



OLD
SKILL
ZINE

1

Under the cover of **DARKNESS**

For Dark Streets & Darker Secrets



IN THIS ISSUE:

A complete adventure for starting PCs.

A new organization to be used as enemies or allies.

A new Archetype for your campaigns.

A tool to determine relationships between PCs.

OLD SKULL ZINE #1

Under the cover of

DARKNESS

For Dark Streets & Darker Secrets

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OLD SKULL
PUBLISHING





INTRODUCTION

I am enamored by RPG zines. I love them and try to collect as many as I can get. They are so personal, so unique, so different from the polished, finished RPG books we more commonly see out there. Their more informal aspect makes the reader closer to the creator, almost like a friend peeking at their secret and personal notes. I love that.

So that's what I want the **Old Skull Zine** to be. I want this to be a place where I can share things I am creating, developing, and using at my own table. Sometimes I can put a sneak peek at some new material for a book that is still in development. Some house rules I am tinkering with. And who knows, some stuff people from the community are creating, too!

This first issue, **Under the Cover of Darkness**, is dedicated to my latest game, **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets**, an RPG of Street and Sorcery and Action Horror. Here you will find a short adventure to be played with 1st Level characters, a faction to be used both as allies and as rivals of the PCs, a new Archetype, and a new tool to help develop quick relationships between PCs.





BLOOD WARS

An adventure for 1st Level characters of Dark Streets & Darker Secrets

The Vampire Council operates in the shadows, manipulating everything from behind a veil of deceit. For hundreds of years the vampire families have maintained a precarious peace to ensure their mutual benefit. Not anymore.

In this adventure for 1st Level characters of **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets**, the player characters find themselves in the middle of a war between vampire families that is threatening everyone in their city. After the death of an elder, the vampire who killed him assumed his place in the family hierarchy and decided it was time to put the other vampires in their place: beneath their own.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The adventure probably begins with the players having a drink in a bar or some other seedy establishment when someone just flies through a wall, breaking a table and chairs right besides them. A group of vampires is attacking a lone vampire from another family. Obviously, this endangers not only the rival undead but a lot of mortals in the way, but the attackers couldn't care less.

From there, the PCs may find out what is happening, either through the attacker who have no qualms about being discrete, or talking to possible surviving vampires. Other attacks are occurring all over the city, and things are escalating quickly.

To put a stop to it, the players will have to use more than their weapons and explosives. They might need to make an alliance with other families of vampires, or they might need to find a better leader (or not so bad) for the rebellious one, or they might come up with a plan to put all the families at a loss so high that they will need to stop the war immediately. There are no defined solutions or endings to the adventure, however, and players are bound to come up with their own crazy ideas. Roll with it and find out what happens.



ADVENTURE HOOKS

Things are getting hectic all over Dark City. The PCs can get involved with the events of the adventure in many different ways, as the war between the families intensifies. Below we provide a few possible hooks that can get the characters interested in the events of the adventure.

A bloody fight commences right where the characters are, as a group of sinister looking individuals come to eliminate a rival vampire that happens to be near the PCs, and all hell breaks loose as they don't care to hide their supernatural nature.

A friend of the PCs calls them and desperately tells them about this crazy thing that just happened right in front of them: a group of blood-dripping vampires showed up and decapitated the head of someone with a sword, not before wounding several other people in their insane fight. Can they help? The police doesn't seem to care.

A contact from the characters has some important information regarding the rumored Vampire Council that supposedly runs the city behind the veils. Apparently, a war will happen, and a lot of mortals will be in peril. That might also mean that their attention will be focused on their own affairs, and their lairs might be vulnerable to be attacked or robbed for valuable artifacts.

A vampire from one of the families is desperate and contacts the PCs to hire them as bodyguards or to eliminate the leader of the rebellious family, Carlo, who is inciting the war. He offers money, influence, and even the opportunity to join their family.

PERSONALITIES OF THE BLOOD WAR

There are many actors in the event to play out in the adventure, from vampires from the various families to rival hunters, politicians, and reporters. Below we describe the main characters of the adventure and provide a small table to determine what are they doing.

CARLO, NEW ELDER OF THE ROMANI FAMILY

Carlo cut the head of the previous Elder of the family and took his position in the hierarchy. His first act was to declare himself lord of Dark City and demand fealty of all the other vampire families. He didn't wait for their answer, though, and ordered his followers to immediately attack all other families to ensure their submission. Carlo has been plotting this move for quite a few years and has "expanded" his family quite a lot, practically raising an fanatical army of followers.

Traits: Haughty, Disrespectful, Punk, Overconfident, Secretly Coward

Carlo HD: 6

Special Abilities: Two Actions per round; Positive Die on all strength-related tests; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had; All allies gain a Positive Die on Morale Checks if Carlo is within medium range; DR 2.

1d6 What is the Romani family doing?

- 1 A large cargo of dynamite has been stolen in the docks, and everything points to the Romani family. Apparently, they plan to fill a truck with it and smash it on a high-rise building where one of the other families hide their assets, and where their Elder hides his lair.

- 2 A group of twenty of their more fanatic younglings are riding motorcycles and heading to the mansion of a powerful vampire from the Ventis family. Their antics, however, isn't limited to one specific location, and they are leaving a trail of blood, fire, and destruction.

- 3 The trusted lieutenants of Carlo are at the top of a corporate business building throwing people off the roof until one of them reveals the location of their "boss's" secret laboratory. Their boss is an Elder of a rival vampire family.

- 4 After a rough encounter with a couple of cops, a party of five vampires decided to go on a killing spree in the Police Headquarters. The chief of police is in the pocket of the Jalos family and will try to contain the situation and put the vampires on the track of the other families.

- 5 Carlo calls for a meeting with the families but is actually planning an attack. However, the other families are expecting exactly that. A great bloodbath will take place, involving not only the vampires but many mortals that get pulled in by them, such as cops, mercenaries, thugs, and people in the vicinity.

- 6 A band of young vampires enter the Museum of Classical Arts, the domain of the Ventis family, carrying flamethrowers. They have no qualms about what or who they burn in their hunt for their enemies.



ELEANOR, ELDER OF THE VENTIS FAMILY

An elegant woman with a sharp mind and cruel focus. She has been leading her family for hundreds of years and doesn't plan to stop now. She is calculating but incredible charismatic. With a wealth that comes from centuries of economic dominance and high society influence, the Ventis family might not be numerous in number of vampires to fight the war, but they control the police and have a vast number of resources to use. Eleanor wants everything to get back to how it was and is looking for a way to eliminate Carlo and put another member of the Romani family in his place, preferably one she can manipulate.

Traits: Charismatic, Manipulative, Calculating, Influential

Eleanor **HD: 8**

Special Abilities: Two Actions per round; Positive Die on all personality-related tests; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had; Can dominate the mind of one individual if they stare at her eyes as an attack against Willpower; Hugely influential in high society and politics; DR 2.

1d6 What is the Ventis family doing?

1 Eleanor put a bounty on the head of Carlo and every Romani vampire she knows of (there are a lot of them she doesn't). However, she is spreading the news that if Carlo is turned in by their own family, only he has to die.

2 The police has been mobilized to stop and shoot to kill anyone that fits the "description" of a typical Romani vampire. Obviously, this leads to many innocents being shot at, too. The media, however, is being carefully controlled with blackmail, money, and even sorcery to overlook the situation.

3 Most of the more powerful and influential individuals in the city are in the pocket of the Ventis family and are doing what they can to control the situation and put those "vandals" and "punks" on the streets down. There is even talk about calling the National Guard.

4 Some of the Ventis members are simply fleeing the city for safety, which is making Eleanor very angry. Word on the high courts of the family is that she is willing to pay handsomely for anyone to bring one of these cowards to her so she can teach them a lesson or two about family loyalty.

5 Eleanor manages to cut the power on all the main locations she knows are associated with the Romani punks and is sending highly trained squads of assassins with night vision goggles to eliminate everyone, including witnesses.

6 Eleanor is in contact with a dissident from inside the Romani family to betray Carlo and take over the family. Many say she is risking too much in this move as the Romani seemed very fanatical up to now.

ZSALAY, JALOS FAMILY

A family of sinister vampires that mostly keep to themselves and now see the war as an opportunity to expand their tentacles over the city. Zsalay is possibly the most ancient vampire in Dark City, but have come here from the Old World just a few centuries ago. He is an accomplished sorcerer and practitioner of black arts, and some say he has pacts with powerful entities of the Abyss. Jalos is a small family, but the fear of them is much bigger, allowing them to have a chair in the Vampire Council. Zsalay plans to use the war as a way to expand their territory and influence in the city, as well as to eliminate some enemies while blaming the Romani family for the attacks. Rumors even suggest Carlo is under the influence of Jalos sorcery.

Traits: Secretive, Vindictive, Brooding, Deceitful

Zsalay **HD: 7**

Special Abilities: Two Actions per round; Can cast a number of Spells equal to his HD as if they had an Attribute score of 17; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had; Has a Shadow Demon as a familiar with 4 HD and the ability to become invisible, fly, and only take half damage from physical attacks; DR 2.

1d6 What is the Jalos family doing?

- 1 Zsalay is preparing a great ritual in the sewers to mind control dozens of the youngest Romani vampires and use them to eliminate rivals in other families (even his own). He believes this will instigate even more chaos in the city and weaken all the other families.
- 2 Zsalay is not controlling Carlo per se, but is controlling his lover, the young vampire mistress known as Brixia. Brixia believes Zsalay is in love with her and is doing what she can to steer Carlo and the fanatical Romani away from the Jalos family and that one day she will rule the city with Zsalay. The Jalos Elder has other plans, however.
- 3 To be safe, Zsalay is creating a number of Shadow copies of himself and hiding in the deepest caverns under the Dark City. At some point during the events, Carlo may even believe he has eliminated the Elder of the Jalos family, while he is perfectly safe underground.
- 4 The Jalos family has spies all over the city. Rats, cockroaches, and other vermin are their eyes and ears, so they are always watching what is going on. The PCs will never get the jump on them, unless they take appropriate actions to prevent these creatures from spying on them.
- 5 One of the oldest members of the Jalos family is summoning demons to possess the dead bodies of the vampires killed by the Romani to use them as foot soldiers in the war, making both the Romani and the victim's families confused as these come back to assault them.
- 6 Using the blood of some of the recently slayed vampires from other families, Zsalay uses his sorcery to assume their appearances and spread chaos among other families and eliminate his rivals.

MARCELL, CORRUPT MAYOR

In the pocket of Eleanor, Marcell is the mayor of Dark City, at least on paper. He presents himself to the populace as a man of a traditional happy family, defender of the traditional values, and faithful to god. He is, in reality, the worst kind of human being you can possibly imagine. He is involved in child abuse, human trafficking, drug trafficking, and much more. That is all in addition to serving as a proxy for the machinations of Eleanor and the Vampire Council. What Marcell wants is to consolidate his place in the hierarchy of the city and gain as much influence and money as he can, while indulging in the most debased vices one can have.

Traits: Two-Faced, Depraved, Coward, Maniac

Marcell **HD: 2**

Special Abilities: Well connected and rich.

1d6 What is the Mayor doing?

- 1 Marcell is actually in a grand religious cult in a grandiose temple, built with money diverted from public services. Fanatical followers are there, overcrowding the place, while in the back the Mayor is doing cocaine and indulging himself in all kinds of sins.
- 2 Marcell and a group of highly trained officials led by a vampire from the Ventis family are hiding in an isolated warehouse away from everything that is happening. Marcell is afraid but very unhappy with the conditions of the place. His protector is almost killing the mayor himself as he can't stand all the whining.
- 3 Marcell is meeting with Eleanor and the chief of police, trying to organize a countermeasure for the Romani attacks. Marcell is nervous, because he really has no idea what to do and is high on drugs. Eleanor is losing her temper and about to execute him.
- 4 The mayor is using the chaos of the war to execute one of the biggest operations in his human trafficking schemes. A large group of people is being sent on a container to another country to be sold as slaves. However, knowing about the mayor's connections to the Ventis family, Carlo has rigged the ship with explosives.
- 5 The mayor is called in his laboratory under the biggest church in the city where they are mixing cocaine and vampire blood into a potent and extremely addictive drug. Eleanor doesn't know that, and this might cause some trouble for her.
- 6 The mayor is caught by a group of Romani fanatics and is being brought to Carlo. Eleanor is offering a big reward to anyone who brings him back. Marcell knows too much, and letting Carlo have access to him would damage her interests.

MICHELLE, DARING JOURNALIST

The media covers what they are paid to cover, nothing more. Not Michelle, who has her own channel on the internet where she covers the real news. Extremely intelligent and brave, now she might just have entered a world that she should have stayed away from. Carlo and his crazy followers have no qualms in appearing on her videos and quite enjoy the attention, but the other vampires want Michelle to stop or want her dead if she reveals something. Michelle just wants the truth, although part of her wants recognition and fame, too.

Traits: Determined, Courageous, Crafty, Vain

Michelle **HD: 2**

Special Abilities: Internet celebrity.

1d6 What is Michelle doing?

1 Michelle is following a group of Romani vampires who are dragging a rival vampire tied on their motorcycles through the streets. The victim is being dragged by their ankles but isn't dying. They are going too fast and an accident is bound to happen.

2 Eleanor contacts Michelle, telling her about a secret meeting of the Vampire Council, and the reporter goes straight away. It's a false meeting, of course, and assassins are waiting for Michelle on the spot. Some actors are staging a "vampire meeting" believing this to be for a short film.

3 The police comes to arrest Michelle under the charge of trespassing a military base. Michelle swears it wasn't her but, surprisingly, they have footage of someone just like her breaking in a military base uptown.

4 Michelle's channel on the web is shut down for allegedly featuring illegal content. No explanation is provided of what this illegal content is. Apparently, this is just a local shutdown, and the channel could be restored if someone went to the city's database and cancelled the command to block her channel. She obviously intends to do so.

5 Carlo invites Michelle for the ceremony of his ascension, where he will decapitate and drink the blood of several Elders of the other vampire families. However, he intends to execute the journalist live on her channel, too.

6 To distract Michelle from everything that is going on, Marcell will host a ceremony to award the reporter with a medal for her outstanding service to the city. All the preparations are keeping her busy and confused. She doesn't understand why this is happening all of a sudden but likes the recognition.

LOCATIONS

The adventure takes place in a big city we call Dark City, but it can be set in any metropolis around the world. Below we present some specific places that can be used to set the stage of the game with some interesting features for each of them.

MANSION ON THE HILL

The lair of Eleanor and other vampires of the Ventis family. These mansions are located in the most prestigious neighborhood in the city, with decorated silver gates, private security, and grand lawns with fountains and shrubberies in the shape of swans. There are lots of rich people in this neighborhood, and they don't appreciate outsiders, especially if they look like the characters. Thus, PCs in the area will have to be discreet.

Traits: Fancy, Private Security, Discrimination, Great Houses

Obstacles: Constant Vigilance, Traps, Police, Vampire Minions

CAVES IN THE SEWERS

Under the filthy sewers of the city, great catacombs have been excavated by the Jalos family. The sewers are infested with vermin and also harbor a vast community of outcasts from the civilized society above them. Some rumors talk about the existence of mutant enclaves, but that has never been confirmed. Deep in the catacombs live the few vampires of the Jalos family in what many would consider a sinister maze of darkness, blood, and illusions.

Traits: Filthy, Humid, Maze, Outcasts

Obstacles: Mind Controlled Outcasts, Illusions, Swarm of Vampiric Rats

CITY HALL

Downtown lies the old building used as the City Hall, where the mayor conducts his dirty business with impunity. The Ventis family has a lot of influence here, and some of their lieutenants have infiltrated the building to keep an eye on the mayor. Security is heavy here, too, but not with officials but with these vampires and their employees. Behind the doors of this building, the dirtiest and most disgusting things happen. If you see too much, you might need to disappear.

Traits: Old, Restricted Areas, Meetings, Vampires Under Cover

Obstacles: Locked Doors, Bureaucracy, Vampires, Secret Passages



THE GRAND TEMPLE

The church is a strong supporter of the mayor's image of a good man with traditional values. This organization has a strong influence in a word where all hope seems lost, and they take advantage of this like no one else. The church followers are fanatics, and they donate everything they can to the church, making it, possibly, the richest organization in the city. The fact that the church also takes part in many illegal activities, such as human trafficking and drug dealing, only makes it much more influential. The Grand Temple is a testimony to this power, and is an exaggerated architectural monument with gigantic pillars and golden statues.

Traits: Luxurious, Crowded, Criminal Activity, Religious Ceremonies

Obstacles: Swarm of Fanatics, Mobsters

WAREHOUSE AT THE DOCKS

The docks are dark, dirty, and a place for shady business and secret meetings. The warehouses are big, abandoned for the most part, and used to store illegal goods, to house gangs of criminals, and to arrange meetings between mobster families and set traps for enemies. The location might be used as a place where Michelle is taken to, where Carlo executes his rivals, or where the mayor passes the order to criminals so they can eliminate the characters.

Traits: Dark, Narrow Alleys, Deserted, Ocean

Obstacles: Trap, Gangs, Trash Compactor

HEAVY METAL BAR

The lair of Carlo, the Romani Elder. This bar is famous for its bad service and is frequented by young punks and bikers. Carlo is almost a legend among them, and they follow him like a king. Hundreds of bottles hang on the walls, and pool bats are always within reach. Here Carlo will pass his order to his followers, create new members of his family, and celebrate his victories.

Traits: Loud Music, Crowded, Sticky Floor, Bad Service

Obstacles: Tough Bikers, Punk Vampires, Liquor Fire, Chase

POSSIBLE SCENES

There is no set plot or defined sequence of events in this adventure. What follows are just some possible scenes Referees can use in their adventures if they make sense. They also serve as inspiration for the Referee's own creations based on what the PCs do.

STREET CHASE

At some point the characters are very likely to be in a car chase through the city. They might be trying to escape a group of bikers, reach a car that has taken someone they are trying to rescue, or just get near enough to fire their guns. To handle this, the Referee should decide how close or far each participant is from one another and determine how many successes one has to have to reach the other (from three to five is ideal). The Referee can use the random tables in the Running the Game chapter of the corebook to generate features on the streets and events in the city to come up with obstacles and scenes for the chase. This and the actions described by the players will inform the Attribute Tests players need to make.

AMBUSH AT FALSE MEETING

The vampire families, especially the Ventis family, might try to trick the characters, feeding them false informal about a meeting between them. Once there, the PCs will see actors pretend to be vampires (they believe to be shooting a short film with hidden cameras), and a group of assassins led by two vampires will kill everyone, including the actors if they witness anything. If the PCs manage to observe the meeting from afar, they might find out something is not quite right. This false meeting will probably be set in a far away location to minimize problems, such as in an abandoned warehouse in the docks or in a ruined factory in the industrial neighborhood.

BRAWL AT THE BAR

Going head on to the Romani domains might not be the best idea, but some players might try it anyway. If they go to the Heavy Metal Bar, where Carlo and his followers hang out and bunker, trying to start a fight, things will get messy quickly. There are a lot of bikers and punks there, most of whom are mortals, but they would enter a fight to teach an outsider manners for very little reason. They usually carry small melee weapons, and very few but the vampires have firearms. At any time, there are 2d6 Romani Youngs there, and a 50% chance that Carlo and his 2 lieutenants are there, too.

RESCUE IN THE DOCKS

Sooner or later the vampire families will take notice of the PCs, and some of them might decide to attack them through someone they care about. If they don't have anyone, maybe a contact or even Michelle can be the one taken. The vampires basically want to attract them to put an end to their meddling or blackmail them to do their dirty work. The victim could be tied in various precarious and dangerous locations, such as at the anchor of a cargo ship, on a running mat to the incinerator, tied in the trash compactor bin, or something similar (classic villain move, I know). Characters will have a set limit of time to be able to save the victim (set a Durability of 3 and roll every turn). If they get there late, things get bloody.

TERROR IN THE DEEPS

Maybe they find out the Jalos are behind it all, or just want to see what's down there, or they chase someone to the sewers. They will eventually find their way into the ancient catacombs under the city and discover the sinister things that lie there. This is a good place to test the characters' ability to navigate maze-like spaces, especially if a monster created by the Jalos family is chasing them. Additionally, once they get further inside the catacombs, illusions and dark sorcery will prove to be their own threat. Characters may see sinister images, such as them dying in terrible ways, forcing them to make Sanity Checks. All that before reaching the Thing in the Deep invoked by Zsaly.



OPONENTS

There are many individuals and monsters that can serve as Opponents in this adventure. Here we list a few that might come in handy.

Police Officer HD: 1

Special Abilities: DR: 1.

Private Security HD: 2

Special Abilities: DR: 1; Can spend a round coordinating act with 2 other Private Security to grant them a Positive Die on their next round.

Trained Assassins HD: 3

Special Abilities: Positive Die on all stealthy and deceitful actions; Attacks force a Physique test to avoid paralyzing poison that imposes a Negative Die to any Physique and Agility test by the victim.

Bikers and Punks HD: 1

Special Abilities: Negative Die on Morale Checks.

Young Romani Vampire HD: 2

Special Abilities: DR: 1; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had.

Romani Lieutenant HD: 4

Special Abilities: DR: 1; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had; Can move twice per round.

Ventis Vampire**HD: 3**

Special Abilities: DR: 1; Positive Die on all personality-related tests; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had.

**Ventis Elder****HD: 5**

Special Abilities: DR: 1; Positive Die on all personality-related tests; Can spend a round and drain the blood of a helpless victim, regaining a HD of Vitality Points per round spent, up to the maximum number of HD the victim had; If spend action speaking to a crowd, they can keep them mesmerized for a turn unless they pass on a Willpower test.

Shadow Guardian**HD: 4**

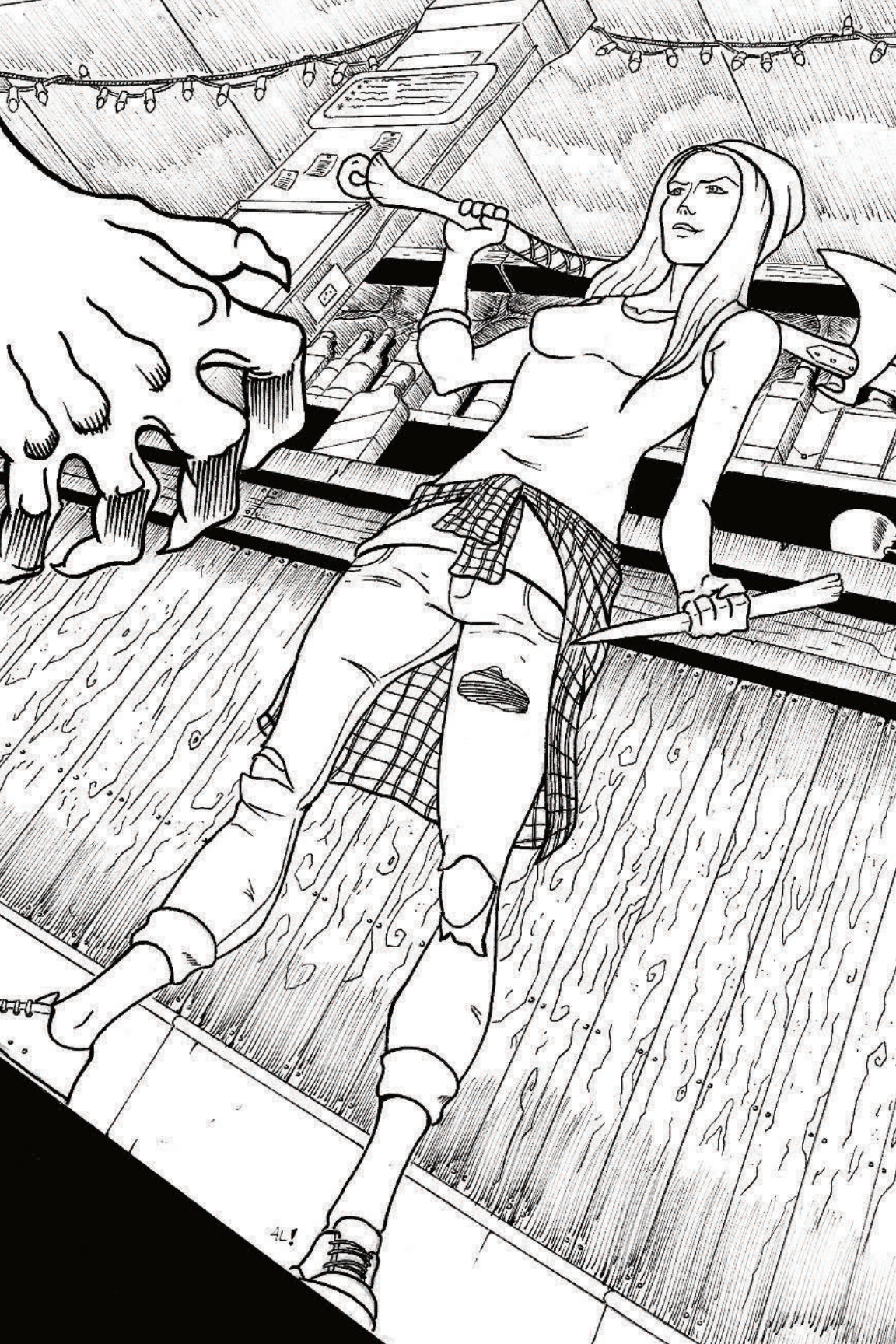
Special Abilities: Immaterial (immune to mundane sources of damage); Can enter any place there is an opening, no matter how small; Can climb any surface; Positive Die to hide in shadowy areas.

Thing in the Deep**HD: 10**

Special Abilities: Can assume the appearance of the characters' greatest fears, forcing them to make a Willpower test or suffer a Negative Die for as long as they see the creature and lose 1d6+1 Sanity points; Can divide its HD in as many HD it wants to make a larger number of attacks per round (1 attack as a 10 HD creature to 10 attacks as 1 HD creature).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure doesn't have a predetermined ending or way to be finished. That really depends on what the characters actually want out of it and what happens during the game. They might end the war as they eliminate Carlo (possibly making the Ventis family stronger in the process). They might try to get rid of all the vampires, pitting them against one another and taking them one by one. They might even align themselves with one of the families and work with them to dominate the city. Anyway, they will make allies, contacts, and enemies (especially enemies) in the process, and these can be used in future adventures.



NIGHT HUNTERS

A faction for your Dark Streets & Darker Secrets campaign

Hundreds of years ago, after a portal from hell was opened in the middle of Rome and nearly killed everyone in the city, a group of brave people formed a secret society of monster hunters they called Night Hunters.

Centuries later, this organization has spread all around the world under the facade of a weapon collection club. However, after hundreds of years, various orders have been formed, each with their own beliefs, methods, and even conflicting goals.

This article will present this faction for your **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets** campaign to be used as allies, contacts, opponents, or patrons of the PCs. A campaign where PCs are members of the Night Hunters is also a possibility, as problems from inside and outside the group could offer great opportunities for the game.

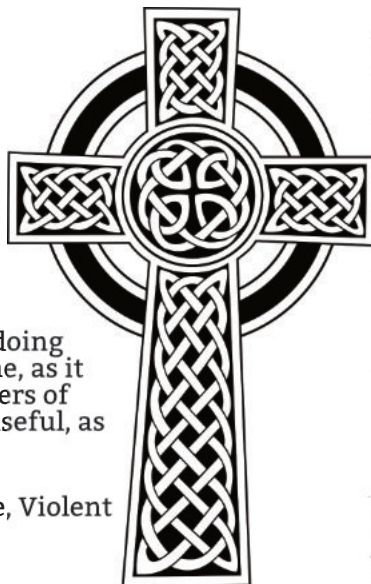
FACTIONS

Through time, the hunters had to organize themselves in groups and cells to better be able to fulfill their duty of defending the world against the terrible threat of demons, vampires, warlocks, and other terrible entities. Eventually, these divided groups developed their own identities and formed orders inside the Night Hunters. Today there are many orders, but the ones below are the most well known. They mostly help each other, but conflicts between them are not unheard of.

PURIFIERS

The most radical group in the Night Hunters, the Purifiers advocate the elimination and destruction of anything and anyone linked to the supernatural and unnatural powers. They believe that anything tainted by these powers are inherently evil and must be purged. Not doing so is a mistake and will lead to catastrophe, as it has happened before. Thus, the other orders of hunters are flawed, but they can still be useful, as long as they don't get in the way.

Traits: Inflexible, Obsessed, Incorruptible, Violent



JUSTICARS

Most of the Night Hunters are members of this order. Justicars see themselves as guardians and judges, protecting the world from malignant creatures while making sure they are fair in their assessment of each supernatural being, as they know not all of them are evil. Usually when a Justicar discovers a supernatural creature or object, they study it for a prolonged period of time and consult their peers before making the decision of destroying it or not. This makes them very slow to act compared to the methods of the Purifiers, but this has also avoided mistakes and led to a few alliances with beings that helped the Night Hunters against powerful threats they hardly could have faced alone.

Traits: Bureaucratic, Indecisive, Fair, Well Connected

CHRONICLERS

The keepers of knowledge and records of the Night Hunters. All groups of Night Hunters need at least one member of the Chroniclers order, or they would probably make a lot of mistakes. They are the ones that know most about all the different types of monsters that exist out there, their powers, methods, weaknesses, and even goals in the long run. In case they don't currently have this information at hand, they at least know where to look for it. The Chroniclers are not so adept in the actual monster hunting part of their job; nonetheless, they are an essential part of any group of slayers. Some, however, can become obsessed with the knowledge they collect and may even neglect their role of fighting the monsters and join them in search of knowledge.

Traits: Curiosity, Bookworm, Clumsy, Intellectual

OBSCURIA

Almost like a secret society within the secret society, members of the Obscuria are ones that have some connection to the supernatural and use this to face the evil threats of the same nature. Most of the members of this order were previously members of the other orders and joined after discovering their supernatural heritage or aptitude for sorcery and other unnatural gifts. There are a very small number of supernatural beings that joined the Obscuria, either because they share the group's ideals of peace and safety, or they own something to them and now have to perform tasks for these hunters. It's not unknown, however, of a few members that have been corrupted by the forces they employ, so members of the Obscuria are hunted down by Purifiers, who believe they are all demonic spies in the skin of allies.

Traits: Weird, Secretive, Corruptible, Suspicious

WHAT IS HAPPENING

What is going on with the Night Hunters? Are they trying to accomplish some specific goal this week? The following table can help make the organization come alive in your game and generate some adventure hooks to use in your campaign.

d10 What is happening with The Night Hunters?

1 The Purifiers have been informed of an Obscuria meeting and plan to attack the order they consider corrupted. They were tipped, however, by a demon-possessed member and is counting on them killing one another to further the goals of the Lord of Hate in the world.

2 The Chroniclers recently discovered the probable location of a legendary citadel of warlocks that existed thousands of years ago and want to plan an expedition to uncover its mysteries. Something, however, still inhabits that place.

3 The Justicars are trying to hide a witch that helps women escape abusive relationships, empowering the women in more than one way. The Purifiers, however, want to kill her, since she meddles with the sinister art of sorcery, and some even consider eliminating some of the women and men who have been exposed to her spells.

4 Members of the Night Hunters are being killed one by one, and the killer seems to know a lot about the victims. The hunters believe one of them is a traitor and now a stage of paranoia and suspiciousness has settled among them.

5 A great attack is being planned by the Purifiers against a group of witches and warlocks in a more rural area outside the city. Some of the people in that enclave have definitely done terrible things, but the majority of them haven't and just live near each other for protection. The Justicars are trying to get past their due process to save as many innocents as they can.

6 After the Night Hunters take down a couple of powerful demons, Hell declares war on them, and demons are coming to the world to hunt them down. Many are fleeing and hiding, but a few are preparing themselves to fight back.

7 A Chronicler believes they have found the location of ancient sacred weapons made to destroy threats to humanity by an order of holy knights. Is it true or is it a trap set by the enemies of the secret society?

8 The spirits of a coven of witches killed by Purifiers a couple of hundreds of years ago awaken when one of their descendants performs a ritual to invoke them to ask questions. Now they are using her to enact revenge on anyone that has any connection to their massacre.

9 A young member of the order with a talent for getting where they are not supposed to be enters one of the forbidden vaults of the society and unwittingly releases a powerful demon that is now inside the society headquarters, playing with the lives and souls of the hunter.

10 A member of the Obscuria is battling with the consciousness of an ancient and powerful warlock that has invaded their mind after an exhaustive research they have done to stop a disciple of said sorcerer. Now they need help to expel the warlock's consciousness from their mind.

NOTEWORTHY HUNTERS

There are hunters all around the world. Below we present some personalities that might be used by Referees in their campaigns to introduce the Night Hunters in their game.

FATHER KAVED

The oldest member of the Night Hunters in the city, Father Kaved is the one responsible for recruiting new members for the society. He is a member of the Chroniclers order and is quite knowledgeable. He is very charismatic and persuasive, being able to keep the various orders within the city working together as best as he can. He doesn't go on hunts anymore as he has lost a leg, and Kaved could become a risk to the other hunters. His goal is to keep the society functioning and avoid internal conflict. He secretly despises sorcerers, though, and mistrusts members of the Obscuria.

Traits: Charismatic, Eloquent, Curious, Diligent

Father Kaved **HD: 3**

Special Abilities: Can identify supernatural beings with sight, forcing them to make a Willpower test to resist this; Access to a really extensive library on occultism and supernatural phenomena; Special Abilities of The Smart character.

HANZ ZITMER

Member of the Purifiers order, Hanz is the most experienced Hunter in the city. He is responsible for training many of the new members and is known to be very demanding of anyone who wants to train with him. Members of the Obscuria obviously avoid him whenever they can, as he has been known to have hunted some of them down in the past. Rumors say that Father Kaved has been able to keep him in check, but the truth is that the Father has helped him keep the "purge", as they call it, a secret. Zitmer ultimately wants to become the leader of the Night Hunters and be recognized by his work in the society. However, he has nightmares of all the Obscuria members he has killed.

Traits: Stubborn, Determined, Vain, Afraid of Ghosts

Hanz Zitmer **HD: 6**

Special Abilities: Two Attacks per round; DR: 2; Madness: Ghosts of Past Victims.

RACHEL VASCA

Although still young, Rachel has become the leader of the Justicars in the city, because of her ability to make good decisions and quickly judge the course of action to be taken even in the most difficult cases. Some of the older members of the society still have difficulty in accepting her in that position, which only makes Rachel even more determined. She suspects Father Kaved isn't the good old recruiter he presents himself as, and she is working with Elizabeth from the Obscuria to protect its members. She hopes one day she can become the leader of the society and end the persecution from within it against Obscuria members. She obviously has problems with the Purifiers order, but she keeps them in check by always finding more pressing matters for them to deal with.

Traits: Determined, Emphatic, Suspecting, Fast Thinker

Rachel Vasca HD: 4

Special Abilities: Sense supernatural beings and activities within long range; Allies in the Obscuria; Gives a Positive Die to Morale Check to all allies within medium range.

ELIZABETH

No one knows her full name or where she is originally from, but Elizabeth has earned the Night Hunters' trust after helping them discover the weakness of a powerful demon who had been released by a crazy warlock a few years ago. The thing is, she couldn't help but wonder how these arcane powers could help the Night Hunters defeat other supernatural threats. After venting these thoughts out loud a couple of times, she was severely criticized by Hanz but quickly embraced by members of the Obscuria, who introduced her to sorcery and ways to control it. Now, Elizabeth is dedicated to train and spread the notion that there can be good supernatural creatures and that they can help defend humanity from the forces of evil. However, she is secretly becoming addicted to the use of sorcery.

Traits: Secretive, Curious, Ambitious, Obsessive

Elizabeth HD: 4

Special Abilities: Can cast 8 spells as if she had an Attribute score of 14; Can swap known spells from one adventure to another; Has access to an extensive web of information regarding occultism.





SPIRIT GUARDIANS

A new Archetype for your Dark Streets & Darker Secrets campaign

In a world where terrible monsters stalk the streets in search of living flesh and pure souls to devour, our protectors might be closer than we realize.

Guardian Spirits are supernatural beings with the duty of protecting our world and humanity from the threats of supernatural beings, especially those with allegiances with the Abyss. They usually take unsuspecting forms not to scare those they protect, and their favorite forms are of cats. Normally, they are sent to protect people that they've foreseen will have an important role in this eternal conflict, so it is not rare for them to be companions of actual monster hunters.

In game terms, they function like an optional Archetype that can be chosen by players when creating a new character. Character generation functions as normal, otherwise!

THE SPIRIT GUARDIAN

You were sent to this world to ensure the forces of Darkness don't take over, and to help those that fight it. You take the form of an unsuspecting animal, usually a cat or dog, that can be closer to the clueless humans to better protect them. Although you have an unthreatening appearance, you hide powers and abilities that are essential to fight the creatures from beyond.

Spirit Guardians is a special Archetype that doesn't really fit a standard role like the ones in the DS&DS corebook, presenting Special Abilities that put them in a more fluid position. They have magical abilities that are unlike those The Gifted possess, but also have some martial aptitudes that let them fight side by side with The Tough.

Prime Attributes: Physique and Willpower

Recovery Roll: 1d6+1

Special Abilities

- *I Can Loose My Fur:* They can assume human form for 1 turn per Level, and can prolong this period by spending Physique points on a 1 per 1 basis.
- *Do I Look Dangerous?:* In its animal form, The Spirit Guardian can use its natural weapons to attack for 1d6 points of damage and gain a Positive Die on all actions the animal form they assumed would be good at. Additionally, they can communicate verbally with those they have some bond with.

- *I am a Protector:* Each adventure The Spirit Guardian may choose a player character to protect. If they are in close range of them during combat, The Spirit Guardian can absorb the damage the chosen PC would take from an attack a number of times per combat as they have Levels.
- *Guardian's Gifts:* Spirit Guardians have special powers that help them protect our world and fight the forces of darkness. Every odd Level, beginning at 1st, they learn a new random power from the table below. Referees might design new ones, too.

d20 Guardian's Gifts

- 1 Spiritual Solace: Between adventures, The Spirit Guardian may reduce their Luck score by one for the next adventure to restore 1d6 Sanity points of another party member.
- 2 Change Shape: The Spirit Guardian can reduce their Luck score temporarily until the next adventure to assume another animal shape. This becomes a second animal shape they possess for the entire adventure.
- 3 Enlarge: The Spirit Guardian assumes an enlarged version of itself. This lasts for 1d6 rounds per Level and allows them to make all Physique test with a Positive Die and make their attacks inflict an additional 1d6 points of damage.
- 4 Sorcery: The Spirit Guardian knows one spell from the list in the corebook and can cast it as a character from The Gifted Archetype.
- 5 True Seeing: By spending a point of Luck, The Spirit Guardian can see the true nature and form of any creature or illusion for a full hour.
- 6 Lucky: The Spirit Guardian can roll twice for every Luck roll and keep the best result.
- 7 Share Luck: The Spirit Guardian can donate their Luck points to other player characters on 1 per 1 basis.
- 8 Spirit Form: The Spirit Guardian can become immaterial and slowly float for 1 turn per Level per session.
- 9 Control Kin: The Spirit Guardian can control 1d6 HD/Level of creatures similar to their animal for 1 hour each day.
- 10 Shrink: The Spirit Guardian can assume a form for up to 10 times smaller than their normal animal form for up to an hour per Level per day. The mechanical effects of this will be handled by the Referee but probably include giving a Positive Die to hiding and stealthy activities and a Negative Dice to strength-related ones.
- 11 Camouflage: The Spirit Guardian's fur can change color to match their surroundings. They must concentrate for a full round to change their fur. This halves the Difficulty of hiding and stealthy actions.
- 12 Charm: By making a human or other creature lock eyes with them, The Spirit Guardian can make a Willpower test to charm them for a number of turns up to their Willpower score.
- 13 Shadow Travel: Once per day per level The Spirit Guardian can safely travel through the shadows, entering one that fits their size and exiting in a shadow up to long range they can see.

14 **Illusory Copies:** The Spirit Guardian can create 1d6 illusory copies of themselves per day per Level. These copies can be used to fool enemies and pursuers, who must roll higher than The Spirit Guardian's Intellect score to notice the difference.

15 **Split Up:** The Spirit Guardian can divide themselves in a number of copies equal to their Level per day, lasting 1d6 turns each. However, they must divide their Vitality points among these copies, and if they die, The Spirit Guardian cannot regain these points until they take a long rest.

16 **Sense Supernatural:** By making a Willpower test with the Difficulty set by how insidious the supernatural element to be detected is, the Spirit Gurdian can sense strange disturbances within long range.

17 **Supernatural Speed:** Once per session per Level The Spirit Guardian can make an extra 1d6 move actions. They can use them at anytime, allowing them to escape enemies and reach friends faster than anyone else.

18 **Regeneration:** The Spirit Guardian automatically regains 1 Vitality point per Level per day in addition to any point regained through resting.

19 **Extra Lives:** The Spirit Guardian gains an "extra life" each Level, allowing them to come back from the dead at a future moment (not in the same scene they died).

20 **Human Form:** The Spirit Guardian has a human form they can assume at any moment for as long as they want, and can use all their abilities in this human form.



ADVENTURE IDEAS FOR SPIRIT
GUARDIANS

Referees might have a difficult time to initially come up with ideas for adventures involving Spirit Guardians, so here are a few to help them out.

1d6 Adventure Ideas for Spirit Guardians

- 1 All The Spirit Guardians of Dark City are having the same nightmare. A group of devilish spirit hunters are imprisoning them in a sinister box and selling them to warlocks and witches to be used as sacrifices. Soon, some Spirit Guardians start to disappear. Could this be true? And can anyone stop them?
- 2 There is a demon assuming the forms of people's pets they've killed and driving them to suicidal thoughts and actions. Who would be better to locate and get rid of these demons than a group of monster hunters containing a Spirit Guardian?
- 3 A group of Spirit Guardians are the only protectors of a Children's Hospital that sit right above a portal to the Shadow World. Can this group of heroes protect the children and their caretakers?
- 4 Hundreds of street animals are appearing dead on the streets with their skin removed. The authorities have no idea or clue as to what is happening and who is behind this, but aren't quite willing to go after the culprits, as for them it's not that important. Can someone find out what is happening and how to stop it?
- 5 A young girl who is supposed to become a very important agent in the fight against the forces of the Abyss has gone missing, and her parents are desperate. The authorities responsible for investigating the crime won't help. Who is really behind the attack and what do they really know?
- 6 Aliens from another dimension are trying to capture Spirit Guardians to study and experiment on them. This could happen to the PCs, or they might try to rescue a friend. Are these aliens with problems they need help with or are they trying to create some threat for humanity?

RELATIONSHIPS

A toll for characters of Dark Streets & Darker Secrets campaigns

Oftentimes the game will start on the premise that the PCs already know one another. This is done to speed up game play and get to the adventure as quickly as possible. After all, relationships actually take a long time to form. Thus, it is usually a good idea for each character to establish some sort of relationship to at least two other PCs in the group. This can create interesting entanglements and spark ideas that can even lead to new adventures. Some of these can be good relationships, while others can be rivalries.

d20 Relationships

- 1 You are stepbrothers/sisters that never really liked each other but now depend on one another. How has that happened?
- 2 You worked together in some illegal activity, and although you almost got caught, you escaped by relying on one another. What did you do?
- 3 You were lovers once but are now separated. Do you still have feelings for each other?
- 4 The character once helped you when you were in a very rough spot, and now you feel like you owe them something. How did they help you?
- 5 You were both involved in some terrible event and were the only survivors. What happened and how did you survive?
- 6 You are both responsible for a terrible tragedy, but no one knows you are to blame. What did you do and why?
- 7 You found out about the existence of something terrible you thought was only a legend. How did that happen and how did you become complicit?
- 8 You feel like you need to protect the other character. Why is that?
- 9 You confide with the character, trusting their advice and judgment. Why do you trust them?
- 10 You were rivals in a field you both feel connected to, but that rivalry turned into comradery. How did that happen?
- 11 You were friends since childhood but have grown apart over the years. Now you have found one another again. What drove you apart?
- 12 You both were friends of a third party that died recently in front of both of you, while you were trying to help. How did they die?
- 13 You studied together and never really liked one another, but circumstances now force you to work together. What are these circumstances?
- 14 You were both betrayed by the same person and that has brought you two together. Who was that betrayer?
- 15 Although not related, you two look almost like twins and feel strongly connected to each other. What's behind this?
- 16 The character saved your life putting themselves at great risk. Why?
- 17 The character knows a secret about you that you would prefer they never revealed to anyone. What is this secret?
- 18 You two discovered something important and valuable together and now don't know what to do with it. What did you discover?
- 19 You are both members of an organization. What is this organization and its goals?
- 20 You mentored the character in some important activity. How was that mentorship?

ON OLD SKULL ZINE #2

On the next issue of Old Skull Zine...

This is just the first issue of many to come. I have plans for at least a dozen zines with material supporting **Old Skull Publishing** games, such as **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets**, **Solar Blades & Cosmic Spells** and **Sharp Swords & Sinister Spells**.

On issue 2, entitled **Beyond the Prismatic Nebula**, we will present material focusing on **Solar Blades & Cosmic Spells**, including the following:

- A full adventure called **In Search of the Lightning Spear** (where the PCs will find themselves between a conflict between Space Amazons and Void Star Cultists);
- Information regarding the **Prismatic Amazons** and how to incorporate them in your campaigns or center one around them;
- **The Cult of the Black Star**, a faction of sinister and fanatical cultists who want to awaken a corrupted Star God and bring all the Universe under its command;
- A complete cult generator to help you insert more insane opponents in your campaign!

Don't miss out on our next issue and stay tuned for more Old Skull Publish games!





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OLD SKULL ZINE #1

Under the cover of
DARKNESS

For Dark Streets & Darker Secrets

I am enamored by RPG zines. I love them and try to collect as many as I can get. They are so personal, so unique, so different from the polished, finished RPG books we more commonly see out there. Their more informal aspect makes the reader closer to the creator, almost like a friend peeking at their secret and personal notes. I love that.

So that's what I want the **Old Skull Zine** to be. I want this to be a place where I can share things I am creating, developing, and using at my own table. Sometimes I can put a sneak peek at some new material for a book that is still in development. Some house rules I am tinkering with. And who knows, some stuff people from the community are creating, too!

This first issue, **Under the Cover of Darkness**, is dedicated to my latest game, **Dark Streets & Darker Secrets**, an RPG of Street and Sorcery and Action Horror. Here you will find a short adventure to be played with 1st Level characters, a faction to be used both as allies and as rivals of the PCs, a new Archetype, and a new tool to help develop quick relationships between PCs.



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