



ARES™

VAMPIRE FX in the ALTERPiTY® GAME

LEGACY OF THE DRAGON

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Since the publication of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in 1897, vampires have been a favorite villain in literature, theater, and cinema. Creatures with the gift—and curse—of immortality, vampires enthrall us with their timeless passion and their strange need for human blood. In recent decades, vampires have been romanticized further as authors, screenwriters, and even roleplayers have considered the classic story from the vampire's point of view. More than bloodthirsty monsters, these beings might have subtle political, social, or personal agendas. This sort of vampire makes an excellent villain for an *ALTERNITY*® game in either the *STAR*DRIVE*® or the *DARK•MATTER*™ setting.

A HISTORY IN BLOOD

The legacy of the vampire began in the Romanian state of Wallachia, just south of Transylvania. Its ruler, Vlad Tepes, was feared for his habit of impaling petty criminals and even—if the tales are to be believed—of drinking human blood. He became known as Vlad the Impaler and Vlad Dracula, a name taken from his father, a member of the Order of the Dragon—a military order created by the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund to defeat the Turks. In the local tongue, the word “dragon” was *dracul*, and “dracula” meant “of the Dragon” or even “of the Devil.”

Dracula's region of Eastern Europe had always been unstable, and Vlad took the throne three times in his life before finally being assassinated in 1476 or 1477. Exactly how he came to rise as a vampire remains a mystery, but the speculation is boundless. Some claim that the atrocities he committed encouraged a demon to “reward” him with an undead existence. Others suggest that Dracula unearthed a lost spell of blood-sorcery and that his odd habits were part of an elaborate ritual to achieve eternal life.

In any case, Dracula dug himself out of his grave, somehow repaired his mangled corpse—his decapitated head had been taken to the Turkish emperor to prove he was dead—and began a new, dark existence. He spent the next century quietly indulging his sadistic urges, learning the secrets of his unnatural powers in secrecy. Only when he had mastered his new abilities did he retake power and avenge himself against the families of those who had wronged him.

When Dracula discovered his ability to create more vampires, he began selecting ruthless mortals who demonstrated a propensity for obedience to a powerful master. Those who were strong but stupid he made ghouls; those who demonstrated intelligence were granted a more terrible gift. Upon these human predators, Dracula bestowed what he fancifully termed the “kiss of the dragon,” avoiding the more vulgar “vampire,” a word too similar to “parasite” for his taste. Likewise, Dracula's undead disciples call themselves “dragons,” setting themselves above mortals and among the most fabulous creatures of legend.

CHILDREN OF THE DRAGON

While Vlad and his fledgling dragons strove to keep themselves hidden, their bloodthirsty natures occasionally spun out of control, resulting in messy, traceable, or public killings. As a result, vampire hysteria swept Europe several times in the 17th and 18th centuries, notably in the cases of Peter Plogojowitz and Arnold Paole. The two men were reported to have been walking about after their deaths, and their bodies appeared extremely lifelike when disinterred, with fresh blood on their mouths. By the late 18th century, the existence of vampires was accepted as truth by the more credible members of the general public, and the undead began appearing

VAMPIRES IN THE DARK•MATTER SETTING

In a *DARK•MATTER* campaign, vampires could easily be placed as allies of the Final Church; they both have an interest in power and bloody rituals, although the wiser vampires have learned caution and frown on the Church's more overt displays. A vampire might solicit the heroes to eliminate reckless members of the Final Church, or the Church could tip off the heroes to a vampire's location after it has made too many enemies within the organization.

In contrast, a vampire could be a target of groups such as the Hidden Order of St. Gregory or the Knights of Malta. Agents of the Order or the Knights could discover a vampire or its minions and recruit the heroes to help eliminate it, or the vampire could plant evidence incriminating one of the groups as being responsible for a previous conflict with the heroes. If these orders have a more sinister goal, this damning evidence could be true.

In either case, vampires have time on their side and aren't above trying to control both sides of a conflict. If necessary, they can pull the right strings to start fires in opposing groups, using the distraction to move to a safe location and hide for years until they are forgotten or assumed dead.

in poetry, prose, and theater, a trend that escalated in the 1800s.

At this point Vlad Dracula, already over four hundred years old, realized that the cat was out of the bag. At the same time, his emboldened dragons, weary of eking out an existence in desolate ruins and tombs, began whispering of travel and exploration. When word reached Dracula of this discontent, he struck down several of the more vocal “little dragons,” as he called them. Others escaped their master's wrath and hid throughout the world to start their own small “families.”

Gamemaster Note: If your campaign doesn't include vampires and you're considering using the *Tangents* supplement for the *ALTERNITY* game, Dracula's emergence as a vampire is a major point of divergence from your timeline. With *Tangents*, you could send your heroes into an alternate world where vampires exist or bring a vampire from that universe to the universe of the heroes.

VAMPIRES IN THE STAR*DRIVE SETTING

Hindered by their curious inability to travel between stars, vampires build power bases on a single planet and use ghouls to meddle in the affairs of other worlds.

A VoidCorp employee who happens to be a vampire doesn't have to worry about retiring before getting a choice promotion, and he or she has exceptional abilities to help win the rat race. Such a creature would make an excellent long-term foe, with employees in many systems and an annoying habit of never staying dead—perhaps sparking speculation about cloning, cybernetic brain downloads, and other inaccurate theories. A Rignunmor vampire would be in a similar position, having centuries to establish a mercantile empire, legally or criminally.

A young Orion vampire might find itself stranded in the frontier and dedicate itself to learning every part of that system, becoming an expert guide.

A Thuldan vampire would be in a unique position: physically superior to its neighbors—and therefore held as a model citizen. It is not truly human anymore, however, and is therefore at risk of being shunned or killed. Such a vampire might end up on the run from Thuldan assassins when its ruse is discovered and it is in need of help from sympathetic heroes (who probably won't be told its true nature).

fresh start in a new territory where they would be the only ones of their kind. They were never heard from again.

When Earth-bound vampires investigated their missing brethren, they heard disturbing news: In every case, the star-bound vampires were found comatose in their cabins at some point during the five-day journey through drivespace. Each later died, apparently of severe malnutrition. Furthermore, their tissues showed signs of decay in line with a much older body. (The coroners didn't realize the corpses were vampires dead a hundred years or more.)

This news stirred the vampire community to uproar. Was there something wrong with those vampires? Foul play on the ship? Or something inherently dangerous in drivespace itself?

Elder vampires declared a ban on drivespace travel for their minions until the cause of "drivespace death" could be discovered. Naturally, the ban didn't stop desperate vampires from fleeing to the stars, hoping that the strange death wouldn't befall them. A few survived—but only the young and the weak.

Whatever the cause, vampires who succumbed to drivespace comas could not be contacted, even through mind-walking. The few fledglings who survived sent messages back to their fellows on Earth stating that they had survived. Young vampires everywhere began conspiring to leave their manipulative creators behind. As word spread, a mass exodus to space began in earnest. Even the young vampires didn't have permanent immunity to the mysterious trauma of drivespace. Swelled with confidence, many returned to earth to recruit their friends, only to arrive defenseless.

In response to the flight of young dragons, the elders began imprisoning their new fledglings, nurturing them carefully until they were thought to be too strong to make the journey. This had the effect of strengthening the bonds between master and fledgling, although resentment at their confinement turned many away from their seniors. These practices

THE BLOOD-DIMMED TIDE

Over the next century, these dragons created many lesser vampires to serve them, and Earth's undead population swelled to almost two hundred by 1850. Most of them flocked to the world's largest cities: London, New York, New Orleans, Paris, Beijing, and Cairo.

The War Between the States offered American vampires an opportunity to feed and spread quickly. Wounded soldiers tended to grasp at a chance to go on "living," and those who refused couldn't fight off a determined vampire. Thus, the undead population of the western hemisphere leaped again. The first and second World Wars did the same thing for Europe. By the end of the 20th century, there were close to 10,000 worldwide, although the vast majority of those were less than one hundred years old.

Life as a vampire in the Information Age was fun and easy. Vampires had been popularized in books, television, and film, and the goth lifestyle as well as a popular roleplaying game made "pretend" vampires commonplace. Eventually, few looked askance at strangely dressed pale kids who never went out in the day. If they claimed to be vampires, so what? This indifference allowed the vampires great freedom to move about at night, and the urban environments were inured to murders and disappearances, so feeding was easy.

Note: This time is before the start of the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. From this point onward, the timeline follows that of the STAR*DRIVE campaign setting.

DARK MATTER & DRIVESPACE

The popularity of false vampires waned in the early 21st century, and the dragons faded quietly into the background. The exploration of the planets in the next century didn't interest vampires, as their numbers were few enough, and food plentiful enough, that they didn't need to think about moving to cramped extraterrestrial colonies. Even contact with the fraal in 2124 aroused little interest from the undead. The few accidental encounters between curious vampires and visiting fraal resulted in casualties on both sides, with rumors of the conflicts convincing most young vampires to leave the aliens alone.

As the human population continued to increase, even the vampires began to feel crowded. Fortunately, the invention of the stardrive acted as a release valve for this pressure as large numbers of humans left earth for new homes in the stars. Content to let their food-animals do the hard work of colonization, most vampires waited until the new planets were sufficiently populated before making the journey through drivespace. Those who made that journey were usually weaker vampires, underlings to others with power. With little hope of advancement at home, these lieutenant vampires thought they could make a

Gamemaster Note: Any vampire who has rank 3 or greater in any vampire FX skill or who has an FX energy pool greater than its CON score succumbs to drivespace death; only the weakest can pass through drivespace safely. Those who observe a vampire carefully during transit notice that just before it collapses mindlessly, the vampire's face assumes a look of horror and pain.

had the ultimate effect of making those dragons who remained on earth both more powerful and more hateful.

AFTER THE LONG SILENCE

The First and Second Galactic wars had little effect upon the vampires; the wars never truly posed a threat to the large settlement on earth, and the numbers of vampires in a particular extra-solar system remained low, so even the loss of an entire inhabited planet would kill only a handful of them. When the Long Silence interrupted contact with the Verge, the vampires remained patient. When the relay at Kendai was rebuilt in 2496, Old-space vampires were eager to hear what had come of their Verger fledglings.

Now vampires feel less pressure to create progeny. Most planets in the Verge are home to only one or two vampires, and the vampires like it that way. There are plenty of resources to share, they are generally wealthy enough to live in luxury, and they have little interest in creating young vampires that are likely to run off and start their own power bases. The vampires in the *STAR*DRIVE* campaign setting are reclusive, gently manipulative, and wanting nothing. They're also stuck where they are, and have learned to like their chosen world.

ROLEPLAYING THE UNDEAD

Vampires are patient. If confronted with a problem they cannot solve soon, they think nothing of hiding for a few years or decades, in which time a solution might have presented itself—or the "problem" might have died of old age. Having transcended death, vampires see themselves as superior to living creatures. It's difficult to have respect for a creature that one considers food.

This attitude makes vampires even more loathed and feared by those who know their true nature, even by those who work for them. It certainly doesn't help that a vampire is willing to sacrifice its living employees—and even its own progeny—to save its own cold skin.

Many vampires fashion themselves tragic villains—the embrace of undeath has deprived them of many of the pleasures they enjoyed in life, and seeing the people they knew in life age and die while they stay the same tends to shake the most hardened souls. Many cling to

the places they frequented in life, pursue the same interests, or develop an unnatural attachment for the descendants of the people they knew when they were still alive, observing, guarding, or stalking these people from the darkness of night.

Vampires come from all walks of life, their unnatural births having been engendered by other vampires for any number of purposes. A vampire created to be a bodyguard probably was the sort of person who fought a lot in life, while a diplomat in life might be made a vampire to infiltrate genteel vampiric society. And there is always the chance that one is made into a vampire for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, only to be discarded by its creator when it has served its purpose.

Vampires don't have to be human, which can create some interesting situations. Imagine a fraal vampire with an eternity to develop its mindwalker abilities—or does its dead brain now lack the ability to channel psionic energy, making the vampire a psionic cripple? A vampire weren could be an immortal

philosopher, or a killer locked in an anti-technological mindset more primitive than any of its living, learning, evolving brethren. A vampiric t'sa might be faster than the wind but lack the technical creativity that makes its eternal life tolerable. Perhaps a mechalus vampire sees its condition as the next step in evolution beyond the flesh, or perhaps its internal circuitry and nanites are now as inert and unresponsive as a burned-out computer terminal. These sorts of conflicts drive the psychoses of the vampire, distancing it from those who are still alive.

BASIC VAMPIRE RULES BLOOD AND FX ENERGY

Vampires are best known for their need for blood, which allows them to perpetuate their undead existence as well as to fuel their supernatural powers. In game terms, a vampire's blood energy is represented by a variant of the FX rules in the *ALTERNITY Gamemaster Guide*.

A vampire can have a maximum number of FX points equal to its CON +1 for every one hundred years it has existed as a vampire. Each night when a



THE FIRST FEW ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN VAMPIRES AND THE ENIGMATIC FRAAL RESULTED IN CASUALTIES ON BOTH SIDES—AS WELL AS THE FIRST FRAAL VAMPIRES.

CROSS-SPECIES BLOOD COMPATIBILITY

Vampire Species	Victim's Species Compatibility					
	Fraal	Human	Mech.	Sesh.	T'sa	Weren
Fraal	1.0	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.6
Human	0.7	1.0	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8
Mechalus	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.4	0.6
Sesheyen	0.7	0.6	0.2	1.0	0.5	0.6
T'sa	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.0	0.7
Weren	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.5	0.8	1.0

Multiply the victim's species compatibility by the amount of blood taken (victim's CON points) to determine the amount of blood (FX points) useful to the vampire.

vampire awakens, it automatically loses 1 FX point from its current total as its body uses the power of its stolen blood to maintain itself. If it has no FX points when it comes time to awaken, the vampire immediately suffers 1 wound point and does not rise from its slumber. If deprived for too long, the inert vampire eventually consumes all of its wound and mortal points in an effort to extend its existence, finally dying a true death when it has no more points to spend. An inert vampire can be fed blood, causing it to awaken, but it cannot heal in this fashion. The vampire must actively feed to recover FX points for anything other than awakening.

A vampire can regain FX points only by consuming blood—sentient creature blood, animal blood, and stored blood are all acceptable. The blood from members of the vampire's species is much more effective, as described in the **Cross-Species Blood Compatibility** chart.

A humanoid creature contains enough blood to replenish a number of vampiric FX points equal to its CON score, so a human with CON 10 can satiate almost any vampire, whereas a weak, small, or young creature with CON 5 is not as filling. Animal blood is not as satisfying to a vampire as is human blood, providing FX points equal to 30% of the creature's CON, rounded up.

A vampire does not need to drain all of a victim's blood—in fact, doing so is wasteful. A vampire can drain up to 20% of a target's blood without harming the victim; beyond that, blood drain inflicts 1 wound point per FX point drained. A creature drained of half its blood needs serious medical attention; a creature that has lost all of its blood dies. Creatures regain 1 FX point worth of blood every 2 weeks as long as they eat normally and

drink sufficient fluids. A smart vampire drains a little blood from several different victims each night, inflicting no serious harm and avoiding suspicion.

FEEDING

The vampire has often been depicted as erotic because of its deadly kiss. As long as a target is unsuspecting of the vampire's intent, no attack roll is needed to break the skin and begin feeding. An unwilling target must be forced into a position where the vampire can feed, which requires an overbearing roll. (See the Unarmed Attack broad skill.) Once bitten, a victim must make a successful *Resolve-mental resolve* roll at a +1 step penalty or surrender to the pleasurable sensation of the vampire's feeding; those who succeed can act for 1 round before making another check.

A vampire can consume 1 FX point of blood per round feeding. (Each phase gathers ¼ FX point, but fractional points are not able to wake a sleeping vampire or power their abilities, so most vampires attempt to feed for at least an entire round.) Unless the vampire's attack is especially violent or overzealous, the wound is only a small pair of punctures that stop bleeding a few seconds after the vampire withdraws.

The vampire must make mouth-to-skin contact to feed, making those in body tanks unsuitable targets and weren or t'sa a serious challenge.

VAMPIRE FLAWS

While they are immortal and can do things outside the realm of the natural world, vampires are limited by their diet and have certain mundane vulnerabilities. These are treated as Flaws, giving the vampire extra character points, which are normally used to purchase

vampiric FX skills. (See Optional Powers.) All vampires begin unlife with the Pallor (6), Vulnerability to Sunlight (9), and Vulnerability to Fire (9) flaws. While it is possible to buy off vampiric flaws with achievement points (at the standard rate of 2x the cost of the flaw), GMs should be hesitant to allow such a thing except for very old vampires that have had time to explore and overcome the weaknesses of their bodies.

PALLOR

+3/6 Bonus Skill Points, WIL

Vampires are essentially cold, unbreathing, walking corpses. Their appearance is distracting, unnerving, or downright repulsive, so vampires suffer a +1 step penalty on all Personality-based skill checks (not including vampire FX skill checks). Vampires that have fed recently (within 1 hour per FX point acquired in its last feeding) can ignore this step penalty. For 6 bonus skill points, a vampire is cadaverous and wasted, increasing the step penalty to +2. A vampire with this level of flaw can reduce the step penalty to +1 only after feeding.

TERRIBLE THIRST

+4/6 Bonus Skill Points, WIL

The vampire's need for blood is much greater than normal. Each day, the vampire must make a WIL roll to resist hunting that evening. Furthermore, when feeding, the vampire must make a WIL roll to stop feeding after 20% of the target's blood has been taken; the vampire can make additional rolls to stop after every additional 20% of the target's blood has been drained. For 6 bonus skill points, these WIL rolls are made at a +1 step penalty.

VULNERABILITY TO FIRE

+3/6/9 Bonus Skill Points, CON

While protected against most mortal frailties, undead flesh is especially susceptible to fire. Any fire or heat attacks inflict an extra 1, 2, or 3 points of damage to the vampire, depending upon the level of this flaw. A vampire confronted with a significant source of fire (at least a torch) must make a WIL roll at a +0, +1, or +2 step penalty (depending on the level of the flaw) or else retreat; larger fires give additional penalties at the GM's discretion.

VULNERABILITY TO SUNLIGHT

+3/6/9 Bonus Skill Points, CON

Nothing inspires dread in vampires like the sun. Something in sunlight interacts with the undead tissue of a vampire's body, causing it to wither rapidly. A vampire in sunlight suffers damage every phase of exposure. For 3 bonus skill points, the damage is 1d4w. For 6 bonus skill points, the damage is 1d4+1w. For 9 bonus skill points, the damage is 2d4+1w. Obscured or filtered sunlight degrades the damage by one category. Note that wound damage degraded to stun damage in this manner is not recovered at the end of a scene! Certain stars might have less or more of whatever causes this damage; star systems of the former type would be havens for vampires, while even moonlight (reflected sunlight) in the latter systems might be deadly.

VULNERABILITY (UNUSUAL)

+3/6/9 Bonus Skill Points, CON

There are so many differing legends about vampires that their weaknesses are never certain. This flaw reflects lesser known vulnerabilities causing additional damage when the appropriate attack is made. For 3 bonus skill points, the vampire is vulnerable to an uncommon substance and suffers +1 point of damage from attacks from that material or is vulnerable to a rare substance and suffers +2 points of damage. For 6 bonus skill points, the material is common and inflicts +1 point or it is uncommon and inflicts +2 points or is rare and inflicts +3 points. For 9 bonus skill points the material is common and inflicts +2 points or it is uncommon and inflicts +3 points or is rare and inflicts +4 points. Common substances are running water, garlic, steel, electricity, and wood. Uncommon substances are acid, silver, holy water, or a particular type of wood (traditionally ash in eastern European legends). Rare materials include platinum, uranium, and holy relics.

WASTEFUL METABOLISM

+3/6 Bonus Skill Points, CON

The vampire requires more FX energy than usual to rouse itself from its daytime slumber. For 3 bonus skill points, the vampire expends 2 FX points to wake; for 6 bonus skill points, the vampire must spend 3 FX points to awaken.

STANDARD VAMPIRE POWERS

All vampires have the following skills; no skill points must be spent to acquire them, and they have no rank benefits (unlike the Optional Powers).

KISS OF THE DRAGON

1 FX energy point

No skill check required.

A vampire can create a new vampire by draining all blood from a victim and then expending 1 FX point just before the victim dies; this FX point expenditure represents the feeding of some of the vampire's blood to the victim. The targeted creature rises from its state of apparent death in (24 - CON) hours with its original abilities, all of the base powers of a vampire, and 0 FX energy points; it also has at least the standard vampire flaws and any other vampire flaws its creator possessed at the time of the attack. This new vampire is considered to be under its creator's Blood Charm. It may learn Optional Powers (by using normal skill points or points from its vampire flaws).

VAMPIRE FLAWS

Flaw	+SP	Ability
Pallor	+3/6	WIL
Terrible Thirst	+4/6	WIL
Vulnerability:		
Fire	+3/6/9	CON
Sunlight	+3/6/9	CON
Unusual	+3/6/9	CON
Wasteful Metabolism	+3/6	CON

BLOOD CHARM

1+ FX energy points

No skill check required.

Vampire blood is intoxicating, and those who taste it find it hard to resist the commands of the vampire that gave it. To use this power, the vampire must feed a target at least 1 FX point worth of blood. For each FX point of vampire's blood consumed, the feeder must make a Resolve-mental resolve check with a +1 step penalty to resist the vampire's commands. This penalty is reduced by 1 step for each week after the feeding, the charm vanishing when the penalty drops to +0 steps. This power works on intelligent creatures, animals, and even other vampires.



INTERSPECIES FEEDING IS LESS BENEFICIAL TO A VAMPIRE,
BUT BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS OUT ON THE VERGE.

OPTIONAL VAMPIRE POWERS

Skill	Cost
Vampire Strength	
Animal Form	5
Claws	2
Might of the Dragon	3
Vampire Dexterity	
Hunter's Speed	4
Wall Crawling	2
Vampire Constitution	
Embrace the Earth	2
Undead Endurance	3
Mist Form	5
Vampire Will	
Confuse Memories	4
Flight	3
Horizontal Levitation	1
Invisibility	2
Vampire Personality	
Blood Telepathy	3
Call of the Dragon	4
Fear	3
Mesmerize	4

CREATE GHOUL

1+ FX Energy Point

No skill check required.

Vulnerable to sunlight, a vampire needs agents who can travel during the day. Most use creatures known as ghouls: living beings who have tasted the blood of vampires. Vampires empower ghouls by donating FX points (in the form of blood). Ghouls can spend these FX points to activate the discretionary powers Undead Endurance and Might of the Dragon as if they had rank 1 in either of those FX skills. They cannot improve these abilities beyond rank 1. Unused FX points fade at a rate of 1 per week as the ghoul's body metabolizes the vampire's blood, so most vampires feed their ghoul at least once a week to maintain the ghoul's abilities (as well as to reinforce the Blood Charm). Note that FX points spent by a ghoul to power its abilities are still considered "active" in its body for the purpose of being beholden to the Blood Charm. Ghouls have none of the vulnerabilities of vampires, but sometimes they develop bad personal hygiene habits and unusual appetites (such as a preference for raw meat). It is possible to make animals into ghouls, although they tend to expend their FX

points as soon as they find themselves in a hostile situation.

IMPROVED ABILITIES

0 FX energy points

No skill check required.

All vampires gain a +1 bonus to CON and a +1 to either STR or DEX. Increased abilities might exceed racial maximums, and secondary effects (such as increased durability, resistance modifiers, and so on) still apply. These increases occur when the vampire is created and require no FX points to activate.

REGENERATION

1 FX energy point

No skill check required.

Vampires can use the supernatural vigor of their stolen blood to repair damage to their bodies. A vampire can spend 1 FX point to heal 1 mortal point, 2 wound points, or 3 stun points (even if the damage was caused by sunlight). Even phenomenal wounds such as amputations can be healed with this power. Vampires do not heal wound and mortal damage through rest and medical treatment, so they must use this power to recover from injuries.

RESISTANCE TO HARM

0 FX energy points

No skill check required.

Many things that would inconvenience or kill a living being have no effect on vampires simply because they are not alive. Extreme cold, many poisons, drowning, suffocation, moderate radiation, and even vacuum are inconsequential to beings that don't require body heat and lack metabolisms. This lack of a living metabolism allows vampires to shrug off a great deal of physical damage; all vampires have an armor value of +2/+2/+0. These values can be improved with the Undead Endurance optional power or conventional armor. Finally, a vampire has 2 additional stun and wound points and 1 additional mortal point; these do not count toward the number of wound or mortal points that can be purchased as achievement benefits. This power does not use FX points.

Vampires are never dazed from losing more than half of their wound points or losing any number of mortal points,

although certain attacks might still give the vampire appropriate penalties. For example, a vampire that gets its right arm mangled in a piece of machinery (taking 2 mortals in the process) won't have any penalties to its actions unless they specifically involve that arm (such as firing a pistol or attempting to use a keypad with that hand). Likewise, they never suffer fatigue damage.

A vampire that loses all of its stun or wound points is knocked unconscious for the remainder of that round. Unlike a living creature, the vampire may begin making Stamina—endurance checks at the beginning of the very next round. If the vampire was knocked out by stun damage, a success restores 2, 4, or 6 stun points (depending upon the degree of success), and the vampire can act normally that round. If knocked out due to wounds, a successful Stamina—endurance check allows the vampire to awaken and act normally that round, even though it has no wound points available!

OPTIONAL POWERS

While all vampires share the same Base Powers, individuals usually focus their supernatural talents in a few areas. These are the optional powers, FX specialty skills sorted under five broad skills, each tied to one of the six Abilities: Vampire Strength, Vampire Dexterity, and so on. Every vampire starts with all five of these broad skills for free but must purchase the FX specialty skills just like any other sorts of skills. Non-vampires cannot use any of these skills, nor can these specialty skills be used untrained.

All of these specialty skills require FX energy points to activate. Unless otherwise noted, each specialty skill requires an activation cost of 1 FX point. Using a broad skill instead of one of the specialty skills costs 1 extra FX point; if the skill roll is successful, the specialty skill operates as if the vampire had rank 1 in that skill.

Those Vampire FX skills identified as "Extended duration" can be extended automatically by expending FX energy points equal to the number needed to activate the skill. This must be done while the skill is activated, and it doubles the increment of its initial duration. Extending the skill in this manner does not require another skill roll.

VAMPIRE STRENGTH ANIMAL FORM

When activated, this power allows a vampire to assume the form of a wolf or a large bat. The vampire retains its intelligence, special abilities, and skills (although it might have difficulty using them in animal form), but can attack as an animal of the appropriate type (using the damage ratings for the assumed form). The movement rate and senses of the animal are also acquired. (Use the *Gamemaster Guide* statistics for Dog, Attack and Alien, Avian for the wolf and bat forms.) Normal animals of the same kind as the assumed shape sense the vampire is not a true animal, but this can be overcome with other vampire abilities. The transformation costs 2 FX points to activate, and reverts after 10 minutes.

Extended duration.

CLAWS

Although their hands usually are indistinguishable from those of the living, vampires can channel their undead energy to turn their hands into weapons capable of causing grievous damage. The power gives the vampire claws that inflict $d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w$ (LI damage) plus the vampire's STR bonus; this change lasts 5 rounds, and the vampire uses the Unarmed Attack or *brawl* skills for combat rolls.

Increased Damage: At rank 5, the damage increases to $d4+2w/d4+3w/d4m$ plus STR bonus; at rank 10 it increases to $d4+3w/d4m/d4+1m$ plus STR bonus.

Extended duration.

MIGHT OF THE DRAGON

When activated, this power gives a vampire a temporary one-point increase to STR. Furthermore, the vampire may jump double the distance traveled by an Athletics-*jump* skill roll. This power lasts 5 rounds.

Heightened Strength: At rank 6, the bonuses increase to +2 to STR and triple the jumping distance; at rank 12, the bonuses become +3 to STR quadruple the jumping distance.

Extended duration.

VAMPIRE DEXTERITY HUNTER'S SPEED

Vampires are famous for their power to move faster than the eye can track. This

power gives the vampire a +1 increase to its DEX and its combat movement rate increases to 150% of normal. This lasts 5 rounds.

Increased Speed: At rank 4, the vampire gains an extra action every round that this power is active. At rank 6, the vampire gains another +1 to its DEX score. At rank 8, the vampire's combat movement rate increases to 200% of normal. At rank 12, the vampire gains a -1 step bonus to its action check score.

WALLCRAWLING

This power allows a vampire to walk upon any solid surface (regardless of orientation) as if on a normal floor. Thus, a vampire could walk or run up the side of a wall, or even stand upside-down on a ceiling. Once activated, the power lasts 10 minutes.

Extended duration.

VAMPIRE CONSTITUTION EMBRACE THE EARTH

This power allows a vampire to push aside normal earth as if it were water

and sink below its surface. The vampire must be in contact with soil, not asphalt, concrete, or stone. When the power is activated, the vampire sinks 2 meters underground, leaving no indication of its passage and remaining concealed indefinitely (although it continues to feel hunger and reacts to stimuli, such as being exhumed). Another activation of this skill allows the vampire to float upward to the surface of the earth. Alternatively, the vampire can use normal strength to dig itself free.

Greater Embrace: At rank 4, the vampire can enter a state of hibernation while underground; the vampire only metabolizes 1 FX energy point's worth of blood every week instead of every day. At rank 8, the vampire's hibernating metabolism slows further, consuming 1 FX energy point worth of blood every month, and at rank 12 this increment increases to once a year. Note that none of these changes affect an active vampire's need for blood; only when hibernating under the earth does this benefit apply.



NOTHING IS MORE TERRIFYING THAN A WEREWARRIOR—
UNLESS YOU COUNT A VAMPIRE WEREWARRIOR.

UNDEAD ENDURANCE

This enhances a vampire's power to shrug off damage that would kill a mortal. When activated, the vampire's armor increases by +1/+1/+1 for 5 rounds.

Increased Endurance: At rank 6, the vampire's armor increases by an additional +1/+1/+1. At rank 10, the vampire only suffers damage from sunlight every other phase.

MIST FORM

This power allows a vampire to assume a mistlike form that can pass through porous barriers and is almost invulnerable. In mist form, the vampire can fly in any direction at its walking rate and has armor protection of 2d4+1 (LI)/2d4+1 (HI)/0 (En). This mist form can make no attacks but can hamper vision in an area 2 meters in diameter. The transformation lasts 5 rounds and costs 2 FX points to activate.

Extended duration.

VAMPIRE WILL

CONFUSE MEMORIES

This allows a vampire to cloud the thoughts of a person. The vampire stares into the eyes of its victim, who must make a WIL roll (penalized by the vampire's WIL resistance modifier). If this roll is a failure, the target loses all memories from the past 5 minutes.

FLIGHT

The vampire can fly at its fly combat movement rate in any direction. It can carry up to 15x its STR in kilograms while flying (including its own equipment). Each activation lasts 10 minutes.

Increased Speed: At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the vampire's flight speed increases by 25% of its base Flight movement rate.

Extended duration.

HORIZONTAL LEVITATION

Unlike the Flight vampire FX skill, this power allows the vampire to rise a short distance into the air (no more than 1 meter) and "fly" at this height at its normal movement rate. Aside from looking eerie, this allows a vampire to travel silently and pass ground-based obstacles such as burning coals, pools of dangerous chemicals, and so on. The vampire is considered to be moving at its ground-based movement speed, only in the air

(so it still suffers penalties to its actions for running, sprinting, and all-out movement). If its moves over a space where the ground is much lower (such as a pit), it falls downward normally but "lands" a meter in the air, unharmed. Each activation lasts 5 minutes.

Extended duration.

INVISIBILITY

This power allows a vampire to remain undetected by living things by clouding their minds rather than by manipulating light. All creatures attempting to spot the vampire suffer a +3 step penalty on all rolls made to do so (including Awareness-perception checks). Once this power is activated, the vampire remains concealed for 5 minutes, after which time the penalty vanishes. Note that beings carrying cameras (or with cybernetic senses) exposed to this power cannot see the vampire, as the observer's brain ignores the data the device transmits; only later review (if the images are recorded) can reveal the vampire's presence. At rank 4, the vampire can fool the sense of smell as well, concealing it from dogs and other creatures that rely on that sense more than sight. At rank 8, the penalty from this power increases to +5.

Extended duration.

VAMPIRE PERSONALITY

BLOOD TELEPATHY

This power allows a vampire to mentally contact its victims or those who have drunk its blood. This contact has a maximum range of 10 meters and lasts 5 minutes. The vampire can converse with the target as if he or she were physically present. The vampire must concentrate for an entire round to activate this power, and can speak normally with those in its presence, although if wounded it must make a Stamina-endurance check with a +1 step penalty to maintain contact.

Increased Range: At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the range increases to 100 m, 1 km, and 10 km respectively.

Extended duration.

CALL OF THE DRAGON

The vampire sends out a silent empathic call to animals of a certain type (wolves, bats, or rats). At least one animal of that

type within the range of the vampire's voice responds to the call, arriving in d4+1 rounds. The animals are not under the vampire's control, but they are not hostile to the vampire and react according to their instincts (possibly attacking or fleeing from other beings in the area). Normally, 1 wolf, 10 bats, or 20 rats respond to the call. If there are no animals of the requested type, the call has no effect. Appropriate substitutions can be made for animals (dogs for wolves, ravens for bats, mice for rats, and so on). The animals remain in the area for at least 5 rounds.

Improved Call: At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, multiply the number of animals called by 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.


FEAR

This power enhances the unnatural presence of the vampire, causing target to flee or even to collapse from terror. The target must be close enough to see the facial features of the vampire (no more than 6 meters away) and can make a WIL roll to resist. A Failure indicates the target flees, while a Critical Failure means the target falls and curls into a helpless fetal position. Either effect lasts 10 minutes, although intervention by other characters might aid the target.

Greater Fear: The vampire can affect an additional target with each use at ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12.

MESMERIZE

By looking into a target's eyes and making an Ordinary complex skill check, a vampire can briefly influence the target creature's mind. Victims who fail a WIL roll are subject to the vampire's commands for the next minute. The vampire can command either simple or complex actions, which the target must perform until the power wears off. The vampire can even plant a suggestion in the mind of the target that can be triggered at any pre-determined cue or time during the duration of the effect.

Increased Duration: At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration of the effect doubles. 

Sean Reynolds has often been mistaken for a fraal vampire, but we've seen him in full daylight with only the slightest ill effects.

LADY BATHORY

Human (Vampire) Diplomat (Free Agent specialty), level 16

STR 8 [-1] INT 11 [+1]
DEX 10 WIL 10
CON 10 PER 11 [+1]

Durability: 12/12/6/—

Action Check: 12+/11/5/2

Move: sprint 18, run 12, walk 4

#Actions: 2

Reaction score: Good/2

Last Resorts: 2

Perks: Great Looks

Flaws: Phobia—*claustrophobia* (moderate), Temper (moderate, triggered by incompetence or insolence), Vulnerability to Sunlight (moderate), Wasteful Metabolism (severe)

FX Energy Points: 19 (+1 for every century she survives after 1914)

Motivation: Personal Power

Moral Attitude: Despicable, Unscrupulous

Traits: Amoral, Foppish

Attacks

Knife 9/4/2 d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+3w HI/O

Claws 11/5/2 d4+2w/d4+3w/d4m LI/O

Defenses

Resistance to Harm +2/+2/0

Skills: Athletics [8]; Melee Weapons—*blade* [11]; Unarmed Attack [8]—*brawl* [11]; Stamina [10]—*endurance* [13]; Knowledge [11]—*anatomy* [15], *Hungarian* [14, native tongue], *German* [14], *Latin* [14], *Spanish* [13]; Law [11]; Awareness [10]—*perception* [13]; Creativity [10]—*torture* [15]; Culture



[11]—*etiquette* (European nobility) [14]; Interaction [11]—*charm* [14], *intimidate* [14], *seduce* [14]

Base Powers: Kiss of the Dragon, Charm of Blood, Create Ghoul, Feeding, Improved Abilities, Regeneration, Resistance to Harm

Discretionary Powers: Vampire Strength [7]—*claws* [12]; Vampire Dexterity [10]—*speed of the night hunter* [12]; Vampire Constitution [10]—*endurance of unlife* [12]; Survival [10]; Vampire Will [9]—*confuse memories* [11]; Vampire Personality [10]—*blood telepathy* [12], *fear* [13]

Gear: Torture equipment (in suitcase), attractive clothing

In 1560, Elisabeth Bathory was born in Hungary. At age 15, she was wedded to Count Ferencz Nadasdy, known by his Turkish foes "Black Knight of Hungary" for his love of battle. While her husband was on campaign, Elisabeth sought diversions among her aunt's decadent friends, including practitioners of black magic. Through them she acquired a taste for torturing insolent servants to death. During one of her husband's longer absences, Elisabeth had an affair with a pale, dark-eyed stranger who some scholars of the arcane believe was Dracula.

In her mid-twenties Elisabeth began to fear that she was losing her youthful looks. When a servant combed her hair too hard, the countess struck the girl hard enough to draw blood, which fell upon Elisabeth's hand. To Elisabeth, the blood appeared to restore the youthful skin. With her evil cohorts, she soon began a practice of torturing virgin girls to death for their blood; such activities often left her drenched in blood, which gave rise to the rumor that she bathed in the blood of virgins.

After her husband's death, Elisabeth continued her deadly hobby. Eventually the peasant blood stopped keeping her young, and her cohorts told her that the blood of nobles

would be needed thereafter. She established an academy at her castle, ostensibly to educate young noblewomen and make them more valuable for marriage. The ruse allowed her easy access to new victims.

Elisabeth became careless, and she was eventually seen tossing the bodies of four women from the parapets of the castle. The crown sent Elisabeth's cousin, Count Thurzo, to investigate. Thurzo discovered her underground torture chamber, several bodies, and a blood-covered Elisabeth reveling in her work. Her accomplices were convicted of vampirism, paganism, and witchcraft and were tortured and executed. Elisabeth herself was charged only with murder and never appeared in court due to her noble lineage, despite the fact that a ledger was found in her own handwriting that indicated that over 650 virgins were dead by her hand. She was walled up in a tiny room in her castle and given food through a small slot in a wall. She was found dead in 1614 and buried in a distant town.

Bathory rose after her burial as a true vampire. She roamed the fringes of Eastern Europe until all who could recognize her were dead, then built a new identity as a foreign noblewoman. In this manner she survived until the

modern day, practicing her atrocities much more carefully.

In recent decades, Bathory has been in the employ of several decadent nations, usually acting as a torturer for the political enemies of the current regime. She dresses in finery appropriate to the occasion, except when working, when she wears form-fitting black or camouflaged clothing. She is sometimes accompanied by practitioners of dark magic, welcome aides to her dark pleasures. She avoids making ghouls unless she feels threatened.

Bathory leads an odd dual life—in cycles. She needs attention and praise for her looks by people of high standing, so she spends weeks among the elite, feeding casually like a normal vampire. After a time, her darker side arises, and she feels an overpowering need to torture people to death, at which times she hires out her services to despots and crime lords.

Her claustrophobia dates from her imprisonment in her own castle; whenever she is in a room smaller than 3 meters on a side without an obvious escape path, she is affected by her phobia. Her wasteful metabolism is unusual; she can wake without spending the full 3 FX points, but doing so causes her to age visibly (appearing in

helpful and generous to those that serve her well. Eventually, of course, she will succumb to her darker side again and turn against those who know her. Under such circumstances, it is likely that the heroes could assume that she was possessed or controlled in some way, preventing them from using lethal force to subdue her, all the while she is quite happy to shed copious amounts of their blood to feed her cursed youth.

Note, of course, that if Bathory is used in a STAR*DRIVE campaign and is encountered off Earth, she must have found a way to circumvent the drivespace death.

ADVENTURE TRACK

Specific hooks for Gamemasters wishing to use such a powerful vampire in their campaigns include the following ideas. If used in an ongoing campaign, they could form the skeleton of a vampires subplot centering on the deadly Lady Bathory:

† While on an unrelated mission, the heroes encounter their first vampire. If they dispatch the creature publicly, they draw Lady Bathory's eye.

LADY BATHORY IS A DEADLY FOE IN ANY ALTERNITY CAMPAIGN, BUT EVEN SHE IS ONLY A PALE SHADOW OF VLAD DRACULA, THE FATHER OF DRAGONS.

her early 40s if she only spends 2 points, or about 55 if she only spends 1 FX energy point). As she is extremely vain and concerned about her appearance, she will arise in this fashion only if she is not going to be unobserved, is running low on FX energy, and will be able to feed soon.

Lady Bathory is completely ruthless. Her true goal is to amass sufficient social and financial means to continue enjoying her depraved lifestyle. To that effect, she has slowly been saving money over time; she is moderately wealthy as of the late 20th century.

BATHORY IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Lady Bathory can be used in nearly any sort of role. As a hired killer or torturer, she's a tough opponent with a vast arsenal of tricks. She could be encountered as part of a terrorist or revolutionary group, pretending to be a captive until circumstances allow her to attack or escape.

She is mysterious enough that introducing her as a false lead in an investigation can distract the heroes from those truly responsible. With her interest in power and money, she could even act as an employer or liaison to the heroes, soliciting them to acquire items or make contacts for her—as long as her temper and baser habits are kept in check.

Lady Bathory could remain in her "normal" state for a month or more at a time, during which time she seems

† Bathory employs the characters to capture a group of terrorists. After their successful mission, the heroes learn that their adversaries were freedom fighters Bathory was hired to kidnap and torture. Even the most inquisitive groups are unlikely to learn Bathory's true nature at this point.

† Depending on earlier relations, Bathory might point the heroes in the direction of weak vampires she wishes to eliminate or else strong vampires she wishes to slay the heroes.

† Ever mindful of her ancient lover's continued existence, Bathory uses the heroes to find clues as to Dracula's current abode. Clever heroes might deduce Bathory's identity.

† Should the heroes locate Dracula and survive, Bathory might formulate a plan to steal his power. Unable to face him one-on-one, Bathory needs the heroes to locate an arcane artifact or even to employ conventional weapons against the father of all vampires. If stealing Dracula's power is even possible, the heroes might be the proverbial kingmakers caught between two impossibly powerful foes. In any event, Dracula's vampire powers should include all those described in this article plus an equal number of powers devised by the Gamemaster—perhaps even the ability to transform into the legendary dragon itself.