoon.

Most information from this period is difficult to attain due to Islamic bias against polytheistic religions, but it is known that the controlling Majnoon house was under the subtle "guidance" of the Setites. The only threat to their dominion in the area was an emerging prophet by the name of Muhammad, who managed to spread the word of Islam and usurp Ashirra control over Mecca. Though he once was forced to flee the city, he returned a conqueror after three decisive battles between Mecca and Yathrib (the city to which he originally fled).

Upon his return in A.D. 629, Muhammad cleansed the Kha'ba of all false idols and may have been the catalyst for the Keening that drove the Ashirra out from the surrounding area. Al Ussa vanished that year, but many say she sleeps in

fitful torpor below Mecca, forever screaming, forever trying to drown out the sound of the Keening.

The Stewardship of Tarique

Background: Tarique, the future leader of the Hajj Nosferatu offshoot, was a Spanish Kindred converted to Islam during its Golden Age. Enamored with the "untouchable" city of Mecca, Tarique ventured to the Arabian Peninsula to gaze upon the holiest of Muslim sites.

It was on the fringes of the Keening that Tarique met his future ally and friend, the Tunisian Wah'Sheen named Zayyat. The two became involved with trying to apprehend Samir, a Majnoon from Al Ussa's brood responsible for fooling the Qarmatians (a heretical Islamic sect) into stealing the sacred Black Stone set within the walls of the Kha'ba. The theft silenced the Keening for two decades. During this 20-year-long quiet period, Tarique, with the help of Zayyat, fortified Mecca before any other Ashirra could lay claim to the city, and he began to pray for Allah's guidance. It is rumored that through the help of Ahl-i-Batin Sahir, Tarique created a ritual that lessened the severity of the Keening (outside Mecca and Medina) after the Black Stone was returned. Tarique claimed that henceforth he and his progeny would become Hajj, religious guardians of Islam and stewards of Mecca.

During the 12th century, Tarique and Zayyat fought successfully alongside Salah al-Din against the Crusaders. Once the war ended, however, Tarique and Zayyat returned to the Arabian Peninsula and watched quietly while the Mongol invasions swept through the Fertile Crescent. The Muslims of the Mideast had divided into fragmented tribes, and a lesson was due them as far as the two Ashirra were concerned. When Egypt fell to the Mamluke soldier-slaves, Tarique and Zayyat were more than happy to allow others to take the vanguard of the Islamic limelight. They were no longer interested in the tumultuous politics of the Middle East.

With the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Tarique was approached by Abdul Rahmann, a prominent Ottoman Hijazi who had embraced Islam. Tarique drew up an accord with Rahmann that allowed the Ottomans to gain control of Western Arabia through the port of Jeddah. Secretly, however, Mecca and Medina remained under Tarique's guidance, while the desert tribes rested under the dominion of Zayyat.

As the centuries passed, Tarique was plagued by nightmares - frightful dreams of something ancient reawakening within the heartland of Arabia. He knew of Al Ussa through legend alone and feared that the Malkavian queen was returning to her desert roost. This precipitated another fear of her trying to reclaim Mecca. Further complications arose in the form of a rapid expansion of European colonialism during the last half of the 19th century. Tarique realized that the only way to protect the twin holy cities from outside corruption was to

build a nation to defend Islam. He conferred with Rahmann on the matter and convinced him to aid an Arabian tribe called the Sa'ud.

The Sa'uds had gained substantial power in Central Arabia under the religious leadership of the iman Al-Wahhab and his demand that Islam should return to its roots. Rahmann clandestinely helped the Sa'ud family regain control of Arabia. It was Tarique's, Rahmann's and Zayyat's efforts that brought about the united Arabia after WWI and the rule of the Sa'ud family after whom Saudi Arabia is named. These three Ashirra managed to create a bulwark that prevented many power-hungry European Kindred from claiming power in the region. Camarilla be damned, the Arabian Ashirra were not interested in the Masquerade, they were defending the Arabian Peninsula and Mecca.

Since that time, Tarique has relegated himself to defending Mecca and Medina as the holy cities of Islam, Zayyat has remained with the desert bedouin and Rahmann has become the Ashirra Malak of Arabia. As yet Al Ussa has not reared her head, but Tarique suspects that the sudden reemergence of Setites in the region is no mere coincidence.

Notes: Tarique says nothing of his sire, though it is thought to be the same Ashirra who Embraced the Byzantine Prelate Alexius (who in turn Embraced Khalid al-Rashid, the Nosferatu primogen member of Chicago).

If Tarique desired, he could obtain the support of over half the Arabian Ashirra. Zayyat and the Wah'Sheen, Malak Rahmann, many Hashashin, Shaykhe Khaled and the most conservative Mushakis would be by his side at the fall of a blooddrop. The other Ashirra would get out of Tarique's way for fear of being trampled.

Tarique trains constantly with his Hashashin bodyguard, Saysen, in the art of sword fighting. Both men are extremely adept at it.

Image: Tarique bears the disfigurement of his Nosferatu birth with nary an embarrassed faltering. He dresses in simple robes, never wearing more than what he needs. Despite his lack of hair, the imposing set of teeth that juts slightly forward past his mouth, and his small sharp eyes, Tarique is a compelling figure.

Roleplaying Hints: Never falter, never back down and never say anything except for the words that need to be spoken. Command people by the way you look at them; lead by example. Your face is not disfigured, it is the wrath of the mala'ika (angels) and Allah. Those who stare upon you should never forget that you serve Allah as his devout servant and are willing to die for Him.

Clan: Nosferatu
Nature: Architect
Demeanor: Visionary
Generation: 5th

Embrace: 807

Apparent Age: Late 30s

Physical: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 7, Manipulation 5, Appearance 0

Mental: Perception 8, Intelligence 5, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 7,

Intimidation 7, Leadership 6, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 4, Melee 7, Music (leading the Salah) 5, Stealth 6, Survival 6

Knowledges: Law (Islamic) 5, Linguistics 6, Occult 5, Theology 8

Disciplines: Animalism 2, Auspex 5, Celerity 3, Fortitude 4, Thaumaturgy 5 (Hidea Iman 5), Obfuscate 6, Potence 5, Presence 5, Protean 2

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 4, Herd 5, Influence 4, Retainers 3, Status 5

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

Humanity: 10

Willpower: 9

Current Events: The Machi-nations of Suzanne Kadim

Background: Unlike those who have affected Arabia's past, Suzanne is both a recent entry into the political foray and a shadow player. Barely on the fringes of the Sabbat, she is aiding the sect in establishing its first foothold within the peninsula.

Suzanne was Embraced into a powerful family line of the Mamluke. A highly talented singer, her grandsire was a renowned lore weaver of Arabian tales and ruler of the Toreador city of Damascus. Overshadowed by her progenitors, Suzanne struck out to find a mark for herself within the Middle East that did not involve her grandsire.

The winds of fortune brought her into the newly emerging courts of westernized Iran under the Shah. Suzanne used her beauty and her drive to become the head of Iran's Mamluke. Under the liberal Shah, Iran was moving toward equal treatment of women, westernized education and a more European style of living. The court also hosted some of the strongest Camarilla supporters within the region. This did not sit well with the more fundamental Islamic sects or with older Ashirra who remembered the Camarilla's control over Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran and Iraq. The Shah of Iran later alienated his Camarilla supporters when he tried to increase the cost of oil during the 1973 and 1977 Oil Crises.

With the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, support for the Ayatollah came from several different factions, including Mushakis within Arabia itself. Suzanne was infuriated as she saw everything she had struggled to establish collapse in a fortnight. She vanished into the darkness that year, setting her sights on destroying both the Ashirra of Arabia and the Camarilla.

Suzanne now lives in Saudi Arabia, watching and plotting from within the Eastern Province. She currently acts as a Sabbat spy (for a coven she met in Marrakesh in 1983),



exploiting weaknesses and using dupes to carry out her wishes. Though she is not aware of it, Suzanne is also a pawn of the Setites.

Saudi Arabia's extensive use of foreign workers created a stockpile of mortals for the Setite cell in Arabia to draw upon. In 1989, a war erupted in the Eastern Province between these Serpents and the local Ashirra. The war came to a quick halt when Prince Muhammad made concessions with them, but this treaty placed him in a dubious position with Arabian Ashirra, who believed that the Setites should have been wiped out. Suzanne has allied herself with this clan, hoping to lure them into the folds of the Sabbat while they in turn manipulate her to carry out their plans.

Suzanne established an impressive array of underground contacts and allies in the Middle East. She has three female Ashirra with her as her companions/lovers and she commands the support of several pro-Western Mushakis. She is very good at manipulating people for her own ends.

Image: The classic figure of an educated, cultured Arabic woman, Suzanne wears the finest modest clothing Parisian designers can offer. She speaks fluent English, Lebanese Arabic (very eloquent and cultured, as opposed to Saudi Arabic, which is very rough) and French (again, a very refined dialect unlike Parisian French). A witty conversationalist, well traveled and well versed in the local and international political scene, she is the perfect hostess and possesses a refined beauty and charm.

Roleplaying Hints: You never drop your refined veneer, regardless of the circumstances. Self-control is an important facade that you retain at all times regardless of your feelings toward the person whom you are addressing. Despite this calm exterior, you are angry, bitterly so, at the destruction of your plans at the Tehran courts. You plan to topple the Saudi Ashirra by any means possible and by manipulating everyone available, whether they are necessary parts of your plans or not.

Clan: Toreador
Nature: Autocrat
Demeanor: Director
Generation: 8th
Embrace: 1910
Apparent Age: Late 20s
Physical: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 5
Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3
Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 1, Empathy 3, Intimidation 4, Leadership 5, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Drive 2, Etiquette 4, Firearms 2, Music 5
Knowledge: Art History 4, Bureaucracy 2, Linguistics 2, Politics 5
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Dominate 3, Obfuscate 1, Presence 4
Backgrounds: Allies 2, Contacts 3, Herd 2, Influence 4, Resources 4, Retainers 2
Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 3, Courage 3
Humanity: 4 (interested in Path of Cathari)
Willpower: 7

The Politics of Oil

Already fairly independent due to geographic isolation, Saudi Arabia was one of the few Middle Eastern nations to emerge outside of European control after the First World War. This oversight is one that the West has regretted ever since the Arabian courts began to use oil as leverage against the Camarilla in an attempt to establish a unified Middle Eastern court to handle Ashirra affairs. O.P.E.C. was the only successful outcome of this endeavor.

After the formation of O.P.E.C., many Middle Eastern countries became overzealous in their attempt to break away from the West. The Ashirra of Iran even advocated raising the price of oil to \$100 a barrel during the Oil Crisis of 1977 (when the Iranian courts fell, this was thought to be one of the reasons why the Camarilla never tried to assist the ousted Shah). Had it not been for Zaki Yamani, the Oil Minister for Saudi Arabia, the Iranians might have succeeded.

Zaki Yamani, a shrewd diplomat, had already been responsible for returning a great deal of oil control back into Arabian hands. Before the Camarilla realized it, the sect lost more control within the region because of him. Oil was later shown to be an even more effective weapon during the Iran-Iraq war, when Saudi Arabia undercut Iran's sale of oil with low prices of its own. Iran, which required the oil trade to finance its military campaign against Iraq, accused Saudi Arabia of trying to undermine Iran's war efforts. Though nothing was ever proved, it showed the world the power of oil politics.

saudi arabia travel guide

Saudi Arabia emerged in 1932 as a monarchy ruled by the Sa'ud family. With the discovery of oil in Arabia's Gulf region, the nation began its climb up the ladder of global status.

Currently Saudi Arabia is an honored member of O.P.E.C. and one of the richest nations in the world. Population estimates range between six to nine million people, including two million foreigners. Because Saudi Arabia does not issue tourist visas, entry is gained through official business, Islamic pilgrimage, special dispensation by the Arabian courts, or by sneaking into the country. Saudi currency is known as the riyal, and the current exchange rate is approximately 3.75 riyals to one American dollar.

Ashirra rule of Saudi Arabia is divided into four provinces. Though it does not constitute a province, Riyadh is an independent city ruled by the Ashirra Malak, Abdul Rahmann, to whom the shaykhes offer their allegiance.

Malak Abdul Rahmann (Hijazi)

A quiet Ashirra who holds a great deal of power, Rahmann commands the respect of most people he meets. With the growing concern over his child, Shaykhe Muhammad, Rahmann has grown more withdrawn and sullen over the inevitable decision that he will be forced to make.

The Western Province

The Hijaz region is ruled by Shaykhe Tarique and his offspring. With exception of the port city of Jeddah, which is open to all Ashirra, the Hajj do not permit the entry of any Kindred except for themselves into the cities of Mecca and Medina (at any rate, the sheer concentrated Faith would drive most Ghuls screaming from the cities). This province is anti-West in its political views, though Tarique tries to deal



only with religious issues.

Mecca and Medina are the primary centers of Islamic faith (along with the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem). When all prayers are made, the worshiper must face Mecca.

Vizier Mazen (Hajj)

What Tarique lacks in tact and political sophistication, Mazen more than makes up for. This Hajj is not only the Shaykhe's political advisor, but his first progeny as well. Mazen oversees all those duties that Tarique cannot be bothered with, including visiting the other courts and maintaining positive relations with the Hashashin and other allies.

The Central Province

The Nafud and Nejd regions are ruled by Shaykhe Khaled, who tends to remain fairly neutral in his political objectives. This area boasts little in comparison to the Eastern and Western Provinces, but Khaled's support of the bedouin Wah'Sheen has earned him a good deal of respect. Politically and economically, however, the middle regions of Arabia do not have a great deal to offer.

Shaykhe Khaled (Mushakis)

While not generally regarded as a political leader, the Mushakis Khaled has certainly proved his worth with the local Wah'Sheen through his physical prowess. He fits the classic image of the noble desert warrior. As the only Mushakis in power in Saudi Arabia, Khaled has the support of his bay't, which is unfortunately pushing him to claim the throne of the Eastern Province. Caught between duty and pride, Khaled waits to see what Malik Rahmann does next.

Vizier Fahd (Mushakis)

Another Mushakis of some ability, Fahd is not as firm in his beliefs as Khaled and allows himself to be swayed by his brethren into a more aggressive posture against Shaykhe Muhammad. His advice to Khaled reflects this growing animosity and may result in a shift of power toward the



conservative factions of Arabia.

The Eastern Province

The Al-Hasa region is ruled by the Hijazi Shaykhe Muhammad, who has come under fire for his treaty with the Setites. Were he not the progeny of the Ashirra Malak of Arabia, his power would surely have been usurped by now.

The Al-Hasa is regarded as the richest and the most pro-Western region of the country. It holds the renowned "Arab Formation" oil fields and is the most rapidly industrializing region of Arabia. Al-Hasa houses a number of foreign "oil towns," including the tri-cities of Damman, Al-Khubar and Dhahran. These three cities (located within 45 minutes of one another) form an important nexus in Ashirra politics and life. Between them can be found the Dhahran International Airport, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (a well-regarded institution), an American Air Force base, the U.S. Embassy, the Dhahran General Hospital (which boast state-of-the-art medical equipment) and the King Abdul Aziz Seaport.

The King Fahd Causeway (a highway across Gulf waters to Bahrain) is an hour drive for people interested in nightclubbing (alcohol and dance clubs are illegal in Arabia, but not in Bahrain). The Causeway serves as one of the easier ways to sneak into Arabia.

However, Ashirra in the Eastern Province don't even have to go to Bahrain to acquire victims. Many of the more decadent Ashirra make their homes here, and they have established an underground nightclub here with the eager cooperation of the Settles. The nameless establishment is highly illegal, and if Rahmann knew of its presence, he would undoubtedly call for Blood Hunts on the offending vampires. Only a few humans and ghouls know of the club; the rest of the mortal "patrons" are victims/slaves (often Western women) supplied by the Setites. Here, Ashirra indulge their natures and play all manner of depraved games with their prey.

It is suggested that any chronicles the Storyteller wishes to run be done within the tri-city region because of the accessibility of the cities, the presence of several Camarilla Kindred and the political tension in the area (including the tenuous peace treaty with the Setites).

Shaykhe Muhammad (Hijazi)

Considered a disgrace by almost all Ashirra, it is no small secret that his sire, Malak Rahmann, is considering his removal from power. Muhammad is a man lost in his position, a member of the Hijazi with no conception of how matters should be handled. While he is not weak-willed, his pro-Western views have alienated a fair number of supporters. Muhammad also does not have the ruthless nature needed to deal with the Setite incursions. More and more, he is withdrawing from the situation and allowing his vizier to rule in his stead.

Vizier Suliman (Lasombra)

One of the few admitted Lasombra antitribu in an open position of power, Suliman, in exchange for "representing" Assamite interests, is well protected by a cadre of Hashashin enforcers. His dealings have weakened Muhammad's position within the courts and set him up as the next likely candidate for rule within the region. While not a member of the conservative faction, Suliman has certainly played to them in exchange for their support. His treaties with the Assamites have strengthened their position in the region already, and his eventual shaykhedom could give the Hashashin unparalleled power in Saudi Arabia and abroad.

Dhahran

Dhahran was established in September of 1933 when American geologists came to explore for oil. The later expansion of Dhahran from a mining operation into a family community precipitated the growth of the nearby settlements of Damman and Al-Khubar.

Since then, Dhahran has become a small city for expatriates (foreign workers and their families) working for ARAMCO (Arabian-American Oil Company). With architecture akin to 1950s American suburbia, Dhahran is designed for a lifetime of living needs along with a tremendous variety of community services (a great deal more than many large American towns).

Because of unequal treatment of women in Saudi Arabia, Dhahran has several community arrangements, including three public swimming pools (one for male bachelors, one for families and unmarried females and one exclusively for families) and separate waiting rooms for men and women at certain administrative offices.

Housing facilities vary from suburban-style homes for those families living permanently in Dhahran, to mobile home parks and apartment buildings for domestics, bachelors and blue-collar workers. The compound also houses administrative, communications and engineering facilities crucial for continued oil production in the region. In Dhahran alone, over 11,000 people are employed in various positions and duties.

In order to move around or leave Dhahran, it is necessary to obtain identification cards issued to all residents. Even trying to enter the movie theatre, snack bars, bowling alley or swimming pools requires an authorized camp identification (they can be obtained legitimately by those entering Arabia legally).

Al-Khubar

When the geologists first arrived, Al-Khubar was a fishing village. Today it is a condensed international coastal city that caters to visitors from all over the world. With highrises, seaside hotels and shopping complexes filled with state-of-the-art merchandise, Al-Khubar is a shopping haven for

international travelers. Many of the country's rich elite come to Al-Khubar to shop before they go out to enjoy Bahrain's nightlife.

The most popular shopping establishment is the Golden Mall, a lavishly designed shopping complex filled with jewelers, precious-metal merchants, rug dealers, top-notch electronics stores, high-fashion boutiques and much more. The price of gold in Al-Khubar is substantially lower than in most parts of the world, but Ashirra should be careful since the market is controlled by the Hijazi.

While many Ashirra may or may not support Western views, a good number still establish stately palaces in Al-Khubar in order to entertain and host lavish parties. Many of Al-Khubar's Ghuls, particularly the older ones, still enjoy the opulent lifestyles that were the trademarks of Persian monarchies, including now-illegal harems. Shaykhe Muhammad of the Eastern Province lives in Al-Khubar and holds his court within a fortified 200-room palace that contains all the comforts of the modern world, including stores, tennis courts, an arboretum, a helicopter pad and a horse-racing track.

The Serpents of Khobar

The Setites have broken the treaty with Shaykhe Muhammad of the Eastern Province by hiding within Al-Khubar itself. The majority of them are currently residing in the Khobar Towers, several abandoned apartment buildings that were built by the human prince of the region as a gift to the bedouin. The nomads refused to settle, however, preferring desert life, and the Towers were shut down, completely vacant. The seven-story apartment buildings were later reopened during the Gulf War to house American military personnel, but the Setites returned to the buildings after the war was over. The Towers currently house large herds of terrified slaves who are often sold to less virtuous Ashirra.

Damman

Damman is another coastal city. Less cosmopolitan than Al-Khubar, it is larger and more industrialized. Damman is the largest of the three cities and the darkest in terms of ambience, perhaps in comparison to the brightly lit and seemingly friendly city of Al-Khubar. Or perhaps it is due to ardent anti-Western Ashirra who make the ir homes here and rarely allow expatriates to feel welcome. Shaykhe Muhammad is even less liked since his concessions with the Setites have given them the Al-Damman Housing Projects on the fringes of Damman. This port city is controlled by the more conservative sects of Islamic Mushakis.

The Rhub'al Khali (The Empty Quarter)

The Southern Province holds a desert whose antiquity predates the written word. The Empty Quarter is also the greatest mystery of Arabia and is regarded as both an



Zayyat (Wah'Sheen)

Very little is known of the Wah'Sheen patron, but he is called Abu Shammal or "Father of the Sandstorm" by those who fear him. Some say he travels through the desert's sandstorms unscathed, a pair of glowing eyes that burn through the lashing winds. Even the Assamites demand nothing of him or his brood, for Zayyat has always proved quick to anger and impossible to contain.



enigma and a place of ill portent. It is a desert that hides the lost city of Wabar (a tribal legend of a place of such evil that Allah smote it, resulting in the Rhub'al Khali). Here, say the Wah'Sheen, the very sand is host to an elemental spirit that defends the desert with unbridled ferocity by constantly shifting the fluid dunes and burying whatever enters. Few who have ventured into this region have returned.

The shaykedom of this desolate region was given to Bandar, another progeny of the Ashirra Malak, as a sign of his displeasure with his errant child. The "Ruler over Nothing" soon surprised everyone by gaining the blessing of Zayyat and his bedouin brood in addition to surviving within the Rhub'al Khali. He is now feared for his anti-Western views and political ambition.

Shaykhe Bandar (Hijazi)

He is the rebel, the outlaw, the public hero and the Ashirra whom almost everybody wants to see in power. Bandar is cunning, fast, sharp, strong, opinionated and quick-witted. In a move that was meant to humiliate him, this shaykhe was given sovereignty over the Empty Quarter. Bandar, however, quickly acquired the support of the Murrah tribe, the legendary traditional bedouins of Arabia and the tribe believed to have the strongest links to the vanished Ahl-i-Batin. As though by divine providence, the harsh Rhub'al Khali opened her arms and Bandar became her master. His actions have become close to legendary and his aura is now shrouded in glamour. Some even say he knows where Wabar lies.

Vizier Majeed (Unknown Clan)

Bandar rarely travels to the other courts and prefers to communicate through Majeed. Though some find this rather odd, it does serve to enhance the mystique that surrounds Bandar. Majeed, in turn, is regarded as a strange little bird. A silvery-tongued devil who claims his bay't to be that of the sand, many have their doubts as to whether this new and enigmatic vizier is actually Ashirra or not. Regardless, Majeed plays the court's games extremely well and often manages to give Vizier Suliman a run for his money.

story seeds

- **Deadly Journey:** Rumors surface that a mysterious woman in Arabia is trying to woo the Setites into the shadow of the Sabbat. The players travel to Arabia, either to stop her or to assist her (depending on their allegiance). The Setites, in turn, are sure to play the two factions against one another.
- **Diplomacy:** An exhibit of Islamic art is touring North American museums and has arrived in the coterie's city. The tour is accompanied by Vizier Mazen, who is caring for the Islamic relics. The characters are asked to safeguard his stay. The Setites, Nosferatu and Tremere are already upset with the Hajj over the treatment of their clans in Arabia. Who knows what they might steal in order to upset the Hajj? Mazen, in turn, is likely to summon Saysen, an Assamite enforcer, to retrieve the stolen merchandise.
- **Power Play:** During the 1980s Iran-Iraq conflicts, Arabia lowered the price of oil to unexpected lows. Iran accused Saudi Arabia of trying to undermine its oil trade, thereby depleting Iran's war coffers. Now, the same measures are being considered as secret sanctions against Iraq. Before this can be done, however, a spy within the Dhahran Communications Center (the complex that links the Eastern Province's various drilling operations with ARAMCO's head offices) must be found and eliminated before he blows the whistle on the plan.

Faction: Hajj

The Hajj, while still technically Nosferatu, do not consider themselves as such. The changes they have undergone have altered both their outlook and philosophy. The Hajj were created when Tarique began to defend Mecca before the end of the first millennium. They consider themselves chosen by Allah to guard the Kha'ba and the other holy sites of Islam.

Appearance: The Hajj wear white thawbs (ankle-length gowns) and tan bishits (floor-length cloaks). Their heads are covered either by white ghutrahs (headcloths) or hattahs (brimless caps worn on less formal occasions). Amongst Ashirra, the Hajj are proud of their Islamic status as protectors and rarely hide their terrible visages.

Haven: The Hajj mostly live in Mecca and Medina. They sleep near mosques and other holy sites in order to facilitate their role as stewards. They are well protected by faithful ansars, maintain connections to the Ahl-i-Batin, hold alliances with the Wah'Sheen bedouins and employ two Hashashin enforcers.

Background: Those taken must be of stellar virtue and devotion. Only men in their late 40s to 50s are Embraced. The men chosen over this past half-century have been teachers from the Shi'ite schools of the peninsula and as such are predominantly Shi'ite in belief.

Preferred Disciplines: Though these are not standard Nosferatu clan Disciplines, the Hajj embrace the difficulty of learning them as part of their duty to Allah: Auspex, Presence, Thaumaturgy (Hidea Iman)

Thaumaturgy Rath: Hidea Iman (Gifts of Faith)

The Hajj use this Thaumaturgic path to emulate True Faith. It is the only path they practice and is available to them only. There are two rites that are unique to the Hajj as well; both are known only to Tarique and Mazen. The first is the ward

that dampens the Keening; the second is a "blessing" that allows an Ashirra to enter a Muslim holy site, even Mecca and Medina, for one night.

Most Hidea Iman rituals require lengthy preparation; furthermore, the user must be absolutely pure (he cannot even have had a Humanity check called for during the past 24 hours).

Level I: Saut Allah

Through a Charisma + Leadership roll (difficulty 6), the Hajj can verbally inspire his followers and grant them an extra point of temporary Willpower. This takes one hour of constant chanting to evoke.

Level II: Nuzra Allah

Using his Willpower against a difficulty of the opponent's current Willpower, the Hajj can prevent one attacker from assaulting him as long as eye contact is maintained.

Level III: Ruh Allah

By reciting a prayer, the Hajj can attempt to bring someone out of frenzy (Charisma + Leadership vs. a difficulty of the target's permanent Willpower). The successes are subtracted from 10. Once the target's Humanity rating is reached, the frenzy is quelled.

Level IV: Ghadub Allah

The same as Nuzra Allah, the Hajj no longer needs to maintain eye contact in order to stop an attack. Only one opponent can be so affected.

Level V: Kubda Allah

After establishing eye contact, the Hajj can demand that an opponent submit, using his permanent Willpower vs. a difficulty of the opponent's permanent Willpower. Successfully attacked opponents who do not submit suffer two levels of nonaggravated damage (they feel an outside force crushing them) per success the Hajj makes. If they do submit, they will no longer be able to attack the Hajj for the duration of the evening.



chapter seven: The forgotten kingdom: Egypt

God! ...If only I had not read so much Egyptology before coming to this land which is the fountain of all darkness and terror!

- H.P. Lovecraft (with Harry Houdini), "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs"

*My childe,
So you and your associates have finally decided to leave that dismal city of Washington - which I still remember as a swamp - in search of more picturesque and historic sites. If, however, you intend to visit Egypt, here is much you should understand: Elders hold open and powerful sway there, and many of Egypt's Cainite communities predate what passes as the modern face of Kindred society. What you have come to expect in modern America, or even the Old World, will be of little import in Egypt, where hidden secrets await discovery and ancient Cainites are reawakening to a new world. So much of Egypt is but a vast necropolis - from Kamak to the Valley of Kings - but it is not these tombs and monuments to dead lime that should concern the Kindred; what is buried is buried, and we of oil creatures should realize that such things are often better left undisturbed.*

The People

Egypt's kine population - over 60 million people, up to 18 million in Cairo - is a medley of races and peoples, and this mixture is highly reflective of Egypt's long history. The largest of these groups is the native Hamito-Semitic stock, while Egypt's Arab population is made up primarily of bedouin Arab

nomads. The last major group is the Nubian peoples from the Aswan area, but other bloods have also come and gone through Egypt's rich history. Indeed, one of Egypt's main problems is its ever-growing population - a situation with which Egyptian Kindred are, of course, quite pleased.

History

So brief a treatment of Egypt's past is a disservice to 5000 years of history; however, lack of discussion is an even greater disservice. Realize this: Many of the "truths" of Egypt's history, particularly its mythic past, are often contradictory. Ask five Kindred historians for their interpretation of Egyptian history, and I guarantee you will get at least five different answers. But what follows is the nearest approximation to an unbiased truth that I can offer.

Prehistoric Egypt: Set and Osiris

Before recorded history was the Egypt of myth and legend, when powerful forces waged great battles that would set the stage for the rest of Egyptian history. The brothers Osiris and Set, who would later take their place in Egyptian mythology as gods, were once simply mortal rivals for complete power over the lands of Egypt. (I have heard mortal magi allege

that the Osiris and Set of which we speak were simply human participants in a cosmological drama, reenacting the activities of an Osiris and Set who truly were godlike - but kine magi allege many ridiculous things.)

At first Osiris, the elder brother, was victorious, and exiled Set beyond the borders of Egypt. But other powers thirsted for Egypt, for the Nile River was a valuable resource and its adjoining lands were desired commodities. Set and Osiris were both Embraced by ancient vampires - perhaps Antediluvians, perhaps those of the Second Generation, though which ones I do not know - and were given powers as strong and terrible as their desires.

Osiris the Despot ruled Egypt relentlessly, while Set learned many dark and ancient secrets in the Second City, which many believe now lies hidden beneath the Egyptian sands. Ultimately, Set returned to his homeland and proved triumphant in the struggle: Osiris was slain and his family enslaved.

This did not end all struggle, though; a mysterious bloodline allegedly was created in Osiris' name, while his sorcerous wife Isis and their son Horus spawned the society of immortals which we now call mummies. These undying warrior-sorcerers continued Osiris' struggle against Set and his followers.

The Kindred were not the only supernaturals active in Egypt, though we often like to think so: Lupines and other skinshifters gnawed at the heels of Egyptian civilization, and early magi wandered the lands. Isis herself was said to have been a powerful Thaumaturge, and many powerful magics were openly brandished in Egyptian society - more so than in other lands.

Pharaonic Egypt

In time, Set learned to skulk behind puppet rulers; he was no doubt influential in the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt under the mortal pharaoh Menes in roughly 3000 B.C., and the subsequent founding of the First Dynasty. Pharaoh followed pharaoh, and dynasty followed dynasty. Over 50 rulers in over 30 dynasties - historically divided into Old, Middle and New Kingdoms - controlled Egypt for 2700 years. Civilization did not begin in Egypt with Menes or his successors, but it blossomed under their rulership. This was a period of unprecedented growth in the arts and sciences, architecture and the military. Sprawling cities developed, enormous mausoleums were constructed and temples were built. Egypt was at the crossroads of the world and a cradle of civilization. The Setites, that cursed clan spawned by Set, struggled with the undying followers of Horus for control over their native lands, and as they struggled, the other clans noticed Egypt and envied it.

Supernatural activity ran rampant in Egypt: Mortal sorcerers perfected their magical arts in a manner nonpareil since then, and countless mysteries remain undiscovered to this very

night, locked in ancient stone monuments. A cynical Cainite scholar once remarked that with the high population of Kindred, mummies, sorcerers, et al., scarcely a single normal kine could be found in those nights; though this comment is clearly hyperbole, it is nonetheless telling.

Rulership was largely indigenous for almost three millennia; foreign rule was minimal and wrought little change on Egyptian culture. The capital did change, from Memphis to Thebes. Toward the end of this period, the borders shrank and the glories of Egypt grew tarnished -the once-proud invaders were themselves invaded repeatedly by their many neighbors - sometimes even led or instigated by Horus or Set.

Then came Alexander the Great...

Hellenistic Egypt

By the time Alexander arrived in 332 B.C., Egypt was an easy conquest. Alexander's first order of business was to establish a new capital, choosing a fishing village on the Nile and naming it Alexandria. Following Alexander's death, his general Ptolemy ruled Egypt, establishing a Macedonian dynasty which was to last for 300 years. With the reign of the Ptolemies came the subsequent spread of Greek culture, and the Toreador made their mark on Egypt. The dominion of the Toreador, however - and the mortal Ptolemies - ultimately proved transitory, falling under the growing shadow of the Roman Empire and its Ventrue parasites.

Roman Egypt

The death of Cleopatra - the last Macedonian ruler of Egypt and allegedly a Setite ghoul - in 30 B.C. heralded the beginning of Rome as the undisputed ruler of the ancient sands. Egypt maintained much of both its native and Greek cultures, but it was little more than a colony to the great Roman Empire. The Setites chafed under Ventrue control, occasionally engineering small revolts, but were unable to throw off the yoke of Roman domination. With the Setites so stifled, the cults of Osiris and Isis grew in popularity, but this was a fleeting thing, soon to fall to the rise of Christianity.

As the Roman Empire became Christian and then fractured, Egypt found itself ruled by Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire; once again the Toreador held sway in Egypt. But this was a weak rule; as the Byzantine Toreador and the Roman Ventrue quarreled over Europe, the Setites were again able to chip away at the power of the outsiders in Egypt, and the Assamites entered the scene as well.

Arab Egypt

A series of Arab invaders and dynasties started in A.D. 640, no doubt instigated by the Assamites, in pursuit of their own mysterious jihad. Perhaps Alexandria was too riddled with Cainite presence and the Assamites desired a capital free

from other Kindred; perhaps it was mere happenstance that the mortal rulers chose to build Cairo as the new capital of Egypt. In the 10th century, Cairo became the capital of the Fatimid Dynasty, whose empire stretched across North Africa. A few Lasombra Moors took advantage of this opportunity to shift into Egypt, but their entree was minimal compared to the rest of our kind.

With the onset of the Crusades, Egypt became one of many battlegrounds for the Assamites and Ventruue fighting for political power, while religious zealots rose to prominence and slowly began their pogrom against supernaturals. The great Seljuk warrior Salah ad-Din - known in the West as Saladin - liberated Cairo and controlled Egypt, starting the Ayubbid Dynasty. Some allege that Saladin was an Assamite dupe, while others contend that he was fully capable of his own greatness without supernal influence. Ultimately, no one can guess which supernatural community may have instigated any of the political goings-on: Assamites, Ventruue, Toreador and Setites all clamored for control, and the even more enigmatic mummies no doubt played their own role as well.

Saladin brought in the Mamluks, mercenaries sold as slaves while children. Mamluks were granted freedom after a stipulated period of servitude, and many of these Mamluks took positions of authority in the Ayubbid Dynasty-finally engineering its downfall in the 13th century and replacing it with a Mamluk rule which lasted over two centuries.

This was a significant period for Egyptian Kindred - power constantly shifted among the Setites, the European clans, and the Assamites. Clan affiliation became secondary: He who could hold the reins through the tempest of political change was a successful prince despite which clan held sway over the lands. Egypt was a melting pot of Cainite cultures; elders established domains despite the frequent changes in mortal dynasties and their subsequent repercussions in Kindred politics, and often paid only partial heed to the squabbles of the nascent Camarilla and Sabbat.

Ottoman Egypt

In 1517, Egypt lost its independence, becoming once again a province; this time, its new foreign lords were the Ottomans, who distrusted Egypt's autonomous desires. Egypt was governed by aposha (an Ottoman overseer), and for centuries it chafed under external dominion.

A brief European interlude appeared in the late 18th century, with the sudden arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte's fleet. More Toreador followed the French into Egypt, but their presence was short lived and ineffectual, serving merely to further weaken the local government.

British Egypt

In the mid-19th century, Egypt became increasingly dependent upon England's finances. This situation,

exacerbated by the building of the Suez Canal in 1869, ultimately led to European financiers stepping in to control the Egyptian government. During the first World War, Egypt sided with the Allies; an abortive Turkish attack on the Suez Canal led England to turn Egypt into a British protectorate. Egypt prospered, and European Kindred - in search of new debauchery - once again flocked to the Nile Delta.

Finally Egypt was back in the hands of the Europeans, much to the ire of the native Egyptians. Various Egyptian nationalist-opposition groups unified, attempting to overthrow their European rulers, but instead managing to have the English impose martial law. Some believe these groups-however mortal in origin-were manipulated by Setites seeking their nation's independence; others claim that the Assamites were responsible, simply desiring to further harass Camarilla powers.

In 1922, Egypt's status as a protectorate ended, but it was still British-occupied. Fuad I became king, and slowly power shifted from the earlier multicultural model to a purely Egyptian elite; the Setites had once again gained the upper hand.

Independence & Modern Egypt

In 1952, Colonel Gamal Abd-elNasser supplanted King Fuad's son and began a transition of power away from European influence and toward a strongly Muslim model. And so we come to the present nights, with which you are no doubt more familiar: the Suez Crisis, the Six-Day War, alternating peace or hostilities with neighboring nations - all too indicative of the ongoing struggle between the various powers that would have Egypt in their fists.

No doubt you would like to know which clan manipulated which political event: who was behind the Suez crisis, whether the Setites were involved in the assassination of Anwar Sadat, etc. You will have to look elsewhere for answers; ultimately it seems that every clan has its fingers in the proverbial political pie of the Middle East, and every clan would like to claim responsibility for major mortal events. Such is often mere grandstanding, though; it is more likely that the Setites, the Assamites and all those others interested in controlling Egypt were among the first to determine how to take advantage of Sadat's assassination, but may not have actually been involved with the deed. The truth behind such things is elusive, and it may be decades before we ever learn who can truly claim which accomplishments.

Now Egypt remains a relatively stable power in a relatively unstable land. It is an anomaly: Almost every major Cainite sect or clan has a holding in Egypt, yet the country can truly be claimed by none. It is its own land, with its own customs and powers. Egyptian elders have reigned since before the Camarilla was formed, and often maintain tentative truces with other Kindred who would normally be mortal enemies. Both the Setites and the Camarilla claim Egypt as their own,

while Egypt's own supernaturals ignore such squabbles and do as they have done for centuries.

Is this all clear to you? So many times the mere mention of Egypt's name evokes images that are purely Middle Kingdom: mummies and pyramids, hieroglyphs and cat-worship. Such interpretation is facile but fatuous - look past the bad Hollywood films. The Nile has been home to many races and cultures, from indigenous Egyptian culture to the pervasive influence of the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Ottomans and Europeans.

Above all else, remember this: Many who go to Egypt for a short visit never return, finding their own agendas subsumed by other more powerful forces - perhaps forces greater than even our own kind.

There and Back Again

Travel to Egypt

Air - Airlines typically schedule flights to Cairo, and only rarely to other cities. The few flights directed into Alexandria come from European cities. The flight between New York and Cairo lasts 10-11 hours; flight between London and Cairo lasts from four to five hours.

Road - The journey between Tel Aviv and Cairo lasts approximately seven to nine hours, plus two hours for customs. Several bus companies run services which cover this route, although it can be made by lone drivers.

Sea - A ferry service operates between Jordan and Egypt, with the entire trip lasting about three hours. Ferry rides between Venice and Alexandria take approximately four days.

Travel Around Egypt

Land - Taxis and buses operate in and between cities; typical road travel between Cairo and Alexandria takes up to three hours. Train rides between the two cities run just over two hours.

Air - Travel from Cairo to Alexandria takes 30 minutes. Air travel within Egypt is more expensive means of transport, but reliable. Many flights run daily.

Remember that these are all average figures determined using late 20th-century travel situations. Enterprising Storytellers who want to know more about boat travel along the Nile (a many-day excursion), camel travel across the Sinai, or other such details may need to do further research. Travel guides in particular will offer such information, including travel times to other locations within Egypt.

Major Regions

Alexandria

Alexandria was built in 331 B.C. at the command of Alexander the Great, who needed a new regional capital for his growing empire. Unfortunately, he never saw the city that bore his name; he died on campaign and was brought back to his new city for burial. Regardless of Alexander the Great's misfortune, though, Alexandria grew in power as a naval base and institution of learning. Among its many claims to fame was the Mouseion and Library, a temple dedicated to learning and believed to have held 500,000 books; unfortunately, much of Alexandria's classical heritage was destroyed in the fourth century A.D., when Christianity reigned over the Roman Empire and paganism was squashed.

For centuries, Alexandria served as Egypt's capital: first under the Greek Ptolemies, then under Roman and Byzantine rule. Unfortunately, much of its greatness lies in the distant past. In addition to its losses in the fourth century, Alexandria declined after the rise of Cairo, becoming little more than a fishing village. With the opening of the Suez Canal, Alexandria grew once more into a major cosmopolitan port, attracting Turks, Egyptians and wealthy Europeans. Alexandria is considered Egypt's most diverse city, and a project is underway to restore the lost library, with a new building and the name of Bibliotheca Alexandrina.

Most of the older Kindred feel more comfortable in this city, with its classical heritage - particularly those from the Ventrue or Toreador clans, as both clans held sway over the city at different times in the past. Some Nosferatu inhabit the Alexandrian catacombs - at least those still undiscovered - which were once the homes of Alexandria's Cappadocian vampires.

Alexandria's supernatural community was ruled for centuries by Marcellus, a Toreador who rose to power as Byzantium gained control of Egypt. His destruction 50 years ago-by parties as yet undetermined - has left Alexandria ruled by its primogen, which has managed a steady truce between the various factions dwelling in the ancient city. Unfortunately, they ultimately rule a shadow-city - one whose grandeur is but a memory and whose power has long since been eclipsed.

Cairo

The city rules over vast territories and fertile lands, is brimming with inhabitants and can be proud of its beauty and splendor. A meeting-point for travelers and itinerants, a place for weak and strong...

- Ibn Battuta, *Description of Cairo*

Sometimes called Umm el-Dunya ("Mother of the World"), Egypt's capital was once also the heart of the Fatimid Empire. This ancient cosmopolitan city is a true anomaly, where East and West blend with traditional and progressive. It is a melange of cultures: Almost every major culture that dominated Egypt has made its mark on the city. Originally the town of Fustat, the region was built upon by Persians, Romans, Byzantines and finally the Arabs, who christened it Al Qahira ("The Victorious").

At Cairo's very heart is Midan Tahrir, or Liberation Square. Near it is the Egyptian Museum, founded in the 19th century and dedicated to the preservation of Pharaonic antiquities. To the southeast lie Cairo's Muslim cemeteries and necropoli, including the City of the Dead, where Cairenes actually live and mingle among the mausoleums of their dead. To the north lie the densely populated urban neighborhoods of Bulaq and Shubra, as well as Ramses Station, the city's train station. Gezira Island, in the middle of the Nile, is the home of Cairo's rich and elite. Just south of Midan Tahrir is Garden City, with more residences and embassies. Further south is Old Cairo, the city's Coptic center.

Cairo is a rarity in the world of the Kindred. Its supernatural community has been lorded over since the 14th century by Mukhtar Bey, a Turkish Mamluk who has successfully negotiated centuries of political strife. His rule is stable but not without challenge: The Setites constantly attempt to take Cairo from him, and the city occasionally erupts in supernatural violence. Cairo is very much an open city under his reign; many Kindred who have no place left to flee frequently find themselves in Cairo, surrounded by saints and sinners alike. Although a Camarilla city, recognized Sabbat vampires have been seen walking its streets at night, and the Black Hand is purportedly quite interested in the city's future.

Giza

The Giza district stretches 18 kilometers west of Cairo, ending at the Great Pyramids and Sphinx. The Great Pyramid of Cheops, Egypt's largest pyramid, was constructed in the third millennium before Christ; archaeologists like to believe that they have discovered every chamber to be found within these pyramids.

The Sphinx is believed to have been carved by Cheops around 2600 B.C. and has had many legends attributed to it. Its Arab name, however, hints at the truth behind whose image is engraved in stone: Abu al-Hol, the Father of Terror. Cheops did, in fact, carve the image in order to replace the unholy visage which had previously dominated the stone.

Setites and others who would have their own private uses for the pyramids and tombs have found their activities hindered by tourists, who overrun the site and often linger past sunset. Many visitors come just at sunset for the view; some learn the perils of tarrying too late into the night.

Memphis & Saqqara

Located 24 kilometers south of Cairo is Memphis, Egypt's original capital, founded by King Menes when he united Upper and Lower Egypt. Once a prosperous and cosmopolitan city, it is now almost completely vanished.

Its massive necropolis, however, remains; Saqqara stretches for 30 kilometers on the Nile's west bank, from Giza in the north to Dahshur (now a closed military area) in the south. Among the many monuments here is the Serapeum, a complex of subterranean chambers and catacombs begun in the 13th century B.C. and added onto through the first century B.C. For years their exact location was unknown, until Auguste Mariette found the Serapeum in 1851. Some cynics believe that Mariette, a pioneer of Egyptology, was sponsored by a knowledgeable Ventrue who wanted to



harass the Setites and publicly uncover one of their favored meeting places.

The Sinai: The Great and Terrible Wilderness

And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire....

- Exodus 19:18

The Sinai Peninsula has long served as the bridge between Asia and Africa; for millennia armies have crossed the Sinai either to conquer Egypt or to conquer in its name. Sometimes these actions were the result of Kindred exploitation, other times they were caused by simple human aggression. More recently, the Sinai was part of a power struggle between Egypt and Israel, culminating in the Suez Crisis when Israel claimed the Sinai and approached Cairo. The historic Camp David Agreement in 1982 officially ended the hostilities, and a U.N. multinational peacekeeping force monitors the relatively calm situation.

But the Sinai is more than just a politically significant piece of land; it is a holy place. The Biblical prophets Elijah, Jacob and Abraham each lived and wandered here. The Bible says that God spoke to Moses here, and it is through this wilderness that Moses led his wandering people in search of their holy land. It is also believed to have served as the resting place of Jesus, Joseph and Mary in their flight from Herod.

Another people may be found in the Sinai: the bedouins, the land's native inhabitants, who practice the traditions and customs of their ancestors and follow religious beliefs that, although Muslim, bear traces of their pagan past. Some in Egypt believe that the bedouins know many secrets which they will not reveal, and rumors speak of one tribe of bedouin ghouls, Blood Bound to an unnamed Methuselah who wanders the savage wilderness.

The Kindred, however, avoid the region almost without exception: It is rife with Lupines who claim the Sinai as their territory, while the many holy spots, often rich in Numina, attract those strong in True Faith. It is not a safe place for vampires, and those who must journey there do so cautiously.

St. Catherine's Monastery

Built in the sixth century A.D., St. Catherine's Monastery is located at the foot of Mt. Sinai - allegedly on the very sight where God appeared to Moses as a Burning Bush. It is named after a fourth-century Alexandrian martyr, who was first tortured on a spiked wheel and then beheaded. The legend continues that angels carried her body to Mt. Catherine - nearby Mt. Sinai - and monks from the monastery found her body in the eighth century. Near the monastery is St. Catherine's village; its inhabitants are believed to be descendants of the bedouin tribe sent by Justinian to defend the monastery when it was built. The monastery is owned by the Greek Orthodox church, and its manuscript collection is second in size only to the Vatican library.

Since the 11th century, the monastery has also been a base for the Akritai, Creek Orthodox witch-hunters. Some vampires believe that Justinian was a Kindred pawn, and aver that many of the villagers of St. Catherine's were sent as spies for the Cainites; others believe that some of the villagers serve the witch-hunters within the monastery's walls. It is likely that both are correct.

St. Catherine's Monastery, as Holy Ground, merits a Faith rating of 6. Consult **The Inquisition** for information on Holy Ground.



The Kindred

Egypt exists very much as a free state: Many of its elders, still politically active, predate the Convention of Thorns. Though they support the Masquerade, they also ignore much of their European brethren's activities and do as they please.

Assamites

The Assamites once played a significant role in the struggle for Egypt, at their political peak during Arab and Ottoman rule. Egypt's Assamites do not seek political power as do many other Kindred: They only seek to protect Alamut - wherever it may be - and to further their own jihad. Egypt has been quite useful to them at times, if for no other reason than to harass Camarilla incursions into Africa or to thwart the Setites, whom they particularly despise.

Brujah

The Brujah have few representatives in Egypt. A Brujah Methuselah is rumored to have come to Egypt after the fall of Carthage to help foster Egyptian struggles against Rome; his fate is a mystery lost to the desert sands. Otherwise the clan has had relatively little influence in Egypt.

The Camarilla

The Camarilla claims Egypt as one of its territories, but only marginally so, and mainly as a matter of stating that it is not controlled by the Sabbat or any other group. The Kindred of the Camarilla do, of course, realize upon what shaky ground their claims rest; theirs is a fairly recent sect, after all, when compared to some of the vampiric dynasties in Egypt.

Caitiff - the Mamluks

Caitiff find some measure of safety in Egypt. Their reputation is enhanced by the singular success of Mukhtar Bey, a Caitiff who rose to become Prince of Cairo.

Certainly not all Caitiff are offered respect merely by virtue of Mukhtar Bey's achievement, but this powerful individual stands as a reminder of what a Caitiff may achieve through guile, force and craft. They certainly receive better treatment within Mukhtar Bey's realm than in other places across the world. Many Egyptian Cainites actually refer to Caitiff as Mamluks, comparing them to the historic mercenaries who rose from slavery to become viceroys. (Needless to say, this title is perceived as a grave insult by Arabia's Toreador, who go by the name "Mamluke.")

Children of Osiris

The Children of Osiris have apparently been driven out of Egypt en masse by the Setites; the Followers of Set actually boast that Osiris' Children no longer even exist. Some few

Children may remain in their homeland, well hidden in still-undiscovered tombs. A small number of Cainite scholars believe that the Children seek to find a means of bringing Osiris back from the True Death - as a Messiah who will both liberate Egypt from the Followers of Set and redeem all Kindred from the Curse of Caine.

Gangrel

Some Gangrel may be found in the Sinai region, but the presence of vigilant, hateful Silent Strider Lupines ensures that this clan does not have a strong presence in Egypt.

Giovanni

The Cappadocians, or the Clan of Death - the forebears of the Giovanni - were fascinated with Egypt; they claimed the shroud between life and death to be particularly thin in this land, and they believed that Egypt contained many of the answers to the mysteries which they desired to solve. When their more politically assertive allies, the Ventrue, took Egypt, Cappadocians eagerly descended on Egypt in pursuit of their arcane studies. On the other hand, the Giovanni, despite their talent for Necromancy, have little interest in Egypt. Giovanni leaders offhandedly dismiss the rumors that some Cappadocians still lurk in Egypt's necropoli, well hidden from the Giovanni purge.

Lasombra

Some few Lasombra, primarily those Moors who migrated from North Africa or Southern Europe during the Dark Ages, still maintain havens in Egypt. These Kindred have had little success in Egypt, though, where the shadows behind thrones are already swarming with other vampires who are more experienced with Egyptian politics.

Malkavian

This clan is almost nonexistent in Egypt; although the land is hardly free from madness, the Malkavians do not have any desires for Egypt or its resources.

Nosferatu

Egypt certainly has many secrets for the Nosferatu to discover, and many hidden lairs for them to inhabit; unfortunately, what works in Europe does not always work in Egypt, and the Setites often thwart most Nosferatu attempts at infiltration. Those few Nosferatu who have been successful at maintaining a presence in Egypt are highly valued by the other clans of the Camarilla.

The Sabbat

The Sabbat has an underwhelming presence in Egypt. Between the zealous Setites, the territorial Assamites, and the power-hungry Camarilla, Egypt is free from Sabbat

incursions. Truly, some cells do exist - but only to inform the sect of Egypt's supernatural activities, not to act as the spearhead for Sabbat infiltration.

Setites

Although not always the most visible clan in Egypt, the Followers of Set are arguably the most active. They have been a driving force in Egypt's history from the beginning; it is their spiritual, physical and political homeland. The Setites have widened their scope of activities considerably since Pharaonic nights, but they still attempt to broaden their influence in Egypt through guile and deceit.

This is more than for nostalgia's sake: Set himself is believed to slumber in torpor within Egypt, and they will not stray far from the Father of Lies. The Setites in Egypt are in close contact with Bane Mummies and frequently attempt to ally with them - in other words, use them - to harry their own enemies, particularly the undying followers of Horus. In spite of the Setites' antiquity, though, even they do not know all the secrets beneath Egypt's sands.

Toreador

Clan Toreador still remembers when it held sway in Egypt. Now, this land, one of the world's birthplaces of art, is merely a political pawn. Ah well - c'est la vie. There are still many beauties to be found in Egypt, and those Toreador with an interest in antiquity may be found here. Some ancient Toreador are believed to have been in Egypt since the time of the Ptolemies, but most of the clan's representatives are from 18th- and 19th-century European excursions into the country. Although egyptienne motifs did become popular during the art deco period, young Toreador now find the whole notion terribly passe - and clan elders lament the ignorance of youth.

Tremere

These warlocks recognize that Egypt represents a source of power beyond the political sphere: The nation has a rich sorcerous heritage, and the Tremere covet many of the secrets hidden in ancient stone and beneath windswept deserts. A small number of these (and other) Kindred Thaumaturges prowl Egypt's alleys and byways in pursuit of these secrets.

Tzimisce

Few Tzimisce have made the trek from their Eastern European homes to the harsh deserts of Egypt. Some Tzimisce revenant families established themselves in Egypt, as the eyes and ears of their masters, but their population has since dwindled considerably. A conclave of Obertus - the most erudite of the ghoulish families - is suspected to maintain a secluded Coptic monastery, but this report cannot be confirmed.

Ventrue

Elder Ventrue who recall when Egypt was under their sway still gnash their fangs when they consider their many losses. Their inability to establish a Ventrue prince in modern Egypt, combined with the growing Setite power and the long-lived independent Egyptian Kindred, has prohibited the clan's reclamation of Egypt. It is true that in recent years the clan has regained a foothold - the Western powers which Egypt's mortal leaders desire to please are often under Ventrue control - but most Ventrue realize that they will never again see the day when Egypt is wholly theirs.

The Kine of Egypt

Kindred often think of kine as little more than livestock, and this is especially true of Egypt's powerful vampires. However, the people of Egypt are not mere chattel for Kindred, and



there is considerable mortal activity in Egypt of which Kindred need to be aware.

Scholars

The Arcanum has been interested in Egypt almost from the society's founding, when one of its members purchased a townhouse in Cairo and later willed it to the society. Arcanum Journeymen in Cairo study the history of the magical tradition in Egypt, from ancient Egyptian magic to Coptic spells, but sometimes stumble onto Kindred activity.

Unfortunately, the Arcanum is merely part and parcel of a greater threat: Cairo is literally crawling with archaeologists and scholars who have ways of unearthing secrets that are better left alone, and sometimes they even disrupt ancient havens. To date, no kine scholar has "accidentally stumbled upon" an Antediluvian in torpor, but Cainites nonetheless keep a close eye on mortal activities in Cairo.

Witch-Hunters

Egypt is at times overrun with witch-hunters; with its proximity to the Holy Land and Saudi Arabia, witch-hunters of many faiths may be found here. The Society of Leopold maintains Cenaculums in both Cairo and Alexandria, while allied Coptic Christian witch-hunters maintain a network across the country. The Ikhwan al-Safa, Muslim witch-hunters, are known to have a lodge in Cairo dating back to the city's founding, but their brotherhood is tightly wrapped in a secrecy which even the Kindred find hard to pierce. Finally, the Akritai - Orthodox Christian witch-hunters with a history that rivals the Society of Leopold's -ate fairly active in Egypt, based at St. Catherine's Monastery. In short, Egyptian vampires have to be very careful where they go in Egypt.

Cults

Cult activity is not new to Egypt; from the very beginning, the Followers of Set and the Children of Osiris encouraged the formation of cults to support their own endeavors and agendas. Some persisted through time, sometimes in various incarnations, while others came and went.

The Cult of Isis, for example, is a small cult - with a few minor sorcerers - which has been active for thousands of years and which had to go underground in order to resist Christian persecution. There are tales of a religious order in the Sinai: the Brothers of St. Nicodemus the Blind, whose leaders, in their pursuit of occult knowledge, have blinded themselves in order to see that which cannot be seen. And others, Kindred and kine alike, mutter about a secretive group that gathers at a hidden temple in the Valley of Kings to worship powers of darkness beyond human comprehension-a group whose tendrils are slowly extending beyond the borders of Egypt.

Every cult is a unique entity, and each has its own interests. Some cults exist only in rumor, while others have never yet been heard of by any except their followers. Some cults may

merely be blood-cults, serving the needs of individual Cainites, yet others may actually have other diabolical pursuits. One thing is for certain: As the end of the millennium approaches, these groups grow more fervid and daring.

Mages

Egypt is the land of Thoth, identified during Classical times as Hermes, and many of the Western magical traditions descend from remnants of the Egyptian magical traditions. The country is thus a prominent gathering ground for mages of all types - from the practitioners of True Magick to hedge magicians. The Ahl-i-Batin, once a strong group of True Magi, have disbanded, but members can still be found practicing their arts across Egypt. Likewise, members of the Order of Hermes frequently visit Egypt in search of esoteric teachings. These mages frequently interact with Kindred - sometimes peacefully, sometimes not.

Secrets in Sand and Stone

Egypt is often described as a land of mystery, and for good reason: Countless legends point to secrets hidden in ancient tombs or beneath shifting sands. The following is only a sampling of those rumors and tales which often lead Kindred - and others - to Egypt.

Second City

After the destruction of Enoch, the First City, the progeny of Caine wandered until those of the Fourth Generation established the Second City; these powerful Cainites ruled the city, and many believe that they, in turn, were ruled by the even more powerful Third Generation. The city grew bloated and decadent; in time, its mortal inhabitants rose up and destroyed the decaying city, and the Kindred scattered again.

It is believed that, for a time, even Set stayed at the Second City; this rumor compels many to believe that the city's ruins lie buried beneath Egypt's desert. Some seek these ruins, believing that they must contain many powerful artifacts and remnants of lost knowledge. No one has yet to determine where the Second City may truly rest - even the Setites, long undisputed as the masters of Egypt's secrets, do not know where it is.

Some believe that the followers of Horus do know where the Second City's ruins may be found and that these mummies remain in Egypt to ensure that the ruins remain hidden from those who would use the ruins secrets to imperil the world even further.

The Lilith Cycle

The Book of Nod contains fragments of a set of ancient texts called simply the Lilith Cycle, which contains prophecies,

proverbs and narratives of the life of Lilit, whom Caine calls the Dark Mother, a powerful witch who awakened Caine's vampiric abilities. Few have ever seen the entirety of the Lilit Cycle, and many believe that any extant version of the text is corrupt, having undergone many revisions through time.

But Cainite scholars - and those few mortals aware of such concerns - believe that the full text of the Lilit Cycle still exists and may be found in its original form, these scholars comb the Middle East and North Africa looking for clues of this fabled text, and many believe that it may yet be found in Egypt.

Of course, some scholars - vampiric and mortal alike - believe that the Lilit Cycle is best left alone, containing a deep and terrible knowledge which, if revealed, could push the world into an even greater darkness. There are horrors which even a vampire may fear.

Lazarus

Lazarus, a Jew Embraced early in the first century A D , was one of the more prominent Cappadocians to settle Egypt As a mortal he already had special insights on the nature of death, his Embrace and centuries of study in Egypt only intensified this knowledge By the late fourth century, Lazarus was acknowledged as the region's most erudite Cainite thanatologist.

As the centuries wore on, Lazarus withdrew ever further into his studies, finally retreating to his favored haunt-an abandoned Coptic monastery, long lost to the memories of kine and Kindred alike. Few knew the monastery's location; any who desired to speak with Lazarus approached his agents, scattered across Egypt. These ghouls would either speak for their lord or, on rare occasions, escort visitors to Lazarus's monastery; reports indicate that guests were typically blindfolded or otherwise prevented from learning of the monastery's location.

By the time the Giovanni family usurped the Cappadocian Lazarus had long since disappeared and was believed to be in torpor, but some now whisper of an ancient Cainite awakening in the heart of the desert, with great knowledge of the underworld and the coming darkness - whether this is the Cappadocian Methuselah is, for now, anyone's guess.

Nigel Lloyd-Stephens

Background: Originally sent to Egypt to help manage British financial interests in the Suez Canal, Nigel was recruited by the Followers of Set, who have long had a habit of seducing Egypt's would-be controllers to their own cause. Now he serves as a capable administrator of the Setites' interests - constantly negotiating with Kindred of the other clans and dealing behind their backs when they are at their weakest points.

Image: Nigel is a pleasant-looking, pleasant-acting young fellow, always casually well dressed. Various scars and tattoos crisscross his body beneath his clothing, however, and they are only noticeable should Nigel be in ritual garb.

Roleplaying Hints: There are two types of salesmen - the unctuous one, whose every nauseating action screams "I'm a salesman"; and the suave, friendly sort, who makes you want to please him. You are definitely the second type. Your modus operandus involves seducing people - usually in spirit, sometimes in mind and often in body - not pushing them away through unctuous behavior. Try to be everyone's friend and confidant.

Ionna

Background: Ionna is a remnant of the Toreador presence in Egypt: a native Egyptian, born in the early 7th century, as Byzantine rule was waning. She, like so many other Toreador, was Embraced more as an act of whim than intent, and her already breathtaking beauty was only enhanced after her Embrace. However, she possessed a keen mind and proved herself to be far more than mere pulchritude. For centuries Ionna was a member of Alexandria's primogen, counseling Marcellus as she saw fit. At the same time, she undertook to learn as much about her world - both mundane and supernatural - as possible, and she claims to possess many books from the Alexandrian Library, currently thought to be either lost or destroyed.

By the time of Marcellus' destruction, though, she had already grown disinterested in Kindred politics. Ionna has since retreated even further, and has moved her haven to an elaborate - and exquisitely tasteful - subterranean complex where she spends her nights in study and meditation. On rare occasions she has sought younger Kindred, relying upon them to be her eyes and ears in contemporary society, and while she does not often receive guests, she has been known to entertain visitors in search of some piece of obscure knowledge or reasoned advice.

Image: Ionna is a tall, elegant woman with long brown hair and dark brown eyes; on the exceedingly rare occasions she



ventures in public, she dresses exquisitely but conservatively. In her haven she typically wears a long, simple robe with sandals, much like she wore during life.

Roleplaying Hints: Be calm and reserved. Treat everyone politely and show yourself to be a woman of fine manners. Consider your answers carefully before you speak; offer such a pause, in fact, that you appear to be ignoring your audience. When you do speak, it is with great thought. You are not easily provoked, but an opportunity to learn something new might just pique your interest and stir some long-lost emotion in you.

Mukhtar Bey, Prince of Cairo

Background: The first lesson: War breeds opportunities for those who are crafty and determined enough to take them. The second lesson: No obstacle is so challenging that it cannot be overcome through skill or guile. These are the two lessons which Mukhtar Bey learned in life, and these are the two maxims which he carried over with him into undeath, ultimately according him the privilege of being a rarity - a Caitiff prince in a world bound by ancient tradition.

Mukhtar Bey was a Mamluk-sold as a child, and trained to kill as a youth, he came as an adult to Cairo to serve in Saladin's army of mercenary warriors. Turkish by birth, he willingly and gladly accepted his role in Fatimid Egypt, a rising power in the Islamic world. He stood out from many of his companions: Although skilled in arms, he possessed a keen mind and demonstrated his leadership potential early in his career. He rose through the ranks of the Mamluks, with the full intention of entering the government after he had dutifully fulfilled his servitude.

But he caught the attention of more than just his mortal superiors. A shadow war was being waged behind the Crusades and the many local rivalries, as Assamites, Setites



and Ventrue all fought equally. Someone saw in Mukhtar a valuable tool-or pawn-and took the young soldier's life late one night, feasting on his rich blood in a Cairene alleyway.

A full decade went by before Mukhtar Bey reappeared; in an act then unheard of, he presented himself to Antonius, Ventrue Prince of Cairo. He could claim no sire, nor would any Kindred claim him as child; an enraged Antonius directed his two guards to tend to the clan-bastard, and was stunned to see the ease with which Mukhtar dispatched the two would-be executioners. Mukhtar repeated his introduction and offered his own services to the shocked Ventrue.

Speculation ran rampant during the early years of Mukhtar's association with Antonius; his radical defiance of tradition spoke of a possible Brujah sire, while narratives of his missing years are filled with a Gangrelesque meandering. Others noted that he was a student of Quietus, hinting at possible Assamite involvement. In short, no one knew where his heritage lay, and he certainly told no one. Many even doubt whether any truth was nested in the stories he did tell.

Yet, in spite of his dubious lineage, Mukhtar Bey served Antonius faithfully, and Antonius was equally loyal to his new vassal - so devoted, in fact, that some questioned Mukhtar's hold over the prince. In time, Mukhtar was more than Antonius' bodyguard; he was his right-hand man.

This was a precipitous time for the Ventrue and any European Kindred. Assamite excursions were on the increase, and the Setites were again uncoiling for another strike. When they did strike, the Ventrue prince was their victim. The tale here is unclear, for none but Mukhtar remain to tell it: Setite assassins invaded Antonius' haven, fighting with sorcery and fire; Antonius, Mukhtar, and a small handful of young Kindred remained to fight off the Setites. The debacle's only survivor was Mukhtar, who burst through the smoldering remains of Antonius' lair.

Cairo was without a prince, and the Cainite community began to crumble. Attacks on either side from Assamites or Setites weakened it, and many Kindred chose to return to their European havens. The prince's allies bickered, and many feared that chaos would erupt. Few were surprised when Mukhtar Bey emerged as a nascent princeling - vampires all over the world heard vague rumors of Kindred pledging obeisance to a bastard Caitiff; some murmured of fragments of the Book of Enoch, which spoke of a Caitiff prince being a sign of the end times, and even these Kindred trembled.

Mukhtar Bey's dominion only strengthened during the first few decades of his rule. There were those outside Egypt who called for his destruction - for one such as he was not fit to rule. But he was nonetheless able to rein in the disparate factions in Cairo, and he earned respect: His rule was steady in spite of the many changes in political winds. He negotiated with Assamites, which could not often be done, and he kept the Setites at arm's length. In time, as other more pressing

global matters caught the attention of European Cainites, he became ruefully acknowledged. It was a Ventrue envoy from Rome who referred to him officially not as Cainite but Mamluk, and the epithet stuck with those unable to stomach a "Caitiff prince."

He is now commonly regarded and respected as the true Prince of Cairo, and he is very much responsible for Cairo's current status as a cosmopolitan haven for Kindred; under his tenure, many of Cairo's most notable historic sites have been declared Elysium. Rumors speak of hidden alliances with Assamites, even of allowing Sabbat vampires free rein in his city. Some still wonder about the truth behind Antonius' mysterious death and Mukhtar's heritage, but these questions for now are silent.

Image: Mukhtar Bey is a tall imposing man, with a full black beard and mustache. He dresses in crisp business suits. He moves slowly and deliberately, but can act with lightning speed when necessary.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a stern father. All the vampires in Cairo are your children: You know what's best for them, and also about matters with which they shouldn't be concerned. Your anger builds slowly, but it also lasts a long time - those whom you dislike typically feel a smoldering rage heating inside you, one which you can barely restrain.

Clan: Mamluk (Caitiff)

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Director

Generation: 7th

Embrace: 1354

Apparent Age: early 40s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 6

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2

Talents: Alertness 5, Athletics 4, Brawl 4, Dodge 5, Leadership 6, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Blind Fighting 4, Drive 2, Etiquette 3, Falconry 3, Firearms 4, Melee 5, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Area Knowledge 3, Bureaucracy 3, Camarilla Lore 4, City Secrets 2, Law 3, Linguistics 4 (Arabic, English, Latin and French in addition to his native Turkish), Politics 3

Disciplines: Celerity 3, Dominate 4, Fortitude 4, Obfuscate 3, Potence 4, Presence 5, Quietus 3

Backgrounds: Contacts 3, Influence 4, Resources 5, Retainers 4, Status 5

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 10

Merits/Flaws: Iron Will

Egypt: The Dark Ages

Storytellers for Vampire: The Dark Ages will find that this chapter, with some obvious changes, contains information equally relevant to 12th-century Dark Medieval chronicles.

Antonius, a Ventrue prince, controls a besieged Cairo caught in the Crusades. The Toreador Prince Marcellus rules the memory-city of Alexandria, centuries past its initial grandeur and not yet ready for its next rise in power. The Cappadocians are still active, and skirmishes between Assamites and Western vampires will be stronger and more violent.

The Society of Leopold has not yet formed, but there are still exorcists and witch-hunters in Egypt, including the Templars, many of whom zealously pursue on supernatural creatures. The Arcanum does not yet exist, but similar mortal groups dedicated to the pursuit of arcane knowledge are active.

story seeds

- The characters, in the course of a chronicle, learn information that directs them to the monastery of Lazarus; they must decide whether or not to find the monastery, and what about it could profit them. After a series of incidents, they arrive at the location, only to find that the Giovanni have also found the monastery. The Storyteller must decide whether Lazarus has in fact emerged from torpor, if he still inhabits the monastery, what it contains and what transpires there.
- The characters discover that the Arcanum Chapter House in Cairo is beginning excavations in the desert. Kindred informants believe that the mortals may have found the ruins of the Second City, and the characters are sent by a mentor to investigate the claim. They find that they are not the only Kindred there.
- The characters are sent to Alexandria to negotiate with a magus of the Order of Hermes for possession of a valuable artifact. No sooner do they get the artifact than it is stolen from them, and they must track it down to a cult operating out of Cairo; what looks like an easy recovery becomes more complicated when the cult turns out to be a Setite blood-cult.
- Politically involved characters can go to the Sinai to observe (or "participate") in Middle East peace talks. Once there, they find Setite (and Assamite, and Ventruel...) plans to manipulate and/or disrupt the talks, ultimately leading to further chaos in the Middle East. The characters must determine what course of action to take.

Bibliography

This is, at best, a cursory examination of Egyptian history and culture. Storytellers who want to run stories (or entire chronicles) set in Egypt are encouraged to do further research.

Encyclopedias

For a fairly detailed history of Egypt, read encyclopedia articles on Egypt. Some encyclopedias will also have entries on Cairo and Alexandria, and these too can be quite informative.

Travel Guides

Two travel guides are particularly useful. Either one may be good, but both together are better.

Knopf Guides: Egypt (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995) has many photographs and lavishly illustrated maps and floor plans. Unfortunately, information is neither plentiful nor well arranged.

Egypt & the Sudan: Travel Survival Kit (Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 1994) also has good maps, which are not as well illustrated as those in the Knopf Guide. Its informational content is considerably higher, though, and the book is full of cultural tidbits that will make any Egyptian chronicle come alive.

Texts

Margaret Bunson, *A Dictionary of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)

W. Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981) has plentiful material, including maps and floor plans, for Pharaonic Egypt.





chapter eight: Africa: The dark continent

*The Gods which seize (upon man)
Have come forth from the grave.
The evil wind gusts
Have come forth from the grave
To demand the payment of rites and pouring libations.
They have come forth from the grave,
Have come like a whirlwind.*

- Assyrian tablet, circa A.D. 1000

A land of mystery, Africa enjoys one of the most diverse cultural mixtures found on any continent. More than 6000 different tribes live here, many with their own languages, religions and customs. The land itself reflects this diversity, from the rich Nile Delta and the sand dunes of the Sahara to the rainforest of the Congo and the snow-covered peak of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

Historically, Africa has been a land of innocents taken advantage of by their more sophisticated neighbors, the Arabs and the Europeans. Through a series of invasions by different peoples, indigenous tribes from Morocco to South Africa have been forced to change religions, transform their customs and even give up their freedom. From 1441 to 1888, more than 100 million African slaves were shipped to the New World.

Kindred have had their fingers in this pot for some time, either grabbing greedily alongside their kine counterparts or

taking the side of the natives. For centuries, Africa has served as a playground to the more adventurous, violent and rapacious Kindred. It has been an arena for Kindred war games and political contests. Kindred have parasitized European colonialism, Arabic slavery, Christian and Catholic missionary assaults, and the abuse of local workers in Africa's rubber, diamond and gold industries.

Africa has its own native Kindred, vampires who were old when Europe's Cainites first began building their cities and fighting their wars. These Kindred disdained to take the influential roles of their European cousins. Many of these vampires retreated to the interior long ago, and over the centuries they have been forgotten save in dim legends of their descendants. In recent years, however, rumored sightings and inexplicable occurrences have given African Kindred cause to hope and the colonist Kindred cause to dread. If one or several Methuselahs are awakening from torpor amid Africa's trackless jungles and barren savannas,

their reemergence could shatter the continent's precarious balance of power.

Wachui Nzahu

Native legends speak of a warrior tribe that runs with the speed of the *chiu* (leopard) and tears its victims limb from limb, ripping into their flesh with sharp teeth and claws. Undoubtedly, they are referring to the Bastet, werecats living throughout Africa. In Swahili, *wachui* means "the leopard men" and *nzahu* means 'cursed.'

The Kindred in Africa

Africa holds a fair number of Kindred, more than Western players might suspect. This seems surprising, considering Africa's Third World status and lack of the amenities to which Western vampires have grown accustomed. However, the continent also harbors corresponding advantages.

Several things attract vampires to Africa. The first is easy prey. Africa's countless forced migrations, brashfire wars and refugee camps provide large numbers of easily taken, rarely missed prey. In Ethiopia, in Zaire, in Somalia and in Rwanda, vampires take advantage of the kine's chaos to batten on their vitae. Kindred can move among the vast herds of defenseless, displaced elderly and children like sharks through mackerel. Africa's cities also house large numbers of homeless street urchins - weak, often malnourished and eager to go with anyone who promises them food or wealth. Their blood is thin and watery, but the quantity far outweighs the quality.

Africa also holds vast natural resources. Colonial vampires have come here, made their fortunes and reentered Europe's Jyhad that much more powerful. (Many have died in the process, of course, but that goes without saying.) Precious metals and diamonds are not as valuable to vampires as they are to kine, but they are nothing to sneeze at even in undeath.

Hand in hand with Africa's resources come large quantities of easily attainable land and influence. Compared to the convoluted machinations of Europe and the Americas, it is relatively easy for a vampire to obtain influence in a nascent African government and, through that connection, set herself up with a fiefdom in some out-of-the-way spot. Many vampires prefer to live in solitude among their herds, anyway, and Africa offers opportunities to do just that. (And if one was born in the Middle Ages, lack of electricity and running water mean relatively little.)

The Cape of Good Hope

South Africa is known for its diamond and gold industries, both of which have flourished and turned the country into a booming urban nation. Large cities with expansive ghettos surround the mines from which these resources were and are drawn. The Kimberly Diamond Mine remains the largest man-made hole in the world: a great gaping wound on the face of the earth. One family, the Delarians, holds the rights to and earns the profits from this, the most productive diamond mine in the world. For over a century, South Africa and its citizens provided a center of culture and wealth to Europeans and Kindred hoping to rub elbows with the richest folk in the world. Then, political upheavals crashed the party.

The recent abolishment of apartheid caused an economic crisis in South Africa. The Johannesburg stock market crashed the following day, as many European-held companies pulled out or sold their stock. Riots in the streets amassed a body count in the thousands. This struggle affected the Kindred as well; war between white Ventrue and black Brujah and Gangrel tore across the cities and "homelands," and the Sabbat used the opportunity to gain a foothold in the region.

To this day, tensions remain high and most white citizens have moved away, leaving behind their businesses and their homes. Much to the dismay of the locals, these citizens also took their money. The Kimberly Diamond Mine and its surrounding area has become a militarized zone, protected by walls and armed guards. The Delarians have thus far refused to leave their family jewels behind or to share with the new black government. There has been some talk of a military strike aimed at Kimberly, but so far nothing has been executed.

The Congo

At the heart of Africa sits a vast, lush rain forest spreading in a verdant tide from the Congo River. Many areas of the mountainous Congo jungle remain unexplored by modern humanity. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, explorers have been fascinated by the enigmas hidden in the thick foliage and natural labyrinths of the Congo. A large number have entered therein; many have been lost forever.

Legends of lost cities and mystical, magical civilizations continue to encourage expeditions (both Kindred and kine) into the jungle. Sporadically, rumors spread of an exploring group locating the site of an ancient artifact. This usually spurs a rash of rival explorers who set out to be the first to rediscover and catalog the artifact. If a competing party doesn't get it, the jungle or its many dangerous inhabitants will. Needless to say, few survive an expedition into the Congo.

Africa's Gangrel and Nosferatu harbor many legends about the Congo's interior. Intrepid members of both clans have penetrated this heart of darkness, though even they can't - or

won't - speak with certainty about what lies inside the Congo. A few Gangrel, drunk on blood laced with plantain wine, have whispered of something waiting beneath the river mud; Nosferatu speak of lost bloodlines haunting millennia-forgotten cities and bat-winged horrors swooping across the moon. Both clans agree that something ancient and deadly lies within the jungle, something better left undisturbed.

The Barbary Coast: Tangier

The northern coast of Africa, facing the Mediterranean, has traditionally been more Westernized than the rest of the continent. Many resorts exist here, attracting cruise ships and tourists of all kinds.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Tangier, located in Morocco, has been one of the most stylish resort areas on the Barbary Coast. Considered an "international city," it has its own laws and administration, part of and yet separate from Morocco's government. Because of this, it has always attracted an odd mixture of expatriates, exiles and refugees. These people usually have one thing in common: a unique perspective on the world which sets them apart from the norm. Due to its reputation for tolerance, Tangier has become one of the world's leading gay centers.

Tangier's unique atmosphere draws eccentric artists, authors and philosophers from around the world. Many of the 1950s Beat poets and writers came here to explore the seedier side of their personalities and to exchange philosophical discourse with like-minded individualists.

The white-washed seaside cafes and dark basement bars which serve as gathering places for the artistes of the world have changed little since the turn of the century. Cobblestones still clack under rolling wooden carts and high heels; seagulls still roam the beaches. Only the murals and street art vary from month to month and year to year.

Though a colony of Setites dwells here, the most influential inhabitants of Tangier are the Toreador. Toreador flock to Tangier in droves and find, when they arrive, a city of people who speak their language: the language of art. For this reason, most other clans purposely avoid Tangier. Entering a room full of ecstatic Toreador can be disconcerting; entering a whole city full of them can be nerve-wracking.

The Sahara

The Sahara Desert consists of three million square miles of mountain ranges and sand seas. Most of its inhabitants live among bedouin bands that travel from oasis to oasis, trading goods for a living.

The desert can be extremely dangerous to Kindred. It is virtually impossible to find protection from the sun. Tents blow down and sandstorms threaten to bury anyone who cannot travel at the drop of a hat, day or night. Only the

bravest Kindred dare to cross the Sahara, and then only with the most well-planned protection.

Nonetheless, a few Kindred make the perilous journey to search for ancient fragments of their cities that lay hidden beneath the trackless dunes. Many locations mentioned in the Book of Nod are thought to remain beneath the Sahara's sands, and the vampire who gains access to the lore of the Antediluvians will have power indeed.

Kenya

Kenya has changed relatively little in the past two thousand years. Simba (lions), chui (leopards) and tembo (elephants) still roam freely across the savanna. The Bantu still hunt with spears and call their muundu mugo, or medicine man, to cure them of curses and possessions. Tribes still war with one



another over land rights and broken taboos.

Only in relatively modern times has the white man exerted a presence in Kenya. Until 1493, the land and the peoples remained unsoiled by expansionists. Then came the Portuguese, the Arabs, the Germans and finally the British.

The British originally claimed the abolishment of Arab-led slavery as their reason for invading Kenyan soil. However, this accomplishment only cloaked their own expansionist ambitions. By 1920, their tune had changed and British settlers began an offensive to further their long-held objective of a "White Man's Kenya." They implemented their own form of slavery, hiring locals at ridiculously low wages to clean their cabanas and serve them tea. Led by a man named Delamere, the movement advanced with the full support of many Cainites. Ventrue, Tremere and Giovanni, in particular, saw the colonization of Kenya as an opportunity for wealth, prosperity and power.

Before long, a national black movement for uhuru (freedom) gained momentum. In the 1930s, native groups openly contested the British protectorateship. Drawn by the media attention that these groups earned, many African Kindred came to aid the native peoples. They Embraced powerful figures in the movement, including leaders of guerrilla groups.

In 1963, the native Kenyans won their battle. The newly empowered citizens of Kenya lowered the Union Jack for the last time and raised the Kenyan national flag upon the summit of Mount Kenya. The Camarilla, rebuffed by Kenyan Kindred, distanced itself, but has never forgotten the rebellion. Great Britain renounced its claim and the people of Kenya elected a brilliant man named Kenyatta as the nation's first president.

Mombasa Island



At one time, the island of Mombasa served as the capital of Kenya. Although this is no longer the case, Mombasa remains the second-most influential city in Kenya, overshadowed only by Nairobi. Its harbors serve hundreds of ships daily. Sometimes called "The Doorway to Kenya," Mombasa has, from the time of the Portuguese invasion, been part of a prosperous trade route and black market.

Mombasa boasts the largest Kindred population in Kenya. Its Old World charm, modern convenience and proximity to untainted nature preserves have attracted many different Kindred. Most of these stick to the Old Town area, where period Arabic buildings with overhanging balconies and carved doorways line cobblestone streets that are too narrow to allow for vehicles. Those who prefer the glass buildings and highways of the newer areas rarely bother to visit Kenya.

Old Town exudes an aura of timelessness. Dhows from Lamu and Somalia float in the harbor, their rectangular sails white against the gray of the Indian Ocean. Their owners come to sell dried fish, fruit or foreign commodities at the market. Fort Jesus, built by the Portuguese to fight off an Arab incursion in the 16th century, still overlooks the northern inlet, its high stone walls barely eroded by the travails of the past 400 years.

Numerous goldsmiths and silversmiths keep shops in Old Town, near the markets where carpets, chests, fish and brassware can be bought at exceptional prices. Gold and silver pass through these shops to be reminted or made into beautiful pieces of jewelry. Less than legal transactions often occur here, especially when someone wishes to sell stolen gold or jewelry. Most dealers interested in acquiring antique jewelry know they will find excellent choices at the exclusive auctions in Mombasa.

The European Incursion

Many European Kindred still live in Mombasa. Some of them have remained to protect their business interests; others take

an active role in protecting the balance of nature in the savannas to the west.

Lupo Giovanni

Background: Lupo runs the Oceanview Hotel. Unlike the other members of the Giovanni board who oversee Africa's affairs, Lupo chose to make Mombasa his home. In 1907, as a young mortal, Lupo came to Kenya from Italy and opened a small hotel on the current site of the Oceanview, billing it as the "Home Away from Home" for European travelers. Big-game hunters poured in from around the world. Among Lupo's earliest patrons were a young Winston Churchill and American president Theodore Roosevelt traveling with his son Kermit in search of big game.

Mombasa and Lupo thrived for over 25 years, until the early 1930s when an economic slump affected the entire world. Lupo could not pay for the hotel's most recent renovations, a fiasco which cost him over \$100,000. He faced bankruptcy.

Lupo wrote home to his father and begged for help. His father pulled the family together and requested a loan for his son. Lupo got his reply: A seventh-generation Giovanni visited Mombasa. Francesco Giovanni offered to help Lupo, but at a price. He Embraced Lupo and split ownership of the hotel five ways, an equal share going to each of five investors, including Francesco and Lupo.

Lupo oversees every aspect of the business, from approving the menu to picking out curtains to checking the books. With the money his new partners gave him, he contracted a complete renovation of the hotel and built an attached casino. He will not tolerate disobedience or theft from his employees or his guests; nor may any Kindred break the Traditions in his hotel. Lupo metes out punishment to fit the crime. Hotel employees have been dismissed or, worse, have had their fingers amputated. Others who committed more serious infractions have taken their final swims in the Indian Ocean. Kindred who break the rules are, at best, banned from the hotel and are, at worst, never seen again.

Lupo lives in a penthouse apartment located atop the casino. He has a private elevator controlled by a key that he carries with him at all times. No one else has access. One room in the apartment contains surveillance equipment, which Lupo uses to watch the gambling rooms, the lobby and each of the hotel rooms and suites.

Image: Lupo's Italian features, weathered by years of hard work and the African sun (before his Embrace), have a rugged handsomeness that appeals to women. His dark eyes, which look out from beneath heavy eyebrows, can sparkle with laughter or spit fire when he is angered. He keeps his thick black hair greased back from his face and wears small round reading glasses on the end of his nose. His rich olive skin stands out against the light-colored kaunda suits he tends to wear. The suits consist of crisp, collarless, short-sleeved shirts with matching cotton trousers.

Roleplaying Hints: You have an undying fondness for Kenya and its peoples. You speak their language and prefer to socialize with them rather than with your own kind. However, the hotel always comes first. Your good business sense has only failed you once, but you have never forgiven yourself. As a result, you watch over and guard the Oceanview as if it were your child. The perfect host, you put a great deal of emphasis on customer service and will diplomatically do everything in your power to help out a patron. If, however, the patron wrongs you, wrongs your hotel, or wrongs any of your guests, you will not hesitate to make her regret it.

Clan: Giovanni

Nature: Architect

Demeanor: Judge

Generation: 8th

Embrace: 1932

Apparent Age: 47

Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4

Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 5, Wits 5

Talents: Alertness 3, Dodge 4, Empathy 5, Expression 3, Intimidation 3, Leadership 4, Subterfuge 3

Skills: Drive 3, Etiquette 5, Firearms 4, Melee 3

Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Computer 2, Finance 5, Investigation 1, Law 3, Linguistics (English, Swahili) 2, Occult 3

Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Fortitude 1, Necromancy 3, Potence 3, Presence 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Mentor 3, Resources 4, Retainers 5

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

Humanity: 5

Willpower: 7

The Oceanview

The entrance to the Oceanview has become a tourist attraction in its own right. Wide marble steps lead up to the carved double doorway at the front of the building. A marble bas-relief of giant elephants, antelope and lions surrounds the door frame. The portico roof is supported by marble pillars covered with carvings of climbing vines. Bamboo chairs and tables on the front porch allow guests a place to



relax as they look out over the ocean.

Inside, the ceiling of the main foyer displays an impressive painting of a sunset behind Mount Kenya. In the same painting, a variety of animals roam among the grasses at the foot of the mountain. A lion greedily eats a dead zebra. A mother elephant snuggles her baby. A hyena raises its snout to sniff the darkening air, and a hippopotamus bathes happily in a brown pool.

To the left, the entrance of the casino is decorated on either side by two large tufts of gilt grass. A gilded lion peeks out from behind one tuft and a large bird hovers just above the other. To the right, the front desk awaits guests checking in and out. The hotel's 100 rooms, 15 suites and single penthouse are all equally elegant. The penthouse has a kitchen and all the necessities for a long-term stay. Room rates compare favorably to similar hotels in Chicago or London.

The casino offers all the games that a European casino would offer. It has acquired a reputation for rich style and honest gambling among the circuit's elite. Beautiful local women serve drinks on trays which they carry on the tops of their heads. They wear brightly colored sukas, strapless garments which encircle their bodies, and elaborate collars of beadwork which wrap tightly around their necks and upper chests, giving the effect of pushing their heads up higher than they should go.

Dillon Abernathy

Background: With a nose for adventure and opportunity, the seventh-generation Ventrue Dillon Abernathy first came to Kenya in 1888, when the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, created the Imperial British East Africa Company and appointed Sir William Mackinnon as its head. Abernathy joined Mackinnon's cause and together they began to build roads from Mombasa into Kenya's interior.

In 1895, the British Parliament ratified the Protectorate of British East Africa and dissolved the British East Africa Company. Mackinnon and Abernathy found themselves on the doorstep. The British government paid them 250,000 British pounds to go away quietly. Abernathy took his portion of the money and immediately began to invest in local trade business. By 1905, he had built an economic empire in the region. He constructed a mansion on the outskirts of Mombasa and hired natives at ridiculously low rates to serve him.

Abernathy continued untouched until 1963, when the government of Kenya reverted to native rule. His holdings were seized and a coalition of native Kindred ousted him from the country. Outraged, Abernathy vowed revenge. In 1970, once the hubbub had quieted down, he returned to Kenya, avoiding those Kindred who had given him the bum's rush. (They are aware of his return, but don't consider him enough of a threat to bother.) Since then, he has made it his

mission to buy African-held companies with the intent of eventually hamstringing the Kenyan economy. Fanatical to the extreme, his business practices are rarely ethical and many companies have gone on the market because the sole owner "passed away" in the night. Several of Dillon's ghouls run his company, which he has dubbed the Western Trading Company, more commonly known as W.T.C. They report to him each night and he gives them orders.

When Abernathy returned to Mombasa, he purchased an old manor house located on Mbaraki Road overlooking the ocean. Built at the turn of the century, the manor has 20 rooms, but Abernathy lives with only the three ghouls who serve him. Known only as "The Manor," it was once the sight of a gruesome murder and some believe the dead still roam the rooms and gardens. Abernathy bought it for that very reason. He knew it would keep away the curious and he loved the idea of making his servants work in a place that they considered thahu (cursed).

Image: Dillon Abernathy resembles a weasel. His thin brown hair sits back from his forehead in two half-circles. His skinny neck bends forward too far, as if he has spent too many hours hunched over a book. Close-set blue eyes peer out from half-closed, heavy lids. His pinched mouth puckers beneath a long, pointy nose. Abernathy prefers to wear typical British clothing; brushed trousers and long-sleeved shirts might seem inappropriate in the African heat, but Abernathy doesn't care.

Roleplaying Hints: You hate the native Kenyans so much that you live among them merely to overthrow them. You barely manage to hide your disdain from others and prefer the company of a fellow European to a local, no matter how cultured or powerful he may be. You have a sadistic streak that comes out from time to time when you punish your "employees." You are always on the lookout for a business opportunity and you stand ready to jump when the time is right. Fortunately, your patience has no limits, since opportunities rarely occur.



Terranda Jackson

Background: One of the most recent additions to Kenya's Kindred community, Terranda is an African-American who came to paint in the land of her ancestors. Terranda is relatively young (13th generation) by vampiric standards; her sire Embraced her in New Orleans in 1975. She has spent the last decade trying to "find herself." Caught up in the resurgence of African pride, Terranda decided to see her homeland for herself.

At a local gathering of Kindred, she presented herself to the city's kabaka (prince) and reveled in the tribal feel of the acceptance ritual. The local Kindred explained to her that the rituals had been passed down through thousands of years of tradition. Terranda felt she had come home.

The next evening, Terranda made an enemy in the form of Dillon Abernathy. She spoke to him with great pride and excitement about her presentation to Mombasa's kabaka. Needless to say, Abernathy did not share her enthusiasm. He chided her for becoming involved with the dirty, uncivilized local Kindred. He chastised her for participating in their pitiful, tribal rituals which, he said, were merest ignorance and superstition.

Terranda's pride and indignation would not let her ignore these remarks. Her teeth came out and she attacked. Abernathy was so surprised that she got a few good hits in before the elder realized what was happening. Other Kindred quickly intervened, and as soon as he could, Abernathy bolted.

Since that night, Terranda has taken periodic safaris into the bush to paint pictures of the wildlife and of the native peoples. Several art shows have featured her paintings, which sell extremely well. Unfortunately, Terranda doesn't know that Abernathy has bought every one of them. He plans to destroy them as his revenge against her and he will make sure she sees the fire as they burn.

At her haven, Terranda has one painting which she has kept. It portrays a young Bantu woman dancing around a ceremonial fire. In the background, the painted faces of the others watching are masks suspended against the darkness. Terranda calls it "Fire Dancer." She would never part with it.

Image: Terranda's face has a beautiful, angelic quality in its rounded softness. Her skin is mahogany and even-toned. Her large brown eyes sparkle with curiosity. She looks at people and things as if attempting to delve into their souls. Her cheeks, punctuated by dimples on either side of her sensual mouth, carry a perpetual blush as if she has just fed. Just above her left nostril, a small mole marks the side of her upturned nose.

Terranda has taken to wearing Bantu tribal garments: split skirts and wrapped sukas. She keeps her black hair cut short and covered in a colorful cloth turban. Visitors to her



apartment or studio sometimes find her topless, as most of the native women she associates with wear nothing to cover their breasts.

Roleplaying Hints: You are ecstatically happy in your new home. Your greatest joy comes in expressing your newfound peace through your paintings. You will suffer no one to rain on your parade. Although you may not react as strongly as you did with Abernathy, you will hold a grudge against anyone who speaks out against your heritage. A social creature by nature, you spend a good deal of time with your fellow Kindred, especially those of African descent. You are a good "tour guide" for Western Kindred unfamiliar with Mombasa, so long as they stay properly decorous.

visitor information

The following offers, in brief, some information for the first-time traveler to Mombasa. All visiting Kindred must, by local custom, present themselves to Mombasa's kabaka at their earliest convenience. A messenger will undoubtedly approach any new Kindred and invite them to an audience.

Getting To Mombasa

Mombasa itself has no airport. Visitors who wish to fly into Kenya must land in Nairobi, then take either a train, a bus, a rented car or a camel to Mombasa. Many cruise lines on the Indian Ocean stop in Mombasa, as do passenger ships from around the coast.

Hotels and Thomi (Elysium)

There are many hotels to choose from other than the Oceanview. A variety of price ranges are represented. The kabaka has established several of these as thomi (Elysium) and will offer a list to any Kindred who presents himself. One of the most popular middle-priced hotels is the Cozy Guest House. With its bed-and-breakfast atmosphere and heavy drapery, the Cozy Guest House has attracted many Kindred over the years.

Nightlife

At night in Mombasa, the lights come on and the music comes up. Anyone who comes to Mombasa looking for common diversion is likely to be disappointed; entertainment in Mombasa is anything but common.

The Cozy Tea House, located several blocks from the Cozy Guest House and owned by the same proprietors, invites local musicians in on the weekends to perform for its customers. Musicians include anyone from concert violinists to native drummers. The music changes nightly, but the atmosphere remains one of privacy and charm.

The dance floor in the lounge at the Splendid Hotel on Msanifu Street never empties. Every night, however, the dancing eventually reverts from modern to native tribal. The locals invariably teach everyone the moves to the Kenya's traditional Leopard Dance.

For those who like things a little rougher, the Lotus Hotel offers more raucous entertainment. Located at the end of an alley off Nkrumah Road, the hotel and tavern serves the fishermen, the nahoda (surlly, bearded captains of the dhows) and their sailors. At least one fight per night begins the entertainment, with everyone joining in on the fun.

The Nyayo

Known among Mombasa Kindred as the Followers of the Old Man, the Kindred collectively known as the Nyayo dominate the city. They have taken up the cause of Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of Kenya, in an attempt to keep Kenya prosperous under black rule. (Local peoples call Kenyatta Mzee, which means Old Man. Nyayo roughly translates to "in the Old Man's footsteps.") Ultimately, the Nyayo's goal is less transitory: Its members desire an Africa free from the wars of Camarilla and Sabbat alike. Although the Nyayo organization is a political movement open to all clans, the majority of its

members tend to be Gangrel.

The Nyayo sect was born in Nairobi and eventually spread to Mombasa, where it attempts to establish a solid foundation for future growth. The methods of the Nyayo remain mostly political, economic and social, although they have been known to resort to violence if the case demands it. They react particularly harshly to poachers who disobey the antipoaching laws established in 1977.

The Nyayo walk the fence in the political arena. They have developed a coolly friendly relationship with the Camarilla while still managing to remain separate from it. (The Camarilla, of course, sees the matter differently....) The Nyayo see no reason to commit to an alliance with the Camarilla, and indeed the Nyayo's ultimate goal is to attain peaceful autonomy for Africa's vampires. However, they also realize they need the Camarilla to fend off groups of native Kindred who would destroy Kenya through bloodlust and radical antiwhite ideals.

Nyayo Acceptance Ritual

When a new Kindred arrives in Mombasa, custom prescribes that she partake in the Nyayo acceptance ritual. A guide assigned to the new Kindred helps her through the ritual and explains the meaning of each aspect of it. Anyone who refuses to participate in any part of the ritual is summarily banned from Mombasa and stays in the city at her own risk.

First, a greeting between the new arrival and the Nyayo is exchanged. The visitor must spit on her hand and then shake the hand of every Nyayo present. A tradition handed down from ancient times, the spitting symbolizes the visitor's goodwill toward her hosts and serves as a promise that she will not bring a thahu down upon them.

Next, the kabaka or his representative places a cord around the neck of a goat and strangles it. This conserves all parts of the goat for consumption. To cut or shoot the goat would waste some of it and to waste the gifts of the land would be



an unforgivable wrong.

The Nyayo then drain the blood of the goat and serve it to all present in a carved wooden bowl. Each must drink of it, for in the sharing, a bond is formed and all are reminded of their common needs and weaknesses.

The goat's carcass is removed and the kabaka or his representative officially welcomes the new arrival to Mombasa.

Mbogo Biashara

Background: Mbogo enjoyed a long and prosperous career as a leader in the African resistance. He grew up in the Kikuyu tribe, listening to Jomo Kenyatta's dreams of freedom. His Embrace came in 1919 following the British "Soldier Settlement Scheme" which gave estates in the Kenyan highlands to veterans of World War I. An ancient and powerful Gangrel chose Mbogo for his clear-mindedness and his passionate defense of his homeland.

After a year of intensive training with his sire (during which Mbogo became extremely powerful for a neonate), Mbogo founded the Kikuyu Central Association, a group dedicated to the cause of African freedom. Then in 1925, he led a mass emigration of the Kikuyu people from the savanna into the city of Nairobi. This caused an enormous social and economic revolution which could not be ignored.

Mbogo enjoyed several years of success until 1928, when he decided he had become too prominent a figure. He faked his own death, and the leadership of the Kikuyu Central Association passed on to Jomo Kenyatta. Mbogo continued his work from behind the scenes, careful to let no one know he was alive.

Finally, in 1961, just after Jomo Kenyatta accepted the presidency, Mbogo founded the Nyayo. He sired six other loyal Kikuyu over a period of 10 years. He remains their leader and the Kabaka of Mombasa. He would sacrifice anything or anyone, including his own pride, to see that Kenya remains a free country.

Mbogo spends most of his time at Nyayo headquarters in a fortified warehouse on Mbu Yuni Road. He has a small area set aside where he sleeps behind a solid steel, double-locked door. Mbogo has other havens as well, although he keeps their locations secret from everyone.

Image: Mbogo carries himself with the grace and pride of a true leader. He stands tall, his thick body held upright as if a string pulled him up from the top of his head. Mbogo rarely smiles, although this has less to do with a lack of humor than it does with the depth to which he feels his responsibility toward Kenya and its peoples. His dark skin bears many scars, most of which he put there intentionally when he was a youth. His nose, upturned and flat, bears the Gangrel stigma, looking more like a snout than a normal human nose. He



keeps his large, round head shaved. His tufted ears hold the traditional Kikuyu rings. His hands are unusually hairy and his nails remain long and sharp.

Mbogo feels equally comfortable in either European or African dress. When performing Kikuyu rituals, however, he always wears his ceremonial *lci/coi*, a wrap-skin made of barkcloth from the bongi tree. With the *kikoi*, he wears no shirt, only a rectangular piece of red cloth thrown over one shoulder. On his head he places a *kofia* (an embroidered skullcap).

Roleplaying Hints: You are large and in charge. You welcome all who will accept your ways, but those who will not might as well move along. You will help them to do so if they seem reluctant. Your deep voice resounds when you speak and you know it; you like to use it to intimidate your enemies and your business associates alike. You realized early on that you had to play by the rules of the Europeans if your people were to regain control of their land. You have an easy command of proper English etiquette and you use it to your advantage. You are also proud of your ability to speak English with only a slight hint of accent.

Clan: Gangrel

Nature: Director

Demeanor: Caregiver

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1919

Apparent Age: 35

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 5, Manipulation 5, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 5, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 3, Expression 4, Intimidation 5, Leadership 5, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 2, Drive 1, Etiquette 4, Firearms 5, Melee 4, Repair 1, Stealth 2, Survival (savanna) 5

Knowledges: African History 5, Area Knowledge (Kenya) 5, Bureaucracy 4, Finance 3, Investigation 2, Law 5, Linguistics (English) 5, Medicine 1, Politics 5

Disciplines: Animalism 4, Auspex 2, Celerity 3, Dominate 2, Fortitude 4, Potence 1, Presence 5, Protean 5

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Fame 1, Herd 3,

Influence 2, Resources 3

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

Humanity: 7

Willpower: 9

Notes: Mbogo is extremely powerful for a vampire of such short unlife. His sire is almost certainly an ancient Methuselah, and undoubtedly has his own purposes in thrusting such a powerful minion into the Jihad.

Kikuyu Earrings

Many of the Bantu tribesmen and women cut holes in the center of their earlobes, then stretch the skin around a ring that is one to two inches in diameter. Once the skin has stretched permanently, they may take the ring out and decorate the loop of flesh with gold, colored string and/or beads.

The Luo

One of the most ancient groups of Kindred in Kenya, the Luo descend from early Setites who came to Kenya in search of the legendary source of the Nile River. They found it in what is now called Lake Victoria, a massive body of water in western Kenya. The source of the Nile holds great import for the Setites. The original Luo took up residence nearby to protect the source from "outsiders." Over time, these Setites Embraced worthy native tribesmen and the line continued. The Luo remain at the forefront of any rebellion against outside invaders. They call themselves Watu wa Mungu (People of God).

In modern times, the Luo supported the Nyayo in their bid for freedom from British domination. A violent organization, the Luo used guerrilla tactics to terrorize and to reduce the numbers of the British. They attacked British homes, torturing and killing the residents. They also orchestrated bombings of the Kenyan rail lines and instigated attacks on British troops.

Once the government reverted to native rule, the Nyayo turned away from the Luo. It became apparent that, although both groups desired the same outcome, their methods conflicted. The Nyayo, led by Kabaka Mbogo, want peace. They are willing to allow the British to remain in Kenya. The Luo reject this. They continue to stage attacks on local whites with the intent of driving them all from Kenya. Only the leaders of the Luo understand the importance of this feat in the overall Setite plan.

In view of their continued aggression against whites, Kabaka Mbogo has publicly renounced the Luo and made any association with this group a crime against Kindred society. The two organizations have become bitter enemies. Mbogo has decreed that all Luo must be captured and brought before him for judgment and punishment. Unfortunately for the Nyayo, the Luo far outnumber them; best estimates indicate a three-to-one ratio of Luo to Nyayo. Also, the Luo



live in the bush most of the time, often leaving for weeks on a pilgrimage to the Setite temple in Uganda. Most Kindred believe that the Luo frequent cities only during attacks. Others, however, have implied that the Luo and their ghouls have actually infiltrated the Nyayo and spy on them from within. Kabaka Mbogo refutes that suggestion.

Ollam-Onga

Background: One of the mightiest of the Luo is the warrior-priest known as Ollam-onga. The circumstances of his Embrace remain a mystery; what is known is that this ancient (sixth-generation) Setite guides the Luo with a forked tongue and a scaled fist. Ollam-onga has close ties to the Setite temple in Uganda and works to ensure that the Luo remain committed to the overall Setite cause. Ollam-onga is the mastermind behind the Luo's assaults and he plots ceaselessly against Kabaka Mbogo and European colonists alike. The High Priests of Typhon have come to him in dreams, telling him that Africa must be cleansed of all foreign powers in order to serve as Great Set's staging ground; and Ollam-onga is nothing if not loyal to his god and master.

Image: Ollam-onga is huge - nearly seven feet tall. He cultivates the image of the warrior-cannibal for the purpose of intimidation: stringy whip-cord muscles, teeth filed to points, and full-body scarification. He is equally comfortable in the ritual garb of the Setites, a pair of khaki shorts or nothing whatsoever. A variety of weapons adorn his frame, and the Setite is well versed in their use. A variety of serpents - mambas, pythons, Gaboon vipers and the like - coil around his limbs. Ritual fetishes decorate his frame-he is an accomplished Thaumaturge, the equal of many Tremere.

Roleplaying Hints: Your every utterance is either a prophecy or a command. You enjoy the fear that your appearance and bearing impart. Tower over those to whom you speak, and mutter of the spirits that hover in the dark.

Jan Arathi

Background: Jan's mother grew up in a Kikuyu tribal village northwest of Mombasa. When she came of age, her family sold her to a wealthy Englishman who immediately impregnated her. The Englishman, Charles Erroll, upon discovering the baby was a boy, insisted that her child bear his name. Thus, Jan Erroll came into the world.

In 1921, Charles Erroll received a visitor who would change Jan's life forever. The woman, a ninth-generation Brujah named Greta Englebert, had been Charles' friend and lover, using him as a Blood Doll for years before releasing him. With her golden hair and lithe figure, Greta charmed both Charles and his son. In truth, she had come in search of a child. Where she had originally intended to Embrace Charles, she became enamored of his dark-skinned son and chose him instead. The two of them went away together. For the first time, Jan visited the white Europe he had already come to hate.

In the end, Jan killed and diablerized his sire. His loathing for Europeans ran so deep he could not bear to look at her. He hated her for trying to make him a part of her world, just as he hated his father for conceiving him in the first place. Jan returned to Kenya and gave his father the same gift he had given his sire: death. Before long, he began an active campaign against white settlers. He acquired a following and sired several children himself. He changed his name to Arathi, which in Swahili means "prophet." Thus, Jan Arathi began his career as a guerrilla leader and freedom-fighter.

Jan prefers to wander and has several havens established all around Mombasa and in the savanna. His favorite haven is a bat cave located just south of Mombasa on the shore of the Indian Ocean where cliffs rise steeply over crashing waves.

Jan openly aligns himself with no organization. He prefers to work as a free agent, joining whatever cause he feels deserves his services. He has contacts with both the Luo and the Nyayo, taking neither side of their argument; however, he secretly sympathizes with the Luo and if it came down to the wire, he would side with them. His cunning, ruthlessness and



unshakable resolve have made him somewhat of a legend among the vampires of Kenya.

Image: Jan Arathi wears the dress of a tribal elder in an attempt to hide his youthful demeanor. His young face, with its broad nose and full lips, belies his experience and knowledge. He hates his appearance, wishing he looked older. His hair bushes thickly around his head and he cakes it with mud and other natural substances in the manner of his tribal ancestors. When meeting others in a formal atmosphere, Jan Arathi wears the white facepaint of a warrior.

Roleplaying Hints: You abhor the white man. You would kill every one of them if you felt you could. When you speak to Europeans, which rarely happens, you adopt an air of superiority and address them as your lessers. You do realize, however, some of them could be useful to your cause. For this reason, you never entirely shun them, at least not until you are certain that they cannot help you.

Fort Jesus

In 1592, the Portuguese built Fort Jesus on the northern coast of Mombasa Island as a fortification against attacking Arabs. They survived a two-and-a-half-year siege behind its walls between 1696 and 1698. Unfortunately, they surrendered only two days before reinforcements from Portugal arrived to help them.

The ruins of Fort Jesus hardly seem like ruins at all. Solid stone walls protect it from the harsh northern winds coming off the ocean. Inside, the fort holds a catacomb of rooms and hallways that tourists love to explore.

Fort Jesus has become a popular hunting ground in Mombasa. The locals know to avoid it, calling it a cursed land, but tourists abound. The dark corners, labyrinthine halls and soundproof walls make it perfect for the hunt. Kabaka Mbogo has sanctioned Fort Jesus as official hunting ground. However, Kindred who arrive in the city receive warnings at their acceptance rituals: Anyone who kills while feeding or for any other wasteful reason will receive a fitting punishment. The look on Kabaka Mbogo's face as he says this usually suffices to convey the implication.

The Laibon

In Africa, there exists a special order of vampires with strong ties to the deserts, the savannas and the jungles of the continent. These Kindred, called Laibon, practice a form of blood magic which is extremely primitive yet powerful. They are the grandfathers of all medicine men; mortal muundu mwei are mere imitations of these mythical figures.

According to their own legends, the Laibon descend from Fakir Al Sidi, an ancient vampire who walked alone out of the desert one dark night. In recent years, other clans, in particular the Assamites, have speculated that this line

descends from an undocumented Methuselah. Fakir al Sidi, they suggest, was an ancient vampire who migrated southwest into Africa. He Embraced one child in Africa, Kamiri wa ltherero, and taught him the magics of blood and earth. Thus, the Laibon line was formed.

The Laibon have vowed never to share their secrets with anyone outside their order, and the accepted punishment for doing so is Final Death. For this reason-in conjunction with the fact that the Laibon traditionally avoid urban areas and rarely leave Africa - their very existence, as well as their abilities and Disciplines, are still subject to speculation among the general Kindred population.

Only 10 Laibon are known to exist. They remain dutifully loyal to one another and do not create childer on whims. Their hierarchy follows typical tribal structure: One Laibon serves as the leader or chief. The others are completely equal in everything. The Laibon do not live in the same area, but prefer to scatter themselves across the continent, each with his own preference of climate and terrain. Once a year, however, they meet in Mombasa to tell stories and to share knowledge.

Kamiri Wa ltherero

All native Kenyans have heard the legend of Kamiri wa ltherero, a medicine man who was said to possess great magical powers. The success of raids depended on his aid and his advice. His extensive knowledge of medicines and ritual libations earned him the respect and even awe of Kenyans. People called Kamiri "The Official Poisoner" and hired him to poison their enemies. Legend also states, however, that Kamiri, being a fair man, would contact the victim beforehand and warn him, thus giving the victim ample opportunity to put right the wrong he had committed against his enemy.

Laibon history claims that Kamiri wa ltherero was the first to be Embraced by Fakir al Sidi. Through him all Laibon knowledge has passed down to later generations. He eventually migrated south to the area where modern-day Mombasa sits on the coast, and he was last seen meditating at the edge of a cliff overlooking the Indian Ocean. Although he disappeared over a thousand years ago, his memory and his magic live on in the Laibon.

Traditionally, the Laibon living near Mombasa takes the name of Kamiri wa ltherero, in honor of the Founder's son. The current Laibon called Kamiri was Embraced in 1582. He associates with no one outside his clan, including the Nyayo and the Luo. Although he cares little for Europeans overall, his innate sense of justice will not allow him to judge a man for the crimes of his fathers.

Assassin Rock

On the southern shore of Mombasa, across the inlet on the mainland, lies a beach with a large rock that hangs over a

small cliff. Local people know that if they have a complaint against an enemy, one for which they would have the enemy killed, they should go to the rock three nights in a row. At midnight on the first night, they leave a small bracelet, called a rukwaru, made of goatskin taken from the body after a ritual sacrifice. On the second night, they leave a gift for the assassin: a bit of gold, money or food - whatever they can afford. On the third night, the supplicant must name his enemy and the reason he wants the assassination.

As part of his traditional duties, the Mombasa Kindred monitors the rock, and on the third night he listens to the person's pleas. Then he investigates. If he should find that the enemy does not deserve to die, he will do nothing. However, if he discovers that the enemy's crime does indeed merit death, he will kill him.

Assassin's Rock has been a local legend and a superstition for centuries. The number of people coming every year has decreased as fewer and fewer believe in it. Those who do believe know only that the rock and their actions place a curse on their enemies. They know nothing of Kamiri.

Kindred influence in Africa

Assamite

The Assamite presence in Africa is minimal, although many Assamite recruits are taken from Africa, particularly those regions wracked by wars. Assamites eagerly hired themselves out, often at reduced rates, during the fall of apartheid; the collapse of that odious institution stirred even the dead hearts of the Assassins.

Brujah

Africa's oldest Brujah allegedly descend from Carthaginian refugees, and a few still seek to create their own isolated refuges. Unfortunately, violent upheavals and military struggles throughout Africa attract other, more violent Brujah. More often than not, these Kindred side with the local peoples against the imposing tyranny of outsiders - but Mozambique and Rwanda have suffered from internecine Brujah strife as antagonistic Brujah take advantage of the kine's struggles to settle old scores. Brujah influence can be felt in Somalia, South Africa and anyplace else where the people have rebelled against the established government.

Followers of Set

The Followers of Set have long blighted Africa with their presence. They have had a hand in the slave trade, as well as in Africa's bloody colonial wars. Currently the Followers cluster in Cape Town and Johannesburg, seeking to gain influence in the A.N.C. government. They also maintain a

presence in Toreador-controlled Tangier, though their influence here has declined of late. Very little in Africa remains entirely free of the Setites' poison touch.

Gangrel

Gangrel have dwelled in Africa for thousands of years; Africa's vast jungles, forests, savannas and deserts draw Gangrel like bees to honey. Nowhere else in the world can one find thousands of miles of land that has not been marred by man. Here, Gangrel can experience nature as it existed 2000 years ago. Gangrel comprise some of the oldest Kindred on the continent; it is rumored that the Gangrel Antediluvian itself roamed (or roams still) under Africa's night sky.

Giovanni

The Giovanni, like the Ventrue, have a vested interest in Africa. Italy, unlike France, Germany and Great Britain, never established successful territories in Africa. In recent centuries, they have attempted to remedy this by infiltrating the trade industry both on and off the continent. Their fingers reach deeply into many African import and export companies. Almost every major port is home to at least one Giovanni or Giovanni ghoul.

Lasombra

The Lasombra maintains a strong presence in the northern reaches of Africa. Algiers and Morocco in particular harbor colonies of Lasombra. The Keepers often war with the Ventrue for control of the area's resources and industries.

Malkavian

A band of Malkavians has taken up a nomadic lifestyle in the Sahara. They are known as the Beni Gnaoua (Sons of the Trance Dancers) or sometimes as the Touareg (Blue Men), so called for the blue cloaks they wear. Legend blames the pale bluish tint of their skin on the dyes in their cloaks.

The Beni Gnaoua roam from oasis to oasis, traveling at night and digging deep into the sand during the day. Anyone is welcome to travel with them. Their number varies anywhere from three to 10, depending on who has come to vacation with their caravan. The existence of the Beni Gnaoua is common knowledge among older Malkavians; many return again and again to spend a few weeks riding camels, partying at the oases and dancing about during sandstorms.

Nosferatu

The majority of African Nosferatu live in Muslim cities in the north. They prefer the older buildings and narrow roadways to the more open spaces of the newer cities. Several lines of sub-Saharan Nosferatu also exist; these collectively go by the name "Chemosit" and rudely turn away all foreign

intruders into their demesnes. The Chemosit are rumored to know many ancient secrets of the African interior; coaxing this information from them, however, is a Herculean feat.

Ravnos

Ravnos traverse the continent, rarely staying long but eagerly participating in Africa's rich storytelling culture. Many African trickster myths may well have their roots in the doings of the Ravnos.

Toreador

Other than in Tangier, few Toreador live in Africa, though many visit to admire the native art. From time to time, talented gold jewelers in Johannesburg attract one or two Toreador, but for the most part, these Kindred just visit and do not establish havens in any city.



Tremere

On the island of Zanzibar, one of the largest chuntries in the world looks out over the Indian Ocean. Nicknamed the Zanzibar Cafe by those who know of it, it exists as a training center for more advanced Tremere. The Zanzibar Cafe was established in 1962 by Noelle Cameron, a sixth-generation Tremere, who became disgusted with poorly trained Kindred and decided to do something about it. Noelle herself reports directly to Inner Councilor Elaine de Calinot.

Tzimisce

Some isolationist Tzimisce have set up large estates in Africa, and it is believed that a few lines of Tzimisce left Eastern Europe for the Dark Continent ages ago. Here, amid Africa's rich soil and vast expanses, these "native Fiends" have continued to propagate, terrifying the populace in the process. A few Sabbat Tzimisce haunt refugee camps, thriving on the plentiful prey and ghoulish fodder. For the most part, however, Tzimisce avoid Africa; there is little here to interest them.

Ventruue

Among the most active of the clans in Africa, the Ventruue has established a business network across the continent. At least one Ventruue or Ventruue ghoul can be found in each major city from Casablanca to Cape Town.

other prodigals in Africa

Kindred do not hold a monopoly on Africa. Other beings of legend also live here.

Africa is the ancestral homeland of the spider-folk, and they

can still be found here, spinning their webs of intrigue. Ananasi haunt all regions of Africa, from the jungles of the Congo to the teeming cities of the north coast. Some Ananasi are found in the area's refugee camps; others feed off the masses of street urchins ubiquitous to Africa's cities.

Bastet

The population of Bastet in Africa has recently been declining. Many of these shapeshifters have left their homeland to explore the world. Although the nature preserves do hold some attraction for the Bastet, and many work to preserve the sanctity of the savannas and jungles, others have migrated to less depressed areas of the world. A rare breed to begin with, the Bastet in Africa rarely make themselves known to other supernatural creatures. For the most part, they do not involve themselves in politics unless it directly affects their territory.

Garou

A large number of Garou, mostly Red Talons, came to Africa at the turn of the century when big-game hunting first became an international attraction. They helped to influence the legislation in 1977 which outlawed it. Many have remained to preserve Africa's wildlife and natural resources. They discourage poachers and seek out native cubs in order to educate them on their nature and responsibilities.

Mages

Because much of Africa has remained untouched by modern civilization and largely unchanged for thousands of years, the Gauntlet here does not have the strength that it does elsewhere in the world. The native peoples still believe strongly in magick and supernatural events. This attracts many mages, especially Dreamspeakers. They bring their apprentices for training, a task made easier among Africa's powerful nodes.



Mokole

Found primarily along the Nile and Congo rivers, the Mokole (wererocodiles) prefer, like the Bastet, to keep to themselves. They rarely involve themselves in local, regional or national politics. One Mokole, a tour guide, has earned legendary status among locals. Known to most people only as Sebek, this Mokole hires his services out to expeditions traveling deep into the Congo. His junglecraft is renowned and African locals say he has actually seen a few of the lost cities which so many people would like to find.

Wraiths

Many native Africans practice ancestor worship. They believe a spirit may return to them through possession of another form, be it that of a snake or through the body of a mwirui (old woman). These events do not frighten the natives; they accept them as a part of life and nature. To throw a snake out of one's home incurs a curse as if one had thrown out one's own mother. Many tribespeople communicate on a regular basis through signals and symbols with their dead ancestors. In Swahili, the Shadowlands are called miri ya mikeongoi.

Changelings

The eshu, native to Africa, were born of its myths and legends. Many roam about like nomads, in search of excitement and adventure. The eshu find themselves drawn to Africa, where the belief in them still survives. Like a battery recharged, the eshu gain strength and lose Banality whenever they return to their homeland.

The Spirit of the Girl

This wraith has reached legendary status among the locals in Mombasa. No one knows exactly how she died, but many people have reported her "hiking possession of their relatives, usually old women. The Girl speaks through these women, demanding the slaughter of a bullock or a cow. The locals believe that anyone who denies the spirit will be doomed. Once, "over a period of two weeks, she appeared many times in a small village to the east of Mombasa. Several hundred animals were slaughtered and consumed. Mombasa officials blamed the phenomenon on a form of mass hysteria and sent in the army to squelch it.

story seeds

The Kindred are drawn to Africa for many reasons, the least of which might be for a vacation or out of mere curiosity. When incorporating Africa into a campaign, play up the mysteries, the rituals and the customs of the people, and emphasize the physical dangers inherent in roaming in the harsh environments of the continent.

- One of the goldsmiths in Mombasa has arranged a special invitation-only auction. The characters manage to get their hands on an invitation, either by legitimate means or otherwise. At the auction, a special ankh, found in 1882 in the tomb of a pharaoh and supposedly imbued with magical qualities, will be sold. Work the ankh into the story much earlier in the chronicle so that the characters recognize it when they see it on the invoice of items to be auctioned. Perhaps the ankh was stolen from someone they know. Perhaps someone else hired them to guard it and it was stolen from them.
- Introduce a NPC much earlier in the chronicle who helps the characters with another problem. When finished, the NPC announces that she is planning a trip to Africa to search for the Lost City of Gold. Several weeks later, the characters hear that their ally has disappeared. What happened to her?
- The characters are asked to investigate a rumored Tremere gathering in Zanzibar. The Tremere have gathered to perform an extremely powerful ritual. The outcome may well mean disaster for the Ventrue and for the other clans.
- The characters are sent as Camarilla political spies to find out what is happening with the Nyayo, the Luo and the other Kindred living in and around Mombasa. What will they do if someone discovers their intentions?
- A Toreador character has heard that a self-proclaimed artist in Tangier has been showing a fantastic collection of paintings. From a brochure, the Toreador character recognizes one of the paintings as belonging to someone she knows, someone other than the artist in Tangier. How would she go about proving it? What if the true artist has met with Final Death at the hands of the Tangier artist?



chapter nine: strangers: the kindred of Asia

The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.

-L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*

The lands of the Orient have a mystical quality about them that has mesmerized mortals for centuries. The cultures, social distinctions and belief systems of the East have so radically changed and evolved that even today, at the split-second pace of millennium's end, time and life - and the universe itself - move at their own pace.

Centuries ago, it was not hard for unwashed mortals from the kingdoms of Europe to imagine the Eastern realms as wondrous, fantastical places full of mysterious people, exotic locales and mythical beasts. The livelihoods and values of the mortals of the Orient still differ vastly from those of the West. How the East lives and breathes, works and rests, believes and fights and dies, cannot be compared to any other set of principles anywhere in the world. The Asians are enigmatic peoples who live enigmatic lives. The Western mind can observe and sense and try to comprehend the profundity of being that is the Orient, but in the end it can never fully perceive the complexities of Asia.

It is no surprise that the vampires of Asia differ from their Western counterparts in practically every way that their mortal herds do. They are reputedly not blood descendants of Caine. Their societies emphasize different codes of conduct from the strictures of the Camarilla and the Six Traditions. Their physiologies do not conform to anything that

the Western clans are familiar with. Asian vampires have different feeding habits and strange, heretofore unknown powers.

Asia's centuries-old isolation from the Western world, and the risks involved with a Kindred's attempting to travel a great distance, have allowed Asia's vampires to exist in a world that has in many ways changed little from the days of the first great emperors and warlords. Those few Western Kindred who risk the journey to China or Japan speak of a dark feeling deep within themselves from the minute they emerge from their hidey-holes to move through the various circles of the Orient's vampires. A sense of alien dislocation tingles through their empty veins - no allies, no ghouls or easily whipped mortals to run one's errands, no clue as to who one's enemies might be. Asia is a world of unfamiliarity, as intricate as one of its puzzle-boxes... and about as infuriating to open.

The Land of the Ten Thousand: The Kindred of China

One billion people. One thousand million bodies.

Which means, roughly speaking, that about 10,000 vampires reside within China. It is the largest number of Kindred dwelling within one country, and this fact alone makes China the nexus of the Eastern Kindred - they even refer to themselves, half-jokingly, as the Ten Thousand. To those who can sense such things - and most Kindred can - the whole land pulses with a raw, unbridled force from the potency of vitae and the presence of native hunger. China still whispers as seductively to the Western clans as it did to the explorers of long ago.

In many respects, China is still a land of the past, of technological simplicity and slow pace. Many of the amenities of the Western world are not in as plentiful supply here as they are in Europe and America; the odd Western Kindred who wants to steal a car (of which there are fewer than one million in the entire country) or who wishes to hide out in an abandoned, out-of-the-way building may very well get a nasty shock when he realizes that the conveniences he had grown accustomed to in his homeland are not so readily available in China.

There are four major citadels of Chinese Kindred: Beijing to the north, Shanghai on the eastern coast, Hong Kong on the southern coast and Chongqing to the west. They are all connected to each other by the Shaolin Monastery, in the province of Henan, which acts as the focal point for the Kindred of China. In these five places, the Ancients of China live and rule and administer over the fate of 10,000 eternals. Despite the throwback nature of the culture, however, the Chinese Kindred are not fools - they know that eyes from the West look greedily upon their world, and they are well aware of the poisoning that will occur if certain Western clans are allowed to infiltrate their universe.

Being Short Discourse on the Phenomenon of Chinese Vampires

The (Chinese Kindred are a completely separate class of vampire from the Western broods. The story of their origins and social compositions is a blend of ancient mythology, philosophy and cultural practices. Many Chinese Kindred point to an old creation myth to explain their origins, a myth based on the ages-old concept of the interaction of *yin* and *yang*.

The story tells of the Emperors Shu and Hu, rulers of the Northern and Southern Seas respectively, who journeyed to visit Hun Dun, or "Chaos," the emperor of the Center realm. Hun Dun received both his quests most kindly, and the two emperors thought long of how to repay his hospitality. They observed that both of them each had seven holes in their bodies, for seeing, hearing, and so on, but that Hun Dun had none. To show their gratitude, the two emperors bored holes in Hun Dun's body, one per day, until the seventh day when their work was done. Unfortunately, Hun Dun had been killed in the process, and at that moment Chaos died, and the ordered world came into being, as the forces of yin and yang in the personification of the Emperors Shu and Hu joined their realms permanently.

This is an allegorical story, of course, but it is a way to explain the origins of the Chinese Kindred, who believe that they are the children of the Center realm, the logical descendants of Hun Dun and the empire of the Center, of Chaos. Hun Dun, as the personification of Chaos, is their First Sire, and it is from him that the Kindred of China, in all their different guises, receive their power. As the forces of yin and yang are each other's opposite, and as their interaction brings Order to the world, so are the Kindred of China the guardians of Chaos, which acts as the opposite of Order, and logically must, exist to preserve the dualistic integrity of the universe.

This is not the only story Chinese explain their origins. More altruistic Kindred point to the myth of the Earth Ancient, who cleared the land of monsters and established the Middle Kingdom. What is clear is that Chinese Kindred are old indeed, and may well predate the Antediluvians and even Caine Himself.

Beijing

The capital city of China, Beijing, is a city of pale colors blown from the dust-filled prevailing winds of Central Asia. The city is squat, lacking the jutting jumbles of high-rise buildings that characterize most other world capitals. A city whose history can be traced by a simple walk down any major thoroughfare, Beijing over the centuries has been attacked, besieged, burned, rebuilt, attacked again,

oppressed, liberated from its oppressors and liberated from its liberators. Each time it has resurrected to its unique form, an atavistic phoenix rising from the ashes of those who would strip Beijing raw and remake it in their image.

The Kindred of Beijing are of the more aristocratic type; some even claim descendancy from the great dynastic emperors. In this regard, Beijing has become a sort of embassy city for Chinese Kindred, a de facto meeting-place where the few Western Kindred who make it to the region can meet with the leaders of the city and move about its confines with at least the leave, if not the help, of the ruler, Ancestor Ch'ang-Li.

Social Hierarchy

As the mortal society of China is predicated upon respect for elders and Ancestor worship, so too is the structure of the Kindred in China based upon these same principles. In Chinese vampiric society, there exists a far more rigid hierarchical setup than the Camarilla. Elder vampires are revered as mortals revere their deceased Ancestors; the term for the "prince" of a Chinese city or region is "Ancestor," even though his or her subjects may not be sired directly therefrom. It places the concept of Kindred interaction in a new perspective, especially among China's younger Kindred, who look to their elders and Ancestors to teach them the way out of their Damned existence - a far cry from anarch revolution and Antediluvian mistrust.

Ch'ang-Li is the head of the Beijing divisions of the People's Army and the ruling Ancestor. A loyal and frighteningly good fighter in the ranks of Genghis Khan's army for many years, Ch'ang-Li became a captain in the Imperial Guard of Kublai Khan, the great Mongolian warrior's successor. He has always been wary of Westerners, ever since the days when a band of Venetian merchants by the name of Polo had audience with the great emperor. The sight of this unwashed, rude band of foreigners did not make a very good impression on Ch'ang-Li, and the last seven centuries or so have done little to change his opinion. Ch'ang-Li is an excellent administrator, but he also has the soul of a warrior and can tire of foreigners quickly, which means that the best course of action in Beijing is to try to catch Ch'ang-Li on one of his good nights - few as they may be.

Tian'anmen Square and its Environs

Tian'anmen Square is an immense agora that fronts the legendary Forbidden City of the Chinese Empire. Standing there in the dead of night, it is almost impossible to discern where its boundaries are; they extend off into the distance in a confusing, horizonless illusion. The square is packed with both natives and tourists during the day, weaving and undulating around the square like the parts of some ameboid colony. At night, Tian'anmen Square is blanketed in that thick, soporific silence that is indigenous to China. Here the Kindred of Beijing walk, the square their agreed meeting place.

Tian'anmen Square also serves as a demilitarized zone of sorts for the few Western Kindred who reside in Beijing. For them, Tian'anmen Square is a neutral ground where deals can be made and guests can be presented to the Ancestor without incident.

The Forbidden City, the old Imperial Palace, is where Ch'ang-Li holds court with native Kindred and receives the few foreigners who come to Beijing. In the old days, the Forbidden City housed the emperor, his court, concubines, ministers, artisans and servants - thousands of people living in a 250-acre plot of land that was the most hallowed ground on Earth. Now it is a museum, home to some of the finest art treasures in all of China, as well as Ch'ang-Li and a small council of ministers who comprise the leadership of the 100 or so Kindred in Beijing.

Within a few miles' radius of the square are several vast parks. Zhongshan Park and the People's Cultural Park flank



the Imperial Palace; these parks house rock gardens, ponds, covered wooden walkways and even an outdoor amphitheater. A few blocks south is Temple of Heaven Park, which houses the Temple of Heaven, and across Yongdingmennei Avenue to the west of the Temple is Xiannongtan Stadium. Yuyuan Lake Park is a few miles west, and Beihai and Jingshan Parks are immediately to the north. All of the parks in Beijing are masterpieces of simplicity and quiet reflection for the mortals who come to them, and when the parks close at night, the inactivity allows Beijing's Kindred to forget that they are in the middle of one of the world's largest cities.

The Great Wall at Badaling

At Badaling Pass, north of the city, lies the Great Wall of China. The largest manmade architectural structure in history, the Wall weaves its brick spine over six thousand miles from the Gobi Desert to the Bohai Sea. It is said that the Wall was built through the efforts of over 300,000 men, many of them political prisoners in the early centuries A.D. Their bodies were interred in the Wall itself, a final marriage of creator and creation. Today, the Wall acts as a sort of conduit for many Chinese Kindred. With the tombs of the original builders long since vacated, vagabond groups of Chinese vampires have been known to lessen the risks of travel by simply traveling along the Wall at night (and feeding upon any stray kine) and using the empty wall-graves by day as places to sleep, turning the Great Wall into the world's largest...er, bed-and-breakfast inn.

The East Side

The eastern part of Beijing is the modern, commercial section, boasting a fleet of hotels and "guest houses" for visiting dignitaries, shopping centers and marketplaces, and Beijing's "embassy row" in the northeast quadrant of the city. The handful of Western Kindred who reside in Beijing on a more-or-less permanent basis concentrate themselves in this part of the city, where the skyscrapers and nightlife help to alleviate homesickness and culture shock. The Peace Hotel

is the most famous and most Westernized accommodation in Beijing, and Western Kindred tend to gravitate toward the shadow it casts. Dongfeng Market, just a stone's throw east of Tian'anmen Square, is a huge canopied affair that houses hundreds of stalls selling everything from hardware to clothing to old science textbooks. Here is where Western Kindred feel most at home.

Martino della Passaglia

Background: The Westerner who makes these Western Kindred feel most at home is a Giovanni named Martino della Passaglia, the head of Beijing's black market. Passaglia has lived in Beijing under one name or another for almost two centuries, and has found that there is a lot of money to be made in the black market. Not one bootleg Beatles album or pair of blue jeans flows through the hidden economy without Passaglia knowing exactly where the merchandise is headed. Regardless of his amassment of wealth or apparent influence in Beijing, Passaglia is still pretty much a hustler. A very good hustler, but a hustler nevertheless.

Image: Passaglia always dresses in the height of fashion, be that fashion Western or Eastern. A tall, pale man with barely graying jet-black hair, Passaglia radiates self-confidence and cool.

Roleplaying Hints: You know all the angles, and you hear everything first. Always stand ready to "help" (i.e., to awe and disconcert) newcomer Kindred with offhandedly remarked news that only you know. Everyone should like you upon their first meeting with you, and by the end of that meeting they should realize that they need you.



Clan: Giovanni
Nature: Survivor
Demeanor: Conniver
Generation: 8
Embrace: 1701
Apparent Age: late 30s
Physical: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 4
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 4, Wits 5
Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 3, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4
Skills: Business 5, Firearms 4, Stealth 3
Knowledges: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 5, Politics 2
Disciplines: Auspex 2, Dominate 4, Necromancy 3, Obfuscate 3, Potence 3
Backgrounds: Allies 3, Contacts 3, Herd 3, Resources 5, Status 2
Virtues: Conscience 2, Self-Control 4, Courage 4
Humanity: 7
Willpower: 7

shanghai

Shanghai is the fifth-largest city in the world. This once-unimportant fishing village and stopover for Japanese ships has transformed over the last 150 years into a thriving center of shipping and commerce. Shanghai is the most cosmopolitan area of China, a world of decaying elegance whose crumbling art-deco architecture and broad tree-lined avenues evoke images of London or Paris in the 1920s. Although Shanghai looks like a place where one might run into Hemingway on any corner, its rows of townhouses are nowadays nothing more than quaint shells housing cramped tenement apartments. These dilapidated structures have fallen apart and out of the spotlight in favor of the modern glass-and-steel monoliths that have sprung up around the city in the last decade.



The Bund: Zhomshan Road

Zhongshan Road, also known as the Bund (embankment) by Westerners, is a wide tree-lined boulevard on the west bank of the Huangpu River that snakes south of the city. It was the former equivalent to Wall Street or London's City when the Western powers dominated Shanghai. Practically all of the old banks, hotels and gentlemen's clubs that line the Bund were completely under foreign control. In 1937, the Japanese overran the eastern coast of China and occupied Shanghai until the end of World War II. Flocks of hostile Japanese Kindred infested a large portion of the city and scoured the Bund in search of both Western Kindred and the local Chinese. To this night, the Bund remains a no-man's-land, and nocturnal battles often crash along its rooftops and down its alleys.

The Old Town

A mere half-block west from the Bund sits the Old Town, a collection of neighborhoods bordered by the circular Renmin and Zhonghua Roads. It is the former "Chinese city" of Shanghai, the place where the heaviest concentration of Chinese Kindred resides. Abutting the Bund, the Old Town was once a rats' alley of slums where few Europeans dared to tread. Nowadays, the Old Town is an out-of-the-way place for tourists to witness the vanishing Chinese urban lifestyle: a sort of living, producing restoration village.

For Kindred, the Old Town is a closely packed community of "Townies." Paranoia and mistrust reign, and a code of silence blankets the area. The streets are narrow and circuitous, like a great landscape maze; more than one foreign Kindred has been lost wandering around the labyrinthine avenues and been set upon by the Blood Circle, a roving gang of extremists that patrols the streets of the Old Town and sees the destruction of all foreign Kindred as its goal. The Blood Circle keeps a sort of order in the Old Town, but it is a service that no one wants - or has tried to stop.

People's Square and Blood Alley

West of the Bund and the Old Town is People's Park and People's Square, a full square mile of green in the heart of Shanghai. Its boundaries were supposedly traced out at swordpoint by a mounted foreigner, who bought up all the land within the circle to create a park. It holds a historical museum; the Shanghai Municipal Library; and People's Square, a 35-acre public ground used for parades and political rallies.

Off Fuzhou Road, west of People's Park, is the most notorious red-light district of Shanghai, known as "Blood Alley," and for good reason - it is the home turf for thousands of prostitutes, heroin addicts and opium addicts. The Alley was cleaned out by the Communist Party in the early 1950s, who detoxified all of the addicts and gave all of the prostitutes new jobs and identities. In the World of Darkness, however, the region's vampires realized that Blood Alley was

too good a hunting ground to lose, and the area quickly reverted to its former state. Blood Alley is crammed with bars and low-end nightclubs where Kindred can meet and do business away from the fire and death of the Bund or the Old Town.

A number of former prostitutes still live on Blood Alley; one of them is "Nightingale" Rosie Ming, who got her name from the bar she used to work out of, Nightingales' Perch. Ming, now a vampire, is usually found hanging out in the modern tourist-trap discotheques and nightclubs that have sprung up around the city, winning the nightly karaoke contests and flirting with all the available men. She is a party girl, one you can always count on for a good time or, if the price is right, a quick sanctuary.

HONG KONG

An international crossroads of business and commerce, Hong Kong is reaching a period of transition in the mortal world, which is hound to have tremendous repercussions upon the Kindred who reside on this island of six million people. At the stroke of midnight on June 30, 1997, the 99-year lease of Hong Kong, the "New Territories," will be up, and this tiny British-controlled outcropping of rock will revert permanently back to Chinese rule. Already, vampires scramble for control over the island, and as 1997 draws closer and closer, tensions ignite, tempers flare and many of the Western Kindred's personal Beasts start to rumble.

Hong Kong is the only spot in all of China where Western Kindred have made any real consolidated stronghold. The entire colony is about 98% Chinese, and the dozen or so Western Kindred who call this colony their home exist in a constant state of furtiveness and secrecy.

The island is divided into two actual Kindred "realms" for native Chinese and Western Kindred. The leader of the Western Kindred is Robert Pedder, a sailor who was Embraced in the 17th century and followed British expansion to Hong Kong, where he was appointed prince of the island following the Opium Wars and the Treaty of Nanking in 1842. Pedder, a seventh-generation Ventrue, runs the affairs of the Western Kindred from his offices in Central District, Hong Kong's main commercial section. He has historically been a fair and mostly reasonable ruler, ensuring safe passage for all Kindred who elect to travel by freight to the island and keeping his charges in line. With the expiration of the lease in 1997, however, Pedder will leave Hong Kong; it is rumored that he has accepted a post as prince in another part of the world.

Pedder's departure will create a power vacuum among the island's Kindred, Chinese and Western alike. It also means a risk for the Westerners - Pedder is the only Western Kindred who really knows anything about his Chinese counterparts, and although Pedder will most likely recommend a successor before he leaves, that successor cannot possibly duplicate

Pedder's mystique and panache. And again, Pedder may choose not to name anyone at all, thereby placing the entire island under the auspices of the local Ancestor and turning the world of Hong Kong's Western Kindred completely upside-down.

Central District

If you took Wall Street, the City in London, Fifth Avenue and Yonge Street in Toronto, and dropped them all on the same island, you'd have a dizzying, cacophonous mess, which pretty much describes Central District in Hong Kong. Vertiginous skyscrapers tower over masses of people in constant motion from place to place. Luxury hotels, slightly shorter in stature but no less dignified, fill in the spaces that financial towers can't, and nightclubs fill in the spaces that the hotels can't. Holed away among all of these monoliths are countless little alleyways and street vendors, plying everything from miracle herbs to on-street faxing to, in the seedier districts, off-street perversity.

The Queen Elizabeth I

One of the world's premier ocean liners back in the days when sailing was far more in vogue than it is now, the QEI was bought by shipping magnate C.Y. Tung and brought to Hong Kong Harbor in order to be transformed into a "Seawise Floating University." No doubt it would have made a great place to study, but in 1972, a mysterious fire raged through the shell of the great ship, rolling her over in the harbor.

Robert Pedder saw the advantages of this great ship and, through negotiation with his Ancestor counterpart, secured the use of the QEI as a safe haven for visiting Western Kindred. The great ship has accommodation space for hundreds of people, definitely enough space to house all of the Kindred in Hong Kong. Pedder has also managed to co-opt the services of some of his ghouls and has employed them to run the liner's old casino, for those Kindred inclined to gambling. The QEI has become, in effect, a Kindred form of a "gentlemen's club," although it is frequented by male and female Kindred alike.

Hollywood Road

Hollywood Road snakes through Hong Kong's Western District, packed with antique dealers, secondhand book shops, brothels, opium dens and just about every conceivable vice and curiosity imaginable. The normal 9-to-5 shops regurgitate their wares onto the sidewalks, and the air reverberates with the chirping of hawkers touting their goods and gawkers haggling over the prices. When the shops close, the thoroughfare known as the Cat Street Market opens. The Cat Street Market, known in earlier times as Thieves' Alley, is the red-light district of Hong Kong: a place where one can retain a prostitute, a few hours in an opium den, or a roaming thug to break someone's kneecaps for \$50 - and kill someone for \$ 100. Naturally, Kindred swarm here.

Winston Lee

Background: Hollywood Road at night can be a dangerous place, but it is a place where Winston Lee, a mortal, feels right at home. Lee has lived in the world of Hollywood Road all his life, having been born in one of its cramped slums and spending most of his formative years running with a gang called the Death Cats. When not raising hell, Winston was often found in the back room of an ancient booksellers' shop on Hollywood Road, poring over old tomes of mysticism and the occult that the old couple let him read simply to keep him off the street. It wasn't long before Winston Lee became more attuned to the supernatural population of Hong Kong; soon Winston found himself before the Ancestor of the island. The Ancestor, named Cho, saw in Winston a valuable kine contact, someone who could move about Hong Kong 24 hours a day to watch the movements of the Kindred populations.

Winston is usually found in the back alleys and atop the roofs of Hollywood Road, working the underworld population and making contacts with both Chinese and Western Kindred, taking in everything and always alert for any sign of trouble.

Image: Winston Lee is a fairly nondescript man of middle years who dresses stylishly but unobtrusively.

Roleplaying Hints: You are almost as smart, savvy and cool as you think you are. Always act as though you know more than you do, but stay out of any real danger: You've seen enough to know your limitations.



Nature: Loner

Demeanor: Survivor

Age: mid-40s

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3

Social: Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Acting 3, Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Brawl 3, Dodge 2, Intimidation 2, Search 3, Streetwise 3, Subterfuge 2

Skills: Drive 3, Firearms 3, Melee 3, Repair 3, Stealth 3

Knowledges: Area Knowledge 4, Computer 2, Investigation 3, Law 2, Linguistics 3, Occult 4, Science 1

Numina & Other Traits: Psychic Abilities 1, Psychometry 2, Thaumaturgy 1

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Contacts 3, Mentor (Cho) 3, Resources 2, Retainers 2

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

Humanity: 8

Willpower: 7

Oliver Thrace

Background: Oliver Thrace gained an infamous reputation even among the Tremere; he specialized in "cleaning up" Sabbat, Assamites and other clan enemies. When Thomas Wyncham offered the power-hungry Thrace an opportunity to sit at his right hand during the Tremere infiltration of the East, Thrace jumped at the chance - particularly because the Orient's multitudinous spirits and demons might well make useful servitors. Thrace now has a hand in many of Hong Kong's vice rings and quasilegitimate operations.

Image: Thrace is tall and muscular, with silver hair and craggy features. A scar mars his right cheek, and he often keeps his right eye hidden beneath a patch (an affectation). He carries a silver-headed walking cane inscribed with all manner of deadly rituals.

Roleplaying Hints: Your gaze could freeze the earth's core. You are the archetypal Tremere sorcerer, combined with a ruthless, cruel edge more suitable to a Brujah or Tzimisce. You desire temporal power, but are even more interested in gaining command over demons and spirits. Unlike many Tremere, you occasionally give in to displays of wrath, and you enjoy dispatching foes (or incompetent underlings) via any of several gruesome spells. Your surreptitious study of Dark Thaumaturgy is a dirty little secret; should anyone discover your demonological predilections, kill the meddler immediately.

Clan: Tremere

Nature: Bravo

Demeanor: Autocrat

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 1496

Apparent Age: 40

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 6, Appearance 3

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Talents: Alertness 5, Brawl 3, Dodge 4, Intimidation 6, Leadership 3, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 4

Skills: Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Melee 4, Stealth 3

Knowledge: Bureaucracy 3, Finance 5, Linguistics 6, Occult 3, Politics 4

Disciplines: Auspex 6, Dominate 6, Fortitude 2, Necromancy 4, Obfuscate 4, Potence 4, Thaumaturgy 6 (Blood 5, Elemental Mastery 5, Lure of Flames 5, Movement of Mind 4, Spirit Thaumaturgy 5), Thaumaturgy (Dark) 3

Rituals: Too many to list here; Thrace specializes in summoning and binding spirits and ghosts.

Backgrounds: Contacts 4, Influence 4, Mentor 5, Resources 5, Retainers 5

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 2, Courage 4

Humanity: 2

Willpower: 9



chongqing

Chongqing sits in the southwest of China, at the confluence of the Yangtze and Jialing rivers. It is the largest city in the Sichuan province of China, but fewer than 10 Chinese Kindred live on and around the pointed peninsula upon which the city sits. Chongqing (known more familiarly to Westerners as Chungking) is a key transportation center, being situated at the fork of two of China's major rivers and a nexus of major north-south land routes.

The name Chongqing means "repeated good luck" in Chinese, but to the Kindred of the region, the city is a far cry from that appellation. Within the city and around the surrounding countryside reside the types of Chinese vampires that old books speak about, the malformed demons of legend. Some Western Kindred who have been lucky enough to survive a brush with these creatures describe corpses with red eyes, razor-sharp talons and white or greenish hair all over their bodies, which gives the impression that the creatures are literally decomposing before one's eyes. Their practices, which range from the reanimation of skeletons to outright cannibalism, would make even the most jaded Nosferatu flinch. Even if they choose not to inflict any physical damage, it is said that these vampires are also practiced in the art of psychological destruction, often leaving their victims, both Kindred and kine alike, babbling long into the night.

The City Proper

Chongqing's peninsula resembles the superstructure of a giant ship, and Pipa Shan Park sits atop its highest point. It is a favorite spot for Kindred at night, as the park offers an unobstructed view of the entire city and both the Yangtze and the Jialing Rivers. It holds a bonsai nursery and several tea gardens, where foreign tourists are usually taken at night to see the illuminated view of the city and the major pier at the junction of the rivers. West of the park is Red Crag Village, which looks like what it is—a residence (formerly the home of the famous premier Zhou Enlai) laid out along a reddish rocky terrain. Enlai's old house sits on a bluff overlooking the Jialing River, and it offers an excellent vantage point to watch activity and movement in the northern countryside.

The Outskirts

Few Kindred stay in Chongqing for any substantial length of time. Fewer still are foolish enough to find themselves lost in the outskirts of Chongqing, along Shapingba and Yubei Roads northwest of the city. Along Yubei Road are two former prisons, Zhazhidong and Baigongguan, that were run by the Sino-American Special Technical Cooperation Organization (SACO), an anti-Japanese organization of communist extremists operating during World War II. Farther down the Yubei Road is another former prison, the Criminal Acts Exhibition Hall, which among its other garish exhibits features a full display of torture instruments used by the SACO upon suspected Japanese sympathizers.

"The Gordon Report"

There have been reports throughout the years of a number of Western Kindred disappearing from Chongqing as soon as they set root in the city. One of the most famous accounts is from a Malkavian named Gordon, who claims to have been abducted by the local Kindred and taken to one of Chongqing's deserted prisons, where he was subjected to hideously mid tortures by a Chinese vampire known as the Warden. Gordon's account explicitly described the use of instruments such as pinpoint blowtorches, strobe lighting that triggered an onset of aggravated Rotschreck, and so forth. Most of the inner Camarillan circle dismissed Gordon's claims as the typical ramblings of his kind, and a further investigation was called off due to the lack of any leads to pursue within the city itself. Suffice it to say, Chongqing has not been a frequent stopover for Western Kindred for quite some time now.

The prisons are allegedly used as interrogation centers by the local Kindred. Whether or not this is true, it must also be noted that the area north of the prisons, in the Jin Yun Hills, appears to be the place where these vampires keep their lair. The Gordon Report also contains testimony about the existence of what the unfortunate Malkavian termed "fox-maidens": female vampires with the ability to shift their forms into that of foxes and tigers.

The Shaolin Monastery

Roughly 700 miles southwest of Beijing, in the rough geographical center of Henan Province, sits the famous Shaolin Monastery. The monastery, despite (or perhaps because of) its holy aura, is home to a sect of Chinese vampires who are popularly regarded as the sages of the Chinese Kindred. Little is known about the inner workings of this clan of monks, except that they have dedicated themselves to learning and teaching what they call the Great Principle—a system of belief and action that is designed to bring Kindred to a state of inner balance and harmony. By living the weds of the Great Principle, it is thought that a Kindred can gain total power over his inner chaotic self and quell the hunger that resides within.

The existence of this band of Chinese vampire-sages was first brought to the attention of the Western Kindred by the Salubri, who maintain that their founder Saulot met with these teachers during his wanderings in Asia. The Salubri believe that it was through the teachings of this sect of eastern Kindred that Saulot was able to achieve the blessed state of Golconda, and upon reaching this spiritual plateau was opened up to many new and wondrous powers. However, few written records to this effect are widely circulated among the Camarilla clans; the details of this Eastern sect are closely guarded among the Salubri - many say for good reason.

The vampire monks of Shaolin are thought to be the spiritual leaders of the Chinese Kindred, and they receive all who come to their doorstep seeking advice and guidance, from the lowest clan member to the highest Ancestor. (At least, all those among China's Damned who can bear to set foot in the place.) They are the most important voices in the society of China's Kindred, and their words have instigated epochal and dynastic changes. Along with advice, the monks also act as the carriers of the Great Principle. From aristocratic Beijing to war-torn Shanghai, to the tense east-west dichotomy of Hong Kong and even to the spurned childer of Chongqing, the



words of the Shaolin Kindred echo through the night.

Layout

Although most of the original facade of Shaolin Monastery fell to the torch in 1928, the buildings that still stand are used by Kindred as the center of their teaching. The Thousand Buddha Hall, one of the most endearing of the surviving structures, is used by the present-day monks as a place to practice the martial art of kung fu, for which the Monastery is renowned. The leaders of the Shaolin Kindred also use its main hall as a temple of sorts to preach the Great Principle to those who risk the hardships of travel to come and hear it. The White Drapery Hall holds a collection of books on various aspects of Shaolin martial arts, as well as certain tomes on meditation and inner focus that allegedly bear close resemblance to the teachings of the Great Principle.

To the west of the Monastery is the Forest of Pagodas, a graveyard for venerated monks. The Forest consists of more than 200 pagoda-shaped tombs, many of them believed to be havens for various undead monks. Another reported haven is in the Longmen Caves west of the Monastery, at the base of the Longmen Mountains. The Caves comprise a network of over 2000 caves, niches and outcroppings fissuring through the Longmen Mountains. Important shrines to the local Buddhist priests, the Caves are the perfect place in which to disappear: Underneath the caves lie passages and older caves from prehistoric times. The path to these subterranean caves, normally inaccessible and unknown to mortals, seems to be known only to the highest-ranking members of this band of Kindred monks. They have been rumored to disappear into the depths for months on end, engaging themselves in quiet meditations on the teachings of the Great Principle.

The western clans in china

China still remains closed off to the majority of the Camarilla, but a few clans have managed to make some sporadic inroads into this colossus, through diplomatic dealings and the initiative of more enterprising Kindred. Despite these scattered instances, no formal agreements or recognitions have been struck between the official governing bodies of the Camarilla and the various clans in China, individually or collectively; China still remains as unknown today as it was centuries ago.

Assamites

Being the most proximate, some members of this Arabic clan have ventured into the westernmost regions of China and have set up one or two havens. The Assamites are said to be on good terms with the Chinese Kindred, which can probably be attributed to a hatred of the Camarilla clans more than any objective fondness for the Chinese Kindred.

However, rumors state that certain Ancestors in the western outskirts of China have entered into a treaty with the Assamites. In exchange for guarding the western borders of China against any significant intrusion of Western Kindred, the Assamites are reputedly provided with vampire vitae untainted by the curse of the Tremere. Admittedly, it is not known whether this is true or, if so, whether Chinese Kindred blood is free from the Tremere curse (or even compatible with Assamite physiology). However, the potential consequences are obviously devastating enough that many are already gossiping about this in the inner sanctums of the Camarilla.

Giovanni

The original party of Giovanni, led by Martino della Passaglia, still funnels Western contraband into the city of Beijing. There were only six Giovanni in the original group; of these six, Passaglia and his two most trusted lieutenants remain in Beijing. One Giovanni died in a mysterious altercation; the remaining two have moved to Shanghai and Hong Kong, where they stay in close contact with Passaglia, often using their banks as money-laundering operations. (And don't think that Passaglia doesn't get a nice take from that casino on the Queen Elizabeth I.)

Passaglia and his cronies are rather contemptuous of the Camarilla and the rest of the Western clans. They consider the entire organization to be a group of stodgy old worriers, and have, in essence, renounced their ties to the rest of their Giovanni brethren back in Europe, preferring to live as lone wolves in this isolated world of the East.

Tremere

By far, the Tremere is the one clan that has made a concerted effort to establish a power base in Asia. Although the planned pincer movement by Tremere councilors Abetorius and Thomas Wyncham proved a failure (Abetorius being routed by the Assamites as he attempted to work through the Middle East and enter China from the west), Wyncham has managed to establish a base in Hong Kong, although he has penetrated no farther inland.

The coming power struggle in Hong Kong is of great interest to Wyncham. As Tremere representative for Asia, he considers it his duty to step in and seize control of the island's Kindred population from whomever succeeds Robert Pedder, as well as undermine the authority of the local Ancestor. Ultimately, Wyncham would like to penetrate into mainland China and the Shaolin Monastery, where the destruction or subjugation of the sect of Shaolin sages would be a large feather in his cap. His first lieutenant in this is a Tremere named Oliver Thrace, who heads many of the vice rings on the island of Hong Kong. Thrace is powerful and scary, but his instability and the building stress as the night of reckoning approaches have made him edgy and prone to slips, which has not sat well with Wyncham at all.

Ventruue

Robert Pedder has been established and respected in Hong Kong since the late 19th century, and is the elder statesman among the Western Kindred. His diplomatic acumen has been instrumental over the decades in allowing Camarilla Kindred of all clans to live on Hong Kong Island unmolested by the native populations. Pedder's influence has even reached as far as Beijing, where he maintains good relations with the Ancestor Ch'ang-Li, thus ensuring the protection of a few Kindred visitors to Ch'ang-Li's domain. The Ventruue have been scrambling their brains in the hopes of finding an able replacement for Pedder when he steps down in 1997, and many in the clan secretly wish that he would reconsider his decision to leave the island.

The gap of the generations: The kindred of Japan

Japan boasts a history, culture and society at least as old as that of China. It also houses its own Kindred, who are as ancient and diverse as the Ten Thousand of old Cathay. Japan is the most Westernized country in all of Asia; it is a forward-thinking economic and technological juggernaut. Yet this island nation's people and customs remain entrenched in thousands of years of social disciplines and mores that seem almost paradoxical, considering Japan's very Western outlook on commerce and business.

Japan was always an isolated nation; being an island off the coast of an unattainable China, she and her people existed in relative isolation until the mid-19th century, when the West came to the Land of the Rising Sun in the form of Commodore Matthew Perry. Within less than 150 years, the nation of Japan was opened to the rest of the world. It adopted some of the practices of the West. The Japanese navy grew and defeated a supposedly superior Russian force at the turn of the century. It invaded China and attacked Hawaii. Japan's cities suffered devastation from the greatest instrument of death ever devised by human hands. The country was rebuilt and modernized, and today is the most advanced country in the world in many aspects of science and business. Its population has increased seven times since the "opening" of the country to the Western world, and its landscape and people have changed forever. Its Kindred have also undergone changes in ways that no outsider can fathom.

What few records and accounts exist point to a small handful of vampire clans that were the original Kindred of Japan. Centuries ago, when Japan was no more than a feudalistic empire, they were strong within themselves and among each other, drawing their potency not only from human vitae, but also from the land itself.

Japan is a mountainous set of islands, with rolling hills and forests and fast rivers thundering through the steep vales. Many parts of the islands, even today, are barely a step or two out of the forest primeval, and only about three percent of the land is actually inhabited. It was in the wilderness that the elder vampires of Japan, the warrior-clans and teacher-clans and earth-spirit-clans, thrived, few but strong in number. Some clans went among the mortals, becoming mighty heroes and samurai; one clan was even purged, its members sent into the mountain depths. On the whole, however, the Kindred of Japan existed in harmony with the land.

All of this changed with the arrival of the foreigners. As the mortal population increased exponentially, so did the Kindred population. As Japan adopted more of the fashions and fads of the Occidental cultures, certain of its Kindred allegedly underwent a strange transformation. It is difficult to say what exactly happened, but recently Embraced Japanese Kindred have supposedly become what are in fact different clans, totally unfamiliar to their earliest sires.

And these new bloodlines have adopted habits and ideals that would make the elder Kindred clans turn pale (if they weren't that already). These new clans of young Turks have modernized along with the kine, and have ridden the tsunami of financial success to become potent players in some of the island's largest corporations and banks. They have dealt with the clans of the Camarilla, made partnerships with them financially and commercially, and are very disposed to continue doing so. They are living for the moment, for the thrill of mortal power and orgiastic sensuality. To them, this epicurean lifestyle is their key: By living like mortals, they can forget that they are not.

The elder clans, however, do not care to forget. They feel that the nature of near-immortality carries with it a *giri* (duty) too dear to be degraded, as the younger Kindred are doing. Unblinded by the glint of money, the elder Kindred of the island have banded together in an unwritten pact to maintain the integrity of their kind against the rebellious youngsters. There is a gap widening in the society of Japanese Kindred, a gap of the generations. And it is dangerously becoming something like a war.

Hiruko's Children

According to legend, the father of the Japanese Kindred is Hiruko, the first child of the divine couple Izanagi and Izanami, who by their coupling are said to have created the islands that make up Japan. Before the two deities brought forth the islands, they supposedly gave birth to their first child, a deformed thing named Hiruko, or "Leech-Child." Unhappy at what they had wrought, the couple placed Hiruko in a reed-boat and consigned him to the sea, where he was never seen again.

The original Japanese clans believe that they are descendants of Hiruko- the abandoned children of the gods who created these islands upon which they reside. Yet rather than curse and rail against themselves and their plight, the members of these, original clans see themselves as chosen for something greater. They hold a proprietary fealty over the island and look upon themselves as its guardians-older siblings in a way - for they are (at least in their minds) not only blood descendants of the Gods, but in fact the blood relations of Japan itself, with all the responsibilities that follow.

TOKYO

Tokyo, arguably the largest city in the world, is the political, commercial, industrial and cultural center of Japan. The city is actually a megalopolis consisting of a thousand small towns, each with its own bullet train stations, shopping markets, arcades and mazes of streets. Over 83,000 streets make up the towns that in turn make up Greater Tokyo, and only the largest of these streets actually have names. This is an infuriating prospect for Kindred trying to find a safe haven or weave their way toward an ally-or away from an enemy. These nocturnal streets are choked with bodies, all reflecting the eerie glow of the neon advertising canopy that covers the city. Despite the press of people, the Kindred of Japan use Tokyo as the nexus point to gather, to hide, to do business with their foreign counterparts - and to battle with their own kind.

The Imperial Palace

Directly in the center of this labyrinthine city is the large, moated Yoyogi Park, and on its grounds is the Imperial Palace, the home of the Emperors of Japan since the divine Emperor Meiji transferred the seat of the capital from Kyoto in 1868. The Palace is closed to the public, and the lavish gardens that surround it are only open two days out of the year. It is the perfect spot for the elder clans to meet and plan their affairs. They meet within the grounds of the Palace itself, in the Meiji Shrine. Dedicated to the Emperor Meiji, this Shinto shrine is a node for Japan's Kindred elders (at least those who can bear the purity of the holy shrine). A hideaway

of serenity smack in the center of Tokyo, the shrine's broad, shaded gravel paths and impressive iris gardens provide a background for the elders to plot against the youngsters and their gaijin friends.

So it is here that the old Kindred convene, those of the ages of samurai and emperor and dragon. They are led by the mysterious elder Hakari, who has been a familiar figure since the days of the ancient feudal warlords. He is considered to be the original statesman, the elder among elders, and it is his will that galvanizes the older Kindred. Hakari and the leaders of the other clans meet here to plan and marshal their forces, which run through the streets of Tokyo, attacking native and foreign Kindred alike. Ghoul squads and knowledgeable mortals alike have been employed by Hakari, making it wise for a Kindred to be doubly cautious as she threads through the city's mazelike avenues.



Ginza

Stretching from the southeast corner of the Imperial Palace, on the other side of the moats, is Ginza, the "Silver Place." It is Tokyo's Fifth Avenue: a stack of nightclubs and department stores that offer everything from ceramics to watches to prints and paintings. It is also the main haunt of the younger Japanese Kindred, who make their havens right in the shadow of the Imperial Palace and thumb their noses at the old fools like Hakari who think they run the world. Outlined at night by an endless band of neon signs, the Ginza is a favorite place for Kindred to move about the stores (many of which stay open until almost midnight) and the karaoke bars (which always provide a good time for the passing Kindred who fancies himself a singer).

On the top floors of the Ginza's Sen-ai Building (a futuristic-looking skyscraper occupied by businesses specializing in women's fashions), one can find Miki. She is one of the younger generation of Japanese Kindred, and she feels that the world of international glamour is definitely the way to go. Rail-thin and pale, Miki is one of Tokyo's top fashion models. Her piercing, catlike stare is adored by millions of young men and envied by millions of young women; the clothes, the paparazzi and the mindless adoration give her a rush almost equal to that of vitae. Miki can usually be found in the latest fashions at dinner parties or events, but she prefers to wear a dark pantsuit when not on stage or in the public eye. She has "the walk" (or in her case, "the slink") down pat, and her arrogance is as much her satisfaction at embracing the ways of the West as it is the typical supermodel's superconceited nature.

The Roppongi

Southwest of the Ginza strip is an area called the Roppongi - 50 square blocks of rock-and-roll bars, dance clubs and concert halls. Needless to say, it is a popular place for foreigners, and the Western Kindred are no exception; it is not uncommon to find the odd Brujah hurling his frenzied self around the mosh pits or a couple of Toreador sneering as the latest performance artist makes a spectacle (and probably a sticky mess) of herself.

The Roppongi rings in the ears and echoes in the brain: It is always packed with people, even when everything shuts down. More than a few captains of industry have been known to drink themselves into such a stupor that they miss the last trains and are stranded on the streets until daybreak. The Roppongi embodies a bit of Hieronymus Bosch, a bit of Vegas and a lot of unfettered energy.

Shinjuku

Tokyo's Shinjuku District is almost schizophrenic. During the Edo period, Shinjuku was an important postal station on the historic Kashi Highway, and its center is dominated by a park called the Shinjuku Goyen, once the private property of the emperor. The park is laid out in different nationalistic

styles: partly Japanese (with chrysanthemums and cherry-blossom trees), but also with English serpentine and follies and broad French tree-lined avenues.

At night, everything looks different; the district seems to blur like the reflection on a pool. Towering skyscrapers thrust upward at odd angles, framed by street-level canopied sushi stands, endless rows of cheap bars and "love hotels" full of the city's prostitutes. All this, filtered through the miasma of a light misting rain that seems indigenous to this stretch of the city, gives Shinjuku a surreal, malleable ambience. Shinjuku acts as a homing beacon for Kindred, simply from the sheer uncontrollability of it all - a mix of vice and postapocalyptic architecture that looks as if it were exiated straight out of Blade Runner.

The Yakuza

Japan has its own well-entrenched organized crime cartel: the Yakuza. The Yakuza control all facets of Japan's "water business": prostitution, gambling, amphetamines and, lately, illegal arms dealing.

The Yakuza are divided into several gumi, or families. Each gumi controls one particular aspect of organized crime. Gumi are relatively open; gangsters maintain offices and carry business cards with the gang symbol on the front.

Until recently, the Yakuza were seen as protectors of the common folk, but this has recently changed. Warfare among the gumi has begun to rack up a high bystander body count, and many Yakuza have foregone the classic image of the noble rogue in favor of a violent, Western, Tarantino-esque approach.

Many vampires participate in the Yakuza subculture, and a few gumi are directly led by Japanese Kindred.

The western clans in Japan

The Western clans have only been allowed in (albeit very, very grudgingly) within the last half-century or so. Those clans detailed below do not make up the full panoply of Western Kindred residing within Tokyo and its environs (and indeed the rest of Japan), but they do help to provide some idea as to the relative motives of each clan as a whole. Rest assured, the odd Brujah will still slamdance in a Roppongi bar, and Giovanni occasionally wend their way through the upper echelons of international finance. The following clans, however, are the most prominent groups in the country.

Followers of Set

Asia's Setites are usually concentrated in Indonesia, Singapore and the countries of former Indochina, where the

heroin and opium trades are strongest. Although they have not ventured into Japan as a clan, some of their number have extended their drug businesses into Tokyo. Here they have infiltrated and made some contacts with Yakuza crime syndicates, as middle-level distributors and enforcers to the foreign populations.

Sabbat

A few Sabbat packs have gained a tenuous foothold in Japan, but they find themselves blocked at every turn by native and Camarilla Kindred. Still, it is not unknown to find a Lasombra or two slinking through the shadows between Tokyo's endless neon arcs, and Japan's more bizarre fashions and performances appeal to a certain set of younger Tzimisce. (Indeed, rumor has it that one enterprising Fiend has set up an underground "body shop" for trendy young Japanese Kindred, who think Vicissitude is all the rage.)

Toreador

Toreador are by nature drawn to the world centers of art and fashion, and the newer generations of Japanese art and cinema have recently begun to spark Toreador interest in Nippon's culture. Japan is an uncharted wonderland of culture for the Toreador, who are still feeling their way around the kabuki theaters and the films of Kurosawa and John Woo. Kindred like Miki, the fashion model, find the Toreador to be long-awaited allies, as these eternal artistes have yet to fully experience the beauty of this lotus island. Besides, there are all those Godzilla flicks, too....

Ventruue

Many of the Ventruue in Japan are of a military command nature, being left over from the World War II occupation. Recent years have left the Ventruue struggling for a reason to stay, however, as military presence in Japan is becoming less of a necessity for Americans. Still, it is not uncommon to see the odd Ventruue in conference with high government officials as a sort of "unofficial" advisor.

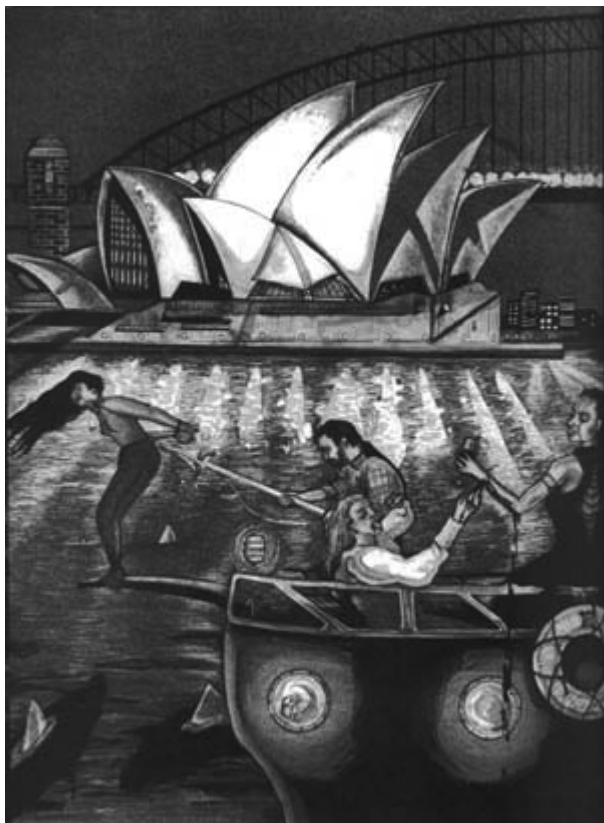
other denizens of the east

Many of the Orient's supernatural beings remain unclassified by those of the West. Stargazer and Shadow Lord Lupines dwell here, as do the malicious Hatar Goblin Spiders, and Bastet of the Khan tribe roam through China and Southeast Asia. The Akashic Brotherhood of mages is based here, and an entire nation of wraiths - the Dark Kingdom of Jade - rules Asia's dead. Several bizarre varieties of changelings inhabit remote peaks, forests and shrines.

What is to Come/Shameless Plug

The Kindred of the Orient are too numerous and diverse to present in this small section. For full details on these mysterious vampires, look for White Wolves upcoming **Vampire: Kindred of the East**, to be released in the fall of 1997.





chapter ten: Australia by night

*The night has become my way
The night has become my day.*

- The Mark of Cain, "You Are Alone"

Australia is the only continent in the world whose landmass is occupied by a single country. The Australian federal government administers Australia's over seven million square kilometers from Canberra, the national capital, assisted by the governments of eight states and territories. This stability does not extend to the World of Darkness, where the violent European conquest began more than 200 years ago and has never ended.

The Camarilla controls only two of Australia's capital cities: Melbourne and Adelaide. The latter has been targeted by the Sabbat and is under constant attack by that sect's nomadic packs. Sydney, the nation's oldest and largest city, is ruled by an independent prince and has become a haven for fugitive vampires from around the world. Brisbane, in Australia's north, was once a Camarilla enclave but is today a Sabbat stronghold, while Perth, capital of Western Australia, was recently "liberated" by anarchists.

Anarch and Sabbat scouts regularly infiltrate Adelaide and Melbourne, whose Kindred are constantly on the alert for spies and enemy agents, as well as incursions by the savage Lupines who prowl the Outback. Tensions run high among Australia's Kindred, and only rarely do they know peace.

History

Australia's indigenous peoples, the Aboriginals, arrived from Southeast Asia some 60,000 years ago. Guided by the Bunyip tribe, a peaceful race of marsupial shapeshifters, the Aboriginals lived in harmony with their environment, believing that land and people were one and that no element should dominate another. Their spiritual lifestyle was abruptly and violently displaced by European settlers when the Europeans' First Fleet anchored at Sydney Cove in A.D. 1788.

In the following years, the Europeans waged a genocidal war against the Aboriginals. Aboriginal tribes were rounded up and imprisoned on reservations. Their children were abducted and forcibly resettled in an attempt to destroy Aboriginal culture via assimilation. In the real world, these inhumane policies were officially abandoned by Australia's government in the late 1960s. In the World of Darkness such genocidal practices continue to this day.

Bound for Botany Bay

The European settlement of Australia began with Captain James Cook's "discovery" of the continent in 1770. Having just lost the American War of Independence and the valuable American territories, Great Britain was in dire need of a new location to dump her ever-growing criminal populace.

The First Fleet, comprising 12 ships (including six convict transports, three naval vessels and three storeships chartered from commercial lines) was dispatched to settle Australia, with the intent of turning it into a penal colony. 1350 mortals sailed aboard the First Fleet. They were not alone.

The great number of Cainites active in England in the 1700s naturally exacerbated the tensions of the Jyhad. British vampires sniped at each other in constant and wearying games of intrigue, a situation of which a number of younger vampires soon began to tire.

One such Kindred, the revolutionary Irish-born Brujah Red Meg, grew sick of being used as a pawn by her elders. Accordingly, she began to agitate among her fellow anarchists and fledglings for an end to such tyranny. Her fiery speeches compared the suffering of young vampires to the abuse of mortals at vampires' hands. She spoke of Carthage, wherein mortals and Cainites had dwelt in harmony together. And, best of all, she claimed that such times could come again.

Red Meg's passion was infectious; within a few years she gathered around her a small number of like-minded Kindred. Red Meg and her compatriots seized upon the First Fleet as a means of escaping both England and their elders. Her companions on the epic, nine-month journey were Wid, a melancholy Nosferatu enamored of solitude; Agaricus, a gaunt and frenzied Malkavian; the sleek, secretive Tremere, Lumley; Montague Lytton of Clan Toreador, who complained bitterly of deprivation for the entire duration of the journey; and the autocratic but politically weak Abram, of Clan Ventruue. These six Cainites renounced the political games of their elders before sailing from England. They also swore never to spill one another's blood and to assist or avenge each other whenever possible.

Such admirable and idealistic goals rarely last, of course, especially among the Damned. It was not long before the emigrant Kindred fell to bickering and infighting.

The tensions that arose among the group were exacerbated by the harsh conditions under which they traveled. Each vampire had to exercise considerable restraint in feeding in order to prevent the Masquerade from being broken. The presence of several Lupines traveling aboard the naval vessel H.M.S. Sirius did not ease the situation, although wards set by Lumley ensured that the werewolves remained restricted to the fleet's flagship.

Red Meg and her close allies, Wid and Agaricus, increasingly found themselves arrayed against Lumley, Lytton and Abram. While Red Meg's clique clung to their original goal of a land where Kindred and kine could coexist peaceably, free from both the Masquerade and the Jyhad, their more conservative opponents instead envisioned a new nation where they could be free to rule as they pleased.

The New Colony

The early years of the colony at Sydney Cove were punctuated by famine, disease and misery. Too many vampires and too few people meant that the mortal population of Sydney Town (as the penal colony was first known) was dangerously close to being bled to death in its early years, with constant lethargy among the settlers the result.

If the European Lupines who had arrived with the First Fleet had not been otherwise engaged in fighting the native Bunyip, they would surely have wiped out the divided



vampire colonists. As it was, the Kindred were given time enough to establish themselves, and their numbers slowly grew.

In 1790, another Cainite arrived at Sydney Cove aboard the Second Fleet. Unlike the First Fleet, whose convicts had survived the journey from England relatively unscathed, a great many convicts on the Second Fleet died during the voyage, and the appetites of the newcomer, the androgynous Sarrasine, were largely to blame for the high death toll.

Sarrasine was a troublemaker, and his presence only exacerbated tensions among Australia's vampiric settlers. It was not long before Abram (urged on by Lumley, Lytton and Sarrasine) declared himself Prince of Sydney Town. His motives may have been just: The colony's future looked uncertain, and despite Red Meg's libertarian beliefs, she had not yet established her promised Utopia.

Enraged by what she perceived as Abram's betrayal, Red Meg stayed long enough in the colony to instigate the only major rebellion in Australia's history (which saw then-Governor Bligh, of Mutiny on the Bounty fame, overthrown by the military in 1808) in an attempt to oust Abram. Thereafter, she turned her back upon Sydney and vanished into the Outback for many decades.

Australia Emerges

Red Meg was not the only vampire to abandon Sydney, nor the first. Agaricus went south, to Van Dieman's Land (which is now called Tasmania) and the newly founded city of Hobart in 1804, where he remains prince to this night. Following Red Meg's departure, the Tremere, Lumley, traveled west to the Swan River settlement (now the city of Perth) in 1829, which he ruled as prince until slain in an anarch uprising in the late 1980s.

Prince Abram ruled Sydney well if unimaginatively, ensuring that his city flourished after its difficult first decades. His success did nothing to alleviate the grudge that he held against Red Meg. It soon became evident that the Ventrue would stop at nothing to see Meg slighted and destroyed. Abram's lust for vengeance was encouraged by the wily Sarrasine, who rapidly worked his way into the prince's confidence.

In 1835, the mortal John Batman sailed from Van Dieman's Land to the Victorian coast, where he founded the city of Melbourne on the shores of Port Phillip Bay. Suspecting Red Meg's involvement (Batman's settlement was founded secretly, without permission from Sydney's mortal government), Abram moved to Melbourne in 1839, leaving his trusted lieutenant Sarrasine to rule Sydney as his regent.

For a time Abram ruled over both Sydney and Melbourne - at least in name. In reality, Sarrasine gradually began to assume more control of Sydney, as Melbourne's interests consumed Abram's time and thoughts. Tennant Usher,

Abram's child, saw which way the wind was blowing and departed Sydney for the penal settlement of Moreton Bay (now Brisbane), although Sarrasine did not declare himself Prince of Sydney for many years to come.

Gold!

No single event had more impact upon the Australian colonies than the discovery of gold in 1851. This opened the floodgates of settlement; between 1850 and 1860 Australia's mortal population grew from 450,000 people to more than one million. It was during the turmoil of the Gold Rush that Red Meg again struck at Abram, inciting a revolt among the miners of Victoria's gold fields in 1854. This brief revolution, the Eureka Stockade, failed to ignite the wave of rebellion that Red Meg desired, but nonetheless entered Australian mythology.

Abram, frightened of being overthrown, worked to establish a strong mortal government to control the populace. He also exerted his strength among the Kindred, boldly declaring himself Prince of Australia. By doing so, Abram sealed his own fate.

Incensed by what they saw as Abram's dictatorial rule, several influential Australian Kindred (led by the traitorous Sarrasine) ousted Abram in a swift and relatively bloodless coup, instating Montague Lytton of Clan Toreador as Melbourne's new prince in 1879.

But the old alliance among Australia's vampiric founders prevented Lytton from taking Abram's life. Broken and humiliated, the Ventrue fled into obscurity. Not until 1927, when the new federal parliament was opened in Canberra, did Abram emerge from exile. Abram rules Canberra to this night and does not concern himself with affairs outside his domain.

Australia in the 20th Century

Numerous important events have shaped modern Australia, including Foundation in 1901, when the separate Australian colonies united into a single nation; the Great Depression of the 1930s; and the post-WW II transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy. Vampires played significant roles in many of these events. The Depression was exacerbated by Sarrasine, the new Prince of Sydney, who exploited and increased the economic and social unrest of the period in order to more firmly establish his reign. Similarly, many vampires took advantage of the shift toward industrialization and urbanization to amass more wealth and larger herds upon which to feed.

As Australia's mortal population grew, the Kindred were increasingly able to move around freely, concealed by the human masses. They also took advantage of humanity's growing numbers to embrace more childer. This influx of progeny proved to be a problem: Foreign Kindred had trickled into the country in the wake of the Gold Rush, and

between these newcomers and the newly Embraced, Australia's Cainite population was reaching its natural limit.

The stresses caused by Cainite overcrowding soon became evident during a period known as "The Razor Wars," when vampire -and Lupine-controlled criminal gangs clashed in the inner suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne. A truce was eventually negotiated, but not before considerable blood had been spilled on both sides. Numerous Kindred took advantage of the Razor Wars to settle old scores, which caused a significant drop in the Kindred population. After the Cress Trace was signed (named after the Sydney hotel where its terms were hammered out), Sydney's and Melbourne's criminal activities were divided into Kindred and Lupine areas of influence. The Cress Truce holds to this night.

No Camarilla scholars can pinpoint the exact date when the Sabbat first arrived in Australia, but the sect's presence was already being felt by the turn of the century. The Sabbat's greatest triumph to date came in 1912, when Brisbane fell after a protracted siege. More recently the Sabbat has extended its rule to take in the tourist strip called the Gold Coast, which stretches south of Brisbane for some 100 kilometers.

Australia's Camarilla has been increasingly threatened in recent decades, with Prince Sarrasine declaring Sydney an independent city. Sydney today is a lawless place, crowded with vampiric exiles from around the world who have found sanctuary in the city. Sarrasine's decadent rule is the subject of all manner of dark rumors.

Perth's Prince Lumley, of Clan Tremere, was killed during the anarchy uprising, which usurped control of his city. The Tremere pyramid has yet to act against the anarchs (who are believed to have links with the mysterious Technocracy) but when the Tremere's vengeance comes, it is sure to be fierce. The one positive effect of the anarchy rebellion has been to rid Melbourne and Adelaide of the bulk of their anarchy populations, as most such rebellious young Kindred have migrated en masse to Western Australia to join their peers.

Of the surviving Cainite founders of Australia, Wid the Nosferatu lives in the industrial blight which is the city of Wollongong, and he seems content to watch the squabbles of his peers without feeling the need to become involved. Prince Agaricus rules Hobart, as he has since its foundation; Abram, as previously noted, rules in Canberra and no longer involves himself in the Jihad.

Melbourne is now ruled by Prince Leslie Taylor (known as "Squizzy" to his friends), a crime boss in his mortal days. Although he is secretive about his sire, many believe that he is the child of Red Meg, who has not been seen in several decades. Taylor slew Montague Lytton in 1983, seizing control of Melbourne in a brief and bloody purge. Lytton's surviving progeny fled to the safety of Adelaide, which has been ruled by Lytton's oldest child, Miranda, for over a

century. The tension between the Prince of Adelaide and the Prince of Melbourne means that the only two Camarilla-held cities in Australia are at one another's throats. United, the two cities might yet stand against the anarchy and the Sabbat. Divided, they will surely fall.

Geography

Although Australia is usually referred to as an island continent, it actually consists of two separate land masses: mainland Australia and the much-smaller island of Tasmania off the southeastern coast. Australia's total land mass is 7,682,300 square kilometers. It is the flattest and driest continent in the world. It is also among the oldest of continents. Australia's mountains are weathered and eroded, with no peaks reaching the permanent snowline, not even Mount Kosciusko, Australia's highest mountain (with an elevation of 2228 meters).

The Great Dividing Range, which stretches from northern Queensland all the way down the eastern coast to Victoria (a distance of more than 3000 kilometers) comprises the largest highlands area in Australia. Tasmania is an island extension of these ranges. West of the Great Divide sprawls the barren Outback.

While the Outback is arid to the extreme, the eastern and southeastern coasts receive fairly high amounts of rainfall. Short rivers provide drainage for the western, northern and eastern margins of the continent, while the massive Murray River system is the only drainage that leads water from the interior to the sea. Elsewhere in the Outback, river beds remain dry for much of the year, as do many salt lakes, the largest of which is Lake Eyre. Early explorers believed that central Australia must have been occupied by an inland sea, although they arrived several million years too late to discover it. Other important Outback features are Uluru (called Ayers Rock by Europeans) and Kata Juta (The Olgas): massive outcrops of sandstone rearing from the dry earth of Australia's Red Center. Both have spiritual significance for the area's surviving Aboriginal tribes.

Off Australia's northeast coast lies the marine paradise known as the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest continuous coral reef and an internationally famous tourist destination. Whales and white pointer sharks (also called great white sharks, as demonized in the novel and film *Jaws*) sport in the cold southern waters of the Great Australian Bight. A colony of Rokea weresharks dwells in the warm waters of the Barrier Reef, while Aboriginal rumor suggests that Mokole wererocodiles might live in the rivers of the northern coast.

Approximately once every three years, major bushfires sweep along the south coast of New South Wales and in northern Victoria; elsewhere in the country, especially in the less-vegetated areas, destructive fires blaze once every two decades or so. Tropical cyclones (as tornadoes are called in

Australia) hammer the northwest coast. In 1974, a cyclone decimated the capital city of Darwin in the Northern Territory; 50 people were killed, 30,000 people were evacuated, and only 500 houses out of 12,000 were left habitable. Other natural hazards include earthquakes; droughts; and poisonous spiders, fish, and snakes (14 of the 15 most-venomous snakes in the world are Australian).

The people

The majority of Australia's 17 million people are scattered around the narrow band of coastal lowlands; more than four-fifths of the total population live in this area, which comprises only 3.3 percent of the country's total land mass. The broad, sun-baked Outback is largely uninhabited, supporting an average population of only 0.1 person per square kilometer.

Although Australia is commonly perceived as an "empty" continent, capable of taking in many new inhabitants, the geographical and climatic restrictions which force people to live along the coast must be recognized. Large populations cannot exist in the inhospitable Outback; the uncomfortable living conditions and lack of arable soil physically prevent settlement. This lack of a mortal population upon which to feed prohibits Kindred from living inland, save for the occasional adventurous Gangrel.

Two-thirds of Australia's population, some 11 million people, live in the capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Darwin, Brisbane and Canberra. Of this urban population, almost three-quarters live in either Sydney or Melbourne.

Australia's population has since the arrival of the First Fleet been predominantly European. For a time this was enforced by the mortal government's White Australia Policy, which specifically excluded immigrants of non-European background. Although Chinese immigrants arrived during the Gold Rush, it was not until the years following World War II that any significant shift in the population occurred. The White Australia Policy historically targeted Great Britain as the most preferable source of immigrants; from the late 1940s onward this was relaxed to include people of Mediterranean, Slavic, Baltic and Scandinavian backgrounds, with the White Australia Policy eventually being abandoned as an embarrassing anachronism.

Since the 1970s and the Vietnam War, Australia has become home to a growing Asian population. Australia today is a diverse melting pot of cultures - a multicultural success story - with more than 100 different nationalities existing side by side in the continent's crowded capital cities. Much of this success can be attributed to the fact that the various nationalities are encouraged to retain their unique customs and festivals rather than assimilate and conform to a bland Eurocentric standard.

In contrast, the fate of Australia's original inhabitants, the Aboriginals, has been grim. Foreign diseases killed many; massacres, poison and despair killed many more. The foundation of the Aboriginal Protection Board in 1860 served to halt the overt anti-Aboriginal genocide, but covert destruction of Aboriginal culture continues to this day.

Through a policy that sees one in six Aboriginal children taken from their parents and forcibly assimilated into white homes (usually as unpaid servants or virtual slaves) and orphanages, the Aboriginal Protection Board seeks to destroy Aboriginal culture by denying the children access to their past. Meanwhile, the children's parents remain restricted to reservations (which they cannot leave without attaining official permission), where they are forbidden to speak their own languages and are denied access to their religions and traditions. Aboriginals deemed half-castes by the Aboriginal Protection Board are thrown out of the reservations and must eke out a living in the squalid slums of the inner cities; often



these unfortunates turn to alcohol, heroin and crime.

In the real world, a referendum passed by the Australian people in 1969 successfully recognized Aboriginals as citizens. No such legislation was passed in the World of Darkness, where Aboriginals today have no rights, no voice, and are scarcely seen as human by the majority of the white population. Australia's Koories (as many Aboriginals identify themselves) have begun to agitate for change; several supernatural beings, including werewolves and a handful of Gangrel and Brujah, have allied themselves with the Koorie cause.

The cities

Any Australian city large enough to support a sizable number of vampires is isolated from its neighbors by thousands of miles of Outback and Lupine-haunted bushland. Only 11 cities in Australia have populations of 100,000 or more; excluding the capital cities (it should be noted that Darwin has a population of less than 100,000), they are Geelong (an industrial city in Victoria, an hour's drive from Melbourne), Newcastle and Wollongong (both satellite cities of Sydney) and the Gold Coast (Queensland's tourist mecca).

Most large rural cities, such as Orange in Outback New South Wales and Bendigo in country Victoria, have populations ranging from 25,000 to 50,000 people. Individual vampires can and do dwell in such cities, but generally maintain a low profile, being particularly careful when hunting and feeding. While a vampire in Sydney can flout the Masquerade, a vampire in a smaller city does so at her own risk.

Australia's eight capital cities all house vampires. Of these cities, the two largest, Melbourne and Sydney, are detailed below. A brief description of the remaining capital cities is given here.

Adelaide

Called "The City of Churches," the capital of South Australia presented itself as the moral, civil and constitutional model of a new community in its early years. Even today, Adelaide is renowned for its reserved and refined atmosphere; Adelaide is almost British in its stiff formality. The biennial Adelaide Festival of the Arts is internationally famous, as are the many wineries located within a few hours' drive of the city itself. A belt of parklands surrounds the city center (which is notable for its many grand sandstone buildings), while the suburbs extend into the steep and thickly forested Adelaide Hills. Bushfires sweep through the Adelaide Hills with dangerous regularity.

Adelaide's mortal population is slightly less than one million. These souls provide fodder for 10 or so Kindred, ruled by the ninth-generation Prince Miranda, the eldest child of the Toreador founder Montague Lytton. Miranda was Embraced in 1875.

Despite its beauty, Adelaide has the highest violent crime rate of any Australian city. The city has recently been targeted by the Sabbat, and unless Adelaide receives aid from other quarters, its Camarilla populace will soon fall.

Brisbane

The Queensland capital, Brisbane was originally founded in 1824 as a penal settlement for repeat offenders. Since 1912 it has been controlled by the Sabbat, which extended its rule southward to the Gold Coast in the 1980s. More than 40 vampires make humid, semitropical Brisbane their home, while two nomad packs roam Australia at large. Australia's Sabbat are led by the fiery, Spanish-born Archbishop Camille of Clan Lasombra. Bishops Judas, Silence and Soul assist Camille in ruling the city.

Brisbane is almost provincial in comparison to Sydney and Melbourne. It has a population of some 1.25 million mortals, and remains more noticeably Anglo-Saxon than its southern



rivals, although both Brisbane and the Gold Coast are popular destinations for Japanese tourists. Brisbane's suburbs are characterized by drab bungalows, although their ugly appearance is offset by lush and verdant blooms; the city itself, flanking the Brisbane River, is a gleaming expanse of glass and steel, patrolled by an over-vigilant police force.

Canberra

The federal capital of Australia was officially founded in 1909, though construction did not begin until 1913. The site of the capital was chosen following intense lobbying from both Sydney and Melbourne for the honor. Australia's leaders felt that a national capital should be independent from the political and commercial domination of any one state, and thus Canberra was established at a location equidistant between the two major Australian cities.

Given its artificial origin, it is not surprising that Canberra has always had something of a lifeless atmosphere, despite being well planned and neatly laid out. A man-made lake, Burley-Griffen, flows through the city center. Large stretches of native scrub grow between the city and its suburbs, and screen each suburb from the other, providing the illusion that Canberra lies amid unspoiled bushland.

The city is populated mainly by politicians and public servants, and the industries which service them. Its population is approximately 300,000. Only one vampire dwells in Canberra: the seventh-generation Ventrue Abram. One of the vampiric founders of Australia, Abram slays any other Kindred who enters his territory. He otherwise ignores Kindred politics, although he has had occasion to stay in touch with the Nosferatu Prince of Wollongong, Wid, one of his few surviving comrades from the First Fleet.

sidney: A Free city

Sydney, capital of the state of New South Wales, is Australia's premier city. It is home to almost four million people (one-fifth of the country's total population), and sprawls over 670 square miles. From the exclusive estates of the North Shore to the oppressive poverty of the western suburbs, from the gleaming skyscrapers of the city to the squalid slums they overshadow, Sydney is a city of contrasts, of rich and poor rubbing shoulders, of crime and capitalism working side by side.

The city's dominant feature is her harbor, its waters crisscrossed by ferries and pleasure craft and spanned by the world-famous Sydney Harbor Bridge. Riding aboard a Sydney ferry is one of the most enjoyable activities the city has to offer, although for many Sydney residents it is so commonplace an event that it is scarcely noteworthy. Luxurious villas perched atop steep cliffs look across the harbor toward the green expanse of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Presiding over the harbor, the majestic white sails of the Sydney Opera House tower into the heavens, looking

for all the world like a seashell, an unfolding flower or a ship preparing to sail out to sea.

Sydney's climate is moderate - averaging 23 degrees Celsius in summer and 12 degrees Celsius in winter - although capable of extremes. It never snows in Sydney, but oppressive heat is not uncommon. There are 140 days of rain in an average year, and weeks can pass when the weather is constantly humid and muggy. Scorching west winds in summer carry smoke from bushfires in the Blue Mountains, while wild storms just as frequently blow out of the southeast in winter.

Sydney is a showpiece of a city: bright, flashy and gaudy. Like all Australian cities, it was built according to a plan, but time and the feverish visions of countless town planners have transformed the central business district into a warren of tangled, narrow, one-way streets and snarled traffic. Victorian-era monuments and buildings stand amid an explosion of glass and steel. The State Parliament of New South Wales stands in Macquarie Street, as does the State Library and the Supreme Court. At Macquarie Street's south end stands Hyde Park, which is located close to the harbor. Macquarie Street's eastern boundary is defined by the open spaces and greenery of The Domain and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

Several blocks west of Macquarie Street is Sydney's most impressive recent development, Darling Harbor. This area, which was once a bustling complex of wharves and warehouses, has been converted into a network of exclusive shops, an entertainment precinct, an aquarium and a convention center. A monorail links Darling Harbor with the city center.

In the heart of Sydney's business district is Martin Place, dominated by the General Post Office. Once a cross-street between Macquarie and George Streets, Martin Place has been closed to traffic and lined with trees. It now serves as a public space, complete with a small amphitheatre (popular for street theatre and public demonstrations), buskers and performers. Martin Place is a popular gathering place for shoppers, strollers and lunching office workers.

The suburbs surrounding Sydney's central business district have retained more of their past. The majority of inner suburbs are characterized by rows of two-story terrace houses, their balconies adorned by intricate wrought-iron lacework. Many of these houses are dilapidated and decayed; inner-suburban Sydney in the World of Darkness has yet to suffer the plague of gentrification that is transforming the real Sydney today.

No other city in the world has marketed its red-light district with the pride that Sydney has invested in King's Cross. Once a district populated by bohemian artists and writers, King's Cross today is a twilight zone of drug addicts and prostitutes, where suburban teenagers cruise for kicks and trouble, and sailors newly ashore congregate in smoky bars.

Close to King's Cross is Oxford Street, Sydney's gay mecca and, for some, the gay capital of the world. The income generated by Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras has firmly established the power of the pink dollar, and the gay community is well entrenched in the surrounding suburbs of Darlinghurst and Woolloomooloo.

In the shadows of the Harbor Bridge is the area known as The Rocks. It was on this sandstone peninsula that Sydney's convicts were originally housed in ramshackle huts. As the city grew, The Rocks became a slum of narrow, stinking alleys, tenement buildings and drug dens. Plague swept through The Rocks in 1900, killing many of the cutthroats, whores and sailors who made the district their home. In modern-day Sydney, The Rocks has been prettied up for the tourists, but in the World of Darkness, the area is still a slum, inhabited by roughs and rednecks, drunks, drug addicts and deviants. Fighting and murder are commonplace here.

The most decayed inner-suburban area is Redfern, the Aboriginal ghetto, where whites enter at their own risk even in daylight. Motorists who are foolish enough to leave their car doors unlocked while stopped at the traffic lights in Redfern have been hijacked at knifepoint. Redfern is home to those Aboriginals banished from the beachfront reservation at La Perouse.

La Perouse itself is gray with despair, littered with broken glass and broken lives. Indeed, the Aboriginals who live in Redfern may count themselves lucky, for at least they have electricity and running water. No such amenities exist at La Perouse, and the only houses are hovels built of cardboard and rusting slabs of corrugated iron. Vampires in need of a quick blood-fix find this area ideal.

Away from the inner city, Sydney's suburbs stretch out to cover an area larger than Greater London. A drive of several hours is necessary to get out of Sydney in any direction. The arterial roads through which the traffic flows are lined with bland shopping centers and ugly housing developments, while endless identical bungalows surrounded by well-mowed lawns typify Sydney's suburbs. The great Australian dream has long been to own one's own house and block of land, and as a result, the suburbs crawl away endlessly into conformist monotony. The more exclusive suburbs such as Vaucluse and Point Piper, congregated around the harbor, display more style: grand old houses perched on the edges of cliffs and steep-sided, thickly forested gullies, home to feral cats and flocks of fruit bats.

Sydney is one of the world's great cities: festive, feverish, glorious. City life is fast paced and unforgiving. If you can make it in Sydney, the world is yours - but, like Sydney Harbor, the city has dark undercurrents, and sharks swim down there in the gloom, hungry for prey.

Sydney's police have long been known as the most corrupt in Australia. Major politicians and businesspeople party with criminals and other underworld figures, making no secret of

their friendships. Sydney residents themselves are generally perceived by outsiders as rude and aggressive; the fast pace of life allows no time for such luxuries as mercy and etiquette.

The Kindred

Sydney's prince is Sarrasine, an elusive and enigmatic figure. Formerly the trusted lieutenant of Prince Abram, Sarrasine came to power in 1879, although he did not declare himself prince until the turn of the century, ruling Sydney as regent until "a more suitable candidate" appeared. Sarrasine's self-effacing and self-serving charade fooled few of his fellow Kindred, but his rule was lax, and so there were few objections to his slow amassing of power.

Since adopting the title of prince, Sarrasine (who avows his bloodline as Toreador, although many have their suspicions as to the truth of his claim) slowly began to manifest a distrust of the Camarilla. He declared Sydney a free city in the mid-1950s, throwing open the gates to disaffected Kindred from around the world. Australia's Camarilla, already beleaguered from within and without, could do little about the decree.

Today Sydney is dangerously overcrowded with Cainites. From diabolists on the run to Sabbat who have abandoned their packs, all manner of exiled vampires make Sydney their home. Sarrasine has no regard for the Third Tradition, allowing his fellow Cainites to sire childer at will, although he pays at least lip service to the remaining traditions. Partially because of his charity toward other vampires, and partially because of his relaxed rule, Sarrasine seems to have few enemies. His network of agents is expansive, and those foolhardy vampires who do plot against him soon find themselves facing the Final Death.

Many Kindred of independent clans make Sydney their home, notably a coterie of Assamites (that serves as Sarrasine's bodyguards), several Setites (Sydney is remarkably free of the bigotry which Setites are normally the target of), at least one Samedi and a few Giovanni. Most such visitors keep a low profile among Sydney's Kindred, but rumors constantly surface about the activities of this Setite or that Lasombra. The Camarilla clans are also well represented, but they know better than to challenge Sarrasine's rule.

Paranoia is a way of life among Sydney's Kindred, with so many of them wanted criminals in one city or another. The Masquerade is strictly enforced. Many Kindred practice a Masquerade within the Masquerade, maintaining secret identities and concealing their true clans. Secretive power games and devilish intrigues flourish and prosper in Sydney's humid, hothouse atmosphere. Sydney is truly a city of the Damned.

Sarrasine, Prince of Sidney

Background: Sarrasine was no stranger to corruption and intrigue, even as a mortal. As a child he was a page in the court of Justinian the Great, Emperor of Byzantium. By the time Sarrasine was 12, treachery, conspiracy and conniving were second nature to him. Ever alert, it was not long before Sarrasine became aware of the secret forces controlling the emperor's court. The Followers of Set sought to infiltrate Byzantium's Cainite power structure, and it was not long before Sarrasine was Embraced to serve as a pawn in the Jyhad.

Existence as a Setite suited Sarrasine perfectly. Already skilled with the weapons that the Setites wielded, Sarrasine fought the Jyhad with flair. Although centuries passed, and the fortunes of his clan rose and fell, Sarrasine always stayed on top. By the 15th century, he was serving at the Grand Temple of Set in Uganda, from whence he was dispatched to England to loosen the Ventrue's grip upon the land.

Sarrasine was making fair progress toward this goal when he mysteriously dropped all of his ruses and journeyed to Australia aboard the Second Reet. He became a trusted advisor to Prince Abram and was left in charge of Sydney as Abram's regent when the Ventrue moved to Melbourne. Thanks to Sarrasine's flatteries, Abram had come to see all of Australia as his domain; for such hubris the Ventrue was overthrown, and Sarrasine became the new Prince of Sydney. Naturally, he concealed his true identity, persuading the Kindred closest to him that he was a Caitiff masquerading as a Toreador. None know the truth, save for his fellow Setites, and even some of them remain unsure of Sarrasine's true identity.

As Prince of Sydney, Sarrasine rules over a degenerate court. He ensures that drug abuse is rampant in Sydney and that crime infiltrates every level of society. While amassing wealth and power and miring all the Kindred of his city in a poisonous web of corruption, Sarrasine also works toward Gehenna and Great Set's awakening. Thus far, none have proved powerful enough to stop him and his terrible master.

Image: Sarrasine's appearance is that of an androgynous, almost asexual youth. His shoulder-length hair is more white than blond, framing a delicately boned face. His eyes are pale blue, and a tracery of blue veins is visible beneath his pale skin. His thin lips are usually twisted in a wry, seductive smile. Sarrasine has slender hands and long fingers, with which he gestures gracefully during conversation. He favors loose white clothes and silver jewelry.

Roleplaying Hints: Whisper rather than speak; even when angry you rarely raise your voice. Touch people as you speak with them, caressing their skin and hair. Make eye contact and keep it. Be sympathetic. Gain people's trust. Use them. Corrupt them. Discard them.

Clan: Followers of Set

Nature: Autist

Demeanor: Confidant

Generation: 6th

Embrace: 532

Apparent Age: 15

Physical: Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6

Social: Charisma 6, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5

Mental: Perception 6, Intelligence 6, Wits 6

Talents: Acting 4, Alertness 4, Dodge 5, Empathy 6, Leadership 5, Seduction 7, Sense Deception 5, Streetwise 5, Subterfuge 6

Skills: Bribery 5, Etiquette 5, Melee 4, Music 4, Stealth 4

Knowledges: Area Knowledge 5, Art History 4, Camarilla Lore 3, Clan Knowledge 4, Finance 5, Linguistics 3 (Ancient Greek, Modern Greek, Latin), Politics 7, Sabbat Lore 3

Disciplines: Auspex 5, Celerity 5, Obfuscate 6, Presence 6, Serpents 7, Thaumaturgy 5 (Corruption 5, Movement of the Mind 3, Weather Control 4)

Rituals: Communicate with Kindred Sire, Defense of the Sacred Haven, Devil's Touch, Rebirth of Mortal Vanity, Wake with Morning's Freshness, Ward versus Lupines

Backgrounds: Influence 3, Herd 4, Resources 5, Status 5

Virtues: Conscience 0, Self-Control 5, Courage 3

Path of Enlightenment: Path of Ecstasy 7

Willpower: 10



Melbourne

Melbourne, capital of the State of Victoria, is located on the shores of Port Phillip Bay at the mouth of the Yarra River. The bay's shallow-ness and narrow entrance have prevented Melbourne from becoming a major port, although a steady stream of ships arrive at her wharves.

The city was founded in 1835 by John Batman, a Tasmanian mortal under the influence of Red Meg. Batman, notorious for his abandonment to "Dionysian frenzies" (namely women and grog), settled Melbourne illegally, without permission from Sydney's government. This was done in order to prevent Prince Abram from becoming aware of Red Meg's activities. Spies in Tasmania alerted Abram, and he sent his own agent - the glib and irritable John Pascoe Fawcner- to claim the site. When Fawcner arrived at the future site of Melbourne, Batman was absent, having returned to Tasmania to stake his claim. Fawcner had established a settlement by the time Batman returned, and is today known as the Father of Melbourne, while Batman retains the title of Melbourne's founder.

Melbourne's growth was slow and stable until gold was found to the north, at Ballarat in 1851. The city's population doubled in 12 months. At this point, Abram traveled to Melbourne and declared himself not only Prince of Sydney and Melbourne, but Prince of Australia. He was punished for his hubris by being overthrown by a conspiracy of influential Cainites.

Melbourne's new prince was Montague Lytton of Clan Toreador. His rule saw Melbourne develop into a proud and graceful city. Highlights of his reign included the construction of many ornate Gothic-revival and Victorian buildings (such as the ostentatious Flinders Street Station and the Exhibition Building), the foundation of the Australian Impressionist art movement and the establishment of Melbourne's cable-tram network.

After World War One, Melbourne experienced an influx of mortal refugees. A number of Kindred came with them, and the increase in deaths caused by these new Cainites was blamed in part on an influenza epidemic. Melbourne's fastest and most sustained period of growth was immediately after the Second World War, when the population rose from 1.25 million in 1947 to almost two million in 1961. This same period saw Melbourne develop a somewhat stifled and puritanical atmosphere. Montague, although fancying himself a cosmopolitan and modern ruler, was firmly entrenched in the values and customs of his mortal life, and his attitude began to infiltrate the metropolis. Kindred and kine alike began to look to Melbourne's genteel past rather than toward the future.

The influx of European immigrants after World War Two helped to revitalize the city, as did its exposure to the world when Melbourne hosted the 1956 Olympics. In 1968, when learning to eat pasta and drink cappuccino had become de

rigueur for would-be bohemians, Melbourne's world-class National Gallery opened in St. Kilda Road. Tullamarine International Airport opened the same year, linking Melbourne to the world.

Melbourne's modern history has its genesis firmly in the past. In 1927, Leslie "Squizzy" Taylor, a one-time jockey who had gone on to become the city's most notorious crime boss, was Embraced by Red Meg, who had decided she needed help if she were to become Melbourne's prince. Taylor's thanks for the Embrace was to diablerize his sire. The diminutive and arrogant Taylor would be no one's pawn.

Having Embraced members of his criminal gang and firmly established himself as an underworld power in the following decades, Taylor struck at Prince Montague in 1983. Severe bushfires had swept across the state all that year. At the height of the fires, a pall of smoke swept across Melbourne, turning the noontime sky black as night. As his peers slept,



Taylor raced desperately across Melbourne. He arrived at Montague's haven, the derelict Regent Theatre in the heart of the city, and slew the Toreador, once again committing diablerie. The theatre is reputedly haunted to this night.

Thereafter declaring himself prince, Taylor has proved himself a strong and merciless leader. Through his ghouls and childer, Taylor already controlled Melbourne's unions, police and organized crime. In a move designed to prevent Montague's childer from undermining his rule, Taylor allied himself with the Ventrue, who had long chafed under the Toreador. By supporting an unlikely candidate as head of Clan Ventrue, and later by allowing a conservative Ventrue puppet to become premier of the state's mortal government, Taylor firmly established himself as Prince of Melbourne.

Melbourne Today

The city Taylor rules has a population of some three million people. Of these, an ever-increasing number claim countries other than Australia as their birthplace. People of more than 100 nationalities make Melbourne their home, resulting in a dynamic mix of ethnic cuisines and festivals.

As in Sydney, Melbourne's urban sprawl is vast, covering some 6000 square kilometers. Melbourne has fairly cold, wet winters (a sprinkling of snow is not uncommon in the Dandenong Ranges to the city's east, while frosts are common throughout Melbourne), with a maximum average of 13 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 6 degrees Celsius. Summer temperatures average a maximum of 28 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 14 degrees Celsius. Hot northerly winds can bring days on end in the high 30s. Temperatures in the summer can climb to the low 40s, although such conditions usually end with an abrupt and dramatic thunderstorm. Regardless of the season, Melbourne's weather is unpredictable.

The central business district lies in the heart of the city, an orderly grid of streets and laneways located on the north bank of the Yarra River. The south bank is dominated by an arts precinct consisting of the National Gallery, the Melbourne Concert Hall, the Arts Center and the Victorian School of the Arts. Southbank Plaza is an upscale collection of shops, galleries, bistros and restaurants on the bank immediately opposite the ornate Hinders Street Station. Downstream from Southbank is Melbourne's new casino complex, a controversial construction that includes cinemas, apartments and shops as well as the casino itself. City landmarks include the Bourke Street Mall, featuring Melbourne's two most prestigious department stores, Myers and David Jones; the aforementioned Southbank arts complex; and the City Square, an antiseptic concrete expanse populated predominantly by street-dwelling youth gangs. Opposite the city square stands the Romanesque Melbourne Town Hall, while the Regent Theatre flanks the square to the east.

A network of parks surrounds central Melbourne. Beyond the parklands stretch the densely populated inner suburbs. Once predominantly populated by the working class, in recent years the inner suburbs have housed waves of migrant families, who in their turn were replaced by artists and other bohemians. The suburb of Fitzroy, with its terrace houses and quaint, crowded hotels (or "pubs" as they are called), is the home of much of Melbourne's artistic community. More than 100 live bands play in the pubs of Fitzroy and related suburbs every Saturday night; indeed, live music is a Melbourne staple every night of the week. Other inner suburbs of note include Collingwood (home to a famous and much-loved football team, as well as the Carlton and United Brewery), Richmond (dominated by clothing factories and the Vietnamese community), Carlton (whose central Lygon Street is the main focus of the city's Italian community) and St. Kilda (a beachfront suburb renowned for its hotels and prostitutes).

Beyond the inner suburbs stretch the dreary no-man's-lands of the suburban blight: endless streets filled with identical houses and average families. The eastern suburbs, such as Caulfield, Camberwell and Toorak, are home to the well-off middle and upper classes. In the west are the decaying, industrial suburbs of Footscray, Sunshine and Altona. The north is a working-class district that is comprised of the suburbs of Brunswick, Broadmeadows and Preston. The outer suburbs, such as Dandenong, Frankston, Springvale and Keilor, compensate for their distance from the city by constructing vast shopping towns such as Northland and Chadstone. Older migrant communities are also strong in the outer suburbs.

The Kindred

Melbourne's 35-odd Kindred tend to congregate in the city and inner suburbs. Prince Taylor strictly enforces the Third Tradition in Melbourne, and more than once he has destroyed childer created without his permission—as well as the offending sires. His strict rule also ensures that Melbourne is a city without Brujah among its anarch community: Any Brujah who would contest Prince Taylor's rule have either been destroyed since he came to power or have fled to Perth. Those other Kindred who call themselves anarchs keep a very low profile.

Prior to Taylor's ascension, Melbourne's Brujah were few and disorganized. Since he became prince, Taylor has ordered the creation of several Brujah fledglings from among Melbourne's criminal underclass, thus simultaneously rewarding his supporters with childer and further ensuring his and his clan's safety. Other Australian Brujah flocked to Melbourne, after they heard of Taylor's rule. Notable Melbourne Brujah include Larson Moore, in charge of the city's drug trade and the prince's trusted right-hand man (and, unbeknownst to Taylor, hooked on the addictive blood of Setite and Sydney ambassador Sebastian Wilde); Conrad Shreck, an aristocratic Idealist of German origin, who controls Melbourne's police force (and secretly works for the Brujah elders of Europe); Fenris, a neo-Nazi skinhead; and

Antonio Romano. Both Fenris and Romano are young iconoclasts and Taylor's enforcers. The two hate each other and are constantly at one another's throats.

The Clanless are few in Melbourne: They were persecuted during Prince Montague's reign, and Taylor is little more tolerant. Most of Melbourne's Caitiff have fled to Perth to join the anarchs.

Lady Eliza Worthington is Melbourne's oldest Gangrel and a member of the city's primogen (on the rare occasion she stays in Melbourne for more than a few weeks). Another of the city's Gangrel, the feral street kid and environmental activist Crow, is an anarchist.

Joining Crow in anarchy is the Malkavian Matthew "Bluey" Cousins. Bluey, however, is also a member of Melbourne's primogen. A survivor of the First World War, he has a serious personality derangement: As Matthew, he works for the prince, applying his field-tested strategic skills to support Taylor, as Bluey, he works against Taylor, having seen in Gallipoli the carnage that is authority's result.

Two clans keep a particularly low profile in Melbourne: the Nosferatu and the Toreador. The Nosferatu, as is their wont, lurk beneath the streets in the sewers and storm drains. A mortal gang known as The Cave Clan, a group of subterranean explorers, acts as the clan's pawns. Simone Alvarde, a poet and artist in life, is the leader of Clan Nosferatu and a secret power behind the throne. She is the only Kindred in Melbourne who knows firsthand of Taylor's crimes, having witnessed his diablerie of both his sire and Prince Montague. With this knowledge, she blackmails Taylor to her own ends. Alvarde's only weakness is her love for a blind mortal artist. Also included in the ranks of Melbourne's Nosferatu are Thalido-mide victim and anarchist Kerry Simpson; and Michelle Morgan, a survivor of domestic violence and rape.

The majority of Melbourne's Toreador fled to Adelaide following Prince Montague's assassination. The handful that remain seek either vengeance (in the case of Tien Hsu, also known as Mehitabel, a Chinese-born woman Embraced by Montague on the gold-fields in 1852) or prestige (in the case of the Poseur Maria Diamante, who was often made the butt of Montague's jokes). Internecine feuding ensures that the Toreador are no threat to Taylor.

Melbourne's Tremere watch, plot and apply themselves to gaining power. Their leader is the enigmatic Professor Cipher, another primogen member. Melbourne University's halls and courts are his haven and hunting grounds, and he defends them fiercely. Goth-devotee Natasha (who has prophetic dreams of Gehenna) and her rival and one-time lover, Seth, are also members of Clan Tremere. Seth, however, flirts with the Sabbat, and may soon undergo the sect's initiation rites.

Prince Taylor's regime is supported by the head of Melbourne's Clan Ventrue, Thornton Adams, a gambler and con man while he lived. Embraced in Brisbane in 1891, Adams fled Queensland when the Sabbat came to power. He drifted up and down the east coast for several decades and eventually settled in Melbourne. In return for Taylor's aid in a bid to become head of Melbourne's Ventrue, Adams has proved himself a firm supporter of the Brujah prince. He is also a member of the primogen, where the traditional enmity between Ventrue and Tremere prevents either clan becoming a force to be reckoned with. Other Melbourne Ventrue include Victoria Grant (who threatens the Masquerade by hosting the late-night television news) and her sire Melissa Redman, a political animal with many Dominated politicians at her service. Together, Redman and Grant work secretly to rid themselves first of Adams and eventually Prince Taylor, although at the first available chance, each will seek to betray the other.

Several independent vampires dwell in Melbourne, including the Setite Sebastian Wilde, the ambassador of Sydney's Prince Sarrasine; Naomi McKellar, a Ventrue antitribu and Sabbat spy; and the Tomb Boys, Ki, Radu and Colin, who claim to be Caitiff fleeing recent purges in Perth, but who may really be agents of the Sabbat, anarchist spies or perhaps even archons. The presence of several influential Glass Walker Lupines in Melbourne only complicates this hotbed of treachery and intrigue.

Leslie "Squizzy" Taylor, Prince of Melbourne

Background: Leslie Joseph Theodore "Squizzy" Taylor was born the second-youngest of five children in the rural village of Elwood in 1888. His father, a coach builder, lost his job during the economic depression of the 1890s and was forced to move to the inner-city slum of Richmond in order to support his young family. Taylor, the runt of his family, fell in with the Bourke Street Push, a gang of youths that harassed theatre patrons, picked pockets and generally raised hell on the streets of Melbourne. Taylor was first arrested at 19, although his earliest experience at the hands of the law was at the tender age of 11, when he was caught with stolen goods and was brutally beaten by the Richmond police. By his early 20s, Taylor had amassed several criminal charges and had been in and out of institutions. A brief stint as an apprentice jockey came to naught, as Taylor's peers considered him too crooked to be trustworthy.

Melbourne in the early 20th century was a crime-polluted city with a puritanical facade, and Taylor naturally gravitated toward the thriving criminal underworld. His childhood crimes provided him with a network of friends, informants and spies, and the keen-witted Taylor soon drew upon his cronies to launch a successful career as a blackmailer and thief. He kept contacts among the police - turning informer on more than one occasion - and also had allies among the press.

As Taylor's influence grew, he distanced himself from any direct involvement in criminal activities, all the while

maintaining a rapidly burgeoning criminal empire. The trappings of wealth appealed to him, and Taylor became a regular visitor in the circles of Melbourne's elite. Reflecting his increasing wealth were his flashy, gaudy clothes and his silver-topped cane. Taylor was now a ruthless criminal mastermind, controlling Melbourne's illegal gambling houses, illicit alcohol sales and much more. His reputation was boosted by the press, and it was this that brought Taylor to the attention of Red Meg. The Brujah was eager for a pawn to use against Lytton, and she saw in the pint-sized crime boss an excellent tool. But Taylor was no one's lackey. A self-made man, he was accountable to none. Red Meg Embraced Taylor after he was critically wounded in a shootout with rival Sydney gangster Snowy Cutmore in 1927. In return, Taylor attacked his sire and diablerized her.

Following his Embrace, Taylor began to establish himself as a power among the Kindred. Using the same skills that had established him as an underworld power, Taylor set about becoming a force to be reckoned with among the Kindred. In 1983 he made his move, killing Prince Montague and establishing himself as Melbourne's prince.

Taylor's rule is stern and brutal when necessary, but he is wise enough to give the majority of his subjects enough leeway that they do not feel threatened by his rule. He rules by force and brooks no opposition. Like many Brujah, he is opposed to authority, but now that he has gained the upper hand, he has no qualms about using his own authority to bolster his position. Understanding the value of faithful service, he has allowed several of his fellow Brujah to Embrace childer, all the better to serve him. Although he pays lip service to his clan, Taylor has few real cares for the Brujah, as evident by the force he throws against any anarch foolish enough to criticize his reign.

Image: Squizzy Taylor stands 5'2" tall and has a sturdy frame. His dark, wavy hair is slicked back from his high forehead. His deep-set eyes are alert with an animal cunning. Taylor dresses extravagantly, as he regularly patronizes Melbourne's best tailors. He rarely smiles, and when he does, his grin is oily and repellent.

Roleplaying Hints: Because you like to think of yourself as the common man made good, you generally treat everybody as an equal, although your natural arrogance always shines through. A pint-sized punk with a flair for self-aggrandizement, you are brutal, thuggish, dishonest, exploitative and egotistical - and those are your good points. You have no time for competition.

Clan: Brujah
Nature: Bravo
Demeanor: Architect
Generation: 7th
Embrace: 1927
Apparent Age: 39
Physical: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5
Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2
Mental: Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 5
Talents: Alertness 3, Brawl 2, Dodge 4, Intimidation 4, Leadership 4, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 5
Skills: Firearms 4, Melee 4, Stealth 3, Survival 4
Knowledges: Finance 3, Law 3, Politics 4
Disciplines: Auspex 4, Celerity 4, Dominate 2, Potence 5, Presence 4
Backgrounds: Allies 5, Contacts 5, Influence 5, Resources 4
Virtues: Conscience 1, Self-Control 3, Courage 3
Humanity: 2
Willpower: 8

