

Mortal Manipulations

Using Influences for Fun and Profit



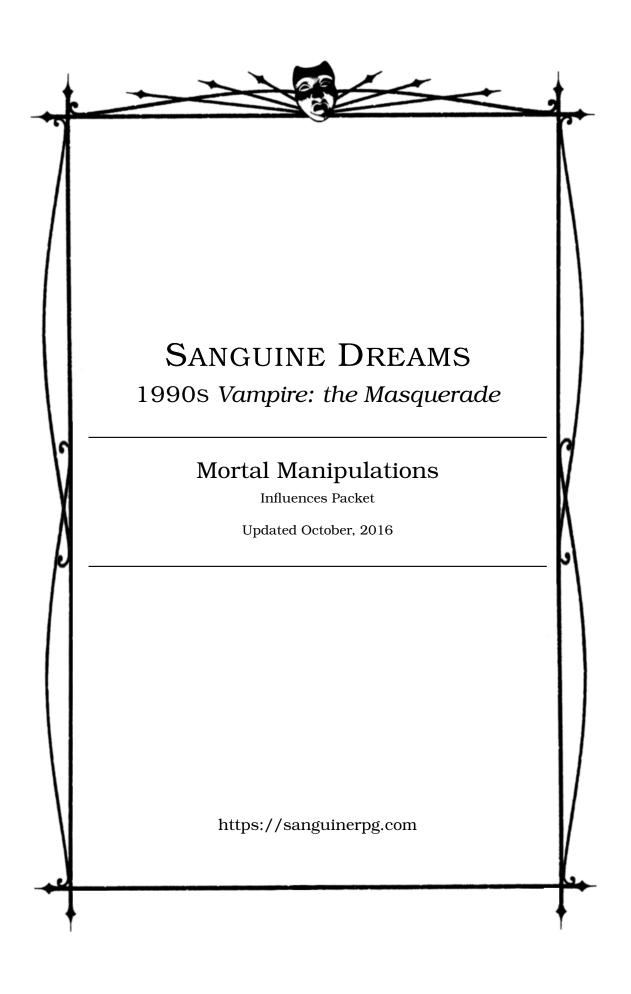


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1 Introduction

1.1 The Game within the Game

Vampire: the Masquerade is a game which operates on many levels—political intrigue, explosive violence, and begrudging alliances—all of which combine to create a rich tapestry for our setting. Beneath the surface however there is another game, that subtle and pervasive tug-of-war for the hearts and minds of the mortal population. Called "Influences," this document contains everything you need to know in order to dive into this cat-and-mouse contest that can have tangible repercussions in our regular Sunday nights.

A special type of Background, *Influences* represent different spheres of mortal society in which your character may have sway. With Influences your character can accomplish many endeavors subtly and without personal risk. While the process of using Influences is slow compared to running a scene with a Storyteller, it can simplify a great many actions and accomplish more long-ranging tasks that are best left to mortals, such as faking legal documentation, building hype about an upcoming club event, or acquiring weapons.

Unlike *Allies* or *Retainers*, dots in the Influence Background are not representative of individual or specific people your character controls; rather it is a metric to show just how much pull or sway they have over that specific mortal arena. With just one dot your character may have the ability to gain advanced warning or knowledge of upcoming events, while with five dots your character may be able to change whole Domain landscapes, be they economical, political, or literal.

Each specific Influence is rated from one to five, which represents increasing control over an aspect of mortal society. Every Influence cycle, usually a two-week period, players submit their desired actions, examples of which are detailed later in this document, and wait to hear whether or not they were ultimately successful. Standing in the way of success are other Domain denizens, who may have a personal grudge against their enemies, or are acting at cross-purposes to a large swath of kindred. A full description of each available sphere of influence can be found in the next section.

If your actions are not successful and you want to determine why, or you have an interest in tracking down just who pulled specific strings, there are mechanics to do just that, all detailed in the next section, with specific examples of Influences in play in the final chapter.

Starting to use Influences can be an intimidating process to new players, but it is the Storytellers' goal to make them approachable, interesting, and a compelling source of story. When in doubt, please talk them and ask your questions!

1.2 The Spheres of Influences

Influence is broken into 15 different areas or "spheres" a vampire may control. While many can provide similar results, each has a distinct and valuable use within the World of Darkness. Those who possess much Influence are well-advised to keep others from becoming their rivals, while those without are encouraged to tear down the figures standing in their way.

Bureaucracy - controlling government agencies and paperwork

Church - worship sites and sects of major religions

Finance - the world of business and accounting

Health - from hospitals to clinics and healthcare workers of every stripe

High Society – the world of the posh and the popular

Industry - the means of production are at your disposal

Legal - protecting or condemning the innocent and the corrupt alike

Media - when you're in charge, all news is good news

Occult - small or undervalued belief systems and the people who follow them

Police – wielding not just a badge, but the entire force **Political** – he who controls the government sets the rules **Street** hampless had been and minor street sange

Street – homeless, hookers, and minor street gangs **Transportation** – getting goods in and out

Underworld – organized or at least structured crime
University – higher education and on-campus resources

1.3 Quick Rules

- Influence cycles last two weeks, lasting from one submission due date until the next
- No character may have more dots of Influence than they have traits (the total of Physical, Social, and Mental)
- Some levels of Influences may be limited by the environment; Sonoma County may not have enough Industry for multiple characters to have level 5, for example
- Influence actions do not resolve immediately; success and failure will be reported at the designated game sessions
- Idle influence fades over time; control must be maintained or it will eventually be lost, at a rate determined by the Storytellers
- Influences cannot be grown through spending XP, it must be done through the use
 of the Growth action
- No Influence can affect areas outside of Sonoma County without use of the *Fame* Background, which represents increased geographical pull in a particular sphere

2 Actions: What Influences can do for You

Every time a character wants to utilize their Influences, they must frame it in the right context. There are goals which are hostile or aggressive, those which are defensive or passive, and those which don't directly affect others at all. When a character uses their Influence, they are allocating their actions to a specific task they wish to see succeed.

During every Influence cycle each character receives a number of actions equal to their dots in a given sphere. For example someone with *Bureaucracy 3* would have 3 actions they can use toward Bureaucracy tasks every cycle. The real meat of the game of Influences lies in the cat-and-mouse play between characters, all jockeying for control over a given aspect of the county, and then trying to exert control over that sphere while keeping away those who would see their plans fail.

Most actions can have more than one point allocated to it, which can increase its effectiveness, such as a two-point *Watch* having the potential to see more than someone who just used one point. The details of how actions interact and whether they can be utilized in this way are described below. Some actions are listed as requiring a target which means these actions have no effect on their own and only function in conjunction with another action or character.

Neutral Actions: Combine, Endeavor, Growth, Hasten, Watch

Offensive Actions: Attack, Block, Follow, Kill, Trace

Defensive Actions: Boost, Conceal, Defend, Reinforce, Stealth

2.1 Neutral Actions

Some actions are neither aggressive nor defensive, and are often the most common types of actions used during the Influences cycle. Unless specified neutral actions requiring a target must target your own, not those of others.

Combine (Requires Target Character)

Occasionally vampires do actually work together. The *Combine* action allows you to gift one or more of your actions to someone else for a particular purpose, such as *Growth* or *Concealing* a previous action. For every two *Combine* actions you use your target receives one of the corresponding action, which can be any type of action listed in this packet. Note that providing someone extra *Endeavor* actions does not actually give them the ability to perform higher-level *Endeavors*, just that they have more points available for the actions they can already undertake. When they submit Influences they must detail that they are using the actions you're giving them or the effort is wasted.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Tina wants to really help Brick's Growth this cycle so she tells the Storyteller that she is using two levels of the Combine action to give Brick an additional Growth action, which he must log if he wants to use it.

Endeavor

Endeavors are the most noteworthy and powerful uses of Influences in the game, and can affect a wide range of game-changing outcomes. Each Sphere has specific Endeavors which can be undertaken at each level, detailed more fully in the next section. Unlike most other Influence actions Endeavors normally take two full Cycles to resolve, but only require you to spend points on them when the action is initiated. Each Endeavor requires a number of points equal to the action's level, as described in the next chapter. Some Endeavors, such as sweeping political reform, may succeed but still take time to affect the greater world, as defined by the Storytellers. Logging multiple actions toward the same goal may help reduce this time.

Resolution Time: Two cycles

Example: Gabby wants to acquire a corpse, which is a Health 4 action, and so she logs that she is spending four points of Health Influence to do so. Provided it is not stopped, after two full cycles she will receive the corpse. Next cycle she will have all of her actions available for other Endeavors or tasks as she may want.

Growth

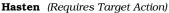
The process of gaining more Influence, with all the glad-handing and petty bribes required, is represented by this action. Each *Growth* is a single action costing one point, though multiple *Growths* can be submitted per cycle. Unlike most other actions *Growth* takes two cycles to resolve, and requires multiple applications to successfully attain the next level in a Sphere—you must have a number of successful *Growth* actions equal to three times your current level to go up, as shown in the following table:

Level	Growth for Next	Total Growth Actions
1	3	0 – 2
2	6	3 – 8
3	9	9 – 17
4	12	18 – 29
5	N/A	30 – 35

Note that if you are at level 5 you cannot store more than 5 additional *Growth* actions.

Resolution Time: Two cycles

Example: Severun wants more Police Influence, tired of just having two. He logs two Growth actions. If the they are not stopped, in two cycles he will be one-third of the way to having three dots of Police Influence.



Sometimes waiting around for an action to resolve just isn't good enough—a character needs results more quickly than normal. The *Hasten* action makes any *Endeavor*, *Kill*, or *Growth* resolve in one cycle rather than two. There is a high cost to this expeditiousness however, as you must spend one more point on *Hasten* than the action to be sped up. A large benefit to *Hastened* actions is that there is little chance of someone stopping you as there is no time to *Attack* the action.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Margarit really wants to obtain small-time contraband (a level two Street Endeavor) sooner rather than later so as she logs her Endeavor she also logs a three-point Hasten. This way she's able to get her results at the end of this cycle rather than the next.

Watch

One of the most common actions in the Influences game, *Watch* allows you to see the goings-on of a particular sphere, including actions which have either started or are ending in the current cycle. While this action won't give all the particulars, you will be able to see the following information:

Total number of *Watchers*, current *Blocks*, attempts to *Attack* other actions, the presence of *Combines*, and any *Growth*, *Endeavor*, *Erosion*, or *Kill* actions starting or ending this cycle. In addition you will be alerted if someone is *Tracing* an action of yours or *Following* you.

Watch actions are countered by Stealth, with ties in the number of points allocated going to Stealth. For this reason those who wish to make sure they're seeing everything going on in a Sphere may want to log a higher-level Watch than normal. Note that to affect an action (such as with Trace or Attack) you must have Watched the action yourself—you cannot rely on second-hand information.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Bryan keeps his ears open and is interested in knowing what's going on in the world of Finance. He tells the Storyteller that he wants to Watch for what others are doing this cycle, and will receive a report detailing just that.

2.2 Offensive Actions

Occasionally people want to prevent others from accomplishing their goals, or figure out who managed to slip one past them. These actions are aggressive in nature and represent actions taken directly against others' Influences. In comparison against defensive actions, ties go to the defender except where specified. While most commonly used against others, it is mechanically possible to use these actions against your own interests.

Attack (Requires Target Action)

After a character has successfully observed a specific Endeavor or Growth in progress, through Watch or Follow actions, they can use the Attack action to prevent it from succeeding. To do so they must spend more on the Attack than the target has on Defend.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Luke saw that someone started a Growth action last cycle through a successful Watch action. Wanting to be the only kid on the block with and not caring who he may be angering, he Attacks with the hope of stopping that Growth.

Block (Requires Target Action or Level)

Sometimes a character wants to put a hold on a specific *Endeavor* or level of *Endeavors*, preventing anyone else from starting it. By spending a number of points in *Block* as the *Endeavor* would normally take, you can be sure nobody can start that *Endeavor* this cycle. Note that *Block* actions do not stop *Endeavors* which are already underway. A *Block* can be affected by and is countered by *Boost* actions, with ties going to the defender.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Marion decides that she doesn't want anyone performing level 2 Finance Endeavors this cycle, and as such puts a level 2 Block in place. Anyone trying to do so without the benefit of Boost will find it prevented.

Follow (Requires Target Character)

A specialized kind of *Watch*, this action alerts you to all of the actions a particular character takes in a given sphere. To *Follow* someone you must have successfully *Traced* or *Followed* them in this sphere during the past four Influence cycles, and doing so provides the following information for the current cycle:

The level of any *Watch* actions, with whom they were *Combining* and for what purpose, any *Endeavors* or *Growth* they start this cycle, what action they are *Attacking*, *Blocks* they put in place, that they are *Following* others, whom they are attempting to *Kill*, that they are *Tracing*, how much *Erosion* they are suffering, any action they are *Defending*, and whether or not they are using *Reinforce*.

Follow will not see any actions protected by an equal or greater number of points in Stealth, and a Follow is not considered to be successful if the target has submitted no actions that cycle.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Garrett knows that Ari has Police Influence, from a previous Trace. This cycle he is Following her to find out everything she does.

Kill (Requires Target Character)

Sometimes just stopping someone's *Endeavors* isn't enough; you want to utterly destroy their control over an Influence sphere. After having successfully *Traced* or *Followed* them in the past four cycles you may attempt to *Kill* their Influences. Taking two full cycles to complete, a successful *Kill* destroys at least one stored *Growth* action, lowering their Influence total if they do not have enough *Growth* stored to withstand the attack. No Influence may be reduced below one dot.

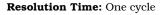
Kill is resisted by Reinforce, where only extra points go through—a level 3 Kill against a level 2 Reinforce will yield 1 successful point of Kill.

Resolution Time: Two cycles

Example: Orion hates that Misty has so much Transportation, an Influence he wants more of, and subsequently successfully completes two Kill actions against her. Unfortunately for Misty she didn't have any saved Growth actions logged and so she loses one dot of her Transportation Influence, going from 4 to 3. Since to go from 3 to 4 takes 9 Growth actions, and the Kill was worth 2, she drops to level 3 with 7 stored Growth.

Trace (Requires Target Action)

Sometimes kindred will take a particular interest in who was behind a particular Influence result, and the *Trace* action provides that information. Anything observed through *Watch* can be targeted with this action, which will tell you who originated it. This detective work is only valid for up to two cycles after you noticed the action, but also provides the target's general level of control over an Influence sphere ("a little," "some," or "a lot"). *Trace* actions are countered by *Conceal*.



Example: Davis is rather irked that his last Endeavor failed due to someone's Attack. This cycle he is attempting to Trace that action to see who was behind the unprecedented aggression. If successful he will receive the person's name and their general level of Influence in this sphere.

2.3 Defensive Actions

Just as there are actions to attack or discover the secrets behind others' goals, there are likewise actions one can take to reinforce their own Influences or prevent them from ever being discovered in the first place. These defensive actions directly counter the hostile actions listed above. In all cases, ties (such in *Attack* versus *Defend*), go to the defender. These cannot be used to benefit the actions of others; except where specified they can only help you own.

Boost (Requires Target Action)

Some times characters may be alerted that their action may be *Blocked* during the next cycle and that it will take some extra help to succeed. The *Boost* action provides protection against such obstruction. Similarly if someone wishes their *Block* to be more effective, they can *Boost* their *Block*. In the case of ties, the non-*Blocking* character wins.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Royal heard that the Malkavians were going to Block all efforts to obtain a firearm this cycle, so in addition to logging that action he adds a Boost to make sure he can accomplish his goals in time.

Conceal (Requires Target Action)

Ensuring one's Influence results do not lead back to them is the function of the *Conceal* action, which actively confuses anyone attempting to *Trace* the character. This does not protect against the action being spotted in the first place, only preventing it from being tracked back to the character who initiated it. In the case of ties, *Conceal* wins.

Since Trace can be used for multiple cycles after an action was witnessed, it is often wise to Conceal for up to two full cycles after a given action completes.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Samael made an unprovoked Attack against someone's Influence last cycle and only too late realized it was the Prince's. To keep himself from being in trouble, he tells the Storyteller that he is Concealing his last action with every dot he has, making it far less likely that the Prince will find out who stopped her plans. He will do the same next cycle to make to cover his tracks.

Defend (Requires Target Action)

Sometimes people know their *Endeavors* or *Growth* are unpopular and are likely to be attacked. Utilizing the *Defend* action provides protection against anyone attempting to *Attack* them during the same Influences cycle. Ties go to the person using *Defend*.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Peggy found out that someone Watched her start an important Endeavor last cycle and believes they mean to stop it. This cycle she uses her actions to Defend it, hoping it will be enough to nullify anyone wishing to see her fail.

Reinforce

Some particularly nasty individuals may want to *Kill* another's Influence, either to tear them down or take their place at top of the food chain. The only way to defend against a successful *Kill* action is to *Reinforce* one's Influence, which protects from these targeted attacks for one cycle.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Ronin noticed last cycle that someone instituted a Kill action and fears it could be targeted at him. Not wanting to lose all he had gained, he devotes all of his actions to Reinforce, hoping it's enough to stop the onslaught.

Stealth (Requires Target Action)

The counter to *Watch* and *Follow*, this protection hides another action from view. Any action successfully hidden with *Stealth* will not show up in Influence results. Multiple points can be spent on *Stealth* in an effort to hide it from stronger observers, and each logged *Stealth* action affects a single target action.

Resolution Time: One cycle

Example: Orion wants to be sneaky with his Block and to make sure nobody sees that one was in place, so he adds levels of Stealth to foil anyone attempting to Watch the sphere in general or Follow him in particular.

3 Spheres and Endeavors

There are a total of fifteen different spheres of Influence wherein which kindred can ply their dark machinations. While actions in one area cannot directly affect Influence actions in another, successful manipulation of mortal society may have far-reaching consequences for all, such as the closing of a hospital (*Bureaucracy* affecting *Health*) or an inflammatory news exposé causing civil unrest (*Media* affecting *Street* or *Political*).

As a kindred's control over a given sphere increases, more expansive or far-reaching endeavors can be undertaken. The entries given below are just examples, but represent the general scope of a given level's power. Final decision of what is possible at a given level of Influence is up to the Storytellers.

Endeavors such as those listed below usually take two full Influence cycles to resolve; particularly at the higher levels of Influence these endeavors represent the control and manipulation of a large number of mortals, and wielding such influence takes time. Occasionally the Storyteller may decide that a particular outcome may take multiple related endeavors, or multiple Influence cycles to complete. When undertaking particularly large-scale projects, please make sure to clarify with the Storytellers ahead of time to make sure you know what will be required for success.

3.1 Bureaucracy

Managing various government agencies, you can create or move past red tape and regulations. Most useful in the creation or shutting down of businesses, faking or acquiring permits and licenses, and manipulating public utilities, this Influence represents control over city clerks and other civil servants. Very effective when paired with the *Legal* or *Politics* Influence spheres.

Cost		Effect	
1	Trace utility bills		

2	Fake a birth certificate or driver's license
	Disconnect a small home's utilities
	Close a small road or park for two weeks
	Get public aid (\$1,000)
3	Fake a death certificate, passport, or green card
	Close a public school for a single day in the next cycle
	Shut down a minor business temporarily due to a violation
4	Initiate a phone tap for two weeks
	Fake land deeds
	Initiate a department-wide investigation
5	Start, stop, or alter a city-wide program or policy (e.g. curfews)
	Shut down a big business temporarily due to a violation
	Shut down a small business permanently due to a violation
	Rezone areas for future development
	Remove all records of a single individual on a city or county level

3.2 Church

Though the church's influence over the day-to-day lives of mortals has waned since the Middle Ages it remains a powerful force, particularly as a defense against the terror and uncertainty of life in the World of Darkness. This Influence represents connections to clergy, youth groups, and even church-sponsored groups of Hunters.

Cost	Effect
1	Identify most members of a given faith in the area
	Pass credibly for a member of the clergy for a service or sermon
	Peruse general church records (marriage, burial, et cetera)
2	Identify higher-level church members or donors
	Track regular church members
	Suspend lay members of a congregation
3	Open or close a small church
	Find a low-level church-associated Hunter
	Dip into the collection plate (\$1,000)
4	Discredit or suspend high-level church members temporarily
	Manipulate multiple faiths to preach a particular edict or philosophy
5	Organize major protests
	Access ancient church lore and knowledge

3.3 Finance

Separate from the *Resources* Background, the Finance Influence represents a kindred's ability to manipulate markets, stock reports, and investment portfolios, whether to increase wealth or to destroy competition. Financiers, stock brokers, bankers, and credit agencies are all elements of this Influence.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn about major local transactions and financial events
	Raise capital (\$2,000)
	Identify general economic trends

	Learn the real motivations behind an individual's financial actions
2	Trace a small, unsecured bank account
	Raise capital to purchase a small business (e.g. a corner store)
3	Purchase a large business (e.g. a small chain or a single large store)
4	Manipulate local banking records (delay deposits, alter credit ratings)
	Ruin a small business
5	Manipulate banking across the county (e.g. shut off ATMs, arrange a
	bank "holiday")
	Ruin a large business
	Purchase a major company

3.4 Health

Every mortal requires health services at some point in their life, and with control over this Influence a kindred can protect, harm, or influence the way care is provided. Research and development, hospitals, and even small clinics are all under this purview, as are the people who staff them.

Cost	Effect
1	Access a person's health records
	Fake minor records (vaccinations, et cetera)
	Use public functions of health centers (e.g. they will stay open late for
	you)
	Get two Traits of mortal blood, packaged and disease-free
2	Access some medical research records
	Have minor lab work done on a sample
	Get a copy of a coroner's report
	Instigate minor quarantines (either in size or scope)
3	Corrupt results of tests or inspections
	Alter medical records
4	Acquire a cadaver
	Completely rewrite medical records
	Abuse grants for personal use (\$1,000)
	Have minor medical research performed on a subject
	Instigate large-scale quarantines
	Shut down a business for "health code violations"
5	Commission special research projects
	Have someone institutionalized or released

3.5 High Society

Even in the midst of the World of Darkness there are decadent parties, high-class societal events, and the insatiable appetite of the famous and wealthy. This Influence represents control over fashion trends, hot night life spots, and other elements of upper-echelon living, and pairs very well with the Media Influence sphere.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn upcoming trends
	Obtain hard-to-get tickets for a show

	Learn about concerts, shows, or plays long before they are made pub-
	lic
2	Track local celebrities and the social elite
	Be a local voice in the entertainment field
	"Borrow" idle cash from the rich (\$4,000)
3	Crush a promising career
	Get an invitation into exclusive or elite events
4	Gain or grant minor celebrity status
5	Get a brief appearance on a local popular talk show
	Ruin a new club, gallery, festival, or other posh gathering

3.6 Industry

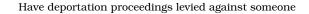
Fueling the world's economy are the large factories and blue-collar workers who staff them, creating everything from automobiles to home furnishings. This Industry represents management of the businesses themselves as well as the staff therein, whether to affect production or create unions. Control of this sphere often means talking with engineers, foremen, manual laborers, and others among the ranks.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn about upcoming industrial projects and movements
2	Have minor projects performed to your specifications
	Dip into union funds or embezzle petty cash (\$2,000)
	Arrange small accidents or sabotage
3	Organize or quash minor strikes
	Appropriate machinery for a short time
4	Close down a small plant
	Revitalize a failing plant
5	Manipulate large local industry

3.7 Legal

Many actions that kindred take are wantonly illegal, or at least would result in legal trouble should they ever be discovered. This Influence represents a character's ability to pull strings, either in someone's favor or to cripple their chances of success. Judges, lawyers, public clerks, even local deans of law are all affected by this Influence sphere. Particularly effective when paired with *Police*.

Cost	Effect
1	Get free representation for minor cases
2	Avoid bail for some charges
	Have minor charges dropped
3	Manipulate legal procedures (minor wills and court documents)
	Access public or court funds (\$1,000)
	Get competent representation in most court cases
4	Issue subpoenas
	Tie up court cases with briefs and motions
	Have most legal charges dropped
	Cancel or arrange parole
5	Close down all but the most serious of investigations



3.8 Media

The ability to draw public attention toward or away from specific events or topics has always been the strength behind journalism. This Influence dictates the sway a character holds over the airwaves, printed media, and even the word on the street, namely through broadcasters, editors, and reporters.

Cost	Effect
1	Get the early scoop on breaking stories
	Submit small articles (published at Storyteller discretion)
2	Suppress small articles or reports
	Obtain information dug up from investigative reporting
3	Initiate news investigation and reports
	Obtain project funding (\$1,000)
4	Ground stories and projects or force them to the A block
5	Broadcast fabricated local stories across the county
	Kill medium-sized articles or reports completely

3.9 Occult

With thousands of years of influencing mortal society, there is no doubt kindred have left their fingerprints in the minds and imagination of the world's inhabitants. Some have begun to dabble in arcane mysteries, whether grounded in fact or not. This Influence allows a character to exert some pull in these groups, be they wiccan circles, amateur talismongers, or other "fringe" groups that fall outside of the *Church* sphere.

Cost	Effect
1	Contact and make use of common local occult groups
	Learn about visible occult figures in the county
2	Contact obscure occult figures
	Access resources for common rituals and rites (e.g. physical compo-
	nents for Thaumaturgy)
3	Learn about other supernatural entities and their possible locations
	Access vital or rare material components
	Milk impressionable wannabes for money (\$1,000)
	Access occult tomes and writings on a specific subject
4	Research a common Basic ritual or rite
5	Research a common Intermediate ritual or rite
	Access a single minor magical item

3.10 Police

Whether acting as a force for order or suppression, city police, counter sheriffs, and the highway patrol are all visible reminders of the rule of law. Used to protect one's holdings or to attack another's, this sphere represents contact and connections to men and women of all ranks within the various local departments, from dispatchers and prison guards to detectives and special agents.

Cost	Effect
1	Hear police rumors and upcoming tips
	Avoid traffic tickets
2	Have license plates checked
	Avoid minor violations (if infrequent)
	Get "inside information" about an ongoing investigation
3	Acquire full copies of an investigation report
	Have police hassle, detain, or harass someone
	Discover bureau secrets or private goings-on
4	Access confiscated weapons or contraband
	Have select serious charges dropped
	Start an in-depth investigation into wrongdoing
	Appropriate money through civil forfeiture (\$4,000)
5	Institute major investigations
	Arrange sting operations or dragnets
	Instigate internal bureau investigations
	Have senior officers fired

3.11 Political

The direction of local government is controlled by those elected or appointed into office, and the particulars of how those officials act is directed by those wielding this Influence. Blackmail, bribery, electioneering, and other tricks are all used to encourage or coerce adherence to particular ideals or campaign platforms.

Cost	Effect
1	Local lobbying for a minor issue
	Identify the real platforms of politicians and their parties
	Gain advance knowledge of upcoming policies and government pro-
	grams
2	Secure a meeting with a small-time politician
	Garner inside information on upcoming laws and departments
	Use a slush fund or fund-raiser (\$2,000)
3	Sway or alter political projects (rededications, local parks, campaign
	drives)
4	Enact minor legislation
	Dash the careers of minor political hopefuls
5	Get your candidate into minor office, when appropriate
	Enact encompassing local legislature

3.12 Street

The polar opposite of High $\mathit{Society}$, this Influence speaks to the destitute, the dirty, and the various organizations which make up life in back alleys. Connecting with homeless, street gangs, prostitutes, petty criminals, and others in the city's underbelly, a character is able to wield considerable force in the grime between the streetlights with this Influence.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn the "word on the street"
	Identify most gangs and changes in their turf
2	Access small-time contraband (e.g. drugs)
	Incite minor violence against a business
3	Learn about other Influences that touch the streets (considered a spe-
	cial Watch action)
	Arrange minor services from street people or gangs
	Obtain a pistol or other hard-to-get item
4	Mobilize groups of the homeless
	Panhandle or hold a "collection" (\$1,000)
	Obtain a rifle, shotgun, or SMG
	Issue commands to local gangs which they are inclined to follow
5	Control a single medium-sized gang for a month
	Arrange impressive protests or small riots

3.13 Transportation

Everyone needs to get somewhere, and those who control the ebb and flow of the city wield surprising amounts of power to affect where and how the area moves. This Influence represents connections and control over truckers, harbor masters, flight control towers, taxis, and more.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn about suspicious shipments coming up
	Travel within the county or into another county quietly
2	Track an unwary target if they use public transportation
	Arrange passage within the county or into another county that is free
	from mundane threats
3	Seriously hamper an individual's ability to travel for two weeks
	Arrange passage within the county or into another county that skirts
	supernatural dangers
4	Shut down one form of transportation for two weeks (e.g. bus lines,
	planes, taxis)
	Route money your way (\$2,000)
5	Reroute major travel routes or modes of travel
	Smuggle a shipment within the county or into another with neigh-
	impunity

3.14 Underworld

The world of crime is pervasive and vibrant in the World of Darkness, and those who can curry favor or command its direction have a great deal of power. Representing underhanded dealings in all number of illegal arenas, this Influence sees characters interacting with drug dealers, bookies, hit men, criminal enterprises, and powerful gangs.

Cost	Effect
1	Locate minor contraband (small gambling halls, minor drug caches,
	et cetera)
2	Obtain a pistol, serious drugs, or a stolen car
	Hire muscle to rough someone up

	Fence stolen loot
	Prove that crime pays (\$1,000)
3	Obtain a rifle, shotgun, or SMG
	Arrange a minor "hit" against an unaware mortal
	Meet a mid-level organized crime boss
4	Establish powerful white-collar crime connections
5	Arrange a gangland assassination
	Hire a demolition man or firebug
	Supply local drug needs

3.15 University

Producing the world's next generation of thinkers, leaders, and doers, local schools are a wellspring of knowledge and power relating to the up-and-coming. Primarily focused on college-level exploits, the effects of this Influence can be wielded against High Schools and other scholastic institutions just as easily, coaxing or bribing deans, advisors, teachers, and school associations into compliance.

Cost	Effect
1	Learn a local school's policies and layout
	Gain access to low-level university resources (e.g. research library,
	lab equipment)
	Obtain records from elementary, middle, or high schools
2	Gain a meeting with someone who possesses useful knowledge or
	Abilities
	Be permitted minor access to campus facilities for a month
	Fake high school records
	Obtain college records
3	Call in faculty favors
	Cancel a class for two weeks
	Fix grades for a single class or student
	Discredit a student academically
4	Organize student protests or rallies
	Discredit faculty members or administrators
5	Falsify an undergraduate degree

4 Contacts, Fame, and Retainers

There are three backgrounds which can greatly effect one's use of Influences: *Contacts*, *Fame*, and *Retainers*. All three allow characters to expand their native abilities and wield greater control over Influences than those without.

4.1 Contacts

Contacts are a special Background which do not represent individuals, or even particular industries, but rather is a rating of how "connected" your character is in general; how many ears to the ground they have across all Influence spheres.

For each level of *Contacts* you possess you gain an extra point which can be spent on *Watch, Trace*, or *Follow* actions, which can be applied to any Influence sphere, including

those in which you do not possess any dots. These actions replenish every cycle, and as such those wishing to have a well-connected character are well-encouraged to possess many *Contacts*.

Example: Daniel has three levels of Contacts. Though he does not possess any Police Influence he can assign one Contact action to Watch for anyone pulling those strings this cycle, another to Follow any of Clive's actions in the local University, and one to Trace an action he previously encountered in Street.

4.2 Fame

The Fame Background represents how much regional "pull" your character has within a given Influence sphere. For each dot of Fame you may either be well-known in an additional sphere or increase your range in a single one, but no character may have more than five dots of Fame in total.

Without the *Fame* Background all Influence actions are limited to Sonoma County. If your character is well-known however, you may exert pull in other nearby Domains. Possessing the *Fame* Background allows you to spend a number of points up to your level of *Fame* in a neighboring Domain (not more than one extra Domain per cycle) for a specific sphere's actions. Areas able to be affected with this Background include Napa county, the San Rafael Domain, Southern Lake county, and Southern Mendocino county.

When you wish to affect an area other than the local Domain with your Influences, please note in your actions that you are using *Fame* and detail the area or Domain you would like to do so in. Note that you cannot use *Growth* in a neighboring area, as such things are difficult to do remotely, even for well-known characters.

Example: Misty has heard that there is going to be a big event in Napa to which she was not invited. Upset at the snub, she relies on her Fame in High Society to ruin the reputation of the event, even before it begins.

4.3 Retainers

As discussed more in the main *Sanguine Dreams* rulebook, each character may have a single *Retainer* which can help manage their Influences. Each dot put into such a *Retainer*, up to five, allows you to manage one additional level of Influences, as if you possessed one more Physical, Social, or Mental trait.

Note that a Retainer designated for Influences cannot be called on to do other tasks; their sole benefit is helping to manage an undoubtedly impressive amount of control over the mortal world. Nor do points spent into such a retainer grant you additional Influences, just an increased capacity.

Example: Baker has all the Influence his traits will allow but feels the need to extend his reach even further. By purchasing a Retainer specifically to deal with Influences he increases his Influence cap by one for each dot spent into his new friend.

5 Influences In Play

Though the large amount of possibilities inherent in *Sanguine Dreams*' Influences system can be daunting, the actual week to week submission of actions and results is very straightforward. This section details how best to post your Influences, the format of the response, and how multi-cycle actions resolve.

5.1 How to Submit Influences

Influence actions should always be submitted in writing, ideally using the "Influences" forum on our message boards. The submission should include how many points you are allocating to which action, whether or not you are using *Contacts*, and clearly state what your goals are in the case of *Endeavors*. All actions which require a target should have it clearly labeled to reduce confusion.

Influences are resolved in two-week cycles, with actions normally being due and results returned on alternating Wednesdays, via the message board. Please do not submit actions for a future cycle until current results have been posted.

Sample Influence Submission:

Bureaucracy: Endeavor x3 (I'm trying to close the Santa Rosa Safeway) **Finance:** Endeavor x1 (Raise \$1,000), Watch x2 (including 1 Contact) **Street:** Conceal x1 (last Cycle's Watch), Defend x1 (last Cycle's Endeavor),

Watch x1

University: Follow x1 (Amanda), Follow x1 (Stephen), Growth x1

Following the above example when making your posts greatly helps the Storytellers keep everything straight; every cycle there are hundreds of Influence actions submitted and every bit of uniformity helps reduce mistakes in a big way.

5.2 Your Influence Results

Taking the above example, let's look at the kind of results that character could receive for Finance. First we'll see the information the Storyteller gave them and then explain what each result represents.

Finance — Cycle 1

You have 2 dots +2 banked Growth actions This Influence is capped for level 5 – nobody at level 4 can advance!

You observed the success of 2 Growth actions and the start of 3 more

There are 3 other Watchers of this Influence

Someone is Combining their Influence with another

You are attempting to: Raise \$1,000

Someone succeeded at: Hire staff for a local restaurant Someone is attempting to: Purchase a large business

Someone Followed you!

Every Influence result will begin with how many dots of a given sphere you have and how many banked *Growth* actions you have. Note that this count will not include any *Growth* actions currently in-progress—it only lists those which have already succeeded. You will also learn whether or not a particular sphere is capped, meaning there's no more room at a particular level. Influence Caps are explained more fully in the next section.

The next lines show the results of the character's *Watch* action; they get a detailed list of how many *Growth* actions succeeded and began this cycle, how many other people were *Watching* this Influence, and then the details of other actions. Because this character was *Watching*, they learned that someone *Followed* them this cycle, something they may want to investigate later.

Now that this character has observed all of these actions, their options really expand for next cycle. They could *Trace* any of the actions they saw, *Attack* anything currently in-progress, or use their points to *Defend*, *Conceal*, or *Stealth* their own actions during next cycle. The possibilities are endless!

5.3 Working with Multi-Cycle Actions

Some Influence actions, particularly *Endeavor*, *Growth*, and *Kill*, take more than one cycle to complete. To understand how these particular actions resolve, please see the following example, where a new *Endeavor* is started in each of three cycles:

Endeavor 1 Start	Endeavor 1 End	Endeavor 3 Start
	Endeavor 2 Start	Endeavor 2 End
Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3

Points are only spent to start each of the above actions; unless stopped (say by an *Attack* action) they will conclude at the end of the next subsequent cycle. This figure illustrates how points spent in Cycle 1 to start an action are again available in Cycle 2, even if the action itself hasn't completed yet. Instead of starting a new *Endeavor* these points could be spent on any type of action, including *Defending* or *Stealthing* the action started in the previous cycle.

Actions that have just started will show up under *Watch* results as "Someone is attempting to ..." while actions which have concluded will return "Someone has successfully ..." or "Someone has failed to ...". Note that if either the start or end of a multi-cycle action is *Stealthed*, it won't appear on that cycle's results unless countered by a superior *Watch*, as described in the Actions section.

5.4 Absence and Influence Erosion

Like so much else in life, Influences adhere to the adage of "if you don't use it, you lose it." Those characters who have let their Influences lay idle for four consecutive cycles (at least two real-world months!) may find that they are subject to *Erosion*, a special kind of action which emulates *Kill* and can only be countered by putting your Influences back to work. Idle Influences will be suffer one *Erosion* action per cycle, which will be visible to anyone *Watching* that sphere.

Unless a particular sphere is heavily impacted, the Storytellers generally only enforce *Erosion* actions against those with level 4 and 5 Influences—the the levels in which most spheres have limited capacity and people actively jockeying for position. In all cases players will be given ample warning about the impending or continuing *Erosion*, normally through the game's online message board.

6 Advanced Influence Rules

Some rules won't be encountered by every player, or cover situations that don't come up during normal play. This section covers those situations where the basic rule-set may not be adequate, to ensure rules calls during these scenarios are consistent across the board.

6.1 Capacity and Managing Sphere Limits

While the rules for each Influence sphere present options for an amazing amount of control and power kindred can wield, not every Domain has the resources to fully realize those abilities; perhaps there isn't enough organized crime to support any kindred from having 5 Underworld, let alone several, or perhaps there are no major routes through

which high levels of Transportation could be used. In all cases, each sphere has a specific limit to the amounts of Influence that can be wielded by local kindred.

In most cases these caps only affect the number of kindred who can possess levels 4 and 5 of a particular sphere, but in extreme cases may even apply to level 3. If a sphere is at capacity no new kindred can rise to the capped levels, and any *Growth* actions that would have elevate that kindred are wasted. An enterprising kindred wishing to join the ranks of the Influence elite only has two choices: knock someone down or increase the cap itself.

The ability to *Kill* others' Influence totals is described in a former section, but the methods to manipulate a sphere's cap deserves its own section here in advanced rules. To identify a sphere's existing capacity, and to see how close it is to being expanded or restricted, any character can use a one-point *Endeavor* to perform the investigation.

A sphere increases its capacity for either level 4 or level 5 characters when enough successful points in *Endeavors* have succeeded for the purpose—normally at least 2x the level to be expanded. When submitting the actions, please designate whether you are attempting to raise the cap of level 4 or level 5, so an accurate count can be kept. Once the cap has been raised, which is usually broadcast through Influence results, a single slot at the designated level is available to be filled.

Reducing a sphere's capacity works the same way; characters can submit *Endeavors* designed to reduce the number of level 4 or 5 slots available for a given Domain, perhaps to counter attempts to expand it or to push out political rivals. Unlike with expanding a sphere, only characters who are currently at levels 3 through 5 can work to narrow it—those with level 5 or 4 can reduce the number of 5 slots, while all of them can work to reduce the number of 4 slots.

In the event that a sphere has not filled its capacity of level 5 characters, any extra slots will be added to the number of level 4s available, until such time as a level 4 kindred climbs to the top spot. This ensures that a vacant level 5 slot does not prevent someone else from growing to level 4.

In the event that a sphere's capacity is lowered to the point where there are more kindred at a particular level than available slots, all characters at and above the capacity line will receive constant *Erosion* effects, resisted by *Reinforce* as they struggle to maintain control over a supersaturated system. The *Erosions* may affect those with greater holdings more severely than those with fewer, but in any case it is cause for concern and immediate attention.

Efforts to expand or constrict Influence spheres often have tangible in-game effects. Where kindred are attempting to promote High Society, more nightclubs, fashion shows, and high-end boutiques will spring up. If kindred try to restrict Police, crime will rise as fewer beat cops patrol the streets and fewer detectives investigate crime. For a Domain trying to maintain a particular image, these factors may weigh heavily on their consideration.

6.2 Slowing Down Endeavors

Occasionally a character wants to have more actions available when performing an *Endeavor*, perhaps in order to *Stealth* or *Conceal* their activities, without relying on others to *Combine* with them for added effect.

To do so the character may spend some, but not all, of the points required by a particular *Endeavor*, which will begin the process of acquiring what they wish as normal, save that anyone who successfully *Watches* or *Follows* them will see that an *Endeavor* is being deliberately slowed. The downside to instituting this even slower method of accomplishing tasks is that any *Endeavor* thus slowed requires twice the number of points it would otherwise need to complete, which must be spent in successive cycles or the *Endeavor* is lost.

Example: Maria is using her Police Influence to receive a riot vest, which is a level 4 Endeavor. She only has level 4 Police however and doesn't want anyone to know that she

is acquiring such equipment. She may spend any number of her points this cycle to start the Endeavor, saving the rest for other actions, but will now not see delivery of her riot gear until she spends a total of 8 points toward this Endeavor, which she can do as quickly or slowly as she likes, so long as she continues to put points towards it every cycle until it completes.

6.3 Transferring Influences

At times kindred are charitable, or at least present themselves as such, and may gift or sell their hard-won Influences to other characters. More complicated than the signing of a few documents, this special *Endeavor* represents the legwork and planning to actually introduce the new kindred to the vast network of connections within a given sphere.

To transfer some or all of one's Influences to another character, a special *Endeavor* must be logged with the Storytellers which takes two cycles to complete. The cost for this *Endeavor* is a number of points equal to the amount of Influence being transferred, with the end result being half of which (round up) being removed from the initiator's sheet and added to the recipient's, provided they do not already have that much Influence.

All transfers must be performed while both characters are alive and active in order to facilitate the changeover.

Example: Sally is tired of managing her Finance Influence and wants to give most of her five dots away to Frank. She institutes a 5-point Endeavor to that effect. If it succeeds Frank will end up with 3 total dots of Finance Influence, and all five dots are removed from Sally's sheet. He will only receive this benefit if he had less than three points himself at the time the transfer concludes, though Sally loses her gifted Influence in any case.

6.4 "Unfinished Business"

Occasionally characters die or are forced to flee the Domain in a hurry, and the question becomes "what happens to their Influences?" In short their Influences start to decay in the same way a character who isn't using theirs would, though perhaps on an accelerated time line, depending on circumstances. Since they are not performing actions there is nothing to see with *Watch* or *Follow*, and there is nothing to *Attack*. Their Influence may however be *Killed* by those who are able, tearing down their empire in order to make room for others who may see opportunity to increase their own power.

Any actions instituted within the cycle the character departs or is killed are lost, not able to be seen through to completion. For actions that take multiple cycles, the action fails for lack of maintenance if they have leave or are killed before the first full cycle is completed. If after that point the action completes as normal, with specific outcomes being determined by the Storytellers.

Example: Thomas is planning on making a quick getaway from the Domain, but he has just started to gift his Political Influence to another character (see above). If he leaves during the same cycle in which the Endeavor began, the effort will fail and no Influences will be transferred. To see them through he needs to remain in the Domain at least through the end of the current cycle, but he has to ask himself whether the increased risk to life and limb is worth it.

7 Examples of Influence Use

While the actions listed above have individual examples, this section more accurately describes how different actions interact, and what can be done to affect them, matching your desires to the mechanics of this system.

7.1 Example 1: Marty Wants a Pistol

In this scenario we find Marty, possessed of some *Street* Influence, wanting to get a pistol without the risk of going out and getting one himself. Travis, also keeping his eyes on the *Street*, is disinclined to let anyone arm themselves, and will take steps to stop them. A third interested party, Paul, just wants to know what's going on.

- Cycle 1 -

Marty's Log:

I want to get a pistol from local gangs.

Street - Endeavor x3: get a pistol

Travis' Log:

I want to know what's going on with Street.

Street - Watch x1

Paul's Log:

What's going on with the Street this cycle?

Street - Watch x2

Result:

Marty is told that he has started the process to acquire a gun (since there was no *Block* in place preventing it).

Travis and Paul are told that someone is trying to get a gun (but not whom, since that would require a *Trace*), and that someone else was *Watching* the Street. Paul's two actions of *Watch* would have been able to overcome someone using one action for *Stealth* since he spent more actions toward it.

- Cycle 2 -

Marty's Log:

I don't want anyone to know I am getting a pistol.

Street - Stealth x2, - Defend x1

Travis' Log:

Whoever that is, they're not getting a gun on my watch!

Street - Attack x1 the Endeavor

Paul's Log:

Huh, who was doing all that moving and shaking?

Street - Trace x1 the Endeavor, Watch x1

Result

Since Marty's *Defend* and Travis' *Attack* were both at 1 action, the tie went to the defender, and Marty successfully got his gun. Paul learns that it was Marty who wanted the gun, but not whether or not it was successful (since Marty successfully *Stealthed* during the second cycle, blocking his *Watch*). Paul also learned that someone tried to stop someone else from getting a pistol, which may lead him to believe the *Attack* was successful.

7.2 Example 2: Stephen Doesn't Like Corpses

In this example we find Stephen who believes strongly in the preservation of bodily remains, Mitchell who really needs a body, and Gabby who is poking her head in from elsewhere. A little later we will meet Rick, Mitchell's friend.

Cycle 1 -

Stephen's Log:

I don't want anyone to get a body this cycle

Health – Block x4 that level 4 Endeavor



Man I really need a corpse, fast Health – Endeavor x4: Acquire a corpse

Gabby's Logs

I want to know what might be affecting the street Street – Endeavor x3: Learn about other Influences

Result:

Gabby's special *Street* Influence action was to utilize a level 3 *Endeavor* which gives her a single *Watch* action in related spheres. The Storyteller decides that *Health* is connected and so lets her see that one person tried to get a corpse, while someone else ensured no corpses could be acquired.

Stephen is informed that his *Block* was successfully instituted, since he spent the right number of actions to counter a level 4 *Endeavor*. He does not discovery whether or not anything was stopped (which is the purview of the *Watch* action).

Poor Mitchell is informed that his corpse-finding expedition never got off the ground.

Cycle 2 -

Stephen's Log:

I still don't want any corpses to be defiled Health – Block x4 the same level 4 Endeavor

Rick's Log:

I want Mitchell to figure out who stopped him Health – Combine x2 to give Mitchell a Trace action

Mitchell's Log:

I still really need the body, and I want to find out who's blocking me! Health – Endeavor x4: Acquire a corpse, Trace x1 the Block (from Rick)

Result

Since Stephen is still *Blocking* the acquisition of a corpse, *Mitchell*'s renewed endeavor would not be successful. Since he was affected by the *Block* in Cycle 1, he is able to *Trace*, in this case after having been granted a few extra actions by Rick through the *Combine* action (at a 2-for-1 ratio). Since Stephen didn't *Conceal* his *Block*, the *Trace* will succeed.

If Mitchell thought the *Block* would be renewed, as it ultimately was, he could have leaned on Rick to *Combine* with him to *Boost* his corpse-finding *Endeavor*, which would have risen it above the level of the *Block*.

7.3 Example 3: Mary's Great Escape

Mary has been bad, and Peter is hot on her tail. She knows he is watching the highways and so wants to utilize her *Transportation* Influence to get safely out of town.

- Cycle 1 -

Mary's Log:

Time to leave this Domain!

Transportation - Endeavor x3: Safe passage to Oakland!

Peter's Log:

I'm utilizing my Contacts

Transportation – Follow x1: Mary, Watch x1

Result

Unfortunately for Mary, Peter has previously been affected by her *Transporation* Influence and so may now *Follow* her, trying to find her specific actions. By utilizing

his *Contacts* he is able to discover that not only is someone trying to get safe passage out of town, but it's Mary!

Mary learns that there were no *Blocks* in place stopping her from organizing her affairs, and so everything is underway for her hopeful escape at the end of next cycle.

Cycle 2 -

Mary's Log:

I think I'm clean, let's go!

Transportation - Stealth x2, Defend x1

Peter's Log

I want to stop her, but I don't have any Transportation of my own. Damn!

Result:

Even though Peter knew what Mary's plans were, because he didn't have any *Transporation* Influence himself, he couldn't submit any *Attack* actions which would have ruined her plans. At least he can report to the Prince that he knows exactly how she got out of the city, though that's likely to be small consolation.

7.4 Example 4: Becky Dislikes Education

Utilizing her *University* Influence, Becky wants to shut down a local Geology class which she feels is getting a bit to close to some of her buried secrets. Though she doesn't have enough sway to completely ruin the professor's career, she can at least put a stop to his current schedule, which will give her time to either make other plans or hide the bodies in a new location.

Cycle 1 -

Becky's Log:

I want to make sure Mark Peterson's Geology class is shut down University – Endeavor x3: Cancel his class

Result:

Provided nobody stops Becky's *Endeavor*, after two complete cycles the class will be cancelled for one full cycle, or two weeks, hopefully disrupting the errant teacher's plans to do an on-site dig during that time.

8 General Disclaimers

Sanguine Dreams is a game of personal horror and darkness where mature themes, suggestions, and implications could occur around every corner. We welcome all players, however those under the age of 18 must have written consent from their parents or guardians to play. Vampire: the Masquerade and all related material *copyright 1990-2015* **White Wolf Publishing**, a division of CCP North America, all rights reserved and are used without explicit permission. Buy their books! **www.White-Wolf.com**

9 Change and Revision Log

• 2015-XX — Initial release.

