***Blood Faith I***

My dear Porfirio,

Belief is an innate aspect of our food source. It colors everything from where they live to what they do. One aspect of their belief is the existence and reverence for certain objects. These religious relics have assumed legendary status, both among them and ourselves, for being effective defenses. Herein we will address just such objects and relics.

Before we consider the nature of artificial vessels of mankind’s beliefs, we must first consider our own nature. For the two are inseparably linked. The effect of the object upon us is directly antithesis to the core of our existence.

We will begin by examining the nature of conversion.

The popular urban legend, and even the colloquial myths, state that one is converted to immortal status through infection by the fluids or ethers of one who is already immortal. Most commonly this is thought to be through the process of feeding itself. However, this is easily disproved by simple examination of our numbers and feeding habits. Were ever our food source converted in the process of feeding, our numbers would have long ago overshadowed those of man.

A second, and slightly less common, belief is that one is converted by both being fed upon and sharing in an immortal’s blood. Such an act is more a perversion of an intimate nature than based upon any truth. There is nothing within our blood, saliva, urine, or other bodily excretions to cause conversion upon a man.

The truth is simpler and far more complex. We are creatures that have combined both body and soul and given ourselves over to a shared single source of power, bloodlust. For a mortal to be converted to immortality, there are required some few steps.

First, the mortal must be corrupted. This is not to say that the mortal must become a psychopathic killer. Rather the mortal must suffer from a change in thought processes that make them more compatible with their destined future. They must be brought to see that they are superior to their fellows and that all others exist merely for their pleasure.

Second, the mortal must be brought to crave the conversion. The simple expedient of feeding works here. For as we feed, we release a bodily agent that creates a sense of pleasure in both ourselves and our food source. But by far, the pleasure is greater for us. A mortal on the proper path of conversion, will recognize this and desire the greater pleasure.

Third, the mortal must undergo the Shedding. We all Shed our previous lives under the guise of death. The mortal who has been corrupted and converted to the proper thoughts, may then under our guidance begin combining their body and soul to such a degree as to become a creature far superior to that of mere man. With the assistance of an immortal, the mortal is drained to near death and placed in a trance. This trance so approaches actual death that the mortal is oft interred prior to its completion. And in recent years the advent of certain post mortem procedures have necessitated haste and caution in the protection of one on the path to conversion, least the trance be prematurely interrupted and fail, launching the convert into the darkness beyond.

Once the mortal has been properly converted, certain physical aspects will begin to change to reflect their new status. An allergy to bright luminescence will develop. This may be overcome, but it is most acute in the newly converted. The nature of the allergy is suspect, but certain theories hold that it stems from the two Philosophies that govern the universe.

Next, the convert will develop the Hunger and accompanying canines. A musculature similar in nature to that of a cat’s claws, develops under the gums allowing for the expansion and retraction of the teeth. This adaptation requires time and is usually complete within six months to a year of conversion.

Those are the most basic of physical changes apparent in conversion. Others including “mind control”—in reality a practice of applied psychology and hypnosis—shape alteration, and most important the ability to recuperate at speed from most any injury are acquired over time, study, and practice. The closer one gets to its chosen of the Two, the greater and more varied the applications of their power.

Now that we are reminded of our nature, we may progress to the nature of the relics and trappings of the mortal mind. In the Reliquary of the Sheridan Le Fanu Library, I have been privileged to examine one of the first religious relics of mankind. It is a simple club, made from a now petrified tree branch.

How is this a religious relic? you ask. I will return to this.

The common relics of our time consist of the symbols of the faiths of the mortals; crosses, Buddhas, stars of David, &c. In some Asian cultures, even the color red is of a religious nature. Mortals consistently use these objects in an attempt to drive us from them. These objects, in and of themselves are of no value and no power. In the library, we have thousands of them from across the world and from all ages of time. No, the power of these objects stems from the minds of the mortal; their belief and alignment with their Philosophy, their side of the Two. This is why the cross in one man’s hand is dangerous and lethal unto our kind, but in the hands of another it is just a paperweight.

Which brings us back to the club. The club is from a time before mortals had formalized their religions and discovered the varied uses for metals. The mortal who bore it believed in the protection and safety it offered. And so when one of the first of our kind encountered it, it was an object of dread unto them. Now, it may be handled safely.

We are affected by these objects because of the conflict of the Philosophies. Our Philosophy is ingrained into us. We conscientiously join our bodies and soul with it. So that when we encounter it’s opposite, we are repelled. For the two cannot co-exist in the same sphere.

Now, the mortals believe that the strength of these objects come directly from their Philosophy. That the object itself is a universal symbol, ingrained in time, nature, and all life to represent such. This idea is a lie. We began this propaganda campaign millennia ago with the installation of idols and religions of pleasure.

No, the power of the object, as I said, comes from the mortal’s alignment with that Philosophy. Garlic no more represents purity, than does a puddle of mud. Unless, the mortal believes it does. The quality of that belief temporarily grants a form of power unto the object. Thus any object could in theory be such a relic.

Case in point, I once encountered a mortal upon whom I wished to feed and yet found myself unable. This intrigued me so that I studied and befriended the man, for such is not forbidden by either Philosophy. I learned that the man’s faith cared little for the outward trappings, but was more centered on the inward. The man sought in essence to live his faith, thereby transforming himself into a holy relic.

I kept tabs on this man throughout the years and upon his death I examined his body only to find that the power which had resided there in life remained, though greatly lessened. It was similar to a thumbprint.

So we see that not every relic poses a threat unto us. However should the ideas of this man find root, our very existence will be endangered. As such, we have increased our campaign of partial conversion. As our plans progress, we will witness the mortals shift their focus from true belief to superficiality and carnality, thus keeping them ripe for the harvest. But be warned, our acts will in all likelihood spur the other Philosophy to increase the potency of those faithful who remain to it.

Just remember belief is innate to our food source. And we can control them if we are careful.

Affectionately,

Hæmming