

Mind's Eye Theatre™

# LAW<sup>S</sup>

*of the*

# Night

CAMARILLA GUIDE



A Supplemental Guide to Laws of the Night

VAMPIRE  
THE MASQUERADE



# A DARKNESS So BRIGHT

The heat of cooling pavement was a friendly, familiar pressure at her back as Victoria turned into the Streetside Café. Martine smiled and waved her to the usual table, vacant, as it had been every evening for the past three months. This was her place, her time: dusk at the Streetside and the sun only just below the horizon.

Joseph would sleep for another hour. Typical, he said, of one as old as he. Victoria was a rarity, even for someone whose living days were still fresh memories. As a rule, she rose half an hour before sunset. After a month of languishing about the halls of Joseph's manor, she dared the dusk and the fading day. When she returned, Joseph was waiting, ensconced in the study with a snifter in his hand. He'd smiled warmly, though, as she muttered apologies. "Have your evenings and your dying sun. Such follies are for the young with breath still fresh in their lungs. Soon enough you'll forget, and forever will begin." She was a rarity, to be sure, but the odds didn't interest her. She loved the pinprick crawl of the fading light over her skin and the giddy roller coaster fear that went with it. If the glory of the sun was denied her, then the dusk was made all the more sweet. Small price to pay.

Martine moved through the tables and customers with a waitress's special grace: smooth, unobtrusive and fully at ease. Her smile flashed, a crescent of white framed in pale skin and short, blonde hair. "The mocha, *mademoiselle*?"

Victoria smiled. Martine's accent was truly what drew her here. Victoria couldn't imagine what could convince anyone to come here, to Cincinnati, from Paris, but with Martine here, Victoria could imagine herself on the Seine, sipping mocha along a cobbled street. The coffee, too, was a part of the illusion. One small artifice Joseph had taught her. "Please," she answered, "and my friend's as well, would you?"

Martine pursed her lips at this in a look of genuine disappointment, "I am sorry, *mademoiselle*, but Monsieur Savage telephoned earlier. He will not be joining you this evening."



Victoria's smile never wavered, but the glow that lit it had dimmed to a glimmer. "Well, then, the mocha, for one, and Mr. Savage will just have to wish he were here." She met Martine's eyes and the smile there. "Ladies night." Martine nodded, but Victoria's mind had already wandered to what might have made Larson miss coffee tonight. *It's nothing, I'm sure.*

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When Victoria returned to the manor, the matter of Larson's absence was quickly put aside. Joseph stood in the foyer, straightening his tie in the bronze mirror that hung between two busts cut from Italian marble.

"Peter has chosen your gown. We must be at the Marsden promptly at eleven this evening."

A hand rose to cut off any comment before it passed her lips. "Dress. We will not be late."

She turned immediately, some visceral will pressing her to act without the faintest thought. He was so perfect, so pale and beautiful.

*So cold.* The thought was forgotten a moment after it dawned, and Victoria turned back down the hall toward her rooms. Peter always chose the most beautiful gowns.

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Draped in emerald silk, hand resting lightly on Joseph's elbow, Victoria imagined herself a vision as they passed the doorman at the Marsden Hotel. A dozen people lounged about the lobby, some seated, some reading newspapers or magazines. One couple stood at the desk arranging their room; a bellman and the concierge spoke quietly in one corner. The lobby itself was a relic of another time — the antique brass fixtures, arched ceilings and crystal chandeliers; even the sofas and chairs were designed with an eye to the earliest days of the century.

Joseph and Victoria glided through the vast room with the sharp click of heels on marble, past the concierge, past the desk, to a pair of doors nestled beneath the curve of a double staircase. Just within, behind a lectern, stood a woman impeccably dressed, though not so elegantly as her patrons.

"Mr. Bonhom. Good evening." Her smile was a picture of professional congeniality. She consulted the ledger before her and waved to a young man standing behind her. "Mr. Bonhom and Ms. Grayson will be sitting at the Lauren table." She turned back to Joseph, "Lawrence will seat you, sir. Please have a wonderful evening." Joseph nodded and followed the silent young man to a table for five where two of the place cards read J.L. Bonhom and V. Hart-Grayson. Other names decorated cards at each of the other three seats at the table, one familiar, the others not. Victoria took her seat, but Joseph, without a word to his childe, strode away from the table toward a knot of people gathered at another table.

Left to herself, Victoria scanned the room, noting faces she'd seen before, faces Joseph had named influential or important. Alan Lords stood in one corner, a trio of his associates muttering behind their hands as more guests entered. The harpy, Joseph had called him. Martin Lorry, the sheriff, stood alone, a scowl etched into his brow as he stared into his wineglass. Mr. O'Shea and Millicent, seneschal and keeper as Joseph had named them, laughed over



their own wineglasses while another knot of people huddled opposite them, the air seeming thick over their heads.

Victoria considered the room's make-up. All the Toreador were here, or as many as she'd ever seen. Joseph had the Ventre with him, and the two he had named Tremere were coming in now. She searched the room again, noting the five or six kine finishing their dinners and preparing to leave. A waiter came to the table, smiling obsequiously as he poured: "Mr. Bonhom's own label, miss. Will you be drinking as well?"

Victoria nodded and lifted her glass to be filled, the dark fluid sharpening the tension that already lifted the hairs at the nape of her neck. She'd picked out the Brujah she knew coming in through the kitchen. The man scribbling in his folio at the table near the service door must be Mr. Lane, the only Malkavian of whom she'd been made aware. Oddly, none of the Gangrel seemed to be here, not even Gideon.

Joseph had said little of the Gangrel, but Victoria knew that they had no love for politicking. Still, though her experience had been short, there had always been at least one of them in attendance when the prince called court. Most often Gideon, Larson's sire and apparently the eldest of their Blood in the city, was the one to stand for them. From time to time, she'd seen even as many as three or four, Larson included, come to Elysium. Tonight, though, there wasn't even a hint of their presence.

Victoria scanned the room a third time. Joseph had left the company of his clansmen and strode smoothly across the room toward Mr. O'Shea, now seated at a table set only for three. As he passed Martin Lorry, the sheriff offered the barest twitch of a nod. She might have missed it if she hadn't been watching. Even now she couldn't be sure of what had been said, but she knew Joseph had spoken to Martin Lorry and Martin Lorry had agreed.

It wasn't until she saw her sire pause and lower his head that she noticed the arrival of the prince. Silence held the room suspended, wine glasses half raised, as Franklin van Wert entered and smiled to the hostess before taking his seat with Mr. O'Shea.

The last of the mortal patrons had left just moments before the prince's arrival and the serving staff were all in Millicent's palm in one way or another, so it was for the benefit of the Kindred gathering that Franklin van Wert's words carried through the room as he spoke with his seneschal.

"Mr. O'Shea, it seems our associate on the Board, Mr. Xaviar, has decided our company is not to his liking and independence is more to his tastes." Timothy O'Shea nodded, the barest of smiles crossing his lips. "I think it would be imprudent of us to retain those of his particular creed in light of this development. See that his fellows are given their papers. I believe we can afford a generous severance package for each of them as... incentive." Again, the seneschal nodded and raised a hand to beckon Mr. Lorry to the table. Words passed between the two, and the sheriff vanished through the kitchen doors.

Victoria was baffled. She'd watched all that went on, had heard the prince's proclamation, but none of it made sense. Joseph had hinted at the importance of "The Board," but he'd never said anything about a man named Xaviar. Most of those gathered had listened in stony silence, but the harpy and

his coterie had smiled openly. Joseph had stood at the seneschal's elbow throughout. Perhaps another would think him stoic, but Victoria knew better. She knew his face, his expressions, and the one he wore now was satisfaction.

Now, as Martin Lorry slipped silently through the kitchen doors and away into the night, Joseph leaned in to whisper to Mr. O'Shea, and the room awoke from the trance the prince's entrance had laid over it. The air buzzed with conversation, and while their faces appeared innocuous, even Victoria's novice ear heard the weighted tones of urgency. Something had happened and everyone knew what it was. Everyone but her.

"Your friend, yes. He wishes to see you."

The voice at her shoulder nearly made her scream, but unlife, if nothing else, had strengthened Victoria's self-control. As it was, she only lifted the wineglass to her lips and sipped at the warm vitae disguised within. Her eyes darted sharply to the windows, hoping to see some reflection of the speaker, but she saw only herself. *Nosferatu*. She spoke softly into her glass, "I don't know what you're talking about."

The voice murmured in her ear, closer now. "Mmm-mmm. Too bad. He was insistent. Yes. The Gangrel was insistent."

Its words sank in. It seemed to step away, and Victoria's control wavered. She twisted her head and rasped in her own harsh whisper, "Wait!"

The messenger returned. "Insistent, yes."

"Larson sent you?"

The voice grew closer, and she fancied that the speaking lips were almost brushing her ear. "Meet him, he says. Here." She felt something brush her lap, and a small piece of folded paper was there where none had been before. "Soon, he says. Soon." And it was gone.

The taste of fear rose in Victoria's throat and mingled with the thick flavor of blood as she scanned the room. Not a soul seemed to know she was there. Joseph had moved on from the prince's table to speak with Millicent and the Tremere. Others shuttled across the room, ferrying gossip from one camp to another, and the harpies watched all with cold, laughing eyes. Praying that all eyes were occupied, she palmed the piece of paper as carefully as she could manage and slid it into her dress.

To steady herself, she drank again from her glass, draining the vitae in one long, shuddering gulp. When she lowered the glass, he was there. She nearly dropped the goblet in surprise as she met his eyes. A man she had never met, dressed in a navy sweater, blue jeans and boots, leaned against the wall looking at her, and as their gazes crossed, he smiled, baring long white teeth. Panic washed over her. *He knows*.

Joseph saved her with a hand on her arm as a wave of inexplicable fear set her to trembling. He arched an eyebrow in concern. "Are you all right?" Victoria nodded, exerting every ounce of will to regain her composure. Satisfied, he took her elbow and turned her gently toward the kitchen. "We're leaving." Victoria nodded again and followed, the fear only a shadow as Peter pulled up in the car. The terror left confusion in its wake. There was so much she didn't know. Why was she so scared? Why, of all nights, did Larson choose this one to disappear?

Joseph offered no answers to her unspoken questions, only sat silently as Peter drove them home. In the darkness outside the car, it quietly began to rain.

They slipped from the car under cover of Peter's broad, black umbrella. As they stood in the foyer, Peter shaking out the umbrella, Victoria brushing water from her gown, Joseph spoke softly. "There are matters I must attend to in the study. I will require Peter's assistance for much of the night. If there is anything you need of him, see that it is tended to now. He will not be available later." He turned to leave the foyer, but stopped as Victoria spoke for the first time since leaving Elysium, her voice barely above a whisper.

"Who was that man?"

Joseph stood with his back to her, his chin rising as he listened. "Which?"

"The one in the sweater. He came in just before we left."

The elder vampire tipped his head to one side, considering. "Tanner Banks, the prince's scourge. I want you to stay away from him."

Victoria dared to press the point, though she could tell Joseph wanted it dropped. "He looks like one of the Brujah. What does he do?"

Joseph turned, his jaw set in a line hard as marble, "He is Ventrue, and he kills." He turned to Peter and beckoned the man with a sharp gesture before turning on a heel and disappearing into the darkness of the house, his servant following after.

Victoria watched them go in silence, already planning.

The street was dark, deserted, inhabited only by the hulks of abandoned cars. It had been easy enough to slip out of the house unnoticed with Joseph secreted in the study with Peter and the rest of the staff in their beds. Victoria changed from her gown to the old pea coat she'd kept from her days at the university, a pair of dark leather boots, jeans and a sweatshirt. She didn't like the idea of deceiving Joseph, but this was important. Something was going on, and somehow Larson was involved. Joseph would understand.

When she came to the place Larson's note had spoken of, she passed it by, eyes skating from side to side, searching for tails or bystanders. She circled the block, just to be safe, but apart from one old drunk snoring under a step, there was no one about. As she approached the building a second time, she noticed a sign hung over four broad garage doors. It read "We—ling Bed and Mat—s" in fading red letters. Again she stopped and scanned the street. Seeing no one, she ducked down the alley alongside the building to a door sunk deep in the shadows. The knob turned with a muted click and the door swung smoothly inward.

Inside, space yawned before her in the darkness. Carefully, Victoria followed the wall to her left, her feet pushing through piles of detritus as she made her way deeper into the old factory. The flare of a lantern suddenly blinded her, and she crouched against the wall, shielding her eyes from the light.

"Vic?" Larson's voice came with the light, heavy with the tremor of his own nerves.

"Turn it down, would you, Larson?" He turned but did nothing to dim the light. As he slipped through a broad sliding door, Victoria caught a glimpse of

him through the glare of the lantern. He was haggard, his clothes torn and dirty, and his face was drawn with an expression she had never seen. In the line of his jaw and in the wide, dark eyes, she saw fear.

"Something happened." His voice was abrupt.

Larson paced the little office like a tiger in a too-small cage. By the light of the lantern, Victoria could see he'd been in a fight. "Slow down, Larson. What's happened?"

The Gangrel only shook his head. "We're leaving."

"Who's leaving?"

Larson Savage ran a hand through his hair, the thick auburn mane falling back from sharply pointed ears, a feature she had never noticed on him. "Me, Gideon, Lender. All of us. We gotta go."

Victoria shook her head, "I don't know what you mean. You're going where? Are you coming back? Is someone after you?"

Larson bared his teeth, "Yeah, someone's after us. Shit, everyone is after us — in this town, anyway. The prince never liked Gideon or any of us. Now he's got an excuse."

"Excuse? What are you talking about?"

The Gangrel leaned on the desk with both hands, his eyes wild. "We're leaving the Camarilla."

Victoria's face screwed itself up in a glare of disbelief, "How can you—" but Larson's expression stopped her in mid-sentence. His eyes widened, and his hair rose in a wild puff of brown. With a hiss through bared fangs, he shoved himself away from the desk, claws sprouting from his fingertips. Victoria spun and felt sharp pain lance through her chest. The stake pierced her heart, and she fell to the floor.

The light was out in a moment, but with or without it, Victoria could see nothing. Paralyzed, she lay on the floor across the desk from where Larson stood a moment ago and listened as the fight raged not a yard from her. Larson's snarls accompanied the machine-gun thump of fists driven into flesh at inhuman speeds. Had she not been immobilized, Victoria might have wept for her friend. The last thing she had seen before falling to the floor was the face of Tanner Banks.

When the little window above her exploded with light, Victoria had nearly resigned herself to death, so exchanging one blindness for another had little effect. It was the sound of an unfamiliar voice that awakened her hope.

Across the little office, what could only be the voice of Tanner Banks sounded strangely surprised. "What—?" The word became a growl of pain as the searing light burned away his sight and winked out, leaving them again in darkness.

More feet entered the room. Heavy boots pounded over the wooden floorboards. Heavy thuds followed, the sounds of blows, the falling of bodies, and finally one last wet chop and silence. Boots shuffled out, what sounded like something heavy dragging after them. Another pair of shoes entered, the steps smooth and sharp. A light flared and Victoria could see again — black leather shoes, a woman's legs and a face. A face she recognized. Martine.



The woman shook her head, tsking quietly. "Monsieur Bonhom will not be pleased, *mademoiselle*." She smiled, cold and inhuman. "Not pleased at all, but I am. You have done me a great service." Darkness came again as rough hands wrapped her in rough fabric. She smelled smoke for a moment, and fear drove out reason for a long time, and then there was only darkness.

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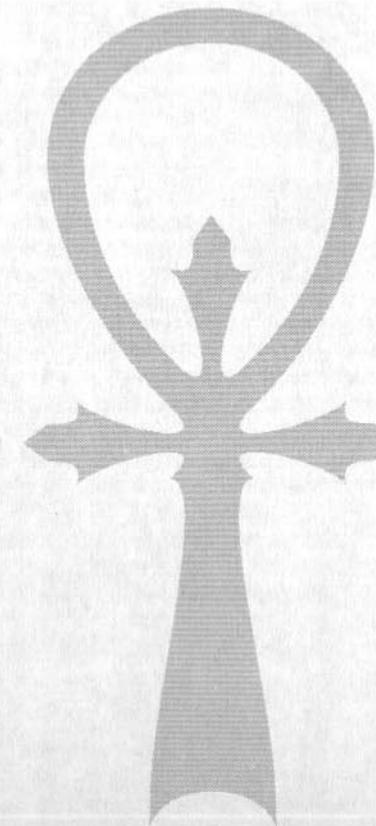
Victoria woke again to darkness and the smell of blood. She found the body easily enough and drank her fill before reason returned and she knew what she'd done. The body stank as it lay there dead and cold. From the light under the door, she could see it was a man, though only just. Probably not even 18. She shuddered and shrank into a corner as far from the corpse as she could get.

Hours later, or minutes – in the darkness Victoria couldn't tell the difference – the door opened and Joseph came in. Martine stood just behind him, visible over his right shoulder.

"I am very disappointed, Victoria. I had thought these whims would pass in time. I see now I was wrong to be so lenient." He straightened his tie and drew a deep breath. For the first time, Victoria saw the gestures for what they were: pure artifice. "No more forays at dusk. No more consorting with your so-called friends. You will sleep here. You will drink what you are given. You will not leave but in my company." He looked down on her, his lips curled in disgust. "I chose poorly with you, but that matter has been rectified. If you please me, you will live."

Joseph turned and walked out, but Martine stayed for a moment. She smiled. "I owe you my thanks, *mademoiselle*. Perhaps, one day, I will give it to you." With that she bared her teeth, long canines showing sharp and white in the wedge of light pouring through the door. When she left, Victoria heard the scrape of a bolt sliding home and knew she would not be getting out tonight. Tears came, and tears alone for a long time afterward. Only fear shook her from her grief as she realized she'd forgotten to breathe. An hour later, though, she decided there were more important things to think about. Eternity was a long time, and vengeance was slow in the planning.

# Mind's Eye Theatre LAWs *of the* Night Camarilla GUIDE



**CREDITS**

**WRITTEN BY:** JASON CARL, MATTHEW HOOPER, EDWARD MACGREGOR,  
MIKKO RAUTALAHTI, BRETT SMITH, LAWRENCE VILES

**DEVELOPED BY:** CYNTHIA SUMMERS

**EDITED BY:** RICH RUANE

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REVISED

**ART DIRECTION BY:** AARON VOSS AND RICHARD THOMAS

**ART BY:** ALYSON GAUL

**FRONT AND BACK COVER DESIGN:** AARON VOSS

**LAYOUT AND TYPESETTING BY:** AARON VOSS



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SUITE 128  
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USA

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Mind's Eye Theatre

# LAWS *of the* *Night* CAMARILLA GUIDE

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## WELCOME TO THE FINAL NIGHTS

There are strange things afoot in the halls of power. Whispers of signs spoken of in the oldest texts buzz from every corner, while rumors of portents mumbled by the far-sighted become facts with each night. These are, as the Chinese might say, interesting times.

The Camarilla stands as it has for nearly six centuries, a pillar against the night. Claiming jurisdiction over every vampire across the globe, the sect has greater numbers than any other, and the reasons for membership are as varied as the Kindred themselves. For some the Camarilla means safety from enemies — the Sabbat, the Lupines, mortal hunters and other groups of Kindred. For some it means a safe place where they might continue gentler pursuits. Some belong because their sires belonged, or because they are unaware that they can belong to anything else. For the elders it is their ivory tower, and it is the default for their childer. All will agree that whatever it is to its members, the Camarilla is monolithic in its strength and purpose.

But in these nights, the monolith is beginning to show signs of strain. The change in the Malkavians has brought consternation to many. The departure of the Gangrel shook the sect nearly to its foundations. Its strongholds are assaulted on all sides by a host of enemies: the bloodthirsty Assamites; the Sabbat, who seem to have found renewed fire in these nights; and the mysterious Cathayans making incursions on the West Coast. Still the Camarilla holds fast against all comers.

Or does it?

As the power struggles grow more ferocious, as the mysteries come to pass, as the once unassailable comes under attack, will the Camarilla finally crumble? Or will it prevail, as it always has in the past — iron-willed and eternal?

## WHAT THIS BOOK IS (AND ISN'T)

This book details the interior of the oldest and largest sect of vampires, the Camarilla. Here stands revealed the might of the elders, the sect's secret ways and means, and the nightly business of power. On a more mundane note, here are rules for the mysterious Gargoyles, new Traits for character creation and everything a Storyteller could want to add new levels of realism and depth to her city.

This book isn't meant as a substitute for *Laws of the Night*. You'll still need that book for character creation, the lower levels of the most common Disciplines and the basic rules. This book runs on the assumption that you already own *Laws of the Night* and are at least passingly familiar with the rules of *Mind's Eye Theatre*. This book also covers only the clans of the Camarilla and their erstwhile sibling Clan Gangrel; the Sabbat and independents will find their own homes in future releases.

With that said, welcome to the halls of Elysium, where the monsters dwell.

## HISTORY: NIGHTS GONE BY

The Camarilla's history, like so many other parts of the Kindred's tale, is a long and bloody one. Born in the fires of rebellious change and watered with much spilled vitae, the sect has grown since its early days as a bulwark against youthful rage and mortal hunters.

In 1381, a band of English peasants rebelled against their local lord, drawing the attention and aid of several young Kindred. Though quickly put down, the mortal rebellion left its mark on those of the Blood who took part. Frustrated in their rise to power and often suffocated under their immortal elders' iron grip, the childer of Europe kindled the beginnings of their own rebellion.

The early 1400s saw the spark that would ignite a wildfire of rebellion throughout the Kindred of Europe. A young Brujah by the name of Tyler assaulted an elder Ventrite named Hardestadt. Inspired by this insolence, childer rose against their sires throughout the continent, clearing the avenues of power with blood and fire. War raged against the eldest of the clans. At the height of the madness, the rebels destroyed the Lasombra Antediluvian and claimed to have destroyed Tzimisce himself as well.

Bolstered by the diablerie of their elders, the rebellious youth, now called anarchs, marched through Eastern Europe, laying waste to the work of centuries. In those lands a means to break the stranglehold of the blood bond had been found, and suddenly, many neonates and ancillae were slipping leashes elders had thought secure. Eager for the opportunity to diablerize European elders, the Assamites joined the fight on the anarch side.

In 1435, Hardestadt gathered the elders in convocation and proposed an arrangement to deal with the anarch movement. The arrangement he offered would cross blood and territorial lines to deal with the issues of the Kindred as a whole. True to form, most elders offered little more than skepticism and left for their own havens to wait out the anarch storms in the way they weathered so many trials for centuries before. A few, though, remained and joined Hardestadt in his vision. They were the Founders, and they would lay the groundwork for the next five centuries of Kindred society.

By the middle of the 15th century, the Founders had persuaded enough elders to join their cause to put forth significant resistance to the anarch rebellion. Coteries drawn across clan lines, bound by a single purpose, gathered across the known world. With their aims finally united, the elders of Europe began to regain ground on their fractious childer. When coteries hand-picked by the Founders and their intimates finally returned with the location of the hidden Assamite fortress of Alamut, the demise of the revolt was all but assured. The war ground to a stalemate of minor skirmishing.

In 1493, the Anarch Movement agreed to parley with the Camarilla. The Convention of Thorns convened in an abbey in England, and there the anarchs accepted terms for surrender. The treaty allowed those anarchs who wished to come into the fold of the Camarilla to do so and levied punishment against the Assamites for their role. In this treaty, the Camarilla came into its own as the guiding sect of Cainite life.

Motivated by the Inquisition, which had raged across Europe in a fiery backdrop to the Anarch Revolt, the new sect deemed the long-ignored Masquerade would become the centerpiece of their order. No more would those of the Blood visibly lord their power over mortals. Instead, the Kindred would act from the shadows, enforcing the Traditions and protecting themselves from the fires of mortal wrath with a charade that would come to span the globe.

Not all anarchs accepted the Convention of Thorns. Many refused to return to the same stifling order that had caused them to rebel in the first place. They rejected the purported peace and fled to Scandinavia to nurse their wounds and grudges. When they finally re-emerged from their self-imposed exile, they had reformed into the sect that would be the Camarilla's staunchest and most bloody opposition: the Sabbat.

## NEW WORLD, OLD WAR

While the Convention of Thorns ended the war, the frustrations that had started it remained. Though many elders had died in the bloody revolt, there were still far more Kindred than there were positions of power. When news came to Europe from across the sea of a whole new world for the taking, many of the most promising ancillae of the Old World packed up and went west to carve out domains of their own. Many were encouraged by their elders, who hoped that they could be rid of their troublesome childer.

Throughout the 16th century, the new-forged Sabbat fought skirmishes against the Camarilla, but the chaotic assaults were to little effect against the deeply entrenched bastions of the elders' power. With the opening of the Americas, though, a new battleground was discovered, and it would become the true crucible for Camarilla and Sabbat. The Camarilla, seeing in the Americas an opportunity to be rid of potential rivals and expand their influence, united in sending a flood of younger Kindred across the ocean aboard the colony ships of the English, Dutch and French. Similarly, the Sabbat used their minions among the Spanish and Portuguese to find footholds in the American colonies.

During this time, war between the Camarilla and Sabbat was, for the most part, a perfunctory thing. Both were more concerned with cementing their hold on the vast resources of the New World than in organizing risky, expensive offensives against the other. While rumors abound of vampiric influence on the American and French Revolutions, the effects of these on the



sects was minimal. The stalemate lasted through most of the 17th and 18th centuries; each side felt the flush of power as the Industrial Revolution flooded the cities with more and more mortals, and more and more opportunities for control. Up until the early years of the 19th century, the Camarilla concerned itself far more with capitalizing on the gains afforded them by advancing technology than on the few assaults made by the Sabbat.

The War of 1812 masked a major shift in the fortunes of the Camarilla. As the British and the Americans fought their war, the Sabbat pressed in on the Atlantic seaboard, gaining cities one at a time over the next 50 years. Flanked on the North and South by Sabbat strongholds, the Camarilla fell back again and again, finally holding on to a scant handful of cities after the attacks subsided. The East Coast has never been regained, and the fighting continues to this day. Some even say that the losses taken in the East are rising faster than ever.

In the mid-1800s, a new front opened in the war between the sects. This time, the vast tracts of the western frontier were both battleground and prize. For a long time the Camarilla teetered on the edge of disaster as the Sabbat pressed and pressed, nearly toppling the Camarilla's foothold not only in the West, but in the Americas as a whole. If not for several sudden, stunning losses and the respite they gave the faltering Camarilla, the Sabbat may well have dug in so deeply as to make it impossible to remove them. There are those that feel that without those losses, the Camarilla would have lost the Americas entirely, but those that dare suggest such a thing often find themselves speaking to silent rooms and smoldering glares.

## THE LAST CENTURY

The 1900s proved ripe for upheaval among mortals and Kindred alike. As newborn social theory and political discontent rocked aging governments, the power structures of the Kindred controlling them were likewise shaken. In the chaos brought by these revolutions, many cities became primed for Sabbat incursions. When the assaults came, the Camarilla establishment often found itself struggling to bring its forces into line and frequently held onto ancient fiefdoms by the skin of its collective teeth.

In the devastation following World War I, many European Kindred tried to take control of the continent. Those that did were little more than twigs in the tide as the world plunged toward Adolf Hitler's Germany and the horror that would rise out of it. As World War II raged, some Kindred with more ambition than sense sought to turn the mortals' war to their own ends. Most did not survive. For once, those without a hold in the halls of power were luckiest, laying low and letting the storms of battle wash over them.

In the years that followed Germany's defeat, the people of America prospered, and the American Kindred along with them. In the chaos of the war, over 500 years after revolution sparked the creation of the Camarilla, the anarch movement once again reared its head. Princes on the West Coast fell as the young movement spread among the Kindred of California. But these were not the anarchs of old. Strong princes rose up to fight the tide, and, in the end, held the anarchs to their sliver of territory along the Pacific. Chicago rose as the anchor of the Camarilla in North America. Guided by Lodin's sure hand, it became a stronghold for the faithful and an example to others across the continent as cities rose overnight in a flood of immigration and urbanization.



In the latter half of the century, interest in vampires took a strange turn as subcultures embraced the image and mystique of the undead. Princes around the world saw it as an unexpected windfall, as many minor infractions could be passed off on mortal admirers, but the trend was not without its repercussions. With such increased interest, each incident became all the more memorable, and concealment became all the more crucial to survival. New technology opened ever-wider avenues to power as younger vampires took advantage of the elders' staid reliance on the old ways to carve inroads into emerging markets and industries. The tides of prosperity continue to swell as mortals flood the cities and Kindred find ever more blood to be had. The question, however, remains: how long can this last?

Omens of misfortune have plagued the Camarilla in recent years. The sect lost its one and only hold on the Far East when Hong Kong was returned to China. Younger and younger Kindred are Embracing childe of their own and with each generation, the Blood grows thinner. There are rumors of neonates whose blood is now too thin to sustain the Embrace and who can even bear the touch of sunlight. The anarchs squat on the Pacific Coast, nettling the princes of the Camarilla with their presence. More disturbingly, reports have come from Western cities of incursions by the mysterious Asian vampires. Along the Atlantic the Sabbat remains, turning back the Camarilla's attempts to recapture their long-lost cities. Only Europe remains unperturbed as the elders there

When the Convention of Thorns drew all Kindred under the auspices of the Camarilla, the Gangrel were among the seven clans who chose full membership in the sect. In the five centuries since, the Gangrel proved themselves invaluable allies, leading the fight in the war against the Sabbat. Both their combat abilities and the great wealth of intelligence gathered by the nomadic clan played decisive roles in the success of the Camarilla's efforts against their rivals.

Until recently.

Speculation abounds as to the circumstances and motives for the Gangrel defection from the Camarilla. There are as many guesses as there are mouths to voice them. Most prevalent of the rumors is that Xaviar, former justicar of the clan, entered the council chamber of the Inner Circle, spoke one sentence and left. Within a month, most of the clan had divorced themselves from the sect, though none would speak of the reasons. To be sure, many also remained, but without a justicar to defend their interests, they are vulnerable to the political machinations of those clans that retain full affiliation.

To date, the Gangrel continue steadfast in their unwillingness to explain their departure from the Camarilla. Those who ask are tersely rebuked—if they're lucky. Though now considered an independent clan, many of those who retain their claim of Camarilla membership are as welcome as ever they were. There are those who have held grudges against the shapeshifters, though, and lacking the threat of justicar retaliation leaves little reason not to make unlfe hard for those that remain.



sit in their havens, long ago having learned to maintain their own control regardless of the shifting of the mortals beneath them.

## THE TRADITIONS

As legend has it, Caine himself passed down the Traditions in the times of the First City to guide his childer through their unives. To this day, they remain the bulwark of Camarilla society and are strictly upheld. It doesn't hurt that they also make good sense.

### THE FIRST TRADITION: THE MASQUERADE

*Thou shalt not reveal thy true nature to those not of the Blood. Doing so shall renounce thy claims of Blood.*

Most Camarilla Kindred say that this is the whole of the law, and all else is incidental. Many a Methuselah has regaled a willing ear with tales of the days before the Camarilla, when the Kindred could walk abroad in the glory of their power, but times have changed. Over the past 500 years, the Kindred themselves have worked hardest at eradicating belief in vampires, squashing reports, discrediting (or eliminating) witnesses and disciplining perpetrators. The madness and slaughter that followed the Inquisition is still fresh in the memories of many elders, and the mistakes that led to it are ruthlessly punished. The penalty for breaching the Masquerade is, most often, death.

### THE SECOND TRADITION: DOMAIN

*Thy domain is thy concern. All others owe thee respect while in it. None may challenge thy word in thy domain.*

The world has grown a great deal smaller in the past few centuries, and the number of Kindred vying for a piece of land to call their own grows with every night. These days it's a rare Lick that holds a significant domain and isn't a prince. More often, the prince doles out portions of his own domain in payment for some favor or service and in return expects the occupant to enforce the prince's will. Those that expect autonomy in such situations, however, are in for a terrible disappointment. Recently, some more business-minded Kindred have taken to claiming dominion over certain aspects of commercial activity in a given city. Young vampires now squabble over brokerage firms and software developers instead of four blocks of prime hunting ground. Many elders, rooted in the old ways and firmly convinced of the surety of real estate, dismiss the trend as one more fantasy of youth doomed to failure. Others, though, have noticed the growing momentum of the practice and wonder at what might really be gained.

### THE THIRD TRADITION: PROGENY

*Thou shalt sire another one with permission of thine elder. If thou createst another without thine elder's leave, both thou and thy progeny shall be slain.*

Princeship bears a great many privileges, the right of creation being chief among them. Once, before princes littered the countryside and domain was free to any that could hold it, one generally sought the permission of one's sire before granting a mortal the Embrace. As centuries passed and the power of the Camarilla waxed, elder came to mean prince. These nights, Kindred vie most fervently to make their own childe, and the princes guard the right jealously.

### THE FOURTH TRADITION: ACCOUNTING

*Those thou create are thine own childe. Until thy progeny shall be released, thou shalt command them in all things. Their sins are thine to endure.*

Creating new vampires is a touchy thing. The changes the Blood wreaks on a mortal's body and mind are vast. The flood of power that comes with unlife can overwhelm the new vampire and provoke lapses in judgment that could threaten the entire Masquerade. So it is that those who sire new childe are charged with guiding them through the early stages of their new eternity until such time as they are aware of the risks and responsibilities their new condition has laid upon them. Until the neonate is deemed ready, her sire is responsible for her actions — *all* of her actions — and any punishment that comes as a result is laid upon sire and childe both.

Given the terrible responsibility and possible consequences of siring a childe, there are those who press the presentation of their childe earlier than might be wise. Childe found to be ignorant of the necessary protocols, whether it be through oral examination by the prince and his officers or through the actions of the childe after her release, may cause a severe punishment to be levied against her and her sire both.

### THE FIFTH TRADITION: HOSPITALITY

*Honor one another's domain. When thou comest to a foreign city thou shalt present thyself to the one who ruleth there. Without the word of acceptance, thou art nothing.*

When in the company of predators, only good manners keep blood from being shed. If a Kindred crosses into the territory of another Kindred, it is customary for him to announce himself to prevent unnecessary conflict. In these days, this generally means approaching the prince of a given city and requesting his acceptance. Certainly there are those that give short shrift to this particular Tradition, the Gangrel chief among them, and in truth, if one can maintain a low enough profile while unacknowledged, the trouble incurred is negligible. In recent nights, however, princes have begun appointing particularly savvy hunters as scourges. Often granted considerable latitude in the pursuit of their duties, scourges pursue and, in some cases, destroy those who have not presented themselves to the prince. Under the aegis of preventing Sabbat incursions, the practice makes sense, but many see the scourge as a dangerous mistake waiting to happen. Many sheriffs also take umbrage at the broad clearance given the scourge, seeing it as an infringement on their own offices.

### THE SIXTH TRADITION: DESTRUCTION

*Thou art forbidden to destroy another of thy kind. The right of destruction belongeth only to thine elder. Only the eldest among thee shall call the blood hunt.*

As with so many of the Traditions, in earlier days the Sixth purported the right of a sire to destroy his childe. In modern nights, the prince has usurped this right. When wielded prudently, the threat of blood hunt is as effective a weapon as a prince can have. Used capriciously, it can easily lead to the downfall of a city.

In cases of a sire's destruction of her childe, the matter depends entirely on the neonate's presentation. A sire has free rein to destroy a fractious childe at any time up until the neonate's presentation to the prince. After gaining the prince's acceptance, though, the neonate becomes the property of the city and is no longer under the auspices of his sire.

The right to destroy another vampire lies solely with the prince of a city. If a vampire decides to take the right for himself and destroy another vampire, the killer can generally expect to find himself on the receiving end of a blood hunt. The power of life and death is one of a prince's most dear, and she guards it with considerable jealousy.

## LEXICON

Subcultures and sects often develop their own speech patterns, inventing slang and jargon unique to their status and social situation. Vampires are no different. Though certain terms may be more prevalent in certain circles, one can generally find the following words in use, in one form or another, in all circles of Kindred society.

**Allthing:** A Gangrel gathering, generally held on a regional scale and called by the eldest member of the clan in the area. Smaller gatherings are called *things*.

**Anarch:** A vampire who has forsaken his affiliation with the Camarilla in favor of existence as an independent. Most claiming the title in the present night have been Embraced within the last hundred years.

**Archon:** Title given the servitors of the justicars. Most are blood bound to their justicar, speak in her name and act with her authority.

**Barrens:** Those areas outside the immediate environs of a city, generally considered uninhabitable by Kindred.

**Blood Bond:** An induced love caused by the ingestion of a particular Kindred's vitae. The bond is strong enough to inspire suicidal devotion in the recipient and is generally thought to be unbreakable.

**Blood Hunt:** A declaration of death levied against a criminal by the prince and often enforced by the city at large.

**Camarilla:** The sect of vampires espousing strict adherence to the Traditions and claiming jurisdiction over all vampires.

**Chantry:** A facility available to all Tremere in a city for use as haven and laboratory.

**Conclave:** Gathering open to the entire sect, generally called by a justicar.

**Convention of Thorns:** Treaty that ended the Anarch Revolt. Also, the conclave that resulted in the signing of the treaty.

**Coterie:** Group of vampires that generally work in concert, often crossing clan lines and rarely lasting more than a few decades.

**Court:** Formal assemblage of the prince and his officers most often held in Elysium. In theory, any acknowledged Kindred of the city may approach the prince at court and be heard.

**Domain:** Territory attributed to a particular vampire, thereby granting that vampire primary rights to hunting, influence and resources. Also, the environs deemed to be within a prince's rule.

**Elysium:** A site or collection of sites wherein violence and the use of Disciplines are strictly forbidden. Often places of artistic or cultural significance are designated as Elysium.

**Embrace:** The process of making a mortal into a vampire.

**Final Death:** The complete destruction of a vampire.

**Ghoul:** A mortal who has tasted Kindred vitae without first being drained of blood. Also, the act of creating a ghoul.

**Harpy:** Title given those at the center of the social pecking order. They are purveyors of rumor and innuendo and the ultimate judges of social status among the Kindred of a city.

**Inner Circle:** The council of elders in control of the Camarilla. The exact number and identity of those on the council are unknown.

**Justicar:** Title given those who carry out the will of the Inner Circle. Each clan has one justicar and each justicar serves for a period of 13 years before facing election by the Inner Circle to decide continuance or replacement. Each justicar bears considerable power in pursuit of her duties, including the right of destruction.

**Keeper of Elysium:** Kindred given charge of maintaining all designated Elysiums, including security and enforcement of the Traditions.

**Malkavian Madness Network:** The mysterious connection linking all Malkavians, supposedly through mutually altered perceptions.

**Masquerade:** Camarilla's strict policy of concealment denying the existence of Kindred to the mortal populace at large.

**Primogen:** Member of the council of elders that advise and assist the prince in the management of a city. The power held by the primogen council varies from city to city and prince to prince.

**Prince:** Supreme authority within a city with regard to local Camarilla matters.

**Rack:** Any of a series of prime hunting grounds in a city including clubs, bars and commercial districts.

**Rant:** A gathering of Brujah, ostensibly for purposes of determining clan policy.

**Red List:** List of those Kindred marked by the sect as a whole for death. Those on the list can expect to be hunted in any Camarilla city.

**Scourge:** Prince's officer charged with patrolling the city for outlaws and the Sabbat. Frequently, the scourge is granted the right of destruction in the pursuit of her duties.

**Seneschal:** The prince's second-in-command, the seneschal often deals with the routine tasks of running a city.

**Sheriff:** Prince's officer charged with enforcing the Traditions and the prince's proclamations.

**Spawning Pools:** Hidden chambers located deep in a Nosferatu warren, used for breeding and feeding bizarre animal ghouls. Many of the oldest pools house monstrous specimens of a variety of species, often grown to tremendous size.

**Traditions:** Six great laws said to be handed down by Caine. Together they form the core of the Camarilla's philosophy.

**Vitae:** Blood. Often the blood of a Kindred, though not always.



## CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTER CREATION

### NEW ARCHETYPES

Archetypes are the building blocks for your character's persona. In day-to-day life, people put on different Demeanors as they face the world. You behave like one sort of person at the office, another at school and maybe yet another when out partying with your friends. None of these different faces we wear are lies, exactly. But the deepest goals and motivations of a person — the innermost Nature — are rarely on display for the entire world to see. When you are building your character, you should ask yourself: What does this person truly want? What face does he show to the world in order to get it? The answers you come up with are the heart of any truly enjoyable character.

There are some Archetypes that are very common in the Camarilla. Certain clans are naturally drawn to grant these sort of people the Embrace. Likewise, Kindred in important positions within the Camarilla are always looking for servants of a certain temperament.

**Idealist** — You are utterly committed to some purpose greater than your own wants and needs.

**Soldier** — You've been given your orders, and you take pride in accomplishing them well.

**Dabbler** — The world is full of new things to learn, and you want to sample all of them.

**Scientist** — Diligent, rational examination can reveal all the secrets of the universe.

### ABILITIES

There are some skills within the Camarilla that are encountered regularly. While the "Hobby/ Professional/ Expert Ability" given in *Laws of the Night* can easily cover these Abilities, it may prove helpful to use the more in-depth description of these Abilities given below. Please note that these Abilities, like any material given in this book, are to be used strictly at the option of the Storyteller.

## HUNTING

This skill allows you to stalk any prey, in any terrain, for any purpose. Deer hunters and Gangrel use this to bring down wild game. Most other Kindred, however, hunt a different sort of prey in the urban jungle. This skill allows them to gain their nightly sustenance without breaking the Masquerade or going hungry due to missed opportunities. This Ability gives you a retest in situations when you are attempting to refresh your Blood Pool, whether in the woods or out on the streets.

## PSYCHOLOGY

This is a working knowledge of psychology, both in theory and in practice. You have a solid understanding of the nature of both human and Kindred minds. Given enough time and effort, you may accurately discern how a person's mind works, or how it doesn't, as the case may be. This Ability may be used to determine the given subjects' Nature or her Derangements (if any), or as a retest to gain insight into a person's motivations. Note that a separate test is needed for each piece of information. You must speak with a given subject for anywhere from 15 minutes to an hour for this skill to work — you cannot diagnose someone's insanity at a glance.

## MERITS AND FLAWS

Merits and Flaws are meant to give your character that little extra twist that sets him apart from the pack. They should always be the last step in character creation and never the main focus of a character concept. Often, new players will make the mistake of latching on to a Merit or Flaw and defining a character solely by that small detail. The end result is rarely a character that has enough depth or creativity to be worth playing for extended periods of time.

Likewise, many players will try and take as many Flaws as they can in order to buy as many points of Generation, Abilities or Disciplines as possible. Bear in mind that the Storyteller has every right to strip a Flaw (and its points) from a character if it isn't being played properly. Flaws are handicaps that limit the things a character can do. A Flaw that isn't a disadvantage isn't really a Flaw, and shouldn't be treated as such.

## PHYSICAL

### BRUISER (I TRAIT MERIT)

The icy stare, the cobra eyes — you've got the stone cold thug look down, and it works. You are one Trait up when comparing ties on any attempts to intimidate someone.

### FRIENDLY FACE (I TRAIT MERIT)

Don't I know you from somewhere? You have an open, honest look about you that always seems to remind everyone of an old friend they haven't seen in years. You are one Trait up on all attempts to persuade, seduce or beguile a stranger.

### DULLED BITE (2 TRAIT FLAW)

Your fangs never fully developed, or they never came in at all. When feeding, you need to find some other way of making the blood flow, or must win

on a Physical Challenge (in addition to any necessary to grapple your victim) in order for your bite to penetrate. A number of Caitiff and high-generation vampires manifest this Flaw.

### GLOWING EYES (2 TRAIT FLAW)

Your eyes actually glow in the dark, not merely reflecting light like a cat's, but actually producing light. This radiation partially blinds you and, in the dark, makes you stand out like a sore thumb. Likewise, your very presence in public is a breach in the Masquerade. Only thick, wrap-around sunglasses will hide this illumination — ordinary sunglasses or contact lenses just don't cut it. You gain the following Negative Social Trait: Bestial and the Negative Mental Trait: *Oblivious*, neither of which can be bought off with experience points. However, you also gain the Social Trait: *Intimidating* for free. It is recommended that you wear a tag proclaiming your unusual deformity.

### PERMANENT FANGS (2 TRAIT FLAW)

Your fangs do not retract, making the preservation of the Masquerade difficult at best. You must take the Negative Social Trait: Bestial, which cannot be bought off with experience points.

## MENTAL

### COLDLY LOGICAL (I TRAIT MERIT)

You have a knack for separating fact from hysteria, truth from emotion. Some may call you a cold fish, but you're too cool to care. You are one Trait up when comparing ties on any attempt to persuade you using emotion (i.e., a Social Challenge where your opponent bids Traits like *Beguiling*, *Charismatic* or *Seductive*).

### THIRST FOR INNOCENCE (2 TRAIT FLAW)

The sight of innocence of any sort arouses a terrible hunger within you. You must pass a Self-Control Test or else frenzy and attack the source of your hunger.

### GUILT-WRACKED (4 TRAIT FLAW)

You cannot cope with the fact that you must consume blood to survive. You must pass a Courage Test each and every time you attempt to feed, or else you simply cannot go through with it. This means you will often be low on blood and will easily succumb to hunger frenzies.

## SUPERNATURAL

### BRIGHT AURA (I TRAIT MERIT)

For some reason, your aura reads as much brighter and more colorful than most Kindred's. When you are the subject of *Aura Perception*, your character appears mortal. This Merit is particularly appropriate for high-generation vampires and Caitiff.

### HEALING TOUCH (I TRAIT MERIT)

Normally vampires can only heal wounds left from the Kiss by licking them. With a touch, you can achieve the same effect.

### **INOFFENSIVE TO ANIMALS (1 TRAIT MERIT)**

Animals generally fear and loathe the presence of the Kindred. The predator fights and the prey flees when Caine's children approach. For some reason, this does not hold true for you. Animals won't necessarily like you at first sight, but they will not automatically flee from you.

### **COLD BREEZE (1 TRAIT FLAW)**

A cold breeze follows you wherever you go. While this is terribly dramatic around curtains and open flames, it also proclaims your supernatural aspect to everyone around you, including mortals. You are one Trait down on any social interaction with mortals. It is recommended that you wear a tag describing this aspect of your character.

### **BEACON OF THE UNHOLY (2 TRAIT FLAW)**

You radiate a palpable aura of evil. Clergy and mortals possessing True Faith are instantly aware that you are a supernatural creature of darkness and react accordingly. Likewise, you suffer the effects of True Faith when on holy ground or any place of worship.

### **BOUND (2 TRAIT FLAW)**

You begin the game blood bound to another player's character or Storyteller character. The knowledge that your will is not your own constantly chafes at your soul, even as you revel in your utter love for your captor. This Flaw may only be taken with the express permission of the Storyteller and, if applicable, the player whose character to whom you are bound.

### **DEATHSIGHT (2 TRAIT FLAW)**

Everything appears to be dead and decaying around you. The world is a corpse, mortals are walking cadavers, and everything is in ruins. You must take the Negative Social Trait: *Callous* and the Negative Mental Trait: *Oblivious*, neither of which can be bought off with experience points. On the other hand, you are two Traits up when comparing Traits on any Social Challenge based on physical appearance (i.e., your opponent bids the Traits *Gorgeous* or *Alluring*).

### **LORD OF THE FLIES (2 TRAIT FLAW)**

Buzzing, swarming insects constantly surround you. You are one Trait down on any social or Stealth-related challenge. It is recommended that you wear a tag announcing this aspect of your character.

## **MASTER-LEVEL INFLUENCES: THE DARK**

### **HEART OF THE CITY.**

The most ancient Kindred of the Camarilla build power bases that are terrifying in scope. Centuries of careful planning, ghouling and scheming can produce empires. These elder vampires become the essence of the city they dwell in: Their wishes and desires shape their homes in ways that lesser Kindred can only dream of.

Surprisingly, however, very few Kindred gain influence on a national or even regional scope. Some of this is due to the fact that elder vampires are more

used to thinking in terms of city-states and towns rather than nations; the rest is because other Kindred would never stand for one of their kind obtaining that much power. Whatever the reason, Kindred tend to develop Influence in depth rather than breadth, and even the most Influential Kindred has little control over the nation he dwells in. There are always exceptions, however....

The following charts give a rough idea of the power granted Influences 6-10 in the various realms controlled by Kindred society. Bear in mind that the area of control of these Influences tend to get blurred at higher levels; someone with high levels of *Street Influence* can influence the behavior of the police and underworld without having any direct say in their activities.

Obtaining these levels of Influence requires decades, if not centuries, of hard work. Such power should only be in the hands of the most ancient and established of elders. Neonates shouldn't even be able to dream of holding such an empire in their hands.

#### **BUREAUCRACY**

A Kindred with higher level of Influence in this domain has spent decades establishing the system that shapes his city. Others may choose the mayors and aldermen of a city — you control them through the machinery of government, without which the entire city would collapse. As this power grows, you may even be able to exert your will on the regional level.

Cost	Effect
6	Initiate a major public works program (a large park or office complex)
7	Completely dominate all aspects of the city's bureaucracy within a city block
8	Prevent emergency services such as fire protection from responding to a major disaster
9	Stop, start or alter a state or regional program or policy
10	Force an entire neighborhood to build as you see fit Collect taxes (\$1,000)
	Build or destroy small towns or suburbs
	Control an entire city district
	Rewrite policy on a state or regional level
	Have a major building condemned and destroyed on short notice
	Build monuments or stadiums
	Completely control the mayor's office
	Rebuild the city as you see fit

#### **CHURCH**

The Church is one of the most ancient bulwarks of Kindred Influence — and the most dangerous. In the World of Darkness, the Church still keeps the truth about the supernatural locked away in its oldest libraries. Kindred with high levels of *Church Influence* dare to use this power to their own ends. Most Kindred possessing level of Influence this high can still remember the foundations of some of these faiths.

**Cost**

6

**Effect**

Identify a church member with True Faith  
Stage a "miraculous" event that gains the unofficial approval of the Church

7

Excommunicate a lay member of the church  
Have a church marriage annulled or dissolved  
Find an experienced Church-associated hunter  
Pose as a bishop or other major regional religious figure

8

Nominate a member of the clergy for elevation  
Stage a "miracle" that gains official recognition by the Church

9

Create or destroy a major cathedral or temple within the city  
Exert minor influence over nationwide Church policy  
Have a member of the clergy excommunicated  
Exert major influence over nationwide Church policy  
Discover the secrets of the modern Inquisition

**FINANCE**

The higher levels of *Finance* become a dizzying game for Kindred. The Cainite elders who were merchant princes during the Renaissance are in awe of the stock market, let alone the pace of electronic money transfers. In this day and age, it takes very energetic Kindred to stay on top of the financial world. Many elders delegate this power to younger Kindred. As a consequence, this is one area where ancillae can truly taste power. Elders, confident of their leash upon these upstarts, allow their childer to play — as long as they get the results they desire.

**Cost**

6

**Effect**

Obliterate all savings and credit for one individual (destroy one level of *Resources*) Control the price of a minor commodity

7

Perform insider trading (\$10,000)  
Exert minor influence over local stock prices

8

Purchase a minor nationwide corporation  
Control the price of a major commodity

9

Cause inflation or depression for a regional area  
Siphon off all profits from a minor corporation (\$100,000)

10

Own a major nationwide corporation  
Exert major influence over local stock prices  
Create a stock market crash Influence nationwide economic trends  
Make someone an instant millionaire (\$1,000,000)

**HEALTH**

The modern world has more threatening things in it than Kindred. The unseen virus, the polluted air — sometimes it seems like the Earth itself has become a vampire, sucking the life out of the people. In truth, it is the Kindred who dominate this influence who make the Earth bleed for them. Ancient vampires scarcely understand why younger Kindred fear those who control the health of a city. The neonates, brought up in a world aware of the ozone layer and AIDS, know better.

**Cost**

6

**Effect**

Cause a major shortage of blood within an area  
Prevent ambulances from responding to a major disaster

7

Contaminate the entire blood supply for one minor hospital  
Locate samples of a minor infectious disease (influenza)

8

Cause a major shortage of one type of medicine (insulin, penicillin)

9

Perform major or illegal experimentation on a large number of patients  
Shut down a small hospital permanently  
Contaminate the blood supply for an entire city  
Shut down a major hospital permanently  
Locate samples of a major infectious disease (anthrax)

10

Shut down all medical care in a city for an entire day  
Direct genetic engineering projects

**HIGH SOCIETY**

This Influence tends to have younger Kindred in its upper reaches than most other spheres of Influence. Partially, this is because of the Masquerade; it's hard to be a major celebrity when you only work nights. More to the point, Kindred know that their greatest strength lies in the shadows, not in the spotlight. Those Kindred who remain in this area of Influence become the purveyors of fame rather than its object. They may not be the faces the public sees in the tabloids, but they certainly choose who will appear on them.

**Cost**

6

**Effect**

Own a small but influential theater or gallery in the city  
Give someone his or her "15 minutes of fame" (create one level of *Fame* for one session)

7

Bring a major traveling concert or play to the city  
Destroy the career of a minor established celebrity (destroy one level of *Fame*)

8

- Appoint anyone as a member of the city's elite social circles
- Make someone a minor celebrity (create one level of *Fame*)
- Become a major celebrity (grant yourself two levels of *Fame*)
- Own a large gallery or theatre in the city
- Make someone a major celebrity (create two levels of *Fame*)
- Influence nationwide fashion trends
- Destroy a major celebrity's career (destroy two levels of *Fame*)

9

10

### I WANNA LIVE FOREVER!

A great deal of the *High Society* Influence revolves around the granting or destroying the *Fame* Background. The Storyteller needs to watch this influence closely to make sure that it doesn't get abused. As a rule of thumb, if a character receives a level of *Fame* Background through the use of this Influence, the recipient must purchase the Background with earned experience as soon as possible. If the character chooses not to do so, the extra levels of *Fame* are automatically removed. However, the person using *High Society* Influence may choose to keep employing his Influence to grant *Fame*, essentially thrusting the character into the limelight despite his wishes. This can be a cunning trap for many Kindred...

The same rule applies to those Influences that grant *Resources*, *Allies* or other Backgrounds: The character receiving the Background must pay for it with experience as soon as possible, or the Background fades away.

- Own the central gallery or theater within the city
- Create a national fashion or trend

### INDUSTRY

This is another area in which the eldest and most potent Kindred are falling behind. Most elder Kindred are familiar with a world where steel and stone are the units of power; they are unfamiliar with a place where transactions can literally move at the speed of light, and silicon is the master of the earth. As younger ancillae clamor to control this Influence, the elders look to control these eager young Kindred rather than the actual tools of industry.

Cost

6

#### Effect

- Attract a major heavy industry to the area
- Illegally dump large amounts of toxic waste (and not get caught)

7

8

9

10

Siphon off company profits (\$5,000)

Eliminate or start a union in any company

Arrange for a major ecological disaster

Fatally sabotage a major construction project

Own a major heavy industry or construction firm in the area

Cause a major strike

Fatally sabotage an entire product of heavy industry or machinery

Influence nationwide labor movements

### LEGAL

At heart, many Camarilla elders are fond of law and order — at least, their versions of law and order. As a consequence, many elders at least dabble in this sphere of Influence. The truly dedicated are not interested in just manipulating the law; they want to shape it to fit their own desires. Perhaps the heavy influence of Kindred upon the law is the reason most lawyers have such poor reputations. Then again, perhaps not. Like does attract like, after all.

#### Cost

6

7

8

9

10

#### Effect

Bring any investigation short of a grand jury to a halt

Force a guilty verdict on any misdemeanor trial

Appoint a state judge

Have a lawyer disbarred

Successfully sue anyone for major damages (destroy one level of *Resources*)

Force a guilty verdict on a felony trial

Control one of the members of the state Supreme Court

Appoint or fire the city's District Attorney

Force a guilty verdict on a major or sensational felony trial

Rewrite state or local law as you see fit

### MEDIA

Controlling the media is one of the most important aspects of the Masquerade. Consequently, although this field has changed as fast as anything else in the Information Age, the elders of the Camarilla have made a concerted effort to keep abreast of current developments. The Internet, however, remains a chink in the Camarilla armor — one that the ancillae are hungry to exploit.

#### Cost

6

7

#### Effect

Submit headline news successfully

Cause a minor media outlet to begin an investigation

Destroy a minor newspaper or TV station

Write small nationwide stories successfully

	Manufacture a major scandal (destroy one level of <i>Fame</i> )
8	Cause a major media outlet to begin an investigation
	Kill national news stories before they get off the ground
9	Broadcast fake regional stories
	Destroy a major newspaper or TV station
10	Create a fake major national news story
	Create a news blackout over an entire city

#### OCCULT

For obvious reasons, the occult is a subject near and dear to the Kindred in general. Influence in this area tends to provide deeper information as opposed to greater power — the more Influence a Kindred has within this realm, the closer he comes to the truth, and the fewer charlatans he has to deal with. The oldest and most powerful Kindred dominate this area.

Cost	Effect
6	Create your own Basic ritual
	Found a local cult (grant one level of Allies Background)
7	Learn truthful lore concerning Lupines or changelings
	Create your own Intermediate ritual
	Access major magical items
8	Learn truthful lore concerning wraiths or spirits
	Create your own Advanced ritual
	Found a regional cult (grant two levels of Allies Background)
9	Locate and bring a specific hedge mage or medium to you
	Access legendary magical items
	Locate and bring a specific Lupine or changeling to you
10	Locate an entire copy of the <i>Book of Nod</i> or the true lair of a Methuselah

#### POLICE

It is rare to find elder Kindred in the upper echelons, but those that are often quite firmly entrenched. When protected by the "blue wall," there is very little these Kindred can't accomplish. As crime-fighting moves into more high-tech spheres, however, some elders prefer to use ancillae as their pawns.

Cost	Effect
	Manufacture a major scandal (destroy one level of <i>Fame</i> )
8	Cause a major media outlet to begin an investigation
	Kill national news stories before they get off the ground
9	Broadcast fake regional stories
	Destroy a major newspaper or TV station
10	Create a fake major national news story
	Create a news blackout over an entire city

6	Control one aspect of a large city precinct (homicide, dispatch)
7	Appropriate contraband or drugs from the evidence room
	Call for SWAT raids
8	Have free access to all police facilities
	Have the crime lab "lose" evidence
9	Completely control the police department of a suburb or small town
	Have people extradited across state lines
10	Have police chiefs fired
	Complete control of a large city's police network

#### POLITICAL

This is another high-profile Influence that many Kindred tend to avoid at the upper levels. Although younger ancillae recognize the dizzying heights of power that such influence can bring, most Kindred prefer to work behind the scenes, appointing the leaders of men rather than serving the common good themselves.

Cost	Effect
6	Enact major legislation on the local level
	Get your candidate into a major local office (i.e., mayor of a major city)
7	Destroy the career of a major local politician
8	Get your candidate into a major federal office (i.e., senator)
9	Enact minor national legislation
	Embezzle taxpayer money (\$10,000)
	Engineer a major political scandal
10	Give major support to a national political candidate
	Propose major national legislation

#### STREET

Those who possesses a high level of this Influence own the heart and soul of their home cities. What anyone in their town knows, they know. This Influence is not broad in scope, but it is very deep. An elder who controls the streets of a city may not appear to be powerful, but those who cross him will find every hand in the city turned against them.

Cost	Effect
6	Completely dominate all aspects of a housing project or slum
	Mark a specific person who enters a downtown area for harassment
7	Locate exotic weaponry (bombs, sniper rifles)
	Start a small riot

8	Completely dominate all aspects of a downtown neighborhood Control a large gang
9	Locate unique or customized weaponry Mark a specific person who enters downtown for death
10	Completely dominate all aspects of the downtown of a major city Start a major citywide riot

#### TRANSPORTATION

This Influence still has a lot of favor within elder circles. Kindred can strangle an entire city with this influence, or they can make a community thrive. There has been substantial change in this environment over the centuries, but it has been slow enough for the elders to keep pace and maintain their hold on who enters their cities or leaves them.

Cost	Effect
6	Bar a person from entering or leaving a city via public transportation
7	Attract a major transportation outlet (i.e., air port) to your city Halt all public transportation and cargo shipping to a small town
8	Siphon off profits from a shipping or trucking firm (\$5,000) Bar a specific form of cargo from entering or leaving a city
9	Isolate a small town from any form of transportation (including highways) Cause a major transportation disaster
10	Destroy a major transportation outlet Completely dominate one aspect of regional transportation (airplanes, trucking, shipping) Prevent anyone from leaving or entering a city via all forms of transportation (including highways) Bar all cargo from entering or leaving a major city

#### UNDERWORLD

The inception of the Mafia dates back to the Renaissance, and it's entirely likely that a Kindred thought of the idea first. Several clans of Kindred have sparred over control of the Mafia for centuries, fueling an already-volatile mix. The potential for violence, blood and easy answers to hard problems brings a never-ending stream of new investors in this ancient profession. The Camarilla has a solid foothold in the upper reaches of this Influence, but that could change at any moment. In particular, the arrival of the Eastern vampires

threatens the small grasp some Kindred have over the tongs and triads in the various Chinatowns.

Cost	Effect
6	Locate exotic weaponry (bombs, sniper rifles)
7	Contract a professional hit
8	Launder money
9	Supply the drug needs of a large city
10	Control the head of a small crime family Locate unique or custom weaponry Put a price on anyone's head Start a mob war Control the head of a large crime family Stage a public assassination, terrorist act or shooting spree (and get away with it)

#### UNIVERSITY

The quiet halls of academia are familiar to many elders. Many former monks who, when they breathed, tutored the sons of nobility seek to recreate their pasts in today's halls of higher learning. As an elder gains more and more power in this Influence, her pet campus begins to reflect her personality. The whole college becomes her personal haven, and everything on it her property.

Cost	Effect
6	Falsify a graduate degree
7	Create a college class of your choice Discredit the head of a college department Falsify a Ph.D.
8	Know a contact or two with high levels of Ability or esoteric knowledge Discredit the dean of a college
9	Appoint the dean of a college Funnel university funds in your direction (\$1,000) Direct an entire university department to research a specific problem Have a research assistant attached to your service indefinitely (grant one level of Allies)
10	Destroy or discredit an entire college

## GARGOYLES

In the earliest years of the Tremere clan, the Warlocks were assaulted on all sides. Ancient vampires, enraged at the usurpers' theft of immortality, circled the new clan like a pack of wolves. Only with strong allies could the fledgling vampires hope to survive their first nights. These allies would have to be powerful, vigilant and utterly loyal. Intimate with betrayal, the Tremere knew that any allies they found had to be beyond reproach.

The Tremere could find no such allies anywhere on Earth, so they created them. After years of experimentation, a new rite was created that would transform captive Tzimisce, Gangrel and Nosferatu into a monstrous bloodline. These new horrors had the strength, tenacity and patience of stone. They had the features of demons and the wings of nightmares. Most importantly, they were easy for the Tremere to *Dominate* into submission. These were the Gargoyles, and their existence guaranteed the survival of the young Warlock clan.

For nearly a thousand years, the Gargoyles have faithfully served their Tremere masters. In recent nights, however, something has happened, and somehow a few Gargoyles have managed to slip their leashes. They have become free creatures, unfettered by the Warlock's chains. Now the Gargoyle Clan is split into two camps. The first, called Slaves, still follow the orders of their Tremere masters. The second, who call themselves Freemen, no longer serve the Tremere, but are often without places to roost. Like Frankenstein's monster, the Gargoyles wander the earth looking for a place in a world that treats them as abominations.

Oddly, the Free Gargoyles have chosen to remain in the Camarilla. Whether this choice is due to a need for order, a desire to spite the former masters or simply force of habit is not known. But just as the Gargoyles once seemed unshakably loyal to the Tremere, the Free Gargoyles seem utterly loyal to the Camarilla as a whole. For now.

In recent years, Gargoyles have taken to embracing mortals, often by impulse or accident. They still perform the ancient rites, however, and new Gargoyles are occasionally created from Nosferatu or Tzimisce stock. Whether Embraced or created, a Gargoyle's past is lost to her once she joins the bloodline. Many Gargoyles pursue their lost identity obsessively, while others are glad for the new start.

In their own way, the Gargoyles are even more alien than the hideous Nosferatu. They are shunned by both Kindred and kine as monsters that have no ties to humanity at all, and the process of creation, which wipes away their memories, is no help. Most Gargoyles are as unruffled by this as befits their stoic natures. However, even the hard shell of a Gargoyle can crack, and many are known to secretly yearn for the touch of kindness or friendship in their lonely lives.

Most players will want to portray a Free Gargoyle. While a Slave Gargoyle can be an interesting character for a while — and an escape chronicle is always entertaining — eventually, being at the continuous beck and call of the entire Tremere clan can get boring. Slave Gargoyles are in far deeper thrall to the Tremere than any ghoul, and blind obedience rarely makes for an interesting long-term character.

**Roleplaying Hints:** Like the stone you embody, you possess great patience and stoicism. The Free Gargoyles won their liberty only after years of careful planning; they are not going to risk that freedom on hasty action now. You weigh and consider each action, but when planning is done, you can act with remarkable speed and decisiveness. Like a mighty train, you're slow to start, but when you're on course, slowing down is even more difficult.

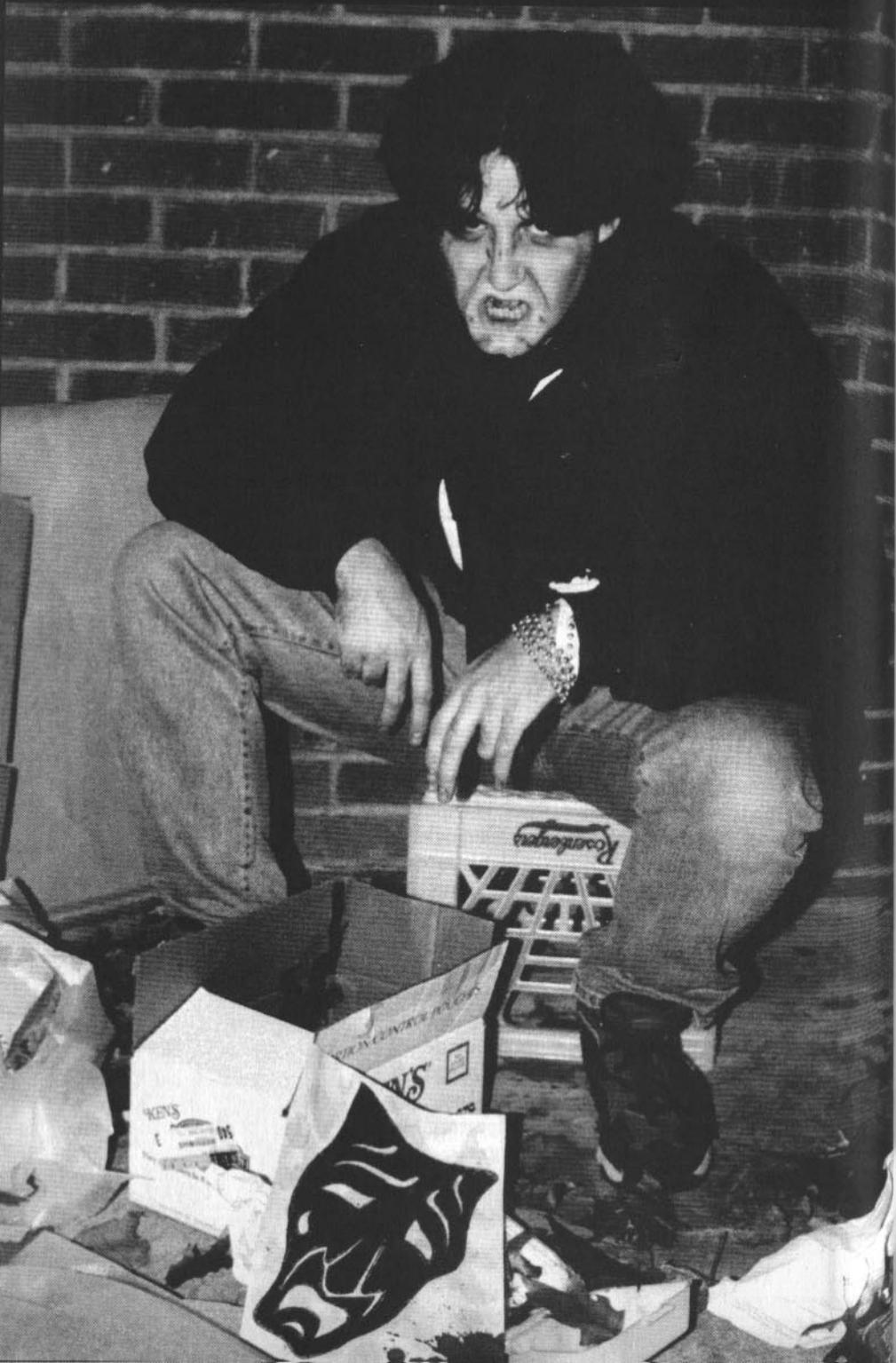
**Disciplines:** *Fortitude, Potence, Visceratika, Flight*

**Advantages:** All Gargoyles automatically begin the game with the first level of *Flight* for free. In addition, the Gargoyles are natural guards, sentries and spies. As a consequence, they possess a free level of *Awareness*.

**Disadvantages:** Gargoyles are hideous, misshapen monsters, even more alien in nature than the Nosferatu. No Gargoyle may possess Appearance-related Social Traits such as *Alluring*, *Gorgeous* or *Seductive* without calling upon special powers (such as *Obfuscate*). Furthermore, all Gargoyles suffer from the Negative Traits *Repugnant* or *Bestial* whenever their true forms are apparent. These Traits may not be removed with Experience Traits or Free Traits. A Gargoyle cannot initiate any Social Challenges in his true form except for the purposes of intimidation, although he may defend against Social Challenges.

The Gargoyles have a natural weakness built into them by their Tremere masters: They easily succumb to *Dominate* and other mind-controlling effects. All Gargoyles possess the Negative Trait *Submissive* x 2 when attempting to resist *Dominate* or any other mind-controlling effects.

**Bloodlines:** Tremere prefer to create their Gargoyles from existing Kindred stock. The surge of competing strains of vitae and the magical effects of the transformation ritual result in wiping away almost all traces of the new Gargoyle's old memories and leaving him as a blank slate to be written upon. Free Gargoyles have taken to Embracing new members into the bloodline; the process is only somewhat gentler for them, as they still lose most of their pasts, but at least retain a vague sense of their former selves. Exact features of each Gargoyle's particular hideousness are dependent upon the combination of blood that created the Gargoyle's original ancestor, whether Tzimisce-Nosferatu, Tzimisce-Gangrel or Gangrel-Nosferatu.



## CHAPTER THREE: DISCIPLINES

When a vampire elder of suitably low generation reaches a certain power level, her command of Disciplines becomes far more powerful than that of lesser vampires. While other Kindred are limited from reaching such potential by their weaker blood, an elder can gain far more potent powers and even create powers of her own.

Any high-level powers must *always* be cleared by the Storyteller before they are allowed in the game. It cannot be stressed enough that a Storyteller who decides to let her players have such powers had best be prepared for the consequences. It's a mistake to drop such a character in the middle of the game and expect that he won't make waves — he will, and rightly so. In the hands of a player who wants to smack down those around him in order to establish his reputation, such powers can mean a quick and bloody end for the chronicle. The Storyteller is under no obligation whatsoever to accept any Disciplines of this level to her game, even if she does accept characters who have the potential to learn them. Many of the powers here also require Storyteller assistance to be properly used, and the Storyteller should prepare for that in advance.

Also, keep in mind that mastering these powers takes a long time — decades at the very least — whether that's simply the learning process or just finding a teacher. Regardless of how much experience a character might have, it is extremely unlikely that he will ever gain more than one Discipline of this level in game (unless the chronicle fast-forwards through the years between sessions). Note that a character can learn several powers from the same power level — for example, it is not impossible for a character to learn several elder-level *Obfuscate* powers if he has the experience and the time to do so.

Disciplines may be learned in any order. The power types below are chosen in chronological order:



### CREATIVE INSANITY

The Disciplines that follow shouldn't be taken as the only available options; rather, they are examples of what kind of power can be achieved. It's not uncommon for an ancient vampire to have highly personalized Disciplines. Once an elder vampire has learned the five basic powers of any given Discipline, he may start creating his own. At that point, he has enough understanding of the Discipline's nature that he no longer requires a teacher. That said, having a teacher may certainly help — after all, inventing such abilities isn't quite as simple as some might think.

The Storyteller should bear in mind that this may well be an invitation to disaster — some players will invariably try to sneak some grossly overpowered stuff past the Storyteller. Storytellers should consider this official permission to mercilessly stomp such powers into the ground, and squeeze the player's nose with a particularly nasty kung fu grip until he repents his powergaming ways. It's harsh, but it's the only way.

Some Disciplines have more powers listed than others. This doesn't mean that certain Disciplines are more versatile than others — rather, it reflects the fact that certain Disciplines have better-known applications. Also, some Disciplines do not go all the way up to Methuselah level. This is because the bloodline has no known members of low enough generation to develop powers of such magnitude.

### EXPERIENCE COSTS

Superior Disciplines' experience costs are as follows:

Level	Experience point cost	Generation requirement
Elder	12	8
Master	15	7
Ascendant	18	6
Methuselah	21	5

Note that the actual cost may end up being of secondary concern to the player, as learning these powers also requires a great deal of time. The specifics are up to the Storyteller, but mastering even the Elder-level powers may take a decade or two, and mastering a Methuselah-level power can take an entire century.

### ANIMALISM

#### ELDER ANIMALISM

#### ANIMAL SUCCULENCE

Most vampires find animal blood tasteless and less nourishing than human blood, not to mention somewhat *declassé*. Those with this power have learned to make greater use of such stuffs.

Once this power is learned, it is always in effect. Simply put, every one Blood Trait you gain from an animal counts as two. However, this doesn't mean that the natural desire for the blood of "higher" prey is in any way diminished — quite the opposite. After every third feeding from an animal, you make a Static Mental Challenge whenever you are confronted with the opportunity to feed on human or Kindred blood. If you fail, you frenzy and attempt to drain the vessel. As you accumulate feedings, you find it harder to resist the lure of finer vintage. At each additional third feeding (the sixth, ninth, etc.), you must bid three extra Traits on the challenge — for example, a vampire who has fed nine times on animal blood must bid six extra Traits on the test when she discovers an unconscious Ventrite just waiting to be fed from. Once you have frenzied and slaked your thirst, you are considered to be "starting over."

You cannot gain extra Blood Traits from any supernatural creature in animal form — this includes werecreatures, Gangrel in animal form, pooka, etc.

#### SHARED SOUL

Through the use of this power, you may probe the mind of any one animal within reach. *Shared Soul* is a somewhat difficult experience for both parties, as both are completely immersed in the thoughts and emotions of the other. With enough effort and time, both participants can gain a complete understanding of the other's mind. *Shared Soul*'s primary use is in extracting memories of a specific event from the mind of an animal, but some Gangrel have been known to use this power in search of enlightenment and understanding of their own Beasts. However, too close a bond can leave both parties entangled after the sharing ends, causing the vampire to adopt behavior patterns similar to those of the animal.

To use *Shared Soul*, you must touch the intended subject, make a Mental Challenge and spend a Willpower Trait. If successful, you can now make contact with the animal's mind. For every memory you wish to read from the subject, you must make a Simple Test. For each success, you experience a memory. Failure means the contact is broken entirely and must be reestablished before attempting again.

If you wish to form a complete bond with the animal, you must spend an entire minute touching the animal and concentrating, then spend another Willpower Trait and make another Mental Challenge with the Storyteller. If successful, you can now access all of the subject's memories at will and no longer need to maintain physical contact with the subject. The Simple Test is still required, but failure merely means that you may try again next turn without penalty. The power remains active until you choose to terminate the connection.

At Storyteller discretion, failing the Simple Test can have unexpected results. Some Cainites surge into frenzy or pick up some of the animal's characteristics. A rabid dog may send the vampire into a crazed bloodlust, whereas a field mouse may turn him shy and timid.

#### SPECIES SPEECH

The power of *Feral Whispers* allows you to communicate with a single animal, but *Species Speech* goes one step beyond — it allows you to communicate with all the members of a species in your presence. It is most often used after a large group of the species has been summoned with *Beckoning*.

You must spend a Willpower Trait to establish contact with a group of animals and make a Static Social Challenge against the group. The Storyteller determines the difficulty, but most animal groups (particularly the "higher" animals) have the equivalent of 10 to 12 Traits. There is no limit to how many animals you can command with this power, but all the animals must be in your presence. You may only command one species at a time; for example, if you're in a zoo, you cannot give orders to elephants and zebras at the same time.

Apart from these differences, *Species Speech* functions like *Feral Whispers*.

#### MASTER ANIMALISM

##### CONQUER THE BEAST

Masters of *Animalism* can control animals and even gain mastery over their own Beasts, controlling them to a degree that lesser Kindred can only dream of. *Conquer the Beast* allows you to not only control your frenzies, but to enter frenzy at will. Some say that the development of this power is one of the first steps on the way to Golconda.

To frenzy at will, you make a Simple Test; on a win or tie, you plunge into a controlled frenzy. You may choose your targets as you please, but otherwise the frenzy plays itself out normally. On a failure you fall to an uncontrolled frenzy (which runs like any normal frenzy).

You may also use this power to regain your composure during an uncontrolled frenzy by making a *Self-Control* Challenge. If successful, you can regain control, but must spend a Willpower Trait every turn. While in this state, you may attempt to end the frenzy in the usual way. If you run out of Willpower Traits before the frenzy ends, you drop back into uncontrolled frenzy again.

#### ASCENDANT ANIMALISM

##### TAUNT THE CAGED BEAST

This power allows you to release the Beast in others at will. With a fleeting brush against the subject, you may command your own Beast to awaken that of the subject, enraging it by threatening its spiritual territory. The victim instantly succumbs to frenzy.

To use this power, you must touch your target (Physical Challenge may be necessary on unwilling subjects), spend a Willpower Trait and then make a Social Challenge against the subject. If you win, the subject frenzies immediately. Should you lose, the frenzy falls on you instead of the subject. This power may also be used on individuals who would not ordinarily frenzy, such as normal humans.

#### METHUSELAH ANIMALISM

##### UNCHAIN THE BEAST

For most Kindred, the Beast is an abstract force of rage and bloodlust somewhere deep inside their consciousness. The elder who has mastered this power can turn that into something far more concrete. With a mere glance, you can awaken the Beast of your target, causing physical injury and excruciating agony as your victim's own violent impulses become manifest and start to tear him physically apart from within. The victim's body appears to rend itself apart, as if by invisible claws and fangs.

You make eye contact with your intended victim, then spend two Blood Traits and make a Social Challenge. With success, the victim suffers 10 minus her Humanity/Path score levels of lethal damage as her Beast attempts to claw its way out of her — for example, a victim with five levels of Humanity would suffer five health levels ( $10-5=5$ ) of lethal damage. This power may be used on mortals and ghouls.

#### AUSPEX

While even conventional levels of *Auspex* grant the user amazing powers of perception, Kindred with elder levels of *Auspex* can attain a startling clarity of vision — they become capable of seeing to others' very souls and keeping an eye on events occurring in distant places while holding a pleasant conversation.

#### ELDER AUSPEX

##### CLAIRVOYANCE

With *Clairvoyance* you can perceive distant events without the aid of *Psychic Projection*. After concentrating on a familiar person, place or object, you perceive events surrounding the subject while remaining aware of your own surroundings.

To use this power, spend a Willpower Trait and one round concentrating on a familiar subject, then make a Simple Test. With success, you may perceive everything that happens around the chosen subject. Your perspective is largely focused on your chosen subject; if you concentrated on another Kindred, your visions would follow her actions and thoughts and be unable to see around the corner to the muggers lying in wait for her. Other *Auspex* abilities may also be used to gain more information about the events that pass (provided you can win any tests they require). The power remains in effect as long as you concentrate, and you must have known your subject for at least one night to use this power.

While using *Clairvoyance*, you must bid two additional Traits for any tests to resolve events that occur in your physical surroundings as you are experiencing events in two locations simultaneously.

#### PREDICTION

With *Telepathy* you can read another's thoughts. With *Prediction*, however, you keep a channel continuously open to all those around you, a constant background buzz of surface thoughts and emotions. It is not a deep probe, nor sufficiently accurate to pick up specific thoughts, but gives clues to others' moods and attitudes, especially when in close contact with a particular subject. It is far less about true prediction and more that you sense



a thought being formed before it is spoken aloud (although the words unspoken are often far more interesting).

Any target speaking with you must truthfully answer generic questions regarding her emotional state, and describe her attitude toward the topic of discussion in generic terms. Questions like "What are you feeling at the moment regarding our discussion of Praxis seizures?" or "What's seeing your rival being so popular with your ex-lover make you feel like?" are acceptable. "Are you planning to betray me?" isn't. You may, however, choose to speculate aloud, "I dreamed today that someone was planning to betray me," and inquire about the emotional state of your listener.

Lying to a vampire with *Prediction* can be very difficult, with one's thoughts practically telegraphing the intent; all attempts to lie require a Mental Challenge, with ties going to the *Prediction* vampire. Of course, nothing prevents others from lying to you, and you need not reveal that you've picked up on their falsehoods.

If someone attempts to trick you via the use of *Subterfuge* or other similar Social Challenges, you may spend a Blood Trait and make a Mental Challenge against the other person. Success means that you're aware someone is trying to swindle you. Note that there's a difference between attempts to manipulate and outright lies — for example, leaving out certain bits of information or telling half-truths aren't the same as an outright lie.

Those with exceptionally strong Willpower (eight or more Willpower Traits, or the *Iron Will* Merit) may keep their thoughts and emotions in check to prevent others from reading them. This requires a conscious effort from them that may be detected by you. Someone who is attempting to veil her thoughts in such a manner must make a Simple Test if her concentration is disrupted (such as a surprise attack or being targeted by certain Disciplines); losing means the defender's concentration is disrupted. Note that the target must specifically know that you can read her in order to defend; a player who doesn't have the appropriate measure of Willpower but goes around claiming such a degree of constant concentration anyway can be safely classified as a stinkin' cheat.

With *Prediction*, you may not be surprised unless your concentration is on other matters, such as an attack or a debate, or your facilities are impaired (due to drugs or mental control). You can sense your enemy's intentions. This effect has a radius of 10 feet. Obviously, this offers no protection against sniping from the building across the street or other similar long-distance attacks. The Storyteller has the final word on what constitutes distraction.

#### MASTER AUSPEX

##### KARMIC SIGHT

While *Aura Perception* allows the briefest glimpses of another's spirit, *Karmic Sight* takes such abilities to a new level, allowing you to look directly into your target's very soul.

Your target must be within line of sight. Spend a Willpower Trait and make a Static Mental Challenge (difficulty equals the subject's Mental Traits). Successful use allows you to learn the character's Nature, Demeanor and whether the subject follows Humanity or another Path. You may also detect any influences on the subject's mind or soul — *Dominate*, *Presence* effects such as *Entrancement* or



infernal pacts. After this, you may make another Static Mental Challenge to learn the subject's Willpower and Humanity/Path scores. Finally, by making one more Static Mental Challenge, you may determine the state of your subject's karma. This is a highly abstract concept (which requires Storyteller intervention), but it will give you some idea of what kind of a person you are looking at. Regardless of highly subjective judgments of "good" and "bad," certain actions leave their marks on a soul. At the Storyteller's discretion, certain fate-related Merits and Flaws such as *Destiny* or *Dark Fate* may be detected as well.

Should you lose a test to read your subject, you risk gaining one of the subject's derangements, a Psychological/Mental/Supernatural Flaw or negative Social or Mental Traits for the duration of the session — subject's choice. If the subject has none, the Storyteller will find something appropriate. The Storyteller should always be called in to determine the end result. After losing, you must begin the process again from the ground up, including spending another point of Willpower and getting answers you already know, before you can proceed further.

#### ASCENDANT AUSPEX

##### PSYCHIC ASSAULT

Generally speaking, most Kindred mind tricks are subtle tools. *Psychic Assault* is anything but — it's a hammer that splits the subject's mind in half. The only indications of the attack taking place are the subject's expression of intense agony, usually accompanied by a nosebleed. Mortals killed by *Psychic Assault* appear to have died of a heart attack or aneurysm. Vampires crumble instantly to dust, regardless of their age.

To use this power, spend two Blood Traits, and either touch the victim (skin contact is not required, although a Physical Challenge may be) or establish eye contact. If you are assaulting a vampire or another supernatural creature, you must also spend a Willpower Trait. You may choose to frighten the subject, render him unconscious or kill him.

To frighten your target, make a Mental Challenge against him; if successful, the subject's mind is assaulted with horrible images. He can do nothing except clutch at his head and suffer excruciating internal pain and nightmarish thoughts for the next two turns. If your target knows who is responsible for the attack, he'll do his utmost to get away from you and avoid your company for the remainder of the evening. Should he be unable to leave, your target becomes skittish around you. He loses two temporary Willpower Traits and must bid an additional Trait whenever a challenge is called for during the rest of the night. Kindred victims need to test against *Rötschreck*.

To knock the subject unconscious, make two Mental Challenges against your subject (you must win both). This assault is similar but stronger than the one previously described, and your target loses consciousness. He remains unconscious for an hour, and wakes up with three health levels of lethal damage. Mortals will require medical attention, and may even die (Storyteller discretion). The victim loses two temporary Willpower Traits and a permanent Willpower Trait, and must bid two additional Traits for during the rest of the night. He may also not spend Willpower. If you succeed on only one

challenge, your target develops an unpleasant headache (treat as two levels of bashing damage), but suffers no other effects.

Should you wish to kill your target, make three Mental Challenges (in addition to the costs of invoking this power). Success on all three means a brutal death for your target as agonizing pain and terrifying images slice through his mind. Should you win fewer challenges, your target suffers as if from being frightened, as described above.

You must declare in advance what kind of effect you are attempting, and once declared, you may not change the effect. If you are attempting to render your target unconscious or kill her, and you lose on all your challenges, your subject becomes immune to *Psychic Assault* for the remainder of the night. A subject who loses his last Willpower Trait to *Psychic Assault* is rendered unconscious for the rest of the evening.

#### METHUSELAH AUSPEX

##### FALSE SLUMBER

It is commonly thought that a vampire in torpor is unable to do much of anything. In most cases, this is true, but a vampire who possesses *False Slumber* is an exception to the rule. This power allows a Methuselah's body to remain in torpor while his spirit moves about normally in his astral body.

Once this power is learned, *False Slumber* becomes active the instant you fall into torpor. Astral travel is handled as described in the rules for *Psychic Projection*. However, you may not be able to awaken physically at will; that is handled normally, as described in *Laws of the Night* p. 199.

Should your silver cord become severed in astral combat, you will become lost in the spirit realms as per normal. You also lose this *Auspex* power and half of your permanent Willpower Traits (round up), and must buy back both this power and the Willpower Traits with experience points. You spend a year and a night in torpor, during which time your soul slowly returns to your body. During this time you cannot be awakened from torpor by any means.

#### Celerity

The previous levels of *Celerity* focused solely on speed. Those Kindred who learn superior levels of *Celerity*, however, become capable of doing far more than simply being faster than their opponents.

Note: Superior levels of *Celerity* have their own Blood Trait costs. In other words, while you can activate the five normal levels of *Celerity* by spending a single Blood Trait, you must spend additional Blood to activate the superior levels.

##### Elder Celerity

##### Projectile

The supernatural speed of the Kindred doesn't operate by conventional physics, and thus items or weapons handled by them often have problems keeping up. For example, while the actual firing of a gun can occur in the blink of an eye, the bullet still leaves the barrel of the gun at a normal speed. A thrown rock slows down to normal speed at the instant it leaves the vampire's hand. There is no sensible explanation for this; most vampires just shrug and accept this fact. However, some of the more powerful Kindred have managed

to work their way around this—objects they throw or fire move at supernatural speeds and become truly impressive weapons.

To use this power, spend a Blood Trait and decide how many levels of *Celerity* you wish to give to the object being thrown or fired. For example, a character with six levels of *Celerity* might want to give the object three levels of *Celerity*. This would mean that the three lowest levels—both Basics and one Intermediate—would be inaccessible to the character for the remainder of the turn.

However, the attack gains one bonus Trait for every level of *Celerity* given to the object—in this example, this would mean three bonus Traits. Furthermore, bashing attacks (such as throwing a simple rock) become lethal attacks due to the incredible speed the projectile travels at. If the attack is already a lethal attack (such as a throwing knife or a bullet), it will now cause one additional health level of damage.

When you use *Projectile*, you must always announce your intention to do so as soon as it is your turn to act, and it must always be your first action—for example, actions granted by *Swiftness* or *Legerity* can be taken normally (unless said levels have been given to the object being propelled, of course), but *Projectile* must always be the first action on any given turn.

##### Master Celerity

##### Flower of Death

A vampire with *Flower of Death* becomes a blur of violence, striking his opponent repeatedly with incredible speed. It is not unknown for a vampire who has attained this level of *Celerity* to be so quick that his opponents are vanquished before they even know what happened.

*Flower of Death* costs three Blood Traits to activate. After it is activated, you gain as many extra Traits to all of your attacks as you have powers in *Celerity* for the duration of the scene. Needless to say, this makes you an extremely dangerous opponent. However, there is no damage bonus; your speed merely grants you the ability to strike faster than your foe can defend or dodge. You may use the Bomb in challenges, as per normal rules.

This power cannot be used in concert with other *Celerity* powers. *Flower of Death* can only be used with hand-to-hand or melee combat—firearms, bows, thrown objects and other ranged weapons gain no bonuses if used with this power.

##### Ascendant Celerity

##### Zephyr

One of the legendary—and rather improbable—comic book usages of superspeed is the ability to run on water or even up walls. Improbable or not, with *Zephyr*, you can easily accomplish this—ordinary obstacles cease to matter to you.

Spend a Blood Trait and a Willpower Trait. You automatically gain the ability to run on water, up walls, or even on ceilings—essentially, any relatively flat and open surface will do. You must keep on moving at all times to keep from falling off a wall or sinking into the liquid you are running on. You can easily run across most liquids, though you risk losing traction on especially slick substances like oil. A Simple Test to maintain footing may be needed (Storyteller discretion—generally once every several turns, or more often for unusually tricky surfaces

like Teflon). This power remains in effect until you stop running. If you wish to reactivate the power, you must again spend the required Traits.

With Zephyr, you may *always* declare Fair Escape as long as there is enough space for you to run away and you have enough Blood and Willpower Traits to activate the power, even if the threat is inches away from you. Doorways blocked by others are not a problem, as long as there is enough room for you to fit through; no one will be fast enough to grab you as you dart past. Closed windows can also be used as exits; at such speeds, you simply smash through them and hit the ground running (within reason — falling from a 10-story height will cause its own problems).

Navigating at speeds as great as this is no small feat and requires concentration. If you wish to take actions other than running, you must make a Simple Test. On a win, you may take the action normally. On a tie, you may not take the action, but may continue running. If you lose, you immediately lose control of your movement and end up smashing into whatever you were heading for. You may start moving again at the beginning of the next turn. This collision may cause bashing or even lethal damage, depending on the circumstances (Storyteller discretion).

#### METHUSELAH Celerity

##### BETWEEN THE TICKS

A vampire who has reached this level of mastery is literally faster than the human eye can see. Other vampires—even some of those with Auspex—have trouble noticing her. Other beings seem almost like inanimate statues, frozen in time as she moves around them.

To use this power, spend a Blood Trait and a Willpower Trait. Everything around you instantly seems to slow down to a painful crawl. You must then spend one Blood Trait per turn to maintain this level of speed. You gain an automatically successful free attack against anyone who doesn't have at least Advanced Celerity. Those with Advanced Celerity are safe from the free attack, but you still have an extra action against them, one that is taken before the other party gets to act. You also have an extra action against other characters with Superior Celerity, but that action is taken after all other actions have been performed.

All attacks against you delivered at less than Advanced Celerity are considered to be automatic failures unless you deliberately stand still. Bullets and thrown objects can be easily dodged or even plucked out of the air (bullets fired or objects thrown with *Projectile* are handled normally). Those with Intermediate Celerity or Intermediate Auspex can perceive your movements, but only those with Advanced Celerity or higher may attempt to attack or stop you (unless you deliberately move slowly enough for slower characters to catch up).

For obvious reasons, you may declare Fair Escape at any time and may only be even potentially stopped by one who has an equal (or higher) level of Celerity.

#### DOMINATE

Elders who have reached Superior levels of Dominate become truly frightening beings, able to bend others' wills to their own effortlessly. A vampire with Superior Dominate may "burn through" an Iron Willed character's defenses as if the defender did not have the Merit in question, unless the subject

is of equal generation to the vampire attempting the Dominate (in which case Iron Will is treated normally.)

##### ELDER DOMINATE

##### CHAIN THE PSYCHE

When correctly applied, even lower levels of Dominate are usually enough to keep the puppets in line, but this isn't enough for some elders. With Chain the Psyche, the subject will experience incapacitating pain if he attempts to break free of control.

Spend a Blood Trait when you use Dominate on a subject. If the subject attempts to disobey implanted commands or recover lost memories, he becomes incapacitated as horrible, pulsating pain lances through his head. He will be unable to act for the next 10 minutes; it's all he can do to stay upright.

When using Chain the Psyche, you must decide how many attempts to resist you wish to crush and spend a Mental Trait for each — for example, to crush five attempts to resist, you must spend five Mental Traits while using Dominate. The Traits spent in this fashion cannot be used during the rest of the night (the expenditure of a Willpower Trait can restore all Mental Traits, as per normal). This power fades after all of the attempts to resist have been made.

Depending on the circumstances, you may wish to keep the number of Traits you spend a secret and inform the Storyteller instead, who keeps tabs on how many times the subject attempts to overcome the mental shackles.

##### LOYALTY

Your commands are so deeply implanted in the subject's mind that other vampires find it very difficult or even impossible to override them by using Dominate on their own. The name is somewhat misleading, as this power instills no particular feelings of loyalty in the subject. Reputedly the elder who developed this power felt rather strongly that loyalty should be mandatory, not voluntary. Not very surprisingly, all of his minions heartily agreed with the statement.

If another vampire attempts to use Dominate on the subject in a way that would cause her to act against a previously implanted command from you, the vampire attempting the Dominate must spend an extra Willpower Trait and bid two extra Traits while making the test.

##### OBEEDIENCE

While Dominate ordinarily requires eye contact, a vampire with Obedience has learned to go beyond that. For her, the briefest physical contact suffices.

Instead of making eye contact, you must make skin-to-skin contact with your subject (a Physical Challenge may be necessary). You may then use Dominate freely. The touch doesn't need to be maintained while you give the instruction, but you can only issue one command in this fashion. If you wish to use Dominate on the subject again, you must touch him again.

##### MASTER DOMINATE

##### MASS MANIPULATION

Ordinarily, Dominate can only be used on a single target at any given time. However, a truly skilled elder can extend this power to entire groups of people, rendering her literally able to control masses.



### "YEAH, I KNOW THAT CUZ I READ IT IN THE BOOK"

Let's take a minute to talk about these powers from the average vampire's point of view.

Take *Chain the Psyche*: Simply put, most characters will want to do everything they can to avoid this incredible, excruciating pain. While your average player can read through the description and know that after a set number of attempts to resist, the power will fade, the character will not be aware of this, and will firmly believe that the effects will remain in place for the foreseeable future. Like Pavlov's dogs, *Chain the Psyche* conditions a response from the target through its results. After the subject suffers through one or two attempts, he will not *want* to repeat the experience unless he has specific knowledge that the effect will fade. Elders don't hand out pamphlets describing how their secret powers work. Neonates and ancillae may have heard strange tales about the powers of elders, but specifics are not usually included with campfire stories.

Most Master Disciplines are in the hands of frightening creatures who have survived the centuries by being nastier and more secretive than those around them. The chances of even a relatively experienced vampire going, "Yeah, that's a classic case of *Chain the Psyche*, all right!" are simply too slim to credit. Disciplines — regardless of their power level — should never be reduced to statistics or everyday events; they are still supernatural powers, and doing so robs them of their mystery.

You must declare the use of *Mass Manipulation* before you attempt the *Dominate* challenge. Spend a Willpower Trait, and make a standard *Dominate* test against the most resistant member of the target group; if he cannot be *Dominated*, then neither can those around him. If you succeed, you may then extend the effect to those around the initial target. The maximum number of additional targets is determined by halving your permanent Willpower score (round up) — for example, if you have seven permanent Willpower Traits, you may control up to four subjects, in addition to the initial target. You may choose who those subjects are, and you need only to make eye contact with the initial subject.

### STILL THE MORTAL FLESH

Despite the somewhat deceiving name, this power works equally well on vampires and mortals. A vampire with this power can not only override the subject's mind, but his body as well. That may mean cutting off someone's senses or even stopping her heart. It is rumored that this power used to come more easily to Kindred in the distant past, but modern medicine has made it easier for mortals to resist this power's effects. Despite this, it is still a frightening and potent power.

To use this power, spend a Willpower Trait and make a normal Mental Challenge against the subject. If successful, you may shut off one of the subject's involuntary functions, or cause them to fluctuate erratically. Hearing,

sight, circulation, perspiration, reflex movements and similar functions are all viable targets.

A mortal whose heart is stopped will die immediately, although he may possibly be revived if he receives proper medical attention in the next few minutes. While cutting off a vampire's circulation or respiratory systems is completely ineffective, rendering her deaf or blind is quite useful.

### ASCENDANT DOMINATE

#### FAR MASTERY

Essentially a refined version of *Obedience*, *Far Mastery* allows you to use *Dominate* on anyone you are familiar with whenever you please, regardless of the distance.

Spend a Willpower Trait and make a normal Mental Challenge against the target to establish contact. Once contact has been established, you may *Dominate* the subject normally as if you had established eye contact. If this power is used against another supernatural being, you must spend an additional Willpower Trait.

### METHUSELAH DOMINATE

#### SPEAK THROUGH THE BLOOD

The famed power structures of Methusalehs didn't spring up overnight, and they certainly don't maintain themselves; indeed, these structures are such webs of deceit and intrigue that only a few can even hope to understand them, and even fewer, if any, ever see them in their entirety. To actually take charge of such an organization would be a monumental task, and while such beings' mental capacity far surpasses that of any human's, making sure that everyone stays in line and works toward the same goal can be extremely difficult. Luckily for such beings, proper application of *Speak Through the Blood* eases the task considerably: It allows a vampire to issue commands to every vampire whose lineage returns to her, regardless of whether they have even met each other. The end result is entire broods of vampires furthering agendas they are unaware of, fully believing them to be their own. New orders get accepted gradually; usually, a vampire's agenda shifts over the next decade or so to accommodate the Methuselah's wishes, and it is a very exceptional individual indeed who realizes that this change comes from an outside source.

To activate this power, spend a permanent Willpower Trait and make a Mental Challenge against the subject. It doesn't matter where the subject is; she may be on the other side of the planet or even on the moon — distance and location are no barriers. However, the subject must be of your own lineage. If successful, you may plant commands into the subject's mind. When combined with powers such as *Mass Manipulation*, this power can be extremely effective.

The commands must be generic, such as "Defend the Camarilla against all of its enemies and remain especially vigilant to internal threats" or "Destroy the power structure of anyone who attempts to upset Clan Tremere's power in this city." Specific orders, such as "Assassinate the prince before he makes his speech tonight" or "Bring me the head of the Nosferatu primogen" cannot be given, nor are the effects instantaneous; this power was meant for long-term planning.

Commands given in this fashion last for five years per Trait of permanent Willpower you possess. Should the power expire, the subject slowly reverts back

to her old ways. However, in many instances, the subject has built his own power base on the command, and may well continue to advance the command without noticing a difference. Still, it bears stressing that at that point she is no longer constrained by any command and may act against it (with or without knowing it).

Should a vampire reach Golconda, she becomes immune to this power. However, she remains unaware that it has been used. The rest of her lineage is still vulnerable unless they attain a similar state of enlightenment. Ghouls of affected Kindred are also affected, but to a lesser degree.

## FORTITUDE

All Kindred with *Fortitude* are able to withstand attacks that would cripple or kill a weaker vampire. Yet this is nothing compared to those who have mastered the truly impressive levels of *Fortitude* — they can walk through attacks that would destroy lesser Kindred.

### ELDER FORTITUDE

#### PERSONAL ARMOR

Often, the best defense is to disarm your opponent. This is the concept *Personal Armor* is based on: any weapon used on you shatters from the impact.

With the expenditure of a Blood Trait, you can activate *Personal Armor* for the duration of the scene. Whenever you are attacked, make a Simple Test; if you succeed, all attacks against you inflict their normal damage, but if you are hit with melee weapons, the weapon shatters on impact and becomes completely unusable. If someone punches or kicks you, the attacker suffers as much damage as he inflicted on you, and the hand (or foot) he used to attack becomes unusable until that specific damage is healed — after all, it is impossible to punch someone effectively if every bone in one's hand is shattered. If someone is foolish enough to kick you, she receives the Negative Physical Trait *Lame* until the damage is healed and can only move around at a walking pace. Should someone feel adventurous enough to headbutt you, he receives double the damage he inflicted and spends the next round stunned, able to defend himself but unable to attack, as his cranium has just become a thousand small fragments of bone. Attackers who have *Fortitude* may use it to reduce the damage they might otherwise receive.

This power is somewhat useless against ranged attacks, as bullets still do damage even as they shatter. However, armor-piercing or high-caliber rounds function like normal rounds when used against you, as they shatter before they can properly pierce your defenses. Non-physical attacks, such as *Fire Bolt* or *Taste of Death* are handled normally.

Fetishes, klaives and magical weapons may be more resistant than ordinary weapons, depending on the Storyteller's ruling.

Note that you cannot be staked if you succeed in the test, as the stake shatters before it can properly pierce your heart.

### MASTER FORTITUDE

#### SHARED STRENGTH

Powerful elders often tend to be bitter rivals, and thus mostly operate alone or with considerably weaker underlings. This is fine until the lead starts to fly, but at that point it is often preferable to the elder to have companions

who are as resistant to harm as she is. With *Shared Strength*, this becomes reality, as you can lend a portion of your resistance to others, enabling them to withstand far more injury than they can on their own.

Spend a Willpower Trait and press a drop of your vitae into the target's forehead; this leaves a mark that remains visible as long as the power is in effect. You then spend one Blood Trait per level of *Fortitude* you wish to transfer to another being — and note that if there are several targets, you must spend that many Blood Traits per target. After spending blood, make a Static Physical Challenge against the number of Blood Traits spent times three for every target. (For example, to bestow five levels of *Fortitude* on someone, you must make a Static Physical Challenge against 15 traits.) Success means your target now has as much *Fortitude* as you decided to bestow upon her for the rest of the night. In case of failure, you may retest using the *Survival Ability*; if that fails as well, the effect has failed on that particular target. You may attempt it again, provided that you have enough Willpower and Blood Traits left. Note that if the target already has *Fortitude*, only the extra levels you bestow count, and you only need pay Blood Traits for the levels that your target actually gains. (In other words, if a target with two existing levels of *Fortitude* is given three levels of *Fortitude* with *Shared Strength*, he will only gain a single level of *Fortitude*.)

*Shared Strength* may only be active once on any single target, no matter how many levels are bestowed: You can't give someone *Fortitude* one level at a time by making a lot of extremely easy challenges.

The target need not be a vampire, and normal generation limitations to how much *Fortitude* one may have don't apply. The target doesn't need to be willing to accept the benefit to receive it. For obvious reasons, you may never bestow more levels of *Fortitude* on anyone than you possess.

### ASCENDANT FORTITUDE

#### ADAMANTINE

*Adamantine* functions exactly like *Personal Armor*, except you no longer receive any damage from the weapons that shatter on your skin.

### METHUSELAH FORTITUDE

#### JUGGERNAUT

A vampire who attains this level of mastery is literally unstoppable, and it seems impossible to hurt him at all. It is incredible and frightening to see him in action; those few who have demonstrated this level of resistance to damage are like walking fortresses who can literally take on dozens of lesser vampires without any apparent effort. If a vampire with this power wants to go somewhere, he simply walks there — anyone on his way gets pushed out of the way or walked over. All attempts to restrain the vampire or to block his way fail automatically unless the character attempting to stop the vampire has as much *Potence* as the vampire has *Fortitude*, in which case the person attempting to stop the vampire must make a normal Physical Challenge. On a win, the vampire is forced to stop, the irresistible force having met the object that cannot be moved.

The vampire cannot walk through walls (not without suitable levels of *Potence*, anyway, although the Elder level of *Potence* is probably enough to

allow the vampire to automatically walk through most walls) or cause damage to people simply by walking at them, but no vampire or other being can stand in his way. It is up to the Storyteller to determine if characters who, for example, get crushed between the vampire and a wall suffer injury.

If two characters with *Juggernaut* meet each other, neither can move the other just by walking at him; the powers negate each other.

Whenever something inflicts damage on the vampire, the player makes a Simple Test. If the damage is aggravated, he completely ignores it on a win, and converts it to lethal on a tie. In case of lethal damage, he completely ignores the injury on a win or a tie. (Damage cannot be first tested down from aggravated to lethal, and then from lethal to bashing.) He may always use Intermediate *Fortitude* to reduce the severity of any damage that makes it through his defenses. All bashing damage to the vampire is completely ignored; he is simply far too resilient to care about it.

## MELPOMINEE

### ELDER MELPOMINEE

#### SHATTERING CRESCENDO

Some rare mortal singers can shatter wineglasses with their voices by finding the precise pitch at which the glass resonates. Exceptionally talented Daughters of Cacophony can go far beyond that. They are able to pitch their voices precisely enough to find the resonant frequency of virtually any object — including the bodies of humans or Kindred. Only one victim at a time can be affected by this power; everyone else in the area will hear a harmless, if unsettling, high-pitched shriek.

The subject must be within hearing range though he must not necessarily be able to hear — this power will work equally well on a deaf victim. Spend a Blood Trait and make a Mental Challenge against the victim. If you are successful, the victim suffers two health levels of aggravated damage. If you use the power against an inanimate object, it is up to the Storyteller to determine how well you succeed (and determine the number of opposing Traits for the Static Mental Challenge). Most objects (windows, normal doors, coffee machines, televisions) are easy enough to shatter with this power.

### MASTER MELPOMINEE

#### PERSISTENT ECHO

With this power you can speak or sing to the air and leave your words there for a later listener. This may either be the next person to stand where you left your words, or a specific person you are already acquainted with. *Persistent Echo* may also be used to "suspend" other *Melpominee* powers for future listeners: a fact that makes some Kindred nervous as it is difficult to detect the usage of *Persistent Echo*.

To use this power, make a Static Social Challenge and spend a Blood Trait. You may now speak (or sing) the equivalent of one sentence; if you wish to speak longer, you must spend a Social Trait for every additional sentence. If you wish to delay another *Melpominee* power, you must spend a Willpower Trait before making the Social Challenge. The echo will stay suspended for a maximum number of nights equal to your permanent Social Traits.

You may either leave the echo audible for anyone who stands where you stood when using the power, essentially creating a repeating loop of mystical sound, or you may choose for the echo to fade after it has been heard once. If you desire, the echo may remain dormant until a specific person with whom you are familiar enters the area. If the echo can only be heard once, all traces of this power will disappear from the area once its purpose has been fulfilled.

A character who enhances her hearing with *Heightened Senses* in an area where an unactivated *Persistent Echo* was placed hears a faint murmur. If she has the *Occult Ability*, she may attempt a Static Mental Challenge against your Mental Traits; if successful, she can hear the message. If she fails, she is deafened for the rest of the night by a sudden roar of mystic static.

## OBEAH

### ELDER OBEAH

#### RENEWED VIGOR

You may now heal even the most grievous injuries with a mere touch and a moment's concentration. If life still clings to the subject — no matter how feebly — you can bring him back from death's doorstep.

To use this power, spend a Willpower Trait and touch your subject. You must remain in physical contact for a full turn, after which *all* missing health levels are restored, regardless of whether the damage is bashing, lethal or aggravated. If contact isn't maintained for the entire turn, the Willpower Trait is wasted and nothing is accomplished. You may use this power to heal yourself, even if you are Incapacitated (but not if you are in torpor, unless you have another power that allows the use of Disciplines while in torpor).

### MASTER OBEAH

#### SAFE PASSAGE

With this power, you may pass through a group without any fear of harm. Unlike *Obfuscate*, this power doesn't make you invisible; instead, it makes you appear neutral, harmless and pleasant, and makes people respectful and helpful toward you without stopping to consider why. Anyone affected by this power will take a very dim view of those who might pursue or attempt to harm you.

You may choose to turn off this power, but otherwise it is always considered to be in effect. Those attempting to pursue you must bid an extra Trait and make a Mental Challenge against you. If you win, your pursuer loses interest and wanders off to do something else. ("What am I doing out here when I could be home watching TV? Oooh, look, a shiny thing!") If the pursuer wins, she may continue her pursuit unaffected for the remainder of the scene.

If you actively seek shelter or assistance ("Excuse me, sir, but could you tell me where I could find a place to sleep?"), you must make a Social Challenge against the subject. You gain three extra Traits for this challenge. With success the subject does his best to help you out. This only applies to seemingly harmless or innocent assistance, such as finding shelter, getting directions, or asking for advice — you cannot use this to search for guns or contraband.



The effects of this power last until the next sunrise. It affects everyone in your general area; however, it is ineffective against those who know you well. It is still quite useful against casual acquaintances and strangers, though.

#### ASCENDANT OBEAH

##### PURIFICATION

With this power, you can successfully cleanse a person, item or a location of demonic or malign spiritual presences. However, the price may be high indeed as you are pitting your very soul against the corruption you are trying to purge.

This power may only be developed or used if you have a Humanity or Path rating of 4 or higher. If the subject is willing and there is no resistance from the corrupting agent — a rare occurrence indeed — you need merely spend a Willpower Trait to purge the subject of the taint.

Most demons and their kind tend to resist such attempts, however, and thus you must engage the demon in taxing spiritual combat. You must engage in Mental Challenges against the possessing entity. The first one to acquire three more net victories than the other wins the battle. If you fail, then the *Purification* also fails. Should you lose three challenges in a row, the demon takes over your body. You may never use *Purification* on yourself, and it has no effect on the Beast or an alternate personality.

Should you win the battle, you pull the corrupting entity from the subject's body and immediately spend another Willpower Trait. You then thrust the entity into a nearby item, animal or person, trapping the demon in the selected vessel. This must be accomplished within two turns of removing the demon from the subject, and the target must be within physical reach. Otherwise the demon will go free, and is likely to locate itself a suitable vessel — such as the original subject or the person who made it so miserable.

#### METHUSELAH OBEAH

##### UNBIND THE FLESH-CLAD SOUL

Few understand the complexities of the soul as well as the Salubri do, yet most Kindred would be amazed to learn just how far this understanding goes. Some powerful Salubri elders may share that understanding with others in a rather permanent way — they may remove a willing subject's soul permanently from his body, allowing him to roam the astral plane and explore the world without the constraints of physical existence. There are those — chiefly Tremere — who warn that the Salubri may misrepresent themselves and trick others into volunteering for "release" from the concerns of flesh, while in actuality they are only using this power to trap souls in another plane of existence. Obviously, the Salubri deny this charge and tend to be rather offended by such implications.

You and your willing subject both enter a deep meditative trance for the minimum duration of an hour while you perform the ritual necessary to separate soul from flesh without damaging either. During this period you must spend twice as many Blood Traits as your subject has permanent Willpower Traits. At the end of the ritual, the subject's body slips into a coma and dies by the end of the night.



The subject's soul is removed from his body and enters the astral plane. This separation is permanent and irreversible. The game mechanics are the same as those of the *Auspex* power of *Psychic Projection*, but the subject no longer has a silver cord. If she is reduced to zero Willpower, she loses a Trait of permanent Willpower and re-forms a year and a day later at the place where her soul was separated from her body. A character reduced to zero permanent Willpower on the astral plane is destroyed forever.

This power may only be used upon mortals (except mages) and vampires who are in Golconda. The subject must have a full understanding of what the ritual entails — including its permanence and the impossibility of reversal. The body of a vampire who is unbound decays at sunrise. It is possible to drink the blood remaining in the vampire's body, but diablerie cannot be performed. Any attempt to Embrace the body of an unbound mortal automatically fails.

You may use this power on yourself, provided that you have reached Golconda.

#### OBFUSCATE

##### ELDER OBFUSCATE

##### CONCEAL

You may now mask inanimate objects as large as entire houses. The entire object and its contents are hidden, although as with other *Obfuscate* powers, photographs will still reveal what is hidden. While *Conceal* is in effect, passersby will walk around the object as if it were still visible, but refuse to acknowledge that they are making any kind of detour.

You must be within 30 feet of the object to be concealed, and the item must hold some personal significance. For example, you may conceal your own car or house, or even your lover's house, but not an unknown person's van. The *Conceal* power functions as *Unseen Presence* for purposes of detection.

*Conceal* can be used to mask a speeding car. Other drivers will subconsciously tend to steer away from the car; indeed, under the right conditions, a car hidden by *Conceal* may even clear traffic faster than an ordinary car. Should you speed, police radar still registers the speeding car, but the police officer holding the radar gun will likely believe the signal to be a glitch.

#### MIND BLANK

With this power, your mind is hidden the way other *Obfuscate* powers hide your body, and you may shrug off most invasive probes into your mind.

Whenever someone attempts to read or probe your mind, she must first make a Mental Challenge. Unless she wins the challenge, she cannot read your mind at all. Even if she succeeds, she must still make whatever challenge the probe requires and bid an additional Mental Trait for that challenge.

#### SOUL MASK

With *Soul Mask* you are now able to conceal your aura. You may display any combination of colors and shades you wish, or even make it appear as if you have no aura whatsoever. Obviously, this power is extremely useful (and dangerous) as it allows one to lie through her teeth and have her aura appear

as if she was telling the truth — or commit diablerie all week long and look squeaky clean come Sunday.

*Soul Mask* allows you to choose one specific kind of aura (or lack thereof) and project it at will. If you have no experience with the use of *Aura Perception*, you cannot choose an alternate aura (after all, how can you alter something if you have no idea what it should look like?). You may still choose to project no aura at all. If you wish to have multiple auras and switch between them at will, you must purchase *Soul Mask* multiple times. The fake aura is considered to be always active, and you must “switch it off” to let your real aura show through. If you purchased *Soul Mask* several times, the first aura you created is the one displayed by default.

#### MASTER OBFUSCATE

##### CACHE

While other uses of *Obfuscate* require that the user is very close to the object or person being *Obfuscated*, with *Cache* you can hide items or people so that the *Obfuscate* remains in effect even after you leave the area.

The item must be within the normal range of the *Obfuscate* power when you activate it. After that, you must spend a Willpower Trait, which activates *Cache* on top of the previously activated *Obfuscate* effect. The concealment will remain in effect as long as you stay within a distance of your permanent Mental Traits in miles. The effect will end at the next sunrise, or when the *Obfuscated* subject chooses to reveal herself, whichever comes first.

#### ASCENDANT OBFUSCATE

##### OLD FRIEND

The Nosferatu are considered by many to be able to find out just about anything, and it is certainly true that there are few who can equal them when it comes to sticking one's malformed nose where it doesn't belong. This particular power is popular among certain Nosferatu elders, who have successfully used it to squeeze secrets out of unsuspecting Kindred. *Old Friend* allows the user to probe the suspect's subconscious and take on the semblance of the individual the subject trusts more than anyone. The person being impersonated doesn't even have to be alive; the subject remembers the encounter as a dream or a ghostly visitation.

Spend a Willpower Trait and makes a Mental Challenge against the subject. On a success, the subject believes you to be an old friend, a relative or someone else he trusts. You receive three extra Traits to all *Subterfuge* tests while this power is in effect. Note that *Old Friend* only affects a single subject at a time, and onlookers will see your true features, unless you also use a *Mask of a Thousand Faces*.

This is a power that requires roleplaying from both parties, and should not be reduced to a string of *Subterfuge* tests.

#### METHUSELAH OBFUSCATE

##### CREATE NAME

While pretending to be someone else can be accomplished with lower levels of *Obfuscate*, such crude deceptions are nothing compared to *Create*

*Name*'s effects. With *Create Name*, you may create a completely new identity. This includes appearance, speech patterns, aura and even thought processes. It is virtually impossible to see through the disguise. *Create Name* may be used to impersonate an existing person, or it may be used to create a new, fictional identity with perfect accuracy.

You must spend three hours in relative peace and silence to establish a new persona. After that, spend a permanent Willpower Trait and make a Static Mental Challenge against the Storyteller. The difficulty of this task is entirely up to the Storyteller (typical difficulties are at least 10 Traits and more for complicated personalities). The Storyteller has final word in all matters regarding this power.

Once the process is complete, you may “step in” to this new identity whenever you desire without any kind of a test. Any outside observer who doesn't have Methuselah-level *Auspex* or the equivalent sees the artificial identity and has no way of seeing through it. Your aura, Nature, Demeanor, even thoughts and Psychological Merits and Flaws, appear completely genuine, even though they have been crafted. You may have as many self-created identities as you desire, but only one of them may be “active” at any given time. To make another identity active (and the previous identity passive), you must spend a Willpower Trait and concentrate for a minute.

Besides Methuselah-level *Auspex* (Mental Challenge required), the only way to spot the personality as a fake is to notice discrepancies between the manufactured identity and the skills and abilities it should possess — for example, a character with no knowledge of *Medicine* isn't going to make a very convincing neurosurgeon if the details of his job come up. A character with enough suspicions about the identity may make a Static Social Challenge against the Storyteller to identify the fraud.

#### POTENCE

It is well-known that vampires who are learned in *Potence* are capable of clearly superhuman feats of strength, but that is nothing compared to the incredible physical prowess of those elders who have reached superior levels of the Discipline.

##### ELDER POTENCE

##### IMPRINT

Some subtle applications of *Potence* exist; *Imprint* isn't one of them. While anyone with *Potence* can exert tremendous pressure on objects, a vampire with *Imprint* can literally crush steel with her bare hands. *Imprint* makes for excellent intimidation. Alternatively, it can be used to create handholds when climbing, and it goes without saying that if applied to someone's throat, the results are extremely nasty.

Spending a Blood Trait activates the power for the entire scene. You can now crush very tough objects with your hands or leave an imprint of your hands in them — for example, you will have no trouble pushing your hand into a wall or squeezing a steel pipe out of shape. If there is confusion as to whether or not the vampire can crush a certain object, the Storyteller always has final say in the matter.

If used against another vampire, the attack inflicts one additional health level of damage. Said damage is considered to be lethal.

#### MASTER POTENCE

##### EARTHSHOCK

*Earthshock* proves that there is more to Potence than just hitting something until it stops moving. With *Earthshock*, you may redirect your strength — you strike (or stomp, depending on personal preference) the ground, and the force of the blow explodes up from the ground some distance away, directly below your opponent.

To use this power, spend a Blood Trait and make a Physical Challenge against your opponent. If successful, the ground directly underneath the target explodes in a geyser of stone, rock and dirt (or, if indoors, wood, concrete and plumbing), inflicting three levels of lethal damage as sharp shards of debris rip into the target.

If used against a car, the car will be disabled unless it is specifically armored. The power may be used indoors, but the results are far more spectacular — not only will there be a gaping hole on the floor, but the resulting shower of floor materials will break nearby windows and cause other damage to the surroundings. If there is another floor or a basement below the target, she must make a Static Physical Challenge against six Traits to remain on the same floor or fall through the resulting hole. This may also happen outdoors if someone happens to be standing on directly on top of a sewer pipe, on a bridge, and so forth. A good rule of thumb is that if there is less than a foot and a half of concrete, earth or whatever, it means that there will be a large hole if *Earthshock* is used there.

The attack has a range of 10 feet per level of Potence, meaning that you will always have a basic range of 60 feet, if not more, as long as your target is in line of sight.

#### ASCENDANT POTENCE

##### Flick

Subtle in use if not in effect, *Flick* is a frightening power. With *Flick* you can use the slightest of gestures to deliver truly devastating attacks. You know how to apply your full strength in the tiniest movements. You can simply snap your fingers and watch your opponent smash through the window or shrug calmly and break the bones of the unsuspecting vampire standing behind you.

You must spend one Blood Trait every time you use this power. If the target is aware of the attack, you must succeed in a normal Physical Challenge against her. However, since it is extremely hard to dodge something that you don't see coming, the target must bid three extra Traits for the challenge. If the target is unaware of the attack and there is physical contact, (for example, if you shake his hand or touch him on the shoulder in a normal social situation) no challenge need be made.

You may hit anything you can see with this power, and don't need to actually touch anyone or anything (but you must always make some kind of a gesture in the direction of the intended target). Indeed, few may realize that you're responsible for laying such waste to everything in the vicinity if you're simply standing around and making small gestures. With a win on a Static

Mental Challenge (difficulty 10 Traits, 15 if the area is dark and the character attempting the detection has no way of seeing in the dark), someone will notice the timing of your motions to the destruction.

*Flick* does whatever damage you would normally do in hand-to-hand combat, including all bonuses. You may also use other levels of Potence, such as *Earthshock*, in conjunction with *Flick*.

#### METHUSELAH POTENCE

##### DESTRUCTION

This is where pure, raw strength begins. A vampire who has reached this level of mastery can literally destroy entire buildings with her strength alone; nothing can stand in her way.

You spend three Blood Traits; for the remainder of the scene, your strength is simply monumental. If you strike something, you inflict three additional levels of lethal damage; your punches are powerful enough to pulverize bones. Where others use baseball bats or swords, you use telephone poles, pieces of concrete ripped off the walls, or even cars. Such weapons give you an additional six Traits to bid in challenges, and cause an additional two levels of lethal damage (though the Storyteller is free to modify the specifics of such weapons).

Other feats of strength are also possible, ranging from punching holes through ships' hulls to ripping cars in half and lifting entire busloads of people in the air. The Storyteller should feel free to call for Static Physical Challenges where appropriate.

Should you strike a mortal or a ghoul, they will die immediately if the strike connects — no human (or even relatively human) body can withstand such punishment. You may, of course, attempt to pull the punch.

#### PRESENCE

##### ELDER PRESENCE

##### Love

The blood bond is certainly one of the most effective and traditional ways to gain control of another Kindred. However, in these enlightened days, children are often aware of the bond and know how to avoid it, and while they can be forced into service, it's often preferable to handle the situation in a more subtle manner. *Love* is one way of accomplishing that — simply put, it has most of the benefits of the blood bond without the less-than-pleasant side effects. It's not quite as sure or lasting a method of control as the bond, but in most cases, it's efficient enough.

The subject must be in the same area and be in some sort of active social contact with you — a conversation, an exchanged look, a greeting, anything will do. Make a Social Challenge against your target. On a success, your target becomes attached to you as if he was blood bound to you for the remainder of the scene — the rules from *Laws of the Night* p. 211 apply. The same subject may be the target of this power as many times during the night as you desire; however, if any tests beyond the first one fail, the subject becomes immune to all *Presence* powers from you for the remainder of the night.

## PARALYZING GLANCE

Elders who have reached this level of mastery may not be able to kill with a glance, but they're certainly close. This power is essentially a more developed version of *Dread Gaze*. A vampire using this on another vampire can freeze the target with mind-numbing terror.

You must make eye contact with the intended subject, then make a Social Challenge against the target; if successful, your target is reduced to a gibbering, panic-stricken wreck. The effects last for as long as you remain in the same room with your target, or until sunrise. If you leave the room or clearly abandon your target's presence (by walking to the other end of the large ballroom, for example), the subject remains paralyzed for the remainder of the scene, after which he slowly regains his senses.

If the subject's life is directly threatened (by physical assault, impending sunrise, a rampaging horde of Sabbat), he may attempt to snap out of it by making a Static Mental Challenge. If he succeeds, the paralysis ends and he may act. Should he fail, he enters a continuous state of Rötschreck for the rest of the night (which may be calmed by the usual means).

## SPARK OF RAGE

This power allows you to shorten tempers and generally raise the irritation level in the area. *Spark of Rage* causes disagreements and fights, and may well send suitably enraged vampires into frenzy.

Spend a Willpower Trait to activate this power for the remainder of the scene. All within 10 feet of you feel its effects and become increasingly hostile to others in the area. Those affected continue to be irritated and hostile even when they leave your sphere of influence, but their irritation is no longer artificially enhanced and they can calm down if they're willing and encouraged to do so. Vampires who become suitably enraged often whip themselves into frenzy. The irritation tends to be directed at others beside yourself, but if you provoke the subjects, or if there are no others present, you're the closest target for venting any ire.

Anyone influenced by this power may spend a Willpower Trait to calm down for one turn and refrain from frenzying. Those with the *Calm Hearted* Merit can spend a Willpower Trait and resist the power's effects for the next minute.

This effect should be mostly roleplayed out; applying rules to determine the degree of irritation is clumsy and inaccurate at best; each player knows when his character has reached such a degree of irritation that he snaps.

## MASTER PRESENCE

### COOPERATION

While the Camarilla is based on cooperation, it is often painfully obvious that some of its members are anything but cooperative. Old rivalries, secret ambitions and endless intrigue don't exactly breed trust and willingness to play nice with each other. An elder who has developed this power can change that in a heartbeat. It's not a perfect solution, but it does cause those it affects to try and work together. Some Ventrite maintain the opinion that the existence of this power is the only reason the Camarilla is still holding together. On the

other hand, those who voice this opinion too loudly tend to find themselves in situations extremely well suited to testing this theory.

The player spends a point of Willpower, which activates this power for the duration of the scene. All those in the same area with the vampire is affected by the power, and as long as it remains in effect, they are more favorably disposed toward one another and are more willing to extend trust or make cooperative plans.

These effects should always be roleplayed out; again, this is something that rules really can't govern very well. Still, there are some specific effects: All who may frenzy while this power is in effect have to make a simple test; if it is successful, the frenzy is avoided; if it fails, the vampire will have to deal with the situation as per normal rules.

## FATHER KNOWS BEST

There is a phase in everyone's development from baby to adult where a person or persons — usually one or both of the parents — is everything to a child; a figure who knows everything and can protect the child from anything. This illusion shatters as the child grows up; in the end, we all discover that the people who once seemed so wise and capable and faultless are just human beings. However, a vampire with *Father Knows Best* can make himself seem like such a being to others and can command almost blind devotion and trust.

It costs one Blood Trait to activate *Father Knows Best*, and it will stay in effect for the entire scene unless you willfully turn it off. As long as the power is active, everyone in the same area with you admires, respects and loves you, and considers you to be a significant authority figure. Note that this doesn't mean that everyone instantly obeys you — after all, children disobey all the time. However, no one under the influence of *Father Knows Best* will ever attempt to harm you in any way and will attempt to cooperate with you. It may take a bit of coaxing, but you can talk others into doing just about anything within reason. ("Stick your head in the furnace, it won't hurt" won't work, but the equivalent of "You must tell me if you've been naughty" will.) Note that this won't regress the subjects' minds to a childlike state and treating them like children is likely to annoy the subjects.

There is a flip side to this, though. If you obviously betray another's trust or otherwise demonstrate that you are not the trustworthy figure you purported yourself to be, your children immediately resent you and refuse to cooperate. You cannot re-establish this influence for the remainder of the session without using *Forgetful Mind* to erase the incident from each person's memory. Another downside is that you may find yourself becoming an exceedingly important figure to the subjects of this power, going so far as to make it impossible for you to get away from them without them wanting to follow you around. They want to remain in your comforting presence because it feels like a safe place. Note that while the power's effects only apply as long as your subjects remain in the same area with you, they still remember the effects, and most subjects will think of them as pleasant. This may lead to some characters — especially ones who have become accustomed to your presence — becoming extremely concerned and frantic if they cannot locate you or fear that something has happened to you.



*Father Knows Best* is a long-term power, and you'll benefit most from it if you play your cards right, make sure your "children" are taken care of and don't abuse them. You can gain extremely loyal and devoted followers simply by spending time around them without even promising them anything. Best of all, these children will never grow out of the phase.

#### ASCENDANT PRESENCE

##### IRONCLAD COMMAND

Most vampires can usually resist the effects of Presence for brief times through an effort of will. However, some elders have developed such a force of personality that their powers of Presence cannot be resisted without truly heroic efforts.

This power is always in effect once it is learned. A mortal may not spend Willpower Traits to resist your *Presence* (for game purposes, "mortal" refers to ordinary human beings, not ghouls, humans who possess True Faith, hedge magicians, or other "special" folks). A supernatural being who can ordinarily resist certain *Presence* powers for one round by spending a Willpower Trait must now spend two Willpower Traits and make a Simple Test; on a win, they can resist the effects; on a tie or a failure, they fail to resist.

##### METHUSELAH PRESENCE

##### PULSE OF THE CITY

On reaching this level of mastery, you are now capable of influencing the emotional climate of the entire region around you, up to the size of a small city. This power is always in effect; simply put, the local population reflects your emotional states. You may also project specific emotions into the minds of the residents of the area. Those who live in the area are affected much more strongly than visitors; likewise, citizens who are visiting elsewhere are still affected by the power, as are those who have very strong ties to the city.

Your emotional state is always mirrored on the local population. However, if you wish to specifically influence the local population, you decide on the emotion you wish to project and spend a Willpower Trait. You then make a Static Social Challenge. If successful, you can change the emotional climate of the city for one minute. If you wish to affect it for a longer time, you must spend additional Social Traits before making the challenge.

Vampires and other supernatural creatures are considered to be affected at one level lower — for example, while the human population will be extremely depressed for a day, the local vampires only feel like staring at a wall and thinking of sad things for an hour.

The Storyteller decides the number of opposing Traits; anywhere from 10 to 15 Traits are appropriate, depending on the size of the city. Should two Methuselahs with this power attempt to affect this area, they make the Social Challenge against each other. The Methuselah who arrived first, provided that she has spent at least six months in the area, will receive five bonus Traits to use in the challenge, as the locals have become used to her control. Such a battle for the control of the city's emotional climate will cause the local humans to become extremely frustrated, and if the situation persists, it may

even lead to riots, mass strikes or other similar outbreaks, depending on the emotions that are being broadcast by the two combatants.

This power may be used even if you are in torpor.

Trait Expenditure	Duration
One Trait	10 minutes
Two Traits	One hour
Four Traits	One day
Six Traits	One week

#### PROTEAN

##### ELDER PROTEAN

##### EARTH CONTROL

A character who has *Earth Melded* is normally unable to move. However, if you have mastered *Earth Control*, you can move within the earth as if you are swimming through water. This power has obvious uses both for unobtrusive travel and for nasty tricks in combat.

This power is always automatically in effect while you are *Earth Melded*. You cannot see underground, but you do gain a supernatural sense of your underground surroundings, with a range of up to 50 yards. Water, rock, cement, tree roots and other obstacles all effectively block your progress; you may only move through earth and other substances of similar consistency, such as sand or gravel. Should two or more vampires attempt to interact underground, only direct physical contact is possible. If an underground battle ensues, all participants must bid an extra Physical Trait. If an underground chase takes place, the character with higher Physical Traits wins; however, if the participants have *Celerity*, the character with the highest *Celerity* wins. (If they tie on *Celerity*, revert back to the Physical Traits; if even those tie, the Storyteller may choose to simply go to Physical Challenges.)

With this power you may surprise an unwary target, as you can rise up from the ground silently behind the target. A target who is expecting such an attack must make a Mental Challenge against you; if he wins, he is not taken by surprise.

##### FLESH OF MARBLE

The Gangrel have a well-deserved reputation as formidable warriors, and this power has certainly contributed to that. With *Flesh of Marble*, your skin becomes what can best be described as flexible stone. It retains its softness, muscle tone and other qualities, and appears to be, for all intents and purposes, normal skin — yet swords shatter against it and bullets ricochet off or flatten themselves against it.

Spend two Blood Traits to instantly activate *Flesh of Marble*. The effects of the power last for the remainder of the scene. While the power is active, all incoming damage is halved (round up). This applies to all physical attacks with fists, claws, swords, firearms or explosions, but not to fire, sunlight or magic. (That said, if the magical effect in question causes a physical attack, such as a

rock hurled at the character with *Movement of the Mind*, *Flesh of Marble* is applied normally.)

In addition to that, one health level is subtracted from all damage coming in from bashing attacks (before the damage is halved as per normal). All swords or other similar melee weapons that are used against you risk shattering unless they are exceptionally well-manufactured (Storyteller's call). The attacker must make a simple test; if he loses, the weapon shatters.

#### MASTER PROTEAN

##### RESTORE THE MORTAL VISAGE

This power allows you to restore your appearance to what it was before you were Embraced, effectively removing all of the bestial features that you have accumulated over the centuries. Perhaps not surprisingly, this power tends to divide the Gangrel into two camps. In the first camp, there are those who take an active part in politics or deal with mortals on a regular basis, and consider this power both necessary and acceptable, for obvious reasons. In the second camp are the more feral Gangrel who shun human society and have accepted the monster in them as a part of their unives. They view this power as a disgusting defiance of the very nature of vampirism. *Restore the Mortal Visage* has only been displayed by Gangrel. Whispered rumors speak of Nosferatu elders who have studied this power and their quick, yet horrible Final Deaths when they attempted to take their mortal forms. Caine's curse is not so easily cheated.

Spend two Blood Traits and a Willpower Trait, and then make a Static Mental Challenge. If successful, all animal characteristics you have disappear completely for the duration of the scene. All Negative Social Traits caused by them also vanish for as long as the power is in effect.

##### SHAPE OF THE BEAST'S WRATH

This power bears some resemblance to the Tzimisce's feared *Horrid Form*, and there are indeed certain visual similarities between the two. That's where the similarities end, though, and it is a foolish vampire indeed who speaks of a connection between the two while there are any Gangrel present. With this power, you shift into a huge, monstrous form, increasing your height by half and tripling your weight. Your form changes to resemble a strange amalgamation of your own form and that of the animal you feel the closest kinship to. Wolves, rats and great cats are among the most common manifestations, but ravens, serpents, bats and even stranger beasts have been seen.

Spending two Blood Traits triggers the change. The change takes three turns, but you may quicken the process by spending Blood Traits at a cost of one Blood Trait per turn — thus, if you spend five Blood Traits, you'll transform instantly. Once transformed, you remain in this form until you choose to revert back to your normal form, or until sunrise, whichever occurs first.

You must decide which animal's characteristics you will take upon first learning this power. The form adds five Physical Traits to your statistics. You may distribute them freely, but they should reflect huge size and strength. These must also be decided upon buying the power, and cannot be changed. You may purchase this power repeatedly, which will grant you other forms.

While transformed, you inflict an additional level of aggravated damage with your fangs and claws. You also gain the equivalent of the Auspex power of *Heightened Senses*, with all of its advantages and drawbacks, and an additional Bruised health level.

However, there are two major drawbacks with this power. First, while using *Shape of the Beast's Wrath*, you are essentially socially crippled. Your Social Traits are decreased by five (said traits are determined upon buying the power); however, they cannot drop below one — you always have at least one Social Trait. The second problem is that you have an extremely hard time resisting the Beast and must bid two additional Traits when attempting to resist frenzy. Willpower Traits may not be used in this challenge.

#### SPECTRAL BODY

A powerful variation of the Advanced Protean power *Mist Form*, *Spectral Body* allows you to retain your physical appearance, even though you become completely insubstantial. You may walk through walls with ease and bullets, swords and fists pass through you without harm. You may even pass through the very floor you are standing on if you so wish. Although your vocal chords are no longer solid, you may still speak without hindrance.

Spend two Blood Traits. The transformation takes one turn and lasts for the rest of the night unless you decide to return to your normal form. When the power is active, you become completely insubstantial, but remain fully visible. You are unaffected by any physical attacks, and all incoming damage from fire or sunlight is treated as lethal damage. Gravity only matters to you if you so desire; you may sink through the floor or float up in the air, although you may move no faster than your normal walking speed while "flying" in this manner. While in this form, you may use any Disciplines that can be used without physical contact or a physical body. On the downside, you are completely unable to manipulate your physical environment while in this form, unless you happen to possess the Thaumaturgy path of *Movement of the Mind*.

#### ASCENDANT PROTEAN

##### PURIFY THE IMPALED BREAST

According to Camarilla records, very few Gangrel elders were killed during the Anarch Revolts. Many who are considered to be in the know hold the opinion that this power is the primary reason for that. With this power, you may expel foreign matter from your body with great force — even stakes through your heart may be removed in this fashion.

Spend two Blood Traits, or three if you've been incapacitated by a stake through your heart. All foreign objects—bullets, splinters, dirt, even stakes, are immediately expelled with great force. Those who are in the "line of fire" must make a Physical Challenge for every object that is expelled from your body. The challenge is made against a number of Traits equal to your Protean rating; if the subject loses the challenge, she is hit by the object. Each object that hits inflicts a single bashing health level of damage on those who fail the test, even if the damage comes from bullets or knives.

If you wish to leave some objects (such as prosthetic limbs) in your body, you must spend a Willpower Trait while expelling other objects. The same



applies if you want to leave an object partially embedded (for example, to leave a stake sticking out of your breastbone to fool your opponents).

Obviously, this power may be used even if you have been staked.

#### METHUSELAH PROTEAN

##### INWARD FOCUS

Unlike other Protean powers, this power's use is completely undetectable: It leaves no telltale visual marks that someone could notice. Indeed, its existence is only known by the handful of Gangrel Methuselahs who have managed to harness its powers. This power subtly changes the Methuselah's body into a supremely efficient construct, enhancing speed, durability and strength to truly impressive levels, even by the standards of the Kindred.

Activating this power requires three Blood Traits, and you must spend an additional Blood Trait every turn past the first to maintain it. The effects of this power are threefold.

First, you gain an extra action every turn as long as this power remains active, and you may receive another up to one additional action by spending yet another Blood Trait. (You may not spend 10 Blood Traits to gain 10 extra actions.)

Secondly, all incoming lethal and aggravated damage is halved, round up. If there is only a single health level of incoming lethal or aggravated damage (before it is halved, that is), you may make a simple test. If successful, you may ignore the damage. You automatically ignore the first two health levels of any attack that inflicts bashing damage.

Finally, your attacks inflict an additional health level of damage, whatever the damage type.

This power may be used in conjunction with all other Protean powers, and with *Celerity*, *Fortitude* and *Potence*. For obvious reasons, a Methuselah with this power is a terrifying opponent.

#### THANATOSIS

##### ELDER THANATOSIS

##### CREEPING INFECTON

*Putrefaction*, *Withering* and *Necrosis* are fast-working powers, and their effects can be instantly seen on the subject. *Creeping Infection* is far more insidious. You can delay the negative effects until you are well out of harm's way. Mercenary Stiffs are suspected to apply this power with a handshake upon closing the deal. Should their "partner" suddenly become less than cooperative, they have an ace up their sleeve. Then again, considering the pervasive sense of fairness and goodwill among vampires in general, perhaps that's just common sense.

You use *Putrefaction*, *Withering* or *Necrosis* as per usual, but may delay the actual effects for a number of months equal to your Physical Traits divided by three (round up). You may at any time spend a Blood Trait to activate the dormant power. If the time limit is reached without the power being used, it simply fades away with no effect.

#### MASTER THANATOSIS

##### DUST TO DUST

You gain additional benefits from your ash form of *Ashes to Ashes*. You maintain cohesion and consciousness and may even move about, albeit in a somewhat limited fashion. While the tactical advantages of being a pile of dust on the floor may not be readily apparent, clever elders have still found applications for this.

While a pile of ash, you retain full consciousness and may use any Disciplines that being a pile of dust would permit — for example, since a pile of dust has no eyes, using *Dominate* is out of the question. However, ridiculous as the thought may be, Disciplines like *Majesty* can be used, resulting in what surely must be the most impressive pile of dirt in the world — no maid would even dream of coming anywhere near it with a vacuum cleaner. You cannot be blown apart by winds, nor can you be easily separated — doing so requires a Physical Challenge, and each level of *Fortitude* or *Potence* you have counts as two extra Traits for this purpose alone. You may move around at a speed no higher than an ordinary wind could move a pile of dust around. However, you may move against the wind if you so desire. You may also "flatten" yourself, spreading your ashes so thinly that you can slip under doors or through cracks on the walls.

This power functions like *Ashes to Ashes* in all other respects.

##### ASCENDANT THANATOSIS

##### PUTRESCENT SERVITUDE

While the Samedi aren't the only Kindred who have dabbled in the creation of zombies, they can claim their share of wholesome necromantic fun. Not only does this power allow them to raise the bodies of the recently dead, it can also be used to enslave mortals who are still alive. Animated corpses look the way they did when raised — pale and decaying. Mortals controlled with this power appear much the same, but they remain more intact than their already dead counterparts. Zombies created with this power are in many ways real classics — they are slow, unintelligent and can't speak. They are, however, extremely strong and resilient.

If you want to raise the dead, you must feed your blood to a recently deceased corpse (maximum time since death equals your Physical Traits divided by three, round up, in weeks). Spending two Blood Traits animates the corpse. The zombie has the same Physical Traits as it did in life. A reanimated corpse has three Mental Traits and a single Social Trait. It is capable of limited reasoning, but free thought is beyond its capacity. It cannot understand anyone but its master or an individual its master has commanded it to obey. Reanimated corpses possess both Basic levels of *Fortitude* and three extra Bruised health levels. They suffer no penalties from their wounds until their last health level, at which point they collapse in a messy heap of rotting meat and bone and cannot be reanimated again.

A reanimated corpse also "dies" at the third sunrise after its creation. This life span can be extended by feeding it more blood when it is created — one Blood Trait per extra night.

Mortals may also be affected by this power. You create a ghoul in the normal fashion by feeding the subject a Blood Trait. You then make two Mental Challenges against the subject (the Medical Ability can be used to retest these); if both are successful, the mortal loses all of his free will and becomes your slave. The mortal may try to break free once per night by spending a Willpower Trait and making a Mental Challenge against you; however, due to his subjugated state, he must bid three extra Traits for this challenge. If he succeeds, he regains his lost Social and Mental Traits. If he becomes blood bound to you, he may never again attempt to break free of your control. Should you perish, the subject regains his free will.

A mortal thus subjugated becomes pale and corpselike. He loses three Mental and Social Traits each, up to a minimum of one. He gains three extra Bruised health levels and takes no penalties from injuries he suffers until he reaches Incapacitated, after which he collapses. At this point, one more wound will kill him. He also gains the first level of Potence, as all ghouls do, and may learn other Disciplines if you're inclined to teach him.

A ghoul zombie who goes a month without vampiric blood loses all benefits of being a ghoul, as would normally occur. All effects of this power disappear and he regains his free will (although he may still be blood bound to you).

## VISCRATIKA

All Gargoyles have a natural affinity for stone and earth, and this Discipline is an extension of that. The popular belief is that possession of *Visceratika* causes its user to start looking like a Gargoyle — complete with the hideously ugly, rocklike appearance and wings. The Tremere have recently released a report that states otherwise, but most Kindred don't feel like taking the risk of learning *Visceratika* and finding out that the Tremere were wrong—or lied. In any case, the point is rather moot as the Gargoyles don't feel inclined to teach one of their primary survival tools to outsiders.

No Gargoyle has ever demonstrated *Visceratika* beyond Advanced level. If higher levels of this power exist, it's either an extremely well-kept secret, or no one who has reached such a level of mastery has lived to spread his knowledge.

Retests of *Visceratika* use the *Survival* ability. *Visceratika* is bought the same way as all other clan Disciplines.

## BASIC VISCERATIKA

### SKIN OF THE CHAMELEON

When activated, your skin takes on the color and texture of the surrounding environment, allowing you to blend in with your surroundings. The illusion moves as you move, as long as you don't move any faster than a normal walking pace. Faster movement causes your body to become a blur of colors and textures. It offers no camouflage, but anyone trying to identify you may find it difficult. If this power is used when in flight, your skin blends in with the night sky almost perfectly. You'll still show up rather obviously against skyscrapers or other similar structures as a dark, winged humanoid shape.

When using *Skin of Chameleon*, you should cross your arms over your chest as if using *Obfuscate*, but place your hands on your shoulders to indicate the difference. You may also want to use a colored ribbon.

Spend a Blood Trait to activate this power. For the rest of the scene, anyone who wishes to detect you must succeed in a Mental Challenge. Unless the person attempting to detect you has *Auspex*, you gain four extra Traits to use in the challenge, or five Traits if you're in flight against the night sky.

### SCRY THE HEARTHSTONE

Gargoyles were created to act as guardians of chantries and havens. This power allows you to maintain watch over an entire building without needing to scout around all the time. All you need do is touch the building, and you gain an innate sense of where things are located inside. Furthermore, you receive accurate information about the building's layout — where everything is, if there are secret passages, and so forth. You also learn the location, approximate size and physical condition of all living (and unliving) beings within.

Spend a Willpower Trait to activate this power. You may move around slowly, but maintaining the power requires constant active concentration, and you must keep touching the building (skin contact is required). The building may be as large as a multiplex theater, a parking garage or a castle, but there must be a sizable quantity of stone or concrete in its construction.

There is a limit to how much detail you can discern; *Scry the Hearthstone* cannot be used to listen in on conversations or to see what people are holding in their hands. The Storyteller has final say on what kind of things you can detect.

You may attempt to detect *Obfuscated* Kindred within; such creatures register to your senses as something of a blur. You know there's something in that particular location, but you're not quite sure who or what. Challenges, if you can otherwise see someone *Obfuscated*, work as per the rules detailed under *Auspex* in *Laws of the Night* p. 137.

## INTERMEDIATE VISCERATIKA

### BOND WITH THE MOUNTAIN

Similar to the *Protean* power of *Earth Meld*, *Bond With the Mountain* allows you to meld with stone or concrete. However, unlike with *Earth Meld*, you don't disappear completely; the sharp-eyed may still spot a faint outline of your form. You cannot move within the substance you have bonded with unless you also possess *Flow Within the Mountain*, nor are you automatically aware of your surroundings (but you may use *Scry the Hearthstone* to be aware of events in the area, if you are Bonded with a man-made structure).

To activate the power, spend a Blood Trait and touch a suitable substance (rock, concrete, cement). Whatever you're touching must be large enough for your hulking form to fit in — a wall will do fine, but a head-sized rock will not. It takes two turns to complete the merge. Once merged, you are immune to sunlight and all aggravated damage applied against you automatically becomes lethal damage, while lethal damage becomes bashing damage. Normal bashing damage has no effect unless the attack inflicts at least two health levels of damage; anything less is

just the equivalent of beating on a stone wall. However, if you suffer three health levels of any kind of damage from a single attack, you are forcibly ejected from the wall and cannot act for an entire turn as you struggle to get your bearings.

Those wishing to spot a Gargoyle who has bonded must bid three extra Traits and make a Mental Challenge. Characters using Auspex do not need to bid the extra Traits.

#### ARMOR OF TERRA

Gargoyles are known as fearsome warriors who can defend themselves against staggering attacks. This power is largely the reason for that; combined with Fortitude, it allows you to withstand attacks that would reduce lesser Kindred to small piles of ash. With *Armor of Terra*, your skin becomes tough, truly rocklike and incredibly resistant to harm. Your pain threshold becomes far higher, and even fire may not hurt you (though you still retain your natural fear of it).

*Armor of Terra* is always active, and requires no expenditure for maintenance or activation. *Armor of Terra* subtracts one level of bashing damage after halving it normally; however, a minimum of one health level is still inflicted. Furthermore, you may convert incoming lethal damage into bashing damage by winning a Simple Test. If you are exposed to fire, you take half damage, but it is still aggravated. You'll need to make a test to resist Rötschreck.

*Armor of Terra* can be used with *Fortitude*; however, when used in such a fashion, it can only be used once per attack. For example, if you're under a fire attack that does aggravated damage, you may use *Armor of Terra* to try and halve the damage, and then use *Resilience* to try to convert the aggravated damage to lethal damage. But you cannot test that lethal damage down to bashing with *Armor of Terra* after that, as you've already used *Armor of Terra* on this attack. *Armor of Terra* must always be used before *Fortitude* comes into play.

#### ADVANCED VISCRATIKA

##### FLOW WITHIN THE MOUNTAIN

At this level of Visceratika, you are truly at home on stone constructs. *Flow Within the Mountain* allows you to move freely within solid rock. Obviously, while this means that you can easily enter any area in the domain you are guarding, it also has its uses as an offensive power; after all, if you can walk through the walls, gaining access to high-security areas isn't very hard. During these days of steel construction, the power isn't quite as useful as it once was, but most buildings can still be penetrated with *Flow Within the Mountain*.

To use the power, you must first use *Bond With the Mountain*. After that, spend a Blood Trait. This activates *Flow Within the Mountain* for the duration of the scene. During that time, you may move freely through solid rock or concrete. The mode of movement is similar to swimming, and you move about at a brisk walking pace.

You can also walk directly through stone walls without first using *Bond With the Mountain* by spending a Blood Trait, but the wall in question can be no thicker than two feet. You may attempt to walk through thicker walls by making a Physical Challenge, but you must bid an extra Physical Trait for every additional two feet. If you have *Potence*, each level of

*Potence* grants you two feet — Basic *Potence* gives two free feet, Intermediate *Potence* four, and Advanced *Potence* six. Should you have Superior *Potence*, you can move through any wall, regardless of its thickness (but must still perform the Physical Challenge). It should be noted that you can stop while within the wall, but cannot deviate from your course without using *Flow Within the Mountain*. Should you lose a challenge, you become stuck in the wall until you are chiseled out or use *Flow Within the Mountain* to escape.

#### GARGOYLE FLIGHT

Gargoyles may have wings, but just glancing at one makes it painfully obvious that they aren't actually supposed to be able to fly. A humanoid form with wings has all the aerodynamics of a rock, and Gargoyles' enormous weight doesn't improve things much — the heaviest Gargoyles have been reported to weigh over 800 pounds. Yet, like the bumblebee, they fly, thanks to their Tremere creators. When the Gargoyles were originally created, the Tremere used a complicated thaumaturgical ritual to make a variant of *Movement of the Mind* an essential part of all Gargoyles' being. Sadly, the Tremere scholar responsible for this met his end during the Gargoyle Revolt, and it seems that the secret of Gargoyle flight has been lost forever.

Only Gargoyles can learn *Flight*; it's their special ability, and it cannot ever be learned by others. All Gargoyles start out with Level 1 *Flight* in addition to other clan Disciplines, and can increase it with experience points as they would increase a normal clan Discipline. Note that under no circumstances can *Celerity* be used to increase flight speed.

It should be stressed that Gargoyles don't think of *Flight* as a Discipline; for them, it's merely something every Gargoyle can do — indeed, flight is as natural to them as walking is for a normal human. This is why different levels of *Flight* don't have specific names; the levels merely exist as a game mechanic to measure different degrees of skill.

If your character is flying, you should hold your arms out straight to the side, as if forming a cross. (Your group may want to agree on a different method of indicating flying characters, such as a sash of a certain color, as some characters may want to stay up in the air for quite a while, and holding your arms like that can become rather tiring.)

##### BASIC FLIGHT

###### Level 1

You cannot actually fly, but you can glide and soar as if you were hang-gliding. However, you cannot carry anything larger than your clothes and personal effects. Maximum speed equals 15 miles an hour.

###### Level 2

You can now attain flight under your own power, though a running takeoff is required. You can carry a maximum payload of 20 pounds. Maximum speed equals 30 miles an hour.

##### INTERMEDIATE FLIGHT

###### Level 3

You can now take off from the very spot you're standing on if unencumbered. With a running takeoff, you can carry up to 50 pounds. Maximum speed equals 45 miles an hour.

#### Level 4

You can now vertically take off carrying up to 50 pounds of baggage. With a running takeoff, up to 100 pounds can be carried. Maximum speed equals 60 miles an hour.

#### ADVANCED FLIGHT

#### Level 5

You can vertically take off with up to 200 pounds. In practice, this means that it's enough to carry most Kindred — or prey. Maximum speed equals 75 miles an hour.

#### FLIGHT AND FAIR ESCAPE

Obviously, it's a bit hard to knock someone's teeth in if he's a quickly receding dot in the sky. While Gargoyles make fearsome warriors, they are certainly smart enough to leave if things get too hairy — and having a pair of wings is a big help.

A Gargoyle with Level 3 Flight can always declare Fair Escape when outdoors or next to an unobstructed window that is large enough to fit through. (The window can be closed; a Gargoyle will have no problems smashing through an ordinary window.)

A Gargoyle with at least Basic Celerity can declare Fair Escape with only Level 2 of Flight as he can achieve a speedy running takeoff.

If the Gargoyle is well above ground level (in a skyscraper, on top of a high and steep hill, in an apartment three or more floors above the ground) even a single level of Flight is sufficient for Fair Escape, as the Gargoyle can glide to safety.

In all cases characters with ranged attacks get to make a single attack while the Gargoyle is flying away.

Characters with an equal or higher Flight score may attack the escaping character normally and may continue fighting as long as they continue to pursue the escaping character.

Note that Fair Escape may also be applied indoors if the characters are in a room that is clearly large enough for someone to fly in: Large ballrooms, warehouses and similar buildings are certainly acceptable. However, the character will be easy pickings to anyone with a ranged weapon, unless the room is exceptionally large and has enough space to allow maneuvering — or a window or skylight the Gargoyle can escape through.

#### FLIGHT MANEUVERS

Obviously, the ability to fly comes with a tremendous tactical advantage. To represent this, Gargoyles can perform special aerial maneuvers in combat.

All maneuvers have minimum requirements of skills or Disciplines to be performed. If you can't meet those requirements, you are unable to perform the maneuver properly, and you crash if you attempt them. Maneuvers cost one Free Trait at character creation, or two experience points after character creation.

If you have not learned the maneuver but do meet the minimum requirements for the maneuver, you can still attempt to perform it, but you must bid three extra Physical Traits. If the challenge fails, you immediately crash into the ground and suffer one health level of damage, unless you have Fortitude or other suitable protection. Moreover, you must spend the next turn getting back to your feet, and cannot attack anyone. (You can defend yourself, but must bid an extra Physical Trait when doing so.)

#### POUNCE

You leap at an opponent and cover a surprisingly large distance by spreading your wings. This maneuver cannot be performed in cramped places, such as tight corridors — assume that you require at least two feet of unobstructed space on both sides. However, most rooms offer enough space for you to pounce on an opponent, even if this requirement isn't strictly met. This maneuver can also be used to increase the distance you can jump normally — for example, to cross a chasm on the ground, or to leap from the roof of one building to another. In practice, this means that you can attack an opponent who is out of your normal reach. You may also pounce directly upward if need be, but cannot achieve vertical takeoff without Flight 3.

When pouncing, you can cover six yards of ground per level of Flight. A normal Physical Challenge is required.

Damage: Normal

Minimum requirements: Flight 1, Brawl 1

#### SWOOP

You swoop down from the sky, attacking an opponent while adding your own momentum to the blow, be it with a fist or with a melee weapon, and then swoop back up. On a successful attack, you reach the safety of the sky again, and cannot be attacked except by long-range weapons. Even if the attack fails, you can get back up to safety. However, Kindred with Intermediate Celerity can attack you once normally when you're swooping down; Kindred with Advanced Celerity get two attacks. Superior Celerity grants one extra attack per Superior level, as characters who move with truly supernatural speed have all the time in the world to punch the attacking Gargoyle once or twice.

Targets who are covered, obscured or out of reach (underneath trees, pressed against a doorway, lying in a gutter) cannot be successfully swooped at. For obvious reasons, Swoop cannot be used indoors unless the room is clearly large enough for such a maneuver. Note that unlike normal attacks, you swoop down at such speed that a character with Alacrity or a suitable weapon cannot pre-empt the attack.

To Swoop, you bid an extra Physical Trait, or two Traits if your opponent is actively trying to avoid you. You then perform a normal Physical Challenge against the opponent.

Damage: One health level of bashing or lethal damage, depending on weapon used.



Minimum requirements: *Flight* 2 and *Brawl* 2 or *Melee* 2, depending on the attack type.

#### SLAM

You swoop down as before, but instead of hitting the opponent and swooping back up, you slam into your opponent at full speed. Considering a Gargoyle's enormous weight, this is an extremely serious attack. This grounds you and thus allows you to be attacked, but is likely to hurt the opponent quite a bit. Your opponent is knocked down but may attack you normally during this turn, as you aren't swooping back up. He must bid two extra Physical Traits for his next action as he struggles back to his feet. If you lose the challenge, you're still grounded, but you manage to land on your feet. Note that as this maneuver depends on your body mass: Melee weapons cannot be used in this attack.

As with *Swoop*, a character with *Alacrity* or a suitable weapon cannot preempt the attack, and targets who are well in cover (as described under *Swoop*) cannot be slammed.

You bid an extra Physical Trait, or two Traits if the opponent is actively trying to avoid him, then perform a normal Physical Challenge against the opponent.

**Damage:** Three health levels of bashing damage. If you have *Flight* 5, you can optionally inflict an additional health level of damage; however, if you do not have at least *Fortitude* 1, you will also suffer one health level of bashing damage. If you have *Armor of Terra*, you inflict yet another additional health level of bashing damage, cumulative with *Flight* 5. If you have *Armor of Terra*, you need no *Fortitude*: Your skin is so tough that you suffer no damage from the impact.

Minimum requirements: *Flight* 2, *Brawl* 2

## THAUMATURGY

The following thaumaturgical paths are practiced throughout the Camarilla by the Tremere. As with all *Thaumaturgy*, the Tremere guard their secrets jealously and will not share them with outsiders.

These additional paths work as described in *Laws of the Night*. Note that a Blood Trait expenditure is always required whenever a thaumaturgical power is activated.

#### ELEMENTAL MASTERY

With *Elemental Mastery*, you enjoy limited control over and communion with inanimate objects. While the uninitiated may believe that the name of this path refers to the four basic elements (earth, fire, air and water), in reality this path is closer to an amalgamation of *Spirit Thaumaturgy* and the *Path of Conjuring*. *Elemental Mastery* only affects dead or inanimate objects.

##### BASIC ELEMENTAL MASTERY

##### ELEMENTAL STRENGTH

You can enhance your own physical prowess by drawing on the strength of the earth or objects around you without the need for large amounts of blood. Upon activating the power, you immediately receive three strength-related Physical Traits of your choice. You may activate this power and attack during

the same turn. These extra Traits will remain for as many turns as you have powers in *Elemental Mastery*, and you may expend a Willpower Trait to get one additional turn. This power cannot be "stacked"; the first application of it must expire before it can be used again.

##### WOODEN TONGUES

You may now talk with the spirit of an inanimate object. Sadly, as most objects are not known for their conversational skills, such discourses are likely to be extremely boring. Still, you may still get a general idea of the significant events that the object has "experienced." However, it should be kept in mind that the experiences that interest you might not be the same ones that interest a coffee maker.

You must make a Mental Challenge against the spirit in question. *Subterfuge* may be used for retests in this challenge. If successful, you may ask a question of the spirit, and the spirit may not lie. Questions like "What did the person who ran by moments ago look like?" or "Has anyone been fighting here recently?" are acceptable, but it should be kept in mind that certain concepts may be very alien to household objects. "What did they talk about?" for example is likely to confuse the spirit quite a bit. Should you fail the test, you're in for a rather inane conversation. For example, if the subject happens to be a rock reflecting on the hardness of its being, a certain amount of frustration is guaranteed.

##### INTERMEDIATE ELEMENTAL MASTERY

##### ANIMATE THE UNMOVING

This power allows you to cause inanimate objects to move as you will. An object cannot perform an action that would be completely inconceivable for its form — for example, a rock could not grow legs, nor could a coffee cup start playing the guitar. But a human-shaped statue could walk around; a gun might twist out of someone's hand or fire itself spontaneously, or a length of steel cable might suddenly start moving like a snake, tripping people and tying them up.

You must spend a Willpower Trait upon activating this power. You may simultaneously control up to a number of objects equal to your permanent Mental Traits divided by three (round up). Each object needs to be animated separately, and they must be in your line of sight when being animated. They remain animated as long as they are within your line of sight, or up to an hour. Simple commands to the objects may be given ("Chase that man" or "Attack anyone who comes in" are all right), but they aren't very smart and have extremely limited reasoning. (For example, "Wait for the red car" could result in an extremely confused bar stool.)

##### ELEMENTAL FORM

You may take on the form of any inanimate object of a mass roughly equal to your own. Thus, you might assume the form of a large television or a small bed, but turning into a handgun or a van is beyond your capabilities.

Upon activation of this power, you may decide the form you wish to assume. However, you must spend a Willpower Trait if you wish to retain your senses and the ability to use Disciplines. Obviously, certain Disciplines cannot be used while in an altered form. The object functions exactly like a real object

would — for example, a television can be plugged in and turned on with no harm inflicted on you. This power lasts for the remainder of the night, although you may assume your true form at will.

#### ADVANCED ELEMENTAL MASTERY

##### SUMMON ELEMENTAL

With *Summon Elemental*, you may summon one of the traditional spirits of the elements: a salamander (fire), a sylph (air), a gnome (earth) or an undine (water). Some Tremere claim that they have managed to contact other elemental spirits, such as those of glass, electricity, blood or even atomic energy, but for the time being, such reports remain unconfirmed.

You must be near some quantity of the classical element corresponding to the spirit you wish to summon. The spirit, once summoned, may not actually follow your orders, but generally speaking, it will do what it is told. Obviously, abusing the spirit will cause the spirit to attack or refuse to cooperate.

The power level of the spirit may vary greatly, and the summoner will not know how powerful (or weak) the spirit is before it actually manifests. As a rule of thumb, all elementals have at least six of both Physical and Mental Traits; some may be far more powerful than that. All elementals have some powers related to their particular element — a fire elemental may toss fireballs, while a water elemental may be able to control water in its vicinity. The details depend on the individual spirit; they may have any combination of skills, powers and abilities the Storyteller sees fit. Moreover, all elementals have personalities; they are usually bright and not unaware of what is around them.

Once the spirit has been summoned, you must exert control over it. This is accomplished with a Static Mental Challenge against the spirit. The more powerful the spirit, the more likely it will make things as difficult as possible. If you win, the spirit obeys the caster and may consider you a superior, or at least an enlightened equal. To command the creature, spend one Mental Trait for each command you wish to give. Otherwise, the spirit will want to bargain, and spirits always want something. Should you be unable to exert control over the spirit, the elemental may think of you as an enemy and attack, or it may simply be indifferent and do as it pleases. It may choose to remain nearby or leave — spirits are unpredictable creatures, after all.

If the elemental is asked to perform a task that endangers its existence, you may enforce your will with another Mental Challenge. Success forces the creature to obey while a loss may result in a creature anxious to flee your presence or a very angry elemental, and spirit anger is an unpleasant thing.

The elemental remains in existence for as long as it is under your control. If it is unbound, it will remain for as long as it chooses — such details are best left to the Storyteller.

#### THE GREEN PATH

A favorite of ecologically minded Tremere, the *Green Path* concentrates on controlling and understanding nature. Anything more complex than an algae bloom can theoretically be controlled by this power, from ordinary potted plants to the sprawling vastness of the rainforest. While many Tremere

consider its practitioners to be merely eccentric tree-huggers, the *Green Path* is still as subtle and powerful as nature itself.

The *Green Path* probably originated from the Order of the Naturists, an old Druidic sect within Clan Tremere. Many practitioners are members of the order or at least mentored by one. According to Tremere history, the path is largely based on the magics formerly practiced by House Diedne, an order of mortal mages destroyed by the Tremere during the Dark Ages.

##### BASIC GREEN PATH

###### HERBAL WISDOM

Merely by touching a plant, you may communicate with its spirit. The exact nature of the spirit depends largely on the plant in question — ancient trees may be extremely wise (if rather cryptic), whereas ordinary crabgrass tends to have far less insight to offer (but might still reveal the face of the last person who trod upon it).

You must touch the plant you wish to communicate with and activate the power. You may ask a single question and expect an answer, which may or may not be helpful but will always be true. To learn more details, make a Static Mental Challenge against the Storyteller; with success, the spirit will divulge more detailed information, if it can. The exact details of the answer are left to the Storyteller.

###### SPEED THE SEASON'S PASSING

With this power, you can cause a flower to grow from a seed to full bloom in mere minutes, or an entire tree to spring up overnight. Alternately, you may cause a plant to die and decay, grass to wither or stakes to crumble with but a touch.

You must touch the target plant and activate the power; the plant's growth or death, depending on your intent, will be greatly accelerated. For an almost instant effect, spend a Willpower Trait to cause a plant to spring from a seed or a tree to sprout fruit in minutes — or start decaying almost instantly. In combat, the expenditure of a Willpower Trait causes a stake or other wooden weapon to crumble into dust. However, you cannot use this power if you become staked.

###### INTERMEDIATE GREEN PATH

###### DANCE OF VINES

You can now animate a mass of vegetation up to your own size, either for utilitarian or combat purposes. Vines can strangle opponents, trees may move to allow faster passage through a thick forest (and bend again to block the passage of pursuers), roots may trip unwelcome visitors, and so forth.

The target plant must be within your line of sight. You spend a Willpower Trait and concentrate on the target plant. The target must have a mass that is less than or equal to your own. The plants stay active for as many rounds equal to half your permanent Mental Traits (round down), and are under your complete control. They are considered to have Physical Traits equal to your current Willpower rating, and a Brawl rating one lower than your own (thus, if you only have Brawl 1, then the plant has no Brawl). Generally speaking, plants do two

bashing levels of damage — this can be modified, depending on the plant. They tend to be best at tripping or tying down opponents, although some enterprising Warlocks have used rowan saplings in their havens to stake unwary intruders.

Plants cannot uproot themselves and start running around: Even at their most energetic, your plants cannot walk under this power. But a tree's deep roots can extend for some distance, and who's to say how much damage 150 pounds of kudzu can do?

#### VERDANT HAVEN

With this power, you may construct a shelter out of a sufficient amount of plant matter. The shelter not only provides protection from the elements, it also protects you against sunlight and attack. It also creates a mystical barrier that keeps anyone you wish to exclude from entering. A *Verdant Haven* appears as a six-foot-tall hemisphere of interlocked branches, leaves and vines with no discernible opening. Even to a casual observer, it appears to be an unnatural construction. Some claim that *Verdant Havens* have supernatural healing properties, but no Kindred who has spent time in one has reported such benefits.

You must be in a heavily vegetated area for this power to work. Upon activating this power, the *Verdant Haven* springs up around you over the course of three turns. Once the haven is sealed, anyone wishing to enter the haven without your permission must make a Mental Challenge against you — you gain two extra Traits that can be used in this challenge only. Unless the unwelcome guest wins the challenge, she cannot enter. All attacks against the haven itself are handled in the same fashion.

The haven lasts until the next sunset, or until you dispel it or leave. Sunlight does not penetrate the haven unless it has been physically breached.

#### ADVANCED GREEN PATH

##### AWAKEN THE FOREST GIANTS

One of the most impressive applications of Thaumaturgy known to the Tremere, this power allows you to awaken the very trees of the forest, causing them to stretch their limbs, pull their roots out of the ground and walk with steps that make the earth shake. They are not nearly as versatile as spirits that have been summoned into existence, but their awesome strength and resilience more than makes up for that.

You must touch the tree you wish to animate, spend a Willpower Trait and concentrate on the target. You must then spend a Blood Trait for every two turns you wish the tree to remain active. (Thus, spending two Blood Traits means the tree will remain active for four turns.) Once this time expires, the tree stops moving and puts down roots wherever it is at the moment. The tree cannot be animated again for the rest of the night. While animated, the tree follows your verbal commands as well as it can. An animated tree has 10 Physical Traits plus twice as many Traits as your Occult rating, and a *Brawl* rating equal to your own. It is immune to bashing damage, and because of its size, all non-aggravated lethal damage is halved (round up). Its health levels depend on its size; an average tree has five or six health levels.

A tree that ceases to be animated immediately takes root wherever it is. Even if it is on concrete, its roots will punch through whatever it is standing

on at the moment until it finds earth and water underneath — thus, it is not impossible to plant a row of maples in the middle of a busy city street. Obviously, using this power to commit such an obvious breach of the Masquerade is a good way to ensure that the mistake will not be repeated.

#### NEPTUNE'S MIGHT

Most vampire myths don't associate vampires with the sea, and indeed, most vampires don't feel any particular connection — the sea simply means nothing to most of them. Nevertheless, *Neptune's Might* has always had a small but devoted following among the Tremere.

Once a thaumaturge reaches the Intermediate level of *Neptune's Might*, she may choose to specialize in either salt water or fresh water. Such specialization grants her two extra Traits as appropriate when dealing with the water type of her choice, but also forces her to bid two extra Traits when dealing with the opposite. Blood is considered to be neither salty nor fresh for this purpose, and difficulties to manipulate it are unaffected. Note that this specialization is optional.

#### BASIC NEPTUNE'S MIGHT

##### EYES OF THE SEA

You may look deep into a body of water and view events that have transpired in, on or around it from the water's perspective. Some practitioners of this path claim that the thaumaturge communes with the spirits of the water when using this power; some younger Kindred scoff at such claims, and others simply don't care.

You must stare deeply into a body of water when activating this power. You may see up to one day into the past. If you wish to see more, you must start making Simple Tests; with each successful test, you may gaze further back in time. Alternately, spending a Willpower Trait counts as an automatic success.

This power can only be used on standing water — lakes and puddles will do; oceans, rivers, sewers or wineglasses will not.

##### PRISON OF WATER

With this dramatic power you can command a sufficiently large body of water to animate itself and imprison a subject. A significant amount of fluid is required for this power to be truly effective, although even a few gallons are sufficient to form chains of animated water. Mortals who are subjected to this power may drown if you are not careful (or if you want to kill them). The extreme pressures that can be brought to bear may even crush other vampires.

Upon activating this power, you must invest Blood Traits into the effect. Every Trait spent equals two Physical Traits for the prison. Your Occult rating is added to this. After that, you may form a prison of water around the subject. To break free, the subject must make a Physical Test against the Traits of the animated water. If he wins, he breaks free, breaking the animated prison and causing the water to become inanimate.

If you desire, you may crush your trapped subject, again using the prison's Physical Traits against the subject's Physical Traits. Each successful challenge results in one health level of lethal damage to the subject. You may choose to

automatically drown a mortal subject. A single prison may be used on a single subject, but you are free to invoke multiple prisons for multiple subjects.

You must always have a line of sight to both the source of water and the subject. The prison remains in existence as long as you are in the same area and maintain a line of sight to them, unless you become unconscious or fall into sleep or torpor.

If a sufficient quantity of water is not present (at least a bathtub's worth), you must bid two additional Traits when making any challenges related to *Prison of Water*.

#### INTERMEDIATE NEPTUNE'S MIGHT

##### BLOOD TO WATER

You have now attained enough power to transmute other liquids into water. The most commonly seen form of this power is an assault: With but a touch, you may transmute the victim's blood into water. For a mortal, this is lethal, and vampires are weakened by it.

You must touch your intended victim when activating the power. You may then spend as many Mental Traits as you please; every Mental Trait counts as one Blood Trait that becomes water. For a mortal, this means death in minutes; a vampire is weakened as the vitae in his system effectively disappears. What's more, the vampire suffers wound penalties as if he were injured, even though actual injury is not inflicted. Those with at least Basic *Fortitude* are unaffected by this, but still lose the Blood Traits normally. The water evaporates out of a vampire's body at a rate of one Blood Trait per hour, but the lost blood will not return.

Liquids other than blood can be transmuted into water as well, as long as you either touch the liquid itself or the container it is in.

##### FLOWING WALL

With this power you can command water to such an extent that you can form it into an almost impenetrable wall. You must touch the surface of a standing body of water and spend two Willpower Traits. You must then spend Mental Traits: Each Mental Trait spent in this fashion causes 10 feet of watery barrier to appear in one dimension, either in width or height. Your permanent Mental Traits are the only limit to how tall or wide a wall you can create. The wall may be placed anywhere in your line of sight and must be formed in a straight line. The wall remains in place until sunrise. It cannot be climbed, but it can be flown over.

Successful Test	Range of Effect
0	One day
1	One week
2	One month
3	One year
4	10 years

Anyone attempting to pass through the wall must make three Static Physical Challenges against your permanent Mental Traits; unless they succeed, they cannot pass through. This also applies to characters who are in astral form or in the Umbra, although those characters use their Mental Traits instead of Physical Traits.

#### ADVANCED NEPTUNE'S MIGHT

##### DEHYDRATE

Upon reaching this level of mastery, you can directly attack both mortal and supernatural targets by removing the water from their bodies. Victims who succumb to this power leave behind hideous mummified corpses. There are other, less aggressive applications for this power, such as drying out wet clothes or evaporating puddles to keep other practitioners of this path from using them.

Make a Mental Challenge against the target's Physical Traits. If successful, you inflict three levels of lethal damage on the subject. Armor offers no protection against this attack, but it can be healed normally. Vampires lose Blood Traits instead of health levels; if the target has no more Blood Traits left, she will then lose health levels as normal. The victim must make a Static Courage test against the amount of health levels lost, times two; if she loses, she is overcome with agony for that turn and cannot act. Vampires who have only lost blood are not overwhelmed until they begin to lose health levels.

#### THE PATH OF CORRUPTION

The learning or even knowledge of this path is neither encouraged nor openly supported by most of the high-ranking Tremere. Those who are familiar with its intricacies hotly debate its origins. One theory holds that its secrets were originally taught to the Tremere by demons, and practicing it may bring one dangerously close to the infernal. Another states that this path is something of a relic from the days when the Tremere were still mortal wizards. The third, and to many the most disturbing, is that the path was originally learned from the Followers of Set and that knowledge of its intricacies was sold to the Tremere for an unspecified price. Obviously, this last rumor is always denied by the Tremere, which automatically makes it the favorite topic of discussion whenever the matter is brought up.

The *Path of Corruption* is path centered on influencing the psyches of other individuals. Unlike *Dominate*, it cannot be used to issue commands, nor can it be used like *Presence* to alter emotions. Instead, the powers of *Path of Corruption* slowly and subtly twist an individual's mind into a darker, more immoral state. Those who wish to engage in this must be well-versed in the darker side of human nature. Lies and deception should be second nature to the user. Accordingly, no character may have a higher rating in the *Path of Corruption* than he has in *Subterfuge*.

Using a Narrator as a proxy between the players may prevent out-of-game knowledge from influencing in-game play.



## BASIC PATH OF CORRUPTION

### CONTRADICT

You may interrupt a subject's thought processes, forcing the subject to reverse his current course of action. This may lead to a man shouting at his wife instead of caressing her, a police officer letting a known violent criminal go instead of arresting him, or a vampire giving into the Beast just when he had gained control at the brink of frenzy. The actual results of *Contradict* are never known in advance, but they always take the form of a more negative action than the subject had originally intended to perform.

*Contradict* can be used on any subject in your line of sight. You must make a Mental Challenge against the subject; if successful, the action or decision the subject is about to undertake becomes the negative, far darker opposite. The details are largely left up to the target, who must roleplay it out, although the Storyteller may intervene.

The subject gets to make a Simple Test. If he wins, he realizes that he is being influenced but doesn't know who is causing it, unless he wins a Mental Challenge against you to become aware of who attempted to influence him. If he ties on the Simple Test, he becomes vaguely aware of the fact that he is being influenced, but cannot change his course of action. If he loses, he believes that he took the twisted action of his own volition.

*Contradict* cannot be used in combat or to affect actions that are mainly physical or reflexive.

### SUBVERT

Similar to *Contradict*, *Subvert*'s effects last longer and dig deeper into the dark side of the subject's psyche. When influenced by this power, the subject acts on her own suppressed temptations, pursuing agendas that her morals or self-control would normally forbid her to follow.

You must make eye contact with the intended victim and make a Mental Challenge. If you win, the victim becomes inclined to follow a repressed, shameful desire until the effects fade. By default, the effects last for five minutes; however, if the original Mental Challenge is successful, you may make Simple Tests against the victim until you lose. The number of wins you score determines the effect's length.

The actual effects are again best left for roleplaying, although the Storyteller may intervene. The victim should follow a negative agenda for the duration of the effect — she is driven by her darker desires and moods. Psychological Flaws or Negative Traits may well come into play here. The character's Nature is also a factor in this — for example, a Loner may become violent if she is forced attend a social function. The subject does not become fixated on this new agenda to the point of stupidity, but it does influence all of her actions with varying degrees of subtlety. The expenditure of a Willpower Trait allows the character to overcome this effect for a minute.

## INTERMEDIATE PATH OF CORRUPTION

### DISSOCIATE

"Divide and conquer" may not be a very original tactic, but it's as effective now as it was centuries ago. The Tremere know this, and this is a powerful tool for those who wish to practice this tactic in a rather persuasive fashion. This power can break the social ties of interpersonal relationships. Even the most passionate lovers or oldest friends can be separated with this power, and more casual ties can be destroyed altogether.

Wins	Duration of Effect
0	5 minutes
One	One hour
Two	One night
Three	Three nights
Four	One week

You must touch the target and make a Mental Challenge against him. If successful, the victim's Social Traits are reduced by four (to a minimum of one) for the duration of the effect — the duration determined as with *Subvert*, above. If this power is used on a character who has participated in the Sabbat Vaulderie or similar ritual, his Vinculum rating is reduced by three for the duration of the effect.

Again, the effects of this power should be roleplayed out. The victim of this power becomes withdrawn, suspicious and emotionally distant. The expenditure of a Willpower Trait allows the character to overcome this effect for a minute or so.

### ADDICTION

This power is a far nastier form of *Subvert*. *Addiction* creates just that in the victim. By exposing her to a particular sensation, situation, substance or action, you can create a powerful psychological dependency. Many Tremere ensure that their victims become addicted to substances or thrills only they can provide, thus creating a source of income and potential blackmail material.

The subject must encounter or be exposed to whatever it is that you wish to addict her to. You then touch your target and make a Mental Challenge. If successful, the target is instantly addicted to whatever it is that you have planned for her. An addicted character must get her fix on a nightly basis. For every night that she is forced to go without a fix, she must bid an additional Trait on *all* challenges she participates in — the longer she waits, the worse her condition becomes. Furthermore, if she is confronted with the object or situation of her addiction, she must make a Static Self-Control Challenge to keep from indulging. *Addiction* lasts for a number of weeks equal to your permanent Social Traits, divided by two (round down).

The victim may attempt to break the effects of *Addiction*. This requires that a *Self-Control* Challenge be made every night until she has accumulated more wins than the caster's rating in *Path of Corruption*. The victim may not indulge in her addiction over the time needed to accumulate the wins; if she succumbs, all accumulated wins are lost and she must start over again. If the target loses a challenge, she may try again the following night. Obviously, the longer it takes, the harder it becomes to win, as she is constantly forced to bid more and more Traits.

#### ADVANCED PATH OF CORRUPTION

##### DEPENDENCE

The final power in *Path of Corruption*, *Dependence* ties your subject's soul to your own, engendering feelings of lethargy and helplessness in her when she is not in your presence or acting to further your desires. It is no surprise that some former pawns of the Tremere speak of feelings of depression and loss they felt when they weren't in the presence of their masters.

Engage your target in conversation, then makes a Mental Challenge against the subject. If you are successful, the victim's psyche becomes subtly bonded to your own for one night per permanent Mental Trait you possess, divided by two (round down).

A bonded victim is no less likely to attack you and feels no particular affection toward you. However, she is psychologically addicted to your presence, and must bid an extra Trait in any challenges she participates in whenever she is not around you or performing tasks for you. Additionally, you gain five extra Traits when engaging her in any challenges that involve asserting your authority, whether through *Dominate*, *Presence*, *Subterfuge* or *Leadership*. Finally, she is unable to regain Willpower Traits unless she is in your presence. Again, these effects should mostly be roleplayed out.

### THE PATH OF TECHNOMANCY

One of the newest and most controversial *Thaumaturgy* paths, *Technomancy* concentrates on controlling electronic devices, ranging from wristwatches to computers. The path is so new that it has yet to spread much beyond the United States, but its proponents are quickly making progress in spreading it as far as they can, stating that it is a prime example of what can be accomplished with creative applications of *Thaumaturgy* in the modern world. More conservative Tremere object to *Technomancy*'s very existence, claiming that mixing magic and mortal technology borders on treason or even blasphemy. Some European regents have even banned practitioners of *Technomancy* from their chantries altogether. The Inner Council has not yet expressed any opinion on the matter, but has approved the introduction of the path into the clan's grimoires.

#### BASIC TECHNOMANCY

##### ANALYZE

Technology doesn't march on — it races. Keeping up with new innovations can be confusing at best, and many vampires find that progress rapidly leaves them behind, despite their best efforts. With *Analyze*, you can project your consciousness into a device, granting you temporary but comprehensive

understanding of its purpose, the principles of its functioning, and its means of operation. No permanent knowledge is gained; this understanding fades in a few minutes.

To use this power, you must touch the device in question. Basic knowledge (on/off and simple functions) is granted in the first turn. After that, every turn of contact with the device allows for more information, but you must spend a Mental Trait for every additional piece of information beyond the first. In the second turn, you know enough to competently operate the device. In the third turn, you have a complete understanding of the full range of the device's potential. The knowledge gained lasts for a number of minutes equal to half your Mental Traits (round down).

This power may also be used to understand new pieces of computer software. However, you must touch a computer in which the software is installed; merely holding the CD-ROM or disk will not do. You must bid an additional Mental Trait when attempting this.

##### BURNOUT

*Burnout*'s only function is destruction. By causing a device's power supply to surge, you may damage or destroy the target. *Burnout* cannot be used to directly injure another individual, but destroying a pacemaker or a car's fuel injection control chip can certainly have dramatic consequences.

You must make a Static Mental Challenge. This power has a range of up to 10 times your permanent Willpower in yards, but you must bid an additional Mental Trait if you are not touching the item. Normal household appliances or desktop computers typically have three Traits, while cars or more resistant devices have six Traits. Large mainframes, passenger aircraft or other similar devices may have nine or more Traits. Devices with additional surge protection gain an additional three Traits for defense (computers well-guarded against power spikes and the like, such as banking or military mainframes, may have more at Storyteller discretion). A damaged device ceases to function and cannot be used again until it is repaired.

If you wish to destroy the target instead of merely damaging it, spend a Mental Trait and make a Simple Test; with success, the target is destroyed instead of being merely damaged. *Burnout* may also be used to destroy electronic data storage (such as disks or CD-ROMs), using the same procedure; with success, the data is destroyed beyond any hope of non-magical recovery.

#### INTERMEDIATE TECHNOMANCY

##### ENCRYPT/DECRYPT

While more conservative Tremere are often unaware of the constant struggle of governments and corporations to keep their encryption routines up-to-date, the technophilic members of the clan take great pleasure in this power as it allows them to mystically scramble a device's controls so that it only works for them. It also works on all sorts of electronic media, ranging from computer files to videotapes — files appear scrambled, the videotape displays nothing but snow and static, and so forth.

To encrypt something, you must touch the device or data container and spend a Willpower Trait. Once the power is invoked, spend Mental Traits to

work the encryption; the more Traits spent, the more secure the encryption. Each level of the Computer Ability you possess counts as two Traits for the purposes of encryption alone. Anyone attempting to use the device or access the data without your assistance must succeed in a Static Mental Challenge against the number of Traits spent. Those who have no appropriate skills (such as Computer, Repair, Science or Security) cannot attempt the challenge at all: The device simply refuses to work. The details of the challenge are left to the Storyteller, but let common sense be your guide. You may dispel the effect at any time merely by touching the target and spending another Willpower Trait.

*Encrypt/Decrypt* can also be used to decrypt devices or data that have been previously encrypted with this power. The power works exactly the way it does when encrypting something, except every spent Mental Trait removes one Trait from the target, thus making using the device or accessing the data easier.

The effects of this power last for a number of weeks equal to your permanent Willpower Traits.

#### REMOTE ACCESS

A suitably skilled technomancer no longer needs to touch a device to operate it. This is not some form of telekinesis; instead you command the device directly with your mind. This power may be used on any electronic device in the character's line of sight. You must spend a Willpower Trait and concentrate on the target. After that, you may use the target device normally, despite the fact that you aren't actually touching it. This could mean operating a computer from afar, opening electronic locks or deactivating security systems. As long as you can see the device, you can operate it.

*Remote Access* remains in effect for a number of turns equal to your *Path of Technomancy* score. You must make a Simple Test for each turn after that; on a failure, the connection is broken. *Remote Access* can only be used on a single target at a time.

If the item you are operating from afar is destroyed while you are using it, you immediately take three levels of bashing damage (which is not halved as per normal), as the shock of having your perceptions suddenly shunted back to your body is somewhat nasty.

#### ADVANCED TECHNOMANCY

##### TELECOMMUTE

*Telecommute* allows you to project your consciousness into the global telecommunication network and send your mind through satellite links, fiber-optic cables and other similar devices. While thus immersed in the network, you can use any of the other *Technomancy* powers on the devices with which you make contact.

You must touch some sort of a communication device. Anything will do; it may be a cell phone, a fax machine, a computer with a modem or permanent network connection, or just an ordinary telephone. You then spend a Willpower Trait and concentrate.

The effects of *Telecommute* lasts for 10 minutes, with each level in *Computer Ability* granting an additional five minutes. This time may be extended by another 10 minutes by spending a Willpower Trait. This can be

repeated until there are no Willpower Traits left, if you so desire. The default range of *Telecommute* is 25 miles. If you wish to go further than that, you may do so by expending Mental Traits as follows:

As long as you are immersed in the network, you may apply any other *Path of Technomancy* power to any device or data you encounter. Should you become disconnected (which may occur should a part of the network your connection runs through be shut down or destroyed), you are immediately yanked back to your body and suffer five levels of bashing damage (not halved as per normal).

Should you attempt to take any actions more complicated than talking to someone while thus connected, you must bid two additional Traits for any and all challenges. It should also be noted that there are beings other than the Tremere out there in the Net, and they may well take exception to the intrusion. The Tremere who are experienced in these things know that these creatures are far more at home in this environment, and steering clear of them is often a good idea.

For obvious reasons, this power always requires Storyteller assistance.

Traits Expended	Range
0	25 miles
One	250 miles
Two	1000 miles
Four	5000 miles
Six	Anywhere in the world, including telecommunication satellites

#### SPIRIT MANIPULATION

Not to be confused with, or even derived from, the ancient *Path of Spirit Thaumaturgy*, *Spirit Manipulation* is actually a somewhat recent innovation for the Tremere. This path was invented to replace the old rituals created by the clan when they were still mortal wizards. Its purpose is to force spirits into situations and actions that would normally be anathema for them. *Spirit Manipulation* mimics many effects that can be created by Lupines and certain shamanic mages, but it takes a completely different approach — instead of making a sort of an agreement with the spirit in question, the thaumaturge forces the spirit into a grotesque mockery of its normal behavior. It's a dangerous practice, though; a mistake may result in the spirit's full wrath against the caster. Whenever a practitioner loses a challenge while working with a spirit, he must make a Simple Test. If he loses the test, the spirit attacks.

##### BASIC SPIRIT MANIPULATION

##### HERMETIC SIGHT

With this power you can perceive the spirit world, allowing you to gaze deeply into it, or perceive nearby spirits as a hazy overlay on the material world.

This power does not allow you to see into the lands of the dead or into the realms of the fae.

You may activate this power at will and automatically see any spirits close by. If you wish to gaze into the spirit realm itself, you must spend a Mental Trait; you may then see into the spirit realm for the duration of the scene. While looking into the spirit realm, you must bid an additional two Traits on any challenges in the physical world due to the difficulties caused by divided perceptions. You may terminate this power at any time.

#### ASTRAL CANT

Most spirits don't speak English, at least not on their home turf. Some can't, but many more simply refuse to do so. With this power you can understand and communicate in the spirits' own languages.

Spending a Willpower Trait activates this power for the remainder of the scene. As long as the power is active, you may converse with spirits in their own language and understand their responses.

#### INTERMEDIATE SPIRIT MANIPULATION

##### VOICE OF COMMAND

This is perhaps the most dangerous power a practitioner of *Spirit Manipulation* has at her disposal — failure here may well mean a painful death when subjected to the attack of an enraged spirit. This power allows you to give orders to a spirit, compelling it to heed your bidding whether or not it desires to do so.

To use this power, spend a Willpower Trait and make a Mental Challenge against the spirit. With success, the spirit must obey whatever command you give, as long as it doesn't endanger the spirit's well-being or conflict with its morals. By spending another Willpower Trait before making the challenge, you may force the spirit into doing something that may hurt the spirit or greatly violate its ethics. To force the spirit into a possibly suicidal action, you must make another Mental Challenge against the spirit; success means the spirit will obey, but will likely be seething with rage at this point. It should be kept in mind that spirits commanded in this manner are fully aware of the fact that they are being forced into something against their will, and they may well seek revenge at a later time. A spirit issued a command above and beyond what it was compelled to do may "agree" to the command, but never follow through, leaving its erstwhile master in a potentially fatal situation.

##### ENTRAP EPHEMERA

With this power, you may bind a spirit into an object. This can be done in order to imprison the spirit, but it's more often performed in order to create a fetish, an artifact that channels a portion of the spirit's power through it to affect the physical world. Fetishes created in this manner are rather fickle at best and may fail at inopportune moments, as the spirits within will do anything in their power to escape or at least thwart their captors.

The actual details of the fetish depend greatly on the details of the spirit and the item in question. For example, a spirit of pain may turn a simple whip into a terrifying weapon, whereas a spirit of sharpness may cause a sword to cut deep and cause aggravated damage. This is in no way

limited to weapons; a spirit of speed bound to a car may result in an extremely fast vehicle, and a spirit of investigation bound into a pair of binoculars may result in a spectacularly clear picture. It is impossible to provide game mechanics that will cover all of the possibilities; instead, they should be worked out with the Storyteller.

A fetish created in this fashion is activated by spending a Willpower Trait and making a Simple Test. On a loss, you must make another Simple Test. On a second loss, the fetish fails to function properly, and you must make a third Simple Test. If that test is lost as well, the physical component of the fetish will be destroyed, and the spirit will be freed.

For more information regarding fetish powers, refer to *Laws of the Wild*. The Storyteller is always the final authority in determining the powers of and mechanics of a fetish created through use of this power.

#### ADVANCED SPIRIT MANIPULATION

##### DUALITY

The height of spiritual transactions, you can now fully interact with the realm of the spirits. When you activate this power, you exist on both planes simultaneously. You can pick up objects in the material world and place them in the spirit world or vice versa. The beings and landscapes of both worlds are solid to you, and you may interact with them as you please. You can even use *Thaumaturgy* and other Disciplines in either world. Still, it's not a walk in the park — a journey such as this is not without its dangers, and a single mistake may leave you trapped in the spirit realms with no way home. Several incautious travelers have starved into torpor in the spirit realm — there is no blood to be had among the spirits, after all.

*Duality* may only be used while you are in the physical world. Note that while this power is in effect, you are vulnerable to attacks from both worlds. You are considered to be in the physical world, as far as basic physics and common sense are concerned — for example, if there's a road in the physical world that leads over a chasm in the spirit world, you may walk across the chasm just fine.

To activate this power, spend a Willpower Trait and make a Static Mental Challenge. If successful, you enter the spirit world without leaving the physical world. Before going further, make a Simple Test. If you lose, repeat the test — a second loss means there was a backlash and you were ripped out of the physical world and thrown into the spirit world. Whether or not there is a way back to the physical realm is up to the Storyteller.

No. of Wins	Duration of Effect
0	One turn
One	Three turns
Two	10 turns
Three	10 minutes
Four	The remainder of the scene



If the entrance was successful, and you're not trapped in the spirit realms, you now determine how long you can remain. Make Simple Tests until you lose — the number of tests won determines the duration of the effect.

After the power has been activated, you must bid two additional Traits on all challenges as long as *Duality* remains active; perceiving two realms can be distracting, making even routine tasks an exercise in concentration.

### THAUMATURGICAL COUNTERMAGIC

This power is not so much a path as it is a separate Discipline. The power to resist Thaumaturgy can be taught independently from Thaumaturgy, even to those Kindred who are incapable of learning even the most basic ritual. That said, for obvious reasons, these techniques are not taught outside Clan Tremere — non-Tremere who display this ability are likely to become a topic of fatal interest for every Tremere in the area.

*Thaumaturgical Countermagic* is treated as a separate Discipline. You may not take this as your primary path, nor does this allow you to perform rituals. The use of this power is treated as a free action in combat. To oppose a Thaumaturgy power or ritual, you must have a *Thaumaturgical Countermagic* rating equal to or higher than the rating of that power or ritual — rituals higher than Advanced may never be countered with this power.

*Thaumaturgical Countermagic* can only be used against Tremere Thaumaturgy at full effectiveness. It is greatly weakened (the character will have four fewer Traits for all challenges relating to an attempt to resist the magical effects) against non-Tremere blood magic and mortal hedge magic, and is completely ineffective against other magics and powers.

Any non-Tremere character who learns this power automatically earns the Flaw *Clan Enmity (Tremere)*, receiving no free Traits for it — supposing that the Tremere know that he has this power, of course. This power cannot be taken during character creation, and it can never be spontaneously developed. It costs the same as any other non-clan Discipline to learn.

There are no names for the levels of *Thaumaturgical Countermagic*; they are simply a game mechanic that measures degree of skill.

#### BASIC THAUMATURGICAL COUNTERMAGIC

##### LEVEL 1

You may make a Mental Challenge against the caster, bidding two extra Traits. If you win, the *Thaumaturgical* power or ritual the caster is attempting fails. You may only attempt to cancel those powers that directly affect you and your garments.

##### LEVEL 2

The character can make a normal Mental Challenge against the caster.

#### INTERMEDIATE THAUMATURGICAL COUNTERMAGIC

##### LEVEL 3

You receive two extra Traits for the Mental Challenge against the caster. You can attempt to cancel a *Thaumaturgy* power or ritual that affects anyone or anything in physical contact with you. (Meaning while you can use this if

someone with *Flesh of Fiery Touch* is grappling you, you cannot use this to counter objects hurled with *Movement of the Mind*.)

##### LEVEL 4

You receive four extra Traits for the Mental Challenge against the caster.

#### ADVANCED THAUMATURGICAL COUNTERMAGIC

##### LEVEL 5

You receive six extra Traits for the Mental Challenge against the caster. You can now attempt to cancel a power or ritual that targets anything within a radius equal to your Willpower in yards, or one that is being used or performed within that same radius.

#### WEATHER CONTROL

Tales have long been told of wizards who could control the weather; indeed, the powers of this path are said to predate the Tremere by several centuries. This path allows for subtle weather manipulation, and at higher levels you may even command entire storms. The area affected is usually rather small (at least on a meteorological scale), no more than three or four miles in diameter, although the Storyteller may alter this as she sees fit.

Decide how you wish to change the current weather and spend a Willpower Trait. Then decide how fast you want the weather to change, spend an appropriate number of Mental Traits (see below) and make a Static Mental Challenge against the Storyteller. If no Mental Traits are spent, the weather changes in a day.

Note that the faster you attempt to change the weather, the more taxing it will be for you. Nearly instant massive changes in local weather are considered Masquerade breaches and are guaranteed to attract unwanted mortal attention.

It should be noted *Weather Control* isn't as much about specific powers as it is about degrees of control over the local weather. Therefore the strongest weather phenomenon you can affect at any given level is listed.

#### BASIC WEATHER CONTROL

##### FOG

The area is filled with thick fog. Vision is impaired, and all characters engaging in challenges to spot anything by sight must bid two extra Traits unless they have Basic *Auspex* or better. Due to lack of visibility, the effective ranges of all ranged weapons are halved.

At this level, you may also call up gentle wind and produce other weather effects of a similarly mild nature. You may also increase or decrease the ambient temperature slightly, by about 10 degrees Fahrenheit.

At this level, the Mental Challenge required to alter weather is handled normally.

##### RAIN OR SNOW

The effects are similar to those of Fog — visibility is seriously impaired. Those attempting to spot anything with normal senses must bid four extra Traits. Those with *Auspex* need only bid two extra Traits. Obviously, depending on whether it

is raining or snowing (and it cannot snow very well unless it is cold enough), things may get very wet or extremely slippery. At the very least, driving becomes a hazardous proposition. The details are left to the Storyteller.

#### INTERMEDIATE WEATHER CONTROL

##### HIGH WINDS

The wind speed rises up to around 30 miles per hour, with gusts of wind up to twice that. All characters attempting ranged attacks with guns must bid two extra Traits when attacking; characters attempting to use bows or thrown objects must bid three extra Traits. You may attempt to knock people down with the winds by making a Mental Challenge against the subjects' Physical Traits, as long as they are in your line of sight and in a location that allows for such gusts of wind (outdoors or on a balcony, yes; inside a china shop, no way). This will not do any damage, but the subjects must spend the next combat turn getting back to their feet. If the characters are attempting physical feats, such as rock-climbing, or some other similarly risky activity, the consequences may be more dramatic.

Local temperature may be raised or lowered by up to 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

##### STORM

This power has the effects of both Rain and High Winds at the same time.

#### ADVANCED WEATHER CONTROL

##### LIGHTNING STRIKE

This attack inflicts three health levels of lethal damage on the target. You must make a Mental Challenge against the target. The target uses Physical Traits to dodge, and he must bid an additional Physical Trait while attempting to do so, as lightning strikes rather quickly. Note that unlike other Weather

Traits spent	Weather change
One Trait	In six hours
Two Traits	In three hours
Three Traits	In one hour
Four Traits	In 10 minutes
Five Traits	Almost instantly

#### WEATHER CONTROL INDOORS

Though *Weather Control* is certainly a powerful path, it does not lend itself very well for use indoors. While certain effects, such as temperature control, winds (provided that the room is large enough) and even fog can be attempted indoors, the Storyteller always has final say in whether or not an effect can be achieved.

Control powers, you need not spend Mental Traits to determine how fast this attack occurs. Unless there are storm clouds overhead, however, you must bid two additional Mental Traits, as calling down lightning from clear skies takes some extra effort.



# CHAPTER FOUR:

## INSIDE ELYSIUM

### PRESENTATION

The custom of presentation is arguably the premiere tradition of modern Camarilla society. Simply put, any vampire new to a city is expected to call upon the prince, announce who he is and ask permission to stay. For newly embraced Kindred, it is their formal introduction to the creatures with which they may be spending eternity. For visiting Kindred, it is their introduction to a new city and its perils. For the prince, it is an affirmation of her power and a chance to get information. For everyone, it is a chance to size up his or her new competition.

### SETTING THE STAGE

A Storyteller who knows that the night's action will feature a presentation will probably want to do a bit of planning in advance. In addition to reviewing the character of the new Kindred, she should ensure that the prince, the sire and whichever other characters will have formal roles in the presentation are aware of their duties. The seneschal can usually be counted upon to brief the parties involved, but, unless the seneschal is deliberately being lax, it is a good idea to double-check. The Storyteller may want to confer with the players of the new character and any others who would be have information about her to work out whatever background is necessary. Nosferatu and harpies often have some sort of dirt on newcomers, but they are certainly not the only ones. Previous encounters and old comrades or rivals always make good hooks for drawing new characters into the story.

If it is a childe's presentation, the prince would be expected to know about it in advance, in most cases because she gave permission for the sire to create the childe. If there is enough time, the sire should have arranged in character for this presentation during the previous session. If the presentation involves a newcomer to the city, the prince may or may not expect her presence; if the prince would not know, the player need not be forewarned. The same is true for the other players. One final complication: If the seneschal has been selectively filtering the flow of information to the prince, the Storyteller might

want to confer with him instead of the prince, following the flow of information within the domain.

Finally, remember that presentation can be an ideal mechanism for introducing new characters and new players to an existing chronicle, or even for starting a chronicle. For a new player, presentation as a childe under the direction of an experienced sire (and player) can act as an informative rite of passage that brings her into the action, introduces her to the other players and gives her a general idea of what is going on. For an experienced player, presentation sans sire can serve the same purpose, but with more of a sink-or-swim ambiance.

#### GIVING THE PRINCE HER DUE

The prince of the city should have a significant say in the feel of a presentation — after all, the presentation is directed at her in her court. The character of the prince will be manifest in both the general feel of the presentation and the specific details. Most princes prefer presentations to be public affairs with as many of their subjects as possible present. Others prefer to limit the attendees to only the most trusted (or powerful) Kindred in their domains. Some princes employ formal scripts that they have used for centuries — and expect all visitors to know — while others are remarkably informal. A suspicious prince may ask questions about the genealogy, motivation and history of the presentee. A cautious prince may want to ensure that the new Kindred has an ironclad understanding of the Masquerade as the prince sees it. A Malkavian prince may want to know what dreams the character had yesterday and which internal organ he thinks is the prettiest. Of course, many princes like to employ *Majesty* for this initial interview to “give the right impression.” In any event, the player of the prince will probably want to ensure that she has a presentation ritual worthy of her domain, after all, this will probably give the newcomer his first taste of what unlife will be like in this city.

The Storyteller may want to work with the player to create this ceremony, to rein in any creative or formal excesses the player may introduce. For example, it is generally not acceptable for the prince to force all newcomers to drink of her blood, and the rest of the troupe does not want to sit through an hour-long ceremony that makes jury duty look interesting.

While the prince may be the most visible personage, a well-done presentation should hint at the politics and powers behind the scenes. If the prince is beholden to some other power, some hints may arise, as she needs approval for what would normally be her sole prerogative. Some princes will introduce presentees to the primogen, the sheriff and other noteworthy Kindred. Others will leave it up to the vampires in question. Some will lavish time on the new vampires while others will have more important matters to attend to. In all cases, the character of the prince and her domain should be manifest in all that occurs, foreshadowing nights to come.

#### PRESENTING THE CHILDE

In essence, the presentation of a childe is a straightforward affair. The sire makes the necessary arrangements with the seneschal or in some cases, the prince. Then, at the appointed time, she brings the childe in and presents him. As noted above, the prince will probably have considerable say in the form of the presentation, shaping it to reflect her philosophy of leadership. In general, the presentation

of a childe will proceed along these lines: The sire calls for the attention of the prince; the sire introduces his childe; the prince questions the childe, and the prince acknowledges the childe. Any of these stages may be modified or even omitted to suit the character of the prince, and some princes have even added other events, such as questioning the sire or testing the childe with a simple ordeal. In most cases the sire can be presumed to have seen this ritual, or possibly even partaken in it as either childe or sire, so she should know what the prince expects and have schooled her childe in the appropriate behavior.

The presentation usually begins when the seneschal informs the prince that the sire is here to present her childe. In most situations, this is merely a formality, for the prince already knows that the presentation is planned. In cases where the prince and seneschal are not on the most open of terms, the seneschal could have kept the information from the prince, hoping to cause her discomfort. Alternately, the prince might spring the event on the seneschal, implying that he is not doing the job he is supposed to. Once the sire has been announced, the presentation proper begins. Some princes expect to be thanked for having given permission for the creation of a new childe, others want the whole business over as quickly as possible so they can get back to more important matters. In any event, the sire introduces her childe to the prince, and, if the prince so desires, the rest of the court. Some sires like to take this time to press their own agendas or tout their virtues or those of their new childe, while others merely call the new Cainite up.

As any new vampire is a risk to both the Masquerade and the safety of the prince's domain, most princes like to take the time to ensure that the new Cainite understands the rules of unlife among the Camarilla. Most princes will at least ask for a recitation of the childe's lineage and the Traditions, others may give the childe an impromptu test on the etiquette of unlife. The prince may want to prepare a speech or some set of questions and tests for the occasion, to help reinforce the nature of her court and her relationship with the sire and her new childe. A prince who favors the sire may praise her and try to form the questions in such a way that the new vampire appears clever. A prince who is resentful about giving permission for the embrace may make ask difficult questions or she may ask absurdly easy ones, implying that the sire could not possibly have trained the childe well enough to handle real problems. Throughout these proceedings, the seneschal or his secretary will probably want to take notes.

Unless the childe displays gross incompetence, the prince should recognize her, conferring the Status Trait of *Acknowledged*. The prince may give a little speech, may introduce the new neonate to the rest of her court, or she may just nod and grunt. Some princes even decline to formally acknowledge the childe, making it easier to remove her should she later prove to be a nuisance. Nevertheless, from that point on, the neonate is considered a full member of the Camarilla. If things go wrong, anything can result. The prince could declare that the childe is unready for Camarilla society, sending her away unacknowledged and stripping the sire of a Status Trait for making such a mistake. She could even demand the destruction of the errant childe, precipitating a dramatic flight from Elysium. Such events are rare, though, for a prince who does so too often makes many enemies, and the harpies start to question her ability to choose deserving sires.

A childe's presentation will probably be a harrowing experience for the character. Her performance will determine the course of her entire future, including whether she will have one at all. Though in all but the most unusual cases the childe will have at least one "friendly" face, her sire's, in the audience, she should be acutely aware that if she screws up, she may not only have to face her sire's wrath, but may be ordered destroyed by the prince. A childe has at least one advantage when she undergoes presentation, though. Since a childe's performance is a reflection upon the sire, a wise sire will almost certainly brief her childe about the presentation and what to expect. She will have given the new vampire tutelage in the Six Traditions and the Masquerade. She should also have told the childe about the clans and the other Cainites of the city, with special warnings about those who are working at cross-purposes to her. The sire's player or the Storyteller may even provide a cheat-sheet with this information that the player (not the character) can reference when all the new faces, names and questions get too confusing.

While a childe's presentation should be a harrowing experience for the character, it should not be harrowing for the player — challenging, maybe, but not harrowing. After all, the character is trying to prove herself worthy of immortality; the player is there to have fun. Other players should be sensitive to this distinction and the storyteller might want to have some distraction prepared if things look like they are getting too uncomfortable.

#### PRESENTING THE NEWCOMER

Most presentations do not involve the debut of someone's childe. According to the Fifth Tradition, the prince expects all Kindred visiting a city to present themselves. As such, it is not uncommon for a Kindred from another city to arrive in the prince's court and present himself. Such presentations have a totally different feel from those of childer. For one thing, the presentee usually has no sire to tell him which Kindred are treacherous and only rumor and hearsay as guides to the city's politics. For another, the prince and the Kindred of the city may have no idea of who this new Cainite is. He could be a diablerist on the run from justice, a Sabbat spy trying to prepare the city for invasion, an archon who has heard some disturbing rumors about one of the primogen — anything. In these last nights, a proper sense of paranoia can go a long way toward staving off the Final Death.

The actual ritual of the presentation is usually as straightforward with a stranger as it is with a childe, and usually has the unique feel of the prince's court. In most cases, once the newcomer has made his way to Elysium, he asks the seneschal to see the prince. Once he has been shown in, the newcomer introduces himself and answers any of the prince's questions. If all goes well, the prince acknowledges the newcomer, and the night goes on with one more predator added to the mix.

First, in order to be presented, the newcomer must make his way to Elysium. Most prudent Kindred learn this location before they set out to a new city. Those without the foresight (or time or resources) to learn where Elysium is will have to make a Static Mental Challenge once per night to locate it. The Storyteller may want to simply repeat the challenges till the player succeeds and say that the character has been in town that number of nights, or she may

force the player to exist outside of Elysium, subject to the vicissitudes of nightly unlfe until he finds his way there. Cainites who are known to have spent time in the domain before presenting themselves are usually viewed with greater suspicion, and if the prince hears of them, she may send the sheriff or the scourge to deal with them. Other Kindred who may have information or suspicions about the newcomer may also take action of their own.

Once reaching Elysium, he waits to be introduced to the prince. Unless sequestered in some out of the way place, he will probably spend his time sizing up the locals while they look him over. It is often considered rude to speak with a Kindred before he is presented, as some princes see that as a usurpation of their prerogative. If business as usual is underway, the newcomer may learn a lot before the prince admits him.

Once the presentee has been announced, he presents himself to the prince, usually identifying himself by name, clan and whatever else he feels is necessary, and asking permission to stay in the city for however long he feels he will need. Perhaps even more so than with a childe, most princes will want to query the newcomer about their history. Unless she already knows the vampire, most princes will at least ask for the Kindred's lineage and reason for being in town. These questions can be quite serious and in depth. If the prince has reason to suspect foul play, such as if the presentee was known to have been in town for a while before presenting himself, she may ask the sheriff to continue the questioning while she attends to other matters. The prince may also ask the other Kindred of the city if any know anything about the newcomer; harpies and Nosferatu are especially apt to have heard if the newcomer has done anything spectacular. If nothing seems amiss, the sheriff will return with the newcomer and so inform the prince. Naturally, the seneschal or his secretary will probably want to take notes of all that transpires.

Unless the court can prove foul play or bring other incriminating evidence to light, the prince will probably recognize the newcomer, granting him the Acknowledged Status Trait. Some princes will give the newcomer information on where not to go and what not to do; some will assign the job to the seneschal, sheriff or newcomer's clan primogen. A rare few expect the newcomer to learn the rules of her domain on their own. If the prince has reason, she may turn away the newcomer. The prince may also require that a Kindred who said he would only be staying for a brief while re-present himself if he needs to stay longer.

After the presentation, the newcomer will probably get an opportunity to meet with most of the other characters and probably hear enough innuendo and gossip to have an idea of the most obvious factions and powers that be. As for everyone else, they will probably be working on factoring the presentee into their own schemes and questioning how much of what he told them about himself was true.

#### SAYING NO

Even in these increasingly paranoid times, it is rare for a prince to refuse a Cainite's petition to stay in the city. Nevertheless, there are certain conditions where it is commonplace to do so. Such situations include:

- The Kindred would represent a threat to the Masquerade in the city.
- The Kindred has a history of causing trouble.

- The Kindred shows signs of supporting one of the prince's rivals.
- The domain is already overcrowded.

In such cases, the prince may grant the newcomer a couple of nights to leave her domain, or she may demand that he be gone before sunrise. Such decisions usually depend on the nature of the prince and the perceived threat of the newcomer. In extreme cases, the prince may even arrange for incarceration and destruction, but she should be cautious in exercising such measures, for it may undercut the entire tradition of presentation within her domain — an undesirable development indeed.

## JUSTICE

Even among the "civilized" vampires of the Camarilla, justice can be swift and harsh. In fact, draconian is a word that is often associated with Cainite justice. Though some Kindred scholars enjoy debating the exact origins and reasons behind this ferocity, most members of the Camarilla accept that it stems from their position as secret predators. Since vampires are so predatory, they do not accept many restrictions and laws. However, since their wariness of the power of humankind compels them to operate in secret, those few laws they do accept are vital to the survival of the entire race. They cannot risk the breaking of those rules and must stop any who would do so by whatever means necessary.

Within the Camarilla, the Traditions are the fundamental laws of Kindred society. All the other rules, strictures, ordinances, etc. are merely interpretations of and elaborations on those six laws. Naturally, each Kindred has a different interpretation of the limitations the Traditions impose. Within the Camarilla, only certain opinions truly matter, however. Most vampires see the prince and the justicars as the forces of justice, the princes on the local level and the justicars throughout the entire sect. While those two groups are certainly the most visible, the real situation is more complicated: The sheriffs, primogen, princes, archons, justicars and the Inner Circle each have a significant impact on the rules of undead existence.

### THE LOCAL WORLD — PRINCELY JUSTICE

"The will of the city: The will of the prince." Behind the simple words of the old saying lies a complex web of power, debt and ambition. While it is true that the prince determines the shape of justice within her domain, there are many opportunities to subvert that justice, before, during and after it reaches the prince.

The easiest way to prevent the prince from punishing a crime is to ensure that she does not learn of it in the first place. Many sheriffs and lesser Kindred are willing to cover up for other vampires if there is something in it for them. Sheriffs and Nosferatu have been renowned for their ability to accumulate and use an impressive array of prestation debts. And since charges of violating the Masquerade are often fatal, such boons are often of high value. For this reason, princes and primogen often make it a habit to monitor the prestation balance of the sheriff to ensure that he does not gain too much power behind the scenes. Scourges are rarely thought of as engaging in this behavior, not only because they are already loathed on different grounds, but also because no one values having a thin-blooded Caitiff in debt.



In most cases, once the suspect has been brought before the prince, she listens to the charges and passes judgment. In cases where a Kindred is known to have committed a crime, or at least been convincingly accused, but has avoided capture by the sheriff, a prince may opt to pass judgment in absentia. Certain princes with a flair for the dramatic may choose to hold a trial to placate the prince's subjects should they question the guilt of the accused, especially in the case of particularly celebrated or notorious Kindred. Depending on the nature of the prince and the nature of the crime, the trial may be a public one where any Kindred who wishes to attend court may observe if not participate, or it may be sequestered behind closed doors with only those the prince allows to attend. Some princes favor the Napoleonic mode of trial where they alone are entitled to ask questions, and whomever they ask had better answer quickly and completely. Other princes, usually those who have spent the majority of their existence in the United States, allow the accuser and the accused a chance to present their cases in their own words or to call upon advocates, witnesses or allies to speak on their behalf. Unless there is some other agenda involved, the word of one of the Camarilla officers typically holds more sway than that of a less illustrious vampire. In almost all cases, the courts of the Camarilla completely ignore the United States' Fifth Amendment.

Once the prince has reached a verdict, she must convey it, along with any sentence, to the court. The prince may make the pronouncement herself, or she may delegate the job to another Kindred or servant. If the verdict is guilty but the Cainite in question is not in custody, the prince may require that the Kindred of the city provide any and all aid in bringing him to justice. In the event that the sentence is destruction, the prince may order a blood hunt.

If the primogen disagree with the prince's verdict strongly enough to confront him, they may attempt to reverse his decision as described in *Laws of the Night* p. 221. Storytellers may want to handle this by secret ballot, asking each primogen privately for the number of Status Traits she is willing to devote to this cause. Once all of the Traits are allocated, the Storyteller or Narrator compares the total with the prince's permanent Status Traits and announces who is victorious.

### CRIMES...

Most crimes are broken down according to the tradition they violate. While the Camarilla usually holds the First Tradition as the most important of the six, the breaking of any Tradition is a serious offense. Though princes usually determine punishment by the severity of the offense rather than which particular Tradition was broken, they like to be able to cite the Tradition that was broken as a means of establishing the legitimacy of their ruling. Seneschals and harpies often like to keep track of such things for their own reasons as well.

#### The First Tradition: The Masquerade

Breaches to the Masquerade can range from leaving blood-drained corpses to transforming from a fanged human into a bat in front of the audience at a rock concert. This tradition can cover any activity that could hint at the presence of vampires. Additionally, since psychic investigators, the Society of Leopold, etc. have shown interest in other mystic manifestations than the vampiric, most princes include any obviously supernatural activities even if they are not uniquely vampiric in nature. Finally, this Tradition covers the dissemination of information about the Kindred and their activities even if no demonstration is included.



### The Second Tradition: Domain

Other than the Masquerade, the Second Tradition, the Tradition of Domain accounts for the most common and most varied assortment of Camarilla crimes. The reason for this is simple: The city is the prince's domain. Therefore, anything that interferes with the prince's control of the city can be depicted as a breach of the Second Tradition. Anything. Many princes have used this as a means of persecuting their rivals and enemies; almost as many have brought about their downfall by abusing this power.

Additionally, this condition passes down to the lesser domains the prince has designated throughout the city. A Cainite who interferes with the sheriff's patrol or hides some of the seneschal's notes can be charged with crimes against the Tradition of Domain as easily as someone who invades the haven of another Kindred.

### The Third Tradition: Progeny

In most cases crimes against the Third Tradition are fairly straightforward: If a Kindred has sired a childe without the permission of the prince, he is guilty. Some princes have taken this one step farther and declared that the creation of ghouls also falls under this Tradition; others claim that unauthorized ghoulung is a breach of the Masquerade. This debate has kept advocates entertained for almost a century.

### The Fourth Tradition: Accounting

The Tradition of the Accounting is mostly used to punish Kindred who are unwise in their choice of childer. Usually the prince employs this tradition to include the sire of an offending childe in any punishments she may devise. Some princes have also employed this tradition to entrap Cainites who manage to wriggle out of charges based on the Third Tradition.

### The Fifth Tradition: Hospitality

In order to properly govern her domain, the prince needs to be aware of the Kindred within. For this reason, most princes take the Tradition of Hospitality very seriously. Any Cainite new to the city who does not present himself to the prince as quickly as possible, preferably on the night that he arrives, is in violation of this Tradition. If he eventually deigns to call upon the prince or is brought in by the sheriff, it is within the prince's rights to charge him with breach of Hospitality. Ignorance of etiquette or how to contact the prince is never considered a valid defense.

### The Sixth Tradition: Destruction

The Sixth Tradition is the Camarilla's answer to the Fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill... without the prince's permission." This Tradition only applies to Kindred of the Camarilla whom the prince has acknowledged. The prince usually will not punish the slaying of mortals, ghouls, Sabbat and other creatures unless the murder broke one of the other Traditions. The Sixth Tradition also covers diablerie, which regularly carries the harshest of penalties.

#### ...AND PUNISHMENTS

Camarilla justice is not as bound by jurisprudence as mortal justice. So long as she does not offend her subjects to the point of rebellion, the prince is more or less free to apply any punishment she desires. Some princes strive for

ironic justice, shaping the punishment to fit the crime; others simply select the harshest punishment they can justify, trusting that it will discourage any further offenses. In most cases, diablerie and breaches of the Masquerade are met with Final Death, preferably after slow torture.

Below is a selection of punishments in descending order of severity. There are, of course, more penalties than these as princes are known to be quite inventive in this respect.

**Final Death:** The criminal is beheaded, burnt or otherwise slain so that there is no hope of return.

**Death/torpor:** The criminal is forced into torpor, either through blood loss, injury or both.

**Long-term staking:** The criminal is staked through the heart and either hidden or placed on display.

**Draining and exile:** The criminal is almost completely drained of vitae and then driven from the city.

**Exile:** The criminal is driven from the city.

**Blood bonding:** The criminal is forced to drink the blood of another Kindred of the court over three successive nights. Most commonly, the criminal is blood bound to the prince, one or more of the primogen, or the victim of the crime.

**Enforced Servitude:** The criminal is forced to serve another Kindred, possibly even a ghoul.

**Torture:** The criminal is forced to endure some physical, psychological or social torture.

**Draught of blood:** The criminal is forced to drink the blood of another Kindred of the court once or twice, bringing them closer to a blood bond or bringing them into one if they have already drunk of that vampire's vitae.

**Loss of station:** The criminal is removed from an office in the court and loses all associated perks, perquisites and Status Traits.

**Loss of property:** The criminal is deprived of some possession. This can include the destruction of a childe or a ghoul.

It is also worth noting that the actual form of the punishment can vary extensively. One crime may merit death by sunlight while another may only receive death by beheading. One prince may exile a criminal by leaving him by the side of the road in the Lupine-infested countryside; another may have a blood hunt drive him from the city; another may construct a catapult to throw the criminal across the local river. Ultimately, it is the prince's choice.

#### CAMARILLA JUSTICE

In certain cases — usually when a prince or other powerful Cainite is accused — the situation escalates. One or more of the Camarilla's justicars may enter the picture. Such a momentous event is usually terrifying for all Cainites in the affected city, since justicars are empowered to use whatever means are necessary to protect the Camarilla and have the power to do so. In most cases, the justicar will arrive only after one of her archons investigates the situation, so the local Kindred may have a slight warning — if the archon's presence is obvious. Even then, it is possible that the archon will be able to rectify the



situation himself — a situation made easier by the near-universal desire of the vampiric populace to avoid the attention of the justicar. The sections on archons and conclaves (below) handle such events more fully.

### THE BLOOD HUNT

The blood hunt — called the Lextalionis by older Cainites — is one of the nastiest weapons in the prince's arsenal: the Sixth Tradition made manifest in the streets of the city. At the command of the prince, all Kindred within her domain are granted the authority to destroy the quarry and forbidden to aid her in any manner. In certain cases, the prince may demand that her subjects actively participate in the Lextalionis, forcing the rapid and complete destruction of the heinous criminal. At least that is the theory. In fact, the city's Cainites often use the cover of the blood hunt to take care of other business as well.

### THE HUE AND CRY

A prince may declare a blood hunt if some Kindred within her domain has evaded more conventional justice and the crime is grave enough. She may command the presence of all Kindred in her domain and make a public proclamation, stating the name and crimes of the subject, or she may issue the edict to the sheriff and the primogen with the expectation that they pass it along to those under their sway. From time to time, other Kindred may presume to invoke the Lextalionis, sometimes in the prince's name, sometimes in their own. This act is considered a breach of the Second Tradition. Both the instigator of the hunt and any who participate in it can expect to feel the prince's wrath. Even if the hunt was in the prince's best interests, many princes feel personally affronted that any would pretend to her powers.

The speed with which the Lextalionis is prosecuted often depends on the popular sentiment behind the prince's edict. If the primogen or other Kindred see the blood hunt as merely the persecution of one of the prince's rivals, they are far less likely to pursue it as avidly as if they believed that the subject was a threat to their own unives or the author of some truly heinous crime. In general, Kindred will not look too askance at a prince who calls a blood hunt for a Kindred who has brought other Kindred to Final Death or committed diablerie, seriously threatened the Masquerade, conspired with the Sabbat or in other ways presented a threat to the Kindred of the city. Cainites are less concerned with Kindred who might pose a risk or inconvenience to the prince's political career and start to get paranoid when the prince begins invoking the Lextalionis over such minor matters. In such cases, they might also start looking toward the replacement of such an extreme ruler.

Another factor that shapes a blood hunt is the urgency behind it. In many cases, the prince is not so interested in the destruction of the Kindred in question as she is in his removal from her domain. Used in this fashion, a blood hunt can serve as a form of permanent exile. After all, most Cainites are inclined to avoid locations where the entire Kindred populace is authorized to destroy — and maybe even diablerize — them. At the other end of the scale, the prince may require all Kindred in her domain to actively seek to destroy the quarry. In such cases, the prince usually establishes some sort of reward for the Kindred who destroys the criminal, ranging from the criminal's possessions to the prince's favor (a Status Trait) to the station of the sheriff (who should have brought in the criminal in the first place). As an

added bonus, it has become tradition that whoever brings down the prey has tacit permission to diablerize him. A prince may explicitly forbid this, but unless she does, most of the hunters will be out for blood.

There are certain rules that apply to blood hunts, and all Kindred within the domain should know them or risk becoming the quarry of the next blood hunt. Though each prince is different and may adjust these rules as she sees fit, the following principles apply to almost all blood hunts. The first and most obvious rule

### CUTTING TO THE CHASE

Storytelling a blood hunt can be incredibly complicated for it will likely involve all players at their craftiest and most active. Storytellers may want to segregate the quarry, only allowing him to communicate with the others through a designated Narrator to keep the hunters and the prey from being influenced by each other's plans.

Another area that may require special attention is the use of Influence Traits. The volatile situation may force players to use Influence in desperate ways they have not needed before. As a rule of thumb, if a player can justify it convincingly, a Narrator may let him affect an area in which she does not have Influence by allocating one more trait than would be spent by someone who did have influence in that area. If the Narrator is not convinced, she may ask that more influence be spent or simply disallow the result entirely.

**Example of play:** Kascha has Underworld x 4 Influence, which she hopes to use to prevent Ko-Ko from escaping on a boat from pier 44. Since the Narrator feels that it would only take Transportation x 2 to stop the boat, he rules that Kascha needs to spend 3 of her Underworld influence to get the Rugsuckers to put the muscle on pier 44. If Kascha had had Church x 4 Influence instead, she would have been out of luck because there is no reasonable way for the local parishioners to affect Ko-Ko's boat.

This can also apply to situations where a Kindred has the right sort of Influence, but in the wrong location or institution. A Narrator may allow a character whose Underworld Influence is tied to the East End street gangs to get them to "call in some favors" and grant him use of the talents of the Russian Mafia for the night — at the price of one or more extra Influence Traits.

In cases where two Kindred are attempting to use Influence on the same institution, the Narrator may resolve the power struggle with a challenge using the Influence Traits in question. In these cases, the Kindred trying to muscle in is still at a penalty because he is using his Influence in an unusual environment. On the other hand, if the Kindred who originally had Influence in that area is not even using a single Trait to keep an eye on his people, the interloper's pawns may be able to get in and get what they want before he even realizes that his assets are being used by another.



is that none are allowed to aid the fugitive or interfere with the hunters. The blood hunt is a matter of princely justice, not of sport or friendship. Even if the prince has not compelled universal involvement in the blood hunt, helping the criminal in any way is considered itself a crime. The second vital rule is that the Masquerade must not become a victim of the hunt. Certain Kindred find it all too easy to get caught up in the thrill of the hunt, but it is vital for them to realize that it does no good to bring down the criminal if a greater crime is committed in doing so. The third rule is that the hunt ends at the city limits. This is not so much a law as a rule of thumb; the prince will punish no one for carrying the hunt further — unless she violates another prince's domain. Taking the Lex talionis beyond city limits — as defined by the prince's control, not by lines on maps — is simply too risky. Additionally, some princes use the blood hunt as a form of permanent exile. They do not actually wish the fugitive destroyed, just out of their city. Hunters could easily fall afoul of Lupines, Sabbat packs or the quarry's confederates as they stray from their home turf. The fourth rule is that the hunt stops only with the destruction of the quarry. Even if the prince who called the hunt dies, even if later evidence exonerates the quarry, even if the quarry escapes to another city or continent, the quarry's name stays in the annals of the city and the hunt continues.

In addition to the standard rules, the prince may establish rules of her own, either for all blood hunts within her domain or on a case-by-case basis. A prince may declare that diablerie is unequivocally forbidden or that only Tremere are allowed to carry out the hunt within a three-block radius of their chantry. If she fears the quarry of being a diabolist, she may insist that the Tremere take an active role. These addenda are entirely the prerogative of the prince, but it is the duty of all Kindred within the city to be aware of them.

The blood hunt ends when the quarry has been dispatched — met his Final Death. The victor returns with whatever proof the prince has demanded and claims any prize the prince may offer. If the quarry escapes, the hunt is not considered completed. Still, should the prey escape the city — or fool the remaining Cainites into believing that he did — the blood hunt is effectively over until he shows his face again. Despite the hunt being finished for all practical purposes, it is technically still active until proof of the fugitive's death is brought back to the prince — even if it is a different prince from the one who ordered the hunt in the first place.

#### THE HUNTERS...

Kindred join the blood hunt in different ways, in varying degrees and with different motives. Some have a personal stake in bringing down the hunted. Others see the hunt as a license to practice their skills and a chance to experience the thrill of hunting the most dangerous of prey. Still others are looking for a way to advance themselves by demonstrating their ability, and the blood hunt is just another theatre for grandstanding. Of course some Kindred may side with the prey — or at least against the prince. There are those who are uninterested in the entire thing and just want to continue with business as usual. Finally, there are those who want to use the distraction provided by the blood hunt to cover other, shadier activities.

Those who take an active part in the blood hunt have several avenues open to them. They may physically take to the streets, rooftops, sewers or whatever in



hopes of tracking the fugitive and bringing him down. A city is a big place, though, and it is often difficult to locate a single vampire within it. Still, if the prey is not yet aware of the blood hunt, or needs to take care of certain things before he flees the city, knowledgeable or lucky Kindred may manage to catch him by heading straight for the prey's haven. Others may seek out his favorite haunts or begin patrolling the typical escape routes from the city.

Cainites who have the resources and Influence Traits may use these to aid their search. *Police*, *Street*, *Transportation* and *Underworld* Influence can be particularly useful in such situations, but depending on the moves of the prey and the ingenuity of the hunter, almost any influence may turn out useful. In most cases, the hunting Cainite will only want to use their mortal pawns to search for and inconvenience the prey. After all, if the entire architecture department vanishes on a field trip she sponsored to the old sanitarium, it is bound to have negative effects on the university's willingness to follow her advice. Nevertheless, such information can let the hunter place herself at the right place at the right time, and often that is what hunting is all about. Another use for Influences is counteracting any influence the prey may have. It is not uncommon for a hunted vampire to use the mortals under his sway to create diversion or trouble for those who are now tormenting him. While protecting against this may not be the most glorious role in the hunt, it is ideal for elders who do not feel inclined to traipse through the street looking for some pathetic fool of a neonate.

Not all of the so-called hunters will be after the prey named by the prince. Blood hunts are dangerous events and all sorts of mistakes can happen. It is not unheard of for Kindred to take advantage of the chaos to take care of business that would be too risky at other times. After all, if one of the other hunters goes missing, who is to say that the hunted did not manage to turn the tables at some point in the chase? Other, less deadly tricks include ransacking another Cainite's turf or haven under the guise of searching for the quarry, striking at a rival's herd and planting evidence or bugs for use at a later date.

Some of the city's Kindred may decide not to take an active role in the blood hunt. Under ordinary circumstances, they can get away with continuing their nightly routine, possibly warning the quarry away if they should happen to cross paths. In those cases where the prince has ordered the participation of all local Kindred, these vampires may still evade the issue by hunting in unlikely locations, using their Influence ineffectively or being so obvious that the prey could hardly fail to avoid him. This can be dangerous, for these apathetic participants run the risk of being labeled as collaborating with the quarry, and thus being thrust into an even more active role in the next blood hunt.

Finally, there will be those Kindred who are willing to go against the prince's orders and help the prey. They may do this because the prey is an ally, because they wish to humiliate the prince, because they need the chaos to last just a few nights longer for another of their schemes, or for any number of other reasons. Actively aiding the quarry can be even more difficult than hunting him. Unless the hunter and the fugitive have some previous plan for such situations, she will have to locate the prey without letting the other hunters know what she is doing and convince the prey that she is an ally. If the hunter and prey did have a plan set up for this situation, the hunter will still have to be cautious, for so close an ally is likely to be under intense scrutiny during such a hunt. An easier technique is to create diversions that draw



the attention of the other hunters. Those who would aid the hunted must be especially subtle and careful, for being caught can prove quite fatal.

#### ...AND THE HUNTED

Being the target of a blood hunt is a terrifying, nerve-wracking experience for anyone who survives it. Though he is unlikely to encounter packs of vampires driving him through the streets — too much chance of damaging the Masquerade — he has to contend with his status as hunter reversing to that of prey. Worse, the fugitive has an idea of how powerful his pursuers are: Even now the Tremere could be tracking his movements through *Thaumaturgy*; there could be a Nosferatu across the street from him waiting to call in the Brujah, or the sheriff might have issued an APB to the police with his name and description. What can he do?

Unless the prey is suicidal or insane, his options usually take three forms: run, distract or fight back. In the long term, it is unlikely that a single Kindred can take on an entire city, so fleeing is the most likely long-term goal. Many cautious Cainites set up stashes of clothes, money and weapons in and around the city for emergencies such as this. If the Kindred is willing, he might be able to grab his stash and take the first bus to Kansas City before a strike closes the bus station down.

Sometimes the quarry has a couple of last chores to take care of, or his primary escape route is blocked. In those cases, he may try to throw his pursuers off his tail by creating distractions. Prey with Influence Traits can usually wreak enough havoc to force some of the other Kindred to devote their efforts to damage control. *Media*, *Police*, *Street*, *Transportation* and *Underworld* Influence can be especially helpful to the creative and desperate fugitive. Quarries often intentionally breach the Masquerade in their escape effort; after all, their pursuers are not allowed to do so and might even feel compelled to stop and patch things up. This can make things bad for the fugitive further down the road, though. Should he escape the blood hunt in his home city, he will probably want to settle down somewhere else. While a nearby prince may be willing to harbor the fugitive just to annoy her neighbor, it is unlikely that she will want to let someone who blatantly broke the Masquerade into her domain.

Finally, there comes a time when the prey must stand and fight. Clever quarries are likely to try to pick the time and place for this stand, either because he is intimately familiar with the terrain, or because he has taken the time to booby-trap it. Fleeing Gangrel have often noticed that pursuit slows down after the first Kindred encounters the punji sticks. Needless to say, a quarry stands a better chance if he can spread his pursuers apart and attack them one by one.

#### THE QUARRY RETURNS

From time to time, the subject of a blood hunt is constrained to return to a city in which he is hunted. Such things happen. Princes and other notable Kindred often take renewed offense at those who dare to taunt them by returning to a domain in which they are under threat of the Lextalionis. Worse, old allies may have grown distant over the time of his absence, so he should not count on their support. In most cases, the best the returning quarry can do is to lie low and try to complete whatever business has brought him back before the sheriff or the prince becomes aware of his return.



In certain cases, such as when a different prince has taken over or when new evidence has cleared the quarry of whatever transgression got him subject to the Lextalionis in the first place, the repatriate may not need to be so circumspect. It is often enough that he not flaunt his return. He should stay on his toes, though, for a tradition of pardon never made its way into Cainite justice, so he is still technically a wanted vampire. Any old rival or pack of neonates could decide to destroy him and still technically be operating within the prince's authority, so even under less hostile conditions, he would do well to be careful.

#### CLIMAX OR ANTICLIMAX

Finally, either the prey will be captured and destroyed, he will be known to have escaped, or he will elude his pursuers long enough that they believe he has escaped. If there is a victorious hunter, the prince should recognize and possibly reward him. Otherwise, the prince will probably chastise her subjects for letting the prey escape, and another bogeyman will enter the city's history.

#### ARCHONS

Archons are the eyes and ears of the justicars, and as such represent the first line of Camarilla justice above the level of the prince. Since princes can go bad, since traitors can move from one city to another, since some problems are hard to notice unless you can take in the big picture, the Camarilla appoints six justicars, one from each clan, to serve as sect-wide troubleshooters. And since the six justicars cannot possibly cover all the trouble there is to shoot, they employ archons. Whenever a justicar hears a rumor or gets a message about something troubling in a certain region, he sends one or more of his archons to investigate. If the archon finds that there is trouble, but nothing serious, he gives the prince or sheriff some advice on how to handle the situation and a warning that it had better be cleaned up when he returns. If he finds serious trouble, he takes care of it. If he can provide a good reason, an archon is exempt from the Sixth Tradition: He is allowed to kill with impunity. If he finds really serious trouble, he calls in his employer, one of the justicars, and matters escalate, possibly to the point of a judicial conclave. If an archon finds no trouble, he just keeps looking: No visible trouble just means that the problem is well-hidden.

Justicars may call upon archons to investigate rumors of collusion with anarchs, the Sabbat or demons; repeated or widespread failure of the Masquerade; evidence that a prince is subverting the Traditions, and any number of other problems that local princes either cannot or will not be handle. While archons may employ ghouls or younger Kindred to handle drudge work, most expect and are expected to be totally self sufficient, only contacting their patron justicars when their investigations are complete or to present regular status reports. An archon can go for weeks without contacting her employer, especially when operating under cover. This habit may have disastrous results if a justicar fails to realize that something untoward had happened to his archon.

Justicars usually select their archons from the ranks of the ancillae and younger elders — somewhere between three and six centuries old. They select Kindred of this age because they have the power and experience that comes with age, but are not yet so ossified in their ways as to be completely out of touch with the modern world. This is an important consideration since many of the problems they encounter are of modern origin. Archons almost always appear



to be incredibly competent and resourceful, blending centuries of experience in a wide range of situations with a ruthless will to get the job done. In broad terms, archons usually operate in two different modes: openly, employing shock, interrogation and intimidation; and clandestinely, employing research, subtle queries and spying. Though the typical archon can adopt whichever role he feels would be more productive, most have a preferred *modus operandi*. On those rare occasions when archons travel in teams, it is common for one archon to take on the role of public distraction while the other investigates covertly.

Regardless of which method the archon intends to employ, the first thing he usually does is research. He learns as much as he can about the city and its inhabitants from any trustworthy sources—sources whose information has usually been accurate in the past and who can be relied on not to let the subjects in question know that they have been inquired about. This information is important for several reasons: It may provide vital clues in and of itself; it gives the archon an idea of what to expect so he can recognize anomalous behavior, and it gives him an idea of what lies he should employ to make his investigation fruitful.

- An archon receives the following two additional Status Traits: *Empowered* and *Feared*. The character can never lose these Traits permanently while remaining an archon.
- When operating in an official capacity, an archon may remove a permanent Status Trait from any Kindred attempting to hinder his investigation or the sentence he has pronounced. This removal costs the archon nothing, and only a justicar can reverse it.
- When operating in an official capacity, an archon can detain, interrogate or destroy any Kindred, though he will need to present evidence to his justicar to justify his actions.

#### MOLES

In most cases, when an archon is instructed to investigate a situation, he enters the city quietly, either avoiding the scrutiny of the prince and her court or presenting himself as some other Kindred in town on some other business. The justicars, who know that there is nothing like the arrival of an investigator to make evidence take flight, inevitably sanction this defiance of the Fifth Tradition. Usually archons adopt a disguise of some sort so they do not need to avoid the scourge or the sheriff. In most cases these Kindred represent little threat to one as skilled as an archon, but everyone gets suspicious when rumors spread about the new Caitiff beating up the scourge.

Archons often present themselves as businessmen, Noddist scholars, historians or whatever other guise would allow them to nose around without arousing more suspicion than necessary. They often ask innocuous questions on a wide variety of subjects, not focusing on the matter they are investigating and being careful not to lead those they question to draw any dangerous conclusions. No Cainite is totally harmless, and all archons know that to other Kindred there is nothing more suspicious than a harmless vampire. For this reason, their covers usually suggest a threat directed far enough away that the locals feel they have nothing to worry about.



At the same time that the archon is interviewing the local Kindred, any subordinates and ghouls he may have will perform less sensitive, more time-consuming research, looking for supporting facts or suspicious trends. They may also reside in other cities, waiting to provide corroboration should anyone bother to verify the archon's cover, and then warn the archon that someone is checking up on him. As a final contingency, these deputies are sometimes told how to contact the justicar should the archon fall afoul, but most archons would rather trust their ability to get out of a tight situation than face the displeasure and embarrassment of their employer arriving for a false alarm.

#### SHOWMEN

Other times, archons announce their arrival with an imperious air and a list of commandments that sends every Cainite within a ten-mile radius scurrying to comply. Part bluff and part inquisition, this ploy is used when the archons feel that the threat is likely to make a mistake under pressure or when time constraints preclude an in-depth investigation. One of the more popular twists on this technique is for the archon to appear to be hunting for one criminal when he is really after another. Another trick is for the archon to create a stir and set his subordinates to snare anyone attempting to flee. The third and most common variation is to first complete a covert investigation in disguise and then make a grand entrance, displaying an uncanny understanding of the inhabitants of a city that he has presumably never visited before. In this scenario, the archon may either set his subordinates to acting as assistant interrogators, sticking their noses into any and all Kindred affairs, adding to the pressure; or he may set them to quietly watching his suspects, waiting for any false move. In the rare circumstances where he has enough deputies, he may use them both ways.

#### ...AND JUSTICARS

There are six justicars within the Camarilla, one for each clan. Each archon reports to one of these justicars, and while archons are impressive in their own right, the abilities of the six that the Inner Circle selects to police the sect are downright terrifying. Details and official *Vampire: The Masquerade* stats for the current justicars can be found in *Children of the Night*, but the Storyteller is encouraged modify or even re-write these characters to suit her own chronicle. These Cainites possess great power and experience, which they will not hesitate to use should they feel the need to visit the story's city. And they *will* feel it is important to visit if one of their archons experiences foul play in there.

#### THE RED LIST

Over the years and across the world, certain Cainites have managed through infamy or treachery to arouse the hatred of the entire Camarilla. These creatures are known collectively and individually as Anathema, and in the halls of Elysia everywhere, the Red List records their names and crimes. Anyone on the Red List is effectively subject to a permanent blood hunt in any Camarilla-controlled territory. Mere membership in the Sabbat, mere diablerie, mere infernalism are not enough to condemn one to the Red List; only actions so monstrous that they are infamous even among vampires suffices for this "honor."

Two justicars must concur that the crimes of the villain are sufficiently heinous to call a conclave concerning the matter. At the conclave, the

justicars present their evidence and recite the crimes. The assembled Cainites pass judgment upon the villain. Unless someone can present a convincing reason why the accused should not be condemned, the accused is added to the Red List. The only way to get off the list is to die. The Red List is ranked according to the infamy of the convicted, not that the average Kindred stands a chance against even the lowliest Anathema.

#### ALASTORS

Alastors are the direct, secret servants of the Inner Council. Though they perform other duties, alastors devote most of their effort to the unremitting hunt of the Anathema. Alastors are usually secretly recruited from the ranks of the most capable archons — so secretly that to most members of the Camarilla, the alastors are little more than a rumor. The only other Kindred enlisted as alastors are those rare vampires who manage to destroy an Anathema on their own; any character who does so is immediately recruited.

In addition to those listed below, alastors also receive an astonishing array of perks, including the severance of blood bonds, training in rare Disciplines and lavish amounts of money and other resources. Each alastor receives different bonuses to compensate for agreeing to an eternal unlife hunting the most dangerous creatures known to the Camarilla. Within the rarified ranks of the alastors is another, more elite group called the Red Alastors, composed of those who have managed to destroy one of the five highest-ranked Anathema. Red Alastors are rumored to possess even greater authority and power than regular alastors.

- A character recruited to the ranks of the alastors receives the following two additional Status Traits: *Sanctioned* and *Feared*. Short of being declared Anathema herself, the character can never lose these Traits permanently.
- An alastor may remove a permanent Status Trait from any Kindred attempting to hinder her mission. This removal costs the alastor nothing.
- An alastor is granted immunity to prosecution on any scale lower than a conclave.

#### The Trophy

The Camarilla heaps great rewards upon those who destroy its most hated enemies. Any character who kills one of the Anathema is granted all of her prey's possessions, entry into the ranks of the alastors and the Trophy. Also called "The Mark of the Beast," the Trophy is a tattoo of ink and blood that is thaumaturgically applied to the right palm. Once applied, the Trophy stays with the vampire forever, and can be detected even through gloves, though only justicars, elite archons and other Kindred in the know recognize it for what it is.

The Trophy exists for the protection of the alastor, so that an archon can tell the prince that she should not call a blood hunt on the Cainite who just decimated her city. It also exists as a precautionary measure, for alastors are prohibited from diablerizing their prey, and any alastor who breaks that

injunction or who defects from the Camarilla is a dangerous enemy who must be destroyed post haste.

#### ANATHEMA

It takes a special sort of vampire to be condemned to the Red List. Though creatures other than vampires occasionally make it to the Red List, it is a rare occurrence — the Red List is a Kindred institution. Each Anathema is a powerful, cunning and dangerous being, easily capable of tearing a city apart and certainly able to destroy a few foolish neonates who decide to go after it. In the past, the ranks of the Anathema have included carriers of mystical diseases, Sabbat warlords, serial diablerists, infernalists, threats to the Masquerade and other horrors that even the Kindred fear. It should go without saying that Anathema are Storyteller characters. Unless it is the central theme of the story, the Storyteller should not allow a player to control of one of these hunted pariahs.

Each Anathema is a different being with unique motivations. The only common thread among the Anathema is that the Camarilla views them as supreme threats. Storytellers should craft Anathema to suit the themes and logistics of their stories. If the story revolves around intrigue, the Anathema can add a new complication to the table. If the story focuses on the struggle against the Beast, the Anathema can represent the ultimate manifestation of the Beast run rampant. If the story centers around fate and self-determination, the Anathema could have been made what it is through forces beyond its control — or entirely of its own volition. Anathema are larger than unlife creatures that can be used to encapsulate the worst, and possibly even the best, of what it is to be Kindred.

An Anathema does not even need to make a physical appearance in a city to have his power felt. Mere rumor of the presence of one can send most Camarilla Kindred into paranoid cowardice or glory-hounding avarice, and the Trophy can be an attractive reward to those who know about it. Some characters may feel sympathy for an Anathema (especially if the Storyteller created the Anathema for just that purpose) and even try to aid it. This is a dangerous path, for the Anathema are understandably cautious and rarely gentle, even with their few allies. Even if the character survives the visit of the Anathema, odds of her surviving the subsequent encounter with the pursuing alastor are almost zero. Storytellers and players should remember that Anathema are deadly to characters and dangerous to plot lines, but what is the fun in playing if you cannot play with fire every now and then?

- The tales and rumors of the Anathema attribute such power to them that they may be considered to have as many extra *Feared* Social Traits as the storyteller deems appropriate. Naturally, these Traits can only be used against Kindred who know what they are dealing with.

## CONCLAVES

There are times when a situation requires the resources of more than just the Kindred of a given city. At those times, for those situations, the Camarilla holds conclaves. A conclave is a grand meeting of Kindred: All the Camarilla vampires who hear of it are invited to attend. Hundreds of vampires make their way to the city for the purpose of determining the solution to the problem at hand and for commingling with others of their kind. Technically, there are three kinds of conclaves: Grand conclaves are huge international affairs in response to truly momentous events. Regional conclaves concern matters in several cities or a part of a continent. Judicial conclaves are trials conducted for Cainites whose age or power puts them above princely justice. Any conclave is a rare and momentous event.

### SETTING UP

Even the smaller conclaves are difficult events that strain the abilities of the Kindred hosting them. Even before word has gone out about the conclave, the hosting prince and her staff have begun the complicated and delicate process of preparation, and for weeks after, they may be forced to clean up the detritus left behind.

There must be some matter of vital importance to the Camarilla as a whole, or at least a large segment of it, to justify the trouble and expense of hosting a conclave. Justicars have called conclaves to deal with renegade princes, to discuss Camarilla policy toward the Internet, to prevent inter-clan strife and to debate how to contain the Anarch Free States.

Only justicars are allowed to call a conclave. On rare occasions, a prince whose reputation is well respected by the Inner Circle may get away with it, but it is usually safer for her to convince an archon that a situation merits this sort of attention and hope he convinces his superior. Most justicars feel that princes are too parochial in their outlook, more interested in the welfare of their domains than the Camarilla as a whole. Justicars are also unhappy about others encroaching on their authority.

Once a justicar has determined that there is a matter of sufficient gravity to warrant a conclave, he must choose the location. Most justicars prefer cities away from the epicenter of the problem so the attendees are safe from its immediate effects. Justicars may also select the site based upon the capabilities of nearby princes. Since hosting a conclave successfully brings no small amount of prestige, justicars sometimes try to give the opportunity to princes of their own clan.

The justicar usually informs the prince of the hosting city four to eight weeks in advance, but he may give less notice for particularly pressing matters. The prince is, of course, free to decline the honor, but doing so suggests that the prince is not as capable as she should be. This makes the dubious prince and her domain a likely candidate for investigation after the current crisis has been dealt with. In most cases, the prince simply accepts and redoubles her efforts to sweeping whatever problems are vexing her under the rug.

As soon as a prince learns that she is expected to host a conclave, she will probably want to summon all her trusted assistants and begin making prepa-

rations. Some princes have contingency plans in place for just such an event; others improvise. Should the justicar doubt the prince's competence, he may assign some of his archons to aid (or direct) her staff. Specifically, the justicar is expected to name the Kindred in charge of security for the conclave. If he does not choose an archon, the chosen Kindred effectively gains the rank of archon and all its privileges.

Among the many matters the prince and her staff must contend with are security, should the Sabbat or anarchs decide to mount an offensive; accommodations for the city's guests, especially the more volatile and less publicly presentable ones, and an appropriate location for the conclave itself. They must also ensure that there is an adequate source of vitae, particularly difficult given that many Ventrue are reticent about letting others learn the specifics of their rarefied needs. Some princes also take this time to clean house, shoring up alliances and taking care of those little annoyances that could embarrass them during the upcoming event.

It is impossible to keep all these preparations secret, though all princes at least make the effort. Within a few nights, the Nosferatu and any Kindred who frequent Elysium will certainly realize that something is happening. Though disseminating rumors and information about such proceedings is forbidden both for reasons of security and propriety, it usually takes less than a week for all the Kindred of the city to figure out that a conclave is coming. The information can even spread to other cities.

Most justicars announce the date and location of the conclave approximately a month in advance. Smaller conclaves may be held with less notice, but it's polite to give the invitees enough time to get their affairs in order before they are asked to travel on business. In most cases, this announcement takes place in the court of the hosting prince and travels through the Camarilla by word of mouth. All Camarilla who hear of the conclave are invited to attend, but most only show if the conclave concerns some matter of interest to them. This means that the primogen of Lisbon will probably not feel the need to attend a conclave dealing with a rash of infernalism in Detroit, though a Tremere scholar who investigated a similar event in the 18th century may feel compelled to make the trip. In certain cases, a rare independent is allowed in as well, but she will be carefully monitored. The Sabbat are more likely to be topics of conclaves than participants; it is difficult to imagine a situation where they would be invited.

Kindred may start to arrive in the city as early as a week before the conclave. Though everyone is busy, the prince is expected to allow all guests to present themselves. Justicars frown on princes refusing entry to Kindred who have come to the conclave, and Cainites still debate whether the rules of the conclave or the rules of the city pertain to those against whom blood hunts have been declared. While the prince is greeting the newcomers, the seneschal may disburse advice and instructions concerning the ways of the city. Such information may include where not to hunt, the boundaries of Elysium, where to contact a clan primogen and where hunters are known to reside. At the same time, the sheriff and his deputies try to keep tabs on the new arrivals and do what they can to verify that no enemies of the Camarilla are sneaking in amid the confusion.



### THE CONCLAVE ITSELF

Before the appointed hour, usually midnight on the announced night, Kindred make their way to the main council chamber where the public business of the conclave takes place. All points of order and propriety in the conclave are determined according to a strange agglomeration of ancient Greek jurisprudence, European courtly etiquette and primal predatory instinct. For unchaperoned neonates, the entire experience can seem like a series of dangerous trials, from choosing the right seat to knowing when to stand or sit to knowing how to address the assembly. Naturally, the harpies are always glad to point out errors, but never willing to explain the proper course of action.

#### LOGISTICS, LOGISTICS, LOGISTICS

Some players love making plans, but many players may not find arranging the minutiae of a conclave matches their idea of a good night's gaming. Fortunately, that's what lackeys and pawns are for. Preparing for a conclave often occupies a large amount of the planning Kindred's Influence: getting the convention hall's peculiar architecture past the zoning board, seeing that travel arrangements are secure and rounding up enough strays who won't be missed to make sure the vitae doesn't get stale. With the expenditure of a little Influence, experts can take care of most of this without the player needing to fret the details. Of course, even experts can make mistakes, so wise Kindred keep track of what their people are doing.

Once all the important Cainites are seated, in order of age and power, the conclave opens with the presiding justicar addressing the assembled Kindred, speaking to them about the matter at hand. From there, any attendee who has something to contribute is allowed to speak, once the justicar has recognized them. Many neonates, seated toward the back of the council chamber, find that they have trouble catching the eye of the justicar, and even when they do, there is no guarantee that any of the elders will actually listen to what they have to say. Nevertheless, this is one of the few situations where a younger vampire is guaranteed the right to speak and be heard by his elders. Discussion continues throughout the conclave under the guidance of the justicar. As the presiding officer, it is his duty to see that attention does not get diverted and that any Kindred who has something to contribute gets the chance to do so. He may limit the loquacious from speaking too long and may order the removal of any disruptive vampires from the chamber. It is his job to see that the Camarilla reaches a decision.

Traditionally, no more than eight hours of each night are relegated to business, but in most cases, the prince and her crew will try to keep the visitors within the grounds of the conclave. It is easier to watch and guard them from treachery if their movements are limited. To this end, the primogen and their clans often prepare seminars, parties and other diversions to keep the guests entertained during their stay. Some younger Kindred suspect that the true business of the conclave takes part during the recess periods, when the neonates are being distracted and the elders have retired to their own diversions.

When it is evident that the matter has been thoroughly discussed, the justicar will state that discussion is finished. He will usually then review the discussion, describe the two or three most popular courses of action and order a recess for everyone to contemplate and discuss the matter in private. Though the justicar and his archons will do their best to ensure that no coercion or skullduggery occurs during that recess, it is one of the most politically frenzied times one will ever encounter. At the end of the recess, the justicar usually represents the choices and calls for the vote. Every Kindred present is allowed to vote. Voting is usually done either by a show of hands or by marking the choice on paper, with the archons commonly being enlisted to tally the results. Once the votes are counted, the justicar announces the results and ritually states that this verdict represents the will of the Camarilla and all members are to adhere to its decision and to inform all others of what has transpired.

After the vote, the hosting prince usually throws a final party where the assembled Cainites celebrate their membership in the largest vampiric sect in the world. In most cases, the justicar leaves to report the results to the Inner Circle immediately after reading the verdict, though he might leave an archon or two to see that everything ends smoothly.

#### AFTERWARD

After the conclave is finished, visitors are expected to depart in a timely fashion, and the sheriff will probably need to spend a good part of his time watching them and encouraging them to leave. Even with the visitors gone, it can take a month or so for the city to return to normal. The preparations for the conclave must be undone, officials must be mollified and any minor problems or breaches to the Masquerade must be taken care of before the city can return to its standard level of treachery and infighting.

Participants may find that they have gained or lost much based on their actions at the conclave. Status, respect, reputation and allies may all be affected by what a Kindred says and does, and even a neonate may earn the respect or enmity of an entire clan through her actions. Those who successfully host or command the security of a conclave can expect to gain a Status Trait in recognition of their efforts. Those who blunder can expect to pay the price, losing Status in an amount commensurate with their error and the size of the conclave — up to two Traits for smaller conclaves, possibly as many as five for the largest.

#### JUDICIAL CONCLAVES

Justicars convene judicial conclaves for the purposes of determining the guilt or innocence of Kindred who may fall beyond the scope of princely justice. Though similar to other conclaves, judicial conclaves are far less social affairs. The justicar, often flanked by his archons, usually presides over the trial with an iron fist, discouraging any discussion that does not pertain to the guilt or innocence of the accused. In such trials, guilt is assumed, and the accused must fight to prove his innocence. Most justicars ask questions, listening to any Kindred who dares, or is ordered, to speak. Unless the justicar has reason to believe that the accused has undue influence over the domain even when incarcerated, judicial conclaves rarely involve Kindred from beyond the city.

They are meant to be quick, efficient and final. By the same note, judicial conclaves rarely last more than a handful of nights.

As with most conclaves, once the justicar feels that the available information has been revealed, he puts the verdict to a vote of all Kindred present. Nevertheless, the justicar may overrule the vote if he believes that coercion or gross corruption has been brought to bear. In such cases, justicars often favor trial by ordeal, and may Caine help the vampire who is assigned an ordeal by the Malkavian justicar.

The sentence is carried out immediately after the verdict has been reached, and the justicar departs for the next crisis soon after. The justicar may order one of his archons to stay behind to ensure that no punishment is brought to bear on any who may have testified in an unpopular manner, but they rarely stay more than a couple of nights. Such unfortunates may consider seeking other residence if they have made powerful enemies.

#### MEETING NEW FRIENDS

One of the possibilities for a conclave involves temporarily merging two or more troupes for the event, with one troupe hosting the conclave and the others playing the roles of visitors. While this allows the Storytellers to present a larger conclave, it creates new challenges as well. First, the Storytellers must ensure that they agree about what is going on — each troupe should be going to a conclave focusing on the same issue. The Storytellers should review the rules and go over any house rules that the other troupes have developed. The Storytellers should also try to give accurate assessments of their players and Narrators so the entire event can be shaped for the enjoyment of all. Once the Storytellers have an idea of their resources and needs, they can get down to business. In most cases, the Storytellers may want to consider the hosting troupe's Storyteller first among equals for resolving any conflicts.

#### PLAYING THE CROWD

Conclaves are rare, very rare. Even then, the smaller regional conclaves and judicial conclaves are far more common than the grand, thousand-Kindred spectacles that draw Cainites from across the globe. Even so, presenting even a small conclave can be a daunting task for a Storyteller. If the conclave is to take place in the characters' city, many of them will be active in its preparation and operation. If the Storyteller wants to show the players how things are done in a different city, she must be ready to portray an entirely new locale. Similarly, if the story focuses on a single coterie or chantry, the Storyteller will not need to cover as much ground as if her players represent all different facets of the city's Kindred. This is especially true if the troupe is so intent on a specific facet of the conclave that they experience the rest of it only peripherally. In such cases, it is possible that the Storyteller and Narrators will naturally devote most of their efforts to the central theme, but they should not let the rest of conclave go by without prodding the characters to see just how large and terrifying such an event is. Perhaps the characters need to perform

some specific task at the conclave, such as swaying an elder's opinion, seeing that an artifact reaches the proper hands or handling the security. Perhaps all of the characters are elders who decide what will really happen while lesser Cainites engage in politics and socializing. Taking such a route can allow a Storyteller to portray a larger conclave with a smaller number of players.

#### POSITIONS OF POWER

Over the centuries, the Camarilla has adopted a handful of positions or stations to see that the Kindred of a city act according to the dictates of the Traditions. In many ways, these positions define the Camarilla even as the Camarilla defines them: They offer a structured society for perpetuating the Masquerade, granting power to those who can best promote the way of the Camarilla, and punishing those who work against it.

Below are eight commonly accepted stations. However, as each Camarilla city has its unique identity, concerns and personalities, it is often prudent to adjust the ranks. One city may need a full-time general to handle the war with the Sabbat. Another may require a sort of sinecure to be created for a powerful Kindred who is not suited for the conventional roles. Usually the prince and primogen argue long and hard over the creation of these special positions. Not only does the presence of these special positions wreak havoc with the conventional balance of power and all those cunning stratagems that rely upon it, but it creates hard feelings among those who feel that the new position detracts from their power. Of course, in certain cases, that is the primary reason for the creation of the station.

#### PRINCE

The prince is often seen as the seat of all Kindred power within a city — the most powerful and cunning of vampires and the official voice of the Camarilla within the city. Certainly, the prince wields great power within his domain. In addition to whatever other powers he can claim through wits or strength, the prince traditionally possesses the right to create progeny and decide who else may do so, the right to determine the boundaries of Elysium and the right to mete out hunting grounds and place others off limits. The office also traditionally includes remarkable political power among the kine of his domain. The prince also determines the course and shape of justice among the Kindred of his domain, including declaration of blood hunts.

Yet, while the prince is almost always the strongest of the city's Kindred — at least the strongest of those who have political aspirations — he is not always the masterful figure Kindred associate with the position. In certain cases, the prince endures a nightly struggle with the primogen or other would-be usurpers. Sometimes the prince is little more than a façade, a figurehead controlled by other, more powerful Cainites, or a lesser party whom the other powers of the city have agreed upon lest one of them develop greater authority than her comrades are willing to relinquish. The power of the prince is mighty — and desirable. There is never a shortage of Kindred eager to take advantage of any weakness, or to cultivate one where it does not yet exist, in hopes of gaining the position for themselves. Few events can shake up a domain like the fall of its prince as all surviving vampires will fight and maneuver to improve their station.



### THE ABUSE OF PRIVILEGE

Sometimes a prince gets out of hand. Sometimes a player gets out of hand.

When a prince's "justice" becomes too draconian, it is only a matter of time before the other Kindred of the domain take equally extreme measures to remove him from power. This could be the central plot of a magnificent chronicle replete with unlikely alliances, clever ploys and unexpected backstabbing — if the players and Storyteller desire it. It could throw a chronicle into chaos if they do not. If it looks like the prince's justice is threatening the chronicle, the Storyteller should speak with him and determine how to keep the game enjoyable for everyone.

On the other hand, it is very, very rare for anything good to come of a player getting out of hand. If the player has resisted all attempts to get him to accommodate the rest of the troupe, the Storyteller should feel free to employ whatever means she feels are necessary to bring the situation under control. These means may be in-game, such as bringing in an archon who handily outclasses the prince to address the complaints of the city's other Kindred, or they may be out of game, such as removing the player from the chronicle. It is the Storyteller's call, but if she wants the chronicle to continue, she must do what she can to keep it enjoyable for as many as possible.

Regardless of the actual position of the prince, it is quite true that she is the focus of Camarilla power within the city. The prince — even on those occasions when she is beholder to others — is the force under which and against which all others must maneuver. A wise vampire scrutinizes the relationships between the prince and the other Kindred. These relationships are often the levers one needs to pry one's way up the ladder of Kindred society. As the arbiter of Cainite justice, all who scheme within his domain must take his temperaments, desires and goals into account. It is prudent to be able to explain any infractions one may commit as being in line with the prince's aspirations. Conversely, one should always describe one's rival's actions in the opposite light.

For his part, the prince must manage the often-conflicting goals of maintaining control of his domain and ensuring the safety of the Kindred under his control. Most princes employ their role as guardian of the Masquerade for both purposes, using the pretext of "protecting the Traditions" or "maintaining the Masquerade" for their harsher decrees.

The prince who intends to last beyond the morning must have power, a commanding presence and the ability to keep the rest of the Kindred of his domain at each other's throats instead of her own. In a social environment like the Camarilla, one should never underestimate the prince's ability to grant and remove Status Traits, for such status is power. Naturally, the prince must balance these gifts and punishments to keep the majority of her subjects grateful, or at least indebted, to her while not granting them enough power to threaten her own authority. She must use punishments to keep rivals from

becoming too potent and to discourage her subjects from disobeying her dictates. The prince need not limit herself to acting directly upon the Kindred in question. In certain cases, such as when a vampire who deserves to be commended has become too powerful for the prince's liking, she may issue an edict against one of that Cainite's rivals. Conversely, someone who has earned the prince's displeasure may find his enemies receiving the prince's largess.

Many princes are more than willing to create special posts for Kindred who catch their eye: to reward them, to keep them occupied or to vex others whose authority these new stations usurp. The demands and purposes of these posts are as varied as the needs of the princes and their domains: The past decade has seen the creation of Ambassador to the Lupines, Guardian of the City Sewers, Lord Regent of Cathayan Affairs and many others.

Of course, should these boons and chastisements prove insufficient, the prince may fall back on more extreme measures, including the blood hunt. A prince who demands such punishments had better be certain that she has the power to enforce her will though.

### SENECHAL

The seneschal takes on many different roles, depending on the political situation. Traditionally, the seneschal is the prince's most trusted assistant, and the Kindred who performs the prince's duties in his absence. In most cases, the seneschal is both more and less than that. Often, the seneschal is the vampire closest to the prince, the filter through which the prince may perceive his domain and the person those who would speak with the prince must convince before they are granted audience. The position of seneschal is by no means a comfortable one. Princes often use their seneschals to perform those unpleasant duties they would rather not handle themselves. Princes may also make their seneschals scapegoats, claiming that they did not give them accurate, complete or timely information. In fact, many princes see this as no more than just retribution for the times when their seneschal chose to give them incomplete information or placed the blame for some unpopular edict that was the seneschal's own creation upon the shoulders of the unknowing prince.

In many cases, the seneschal is the battleground against which the prince and primogen vie for ascendancy, and astute vampires can discern much about the political climate of a city by studying whether the prince or the primogen chose the seneschal. It is also worth noting which faction the seneschal favors — it is not always the same as the one who sponsored him. Regardless of the climate, most vampires try to curry the good will of the seneschal, for this luminary usually has the ear of all the other important Kindred in the domain. And while he may choose not to work directly against an offending Cainite, a clever seneschal can easily filter the information he puts forth so as to make the object of his ire appear a fool or a threat to the prince.

Serving as the focus for those who would speak to the prince grants the seneschal access to an impressive amount of information, and many manage to keep as well informed as their city's harpies. In certain cases, an informal rivalry may develop between the seneschal and the harpies to determine who has access to better gossip. Such competition is the bane of the seneschal, for

it is easy for other Kindred, from the Keeper of Elysium to the prince, to perceive him as in contention for their power. In general, it is only the seneschal's inside information that lets him stay one step ahead and keep his many challengers at each other's throats instead of at his. As a premiere power broker in the domain, the seneschal should keep in close contact with the Gossip (*Laws of the Night* p. 218) if the campaign has one.

Many seneschals find it useful to keep an assistant or a secretary. If he is lucky, he will be able to choose his own. Less fortunate seneschals are often "gifted" with one by the prince, one or more of the primogen, or some other powerful Kindred in the domain. Ostensibly, these Kindred are there to help the seneschal, but none are so foolish as to believe that. In truth, these assistants are almost always sponsored in hopes of gaining their patron access to some of the seneschal's information, usurping a bit of his power or as part of some other political machination. In such cases, the assistant becomes merely another front in the nightly intelligence war that marks the seneschal's existence.

#### PRIMOGEN

The word primogen refers to both the council of most powerful Kindred within a city and the individual Cainites that comprise it. The primogen council usually acts as both an advisory council to the prince and a check on her power. In theory, the primogen is composed of the eldest of each Camarilla clan, and the primogen of each clan is expected to protect that clan's interests within the city. Nevertheless, certain clans — usually Malkavian and Brujah, for they are often considered too volatile — may find their presence proscribed by the prince, and thus have no representation among the primogen. Additionally, some clans may have enough power in the city to command more than a single seat on the primogen council. Also, in some cases, the prince acts as his clan's representative in the primogen, in others some other vampire, often one of the prince's childer, but sometimes a rival clan member, fills that post.

The members of the primogen are usually engaged in a struggle for power with the prince and the other primogen, and daring Kindred may gain the favor of their clan primogen by performing deeds that further their power. This is a dangerous game though, for the primogen have had decades or even centuries to develop their plans and can react quite angrily to ill-informed meddlers. Naturally, it is more common for such folk to get dragged by one primogen or the other into these machinations against their will.

Most Cainites try to limit their interaction with the primogen to that of their own clan, since she is the most likely to be able to help them and interested in doing so. It might seem that a primogen could abuse her powers by repeatedly increasing the status of her clanmates, but such actions tend to result in a backlash from the other clans. Additionally, granting excessive social power to ambitious underlings can be a dangerous ploy. If Kindred are cautious around their own clan's primogen, they are doubly so around those of other clans. Unless a vampire has a reputation as a friend of the clan in question, primogen of different clans often view such creatures as little more than pawns and spies of their rivals — spies to be fed disinformation and pawns to be led astray. After all, anything that decreases the prestige of another clan

decreases the importance of that clan's primogen; and anything that reduces the power of one primogen increases the authority of the others. As senior members of their clan, primogen possess considerable power, though it is usually limited to the clan and its area of influence. Primogen rarely have official powers beyond their clan, but as they are powerful Kindred in their own right, lesser vampires tend to tread lightly in their presence.

The primogen council is usually limited to the senior members of each clan, which limits the membership to five Kindred in most cases. Nevertheless, many primogen like to maintain a lieutenant of sorts, as a means of displaying clan unity, subtly threatening the other primogen and keeping track of the sorts of tedious details that do not demand their complete attention. In Great Britain and the United States, the Primogen have adopted the term Whip to refer to these roles from their mortal legislatures. The jockeying and maneuvering among these lesser Kindred can be quite intense as the primogen like to present this as a route to prestige and power. They gloss over the fact that there is room for only one primogen in each clan, and these ancillae and neonates will only get that post by leaving for another domain or over the dead body of the current one.

#### HARPY

If the prince is the official face of Camarilla justice, the harpy is the de facto arbiter of vampiric propriety, culture and status. They are the undying memory of *faux pas*, innuendo, gossip, rumor and scandal — all bundled into a viciously entertaining combination of Torquemada and Miss Manners. In the world of the Camarilla, where the halls of power can often resemble an old boys' club, the harpy is as close to an equal-opportunity position as one may find. Any Kindred with the right combination of wit, maliciousness and *savoir faire* may insinuate herself into the position. Of course any pretender who tries but falls short will find that news of this particular solecism has reached the ears all but the most bucolic of domains.

Many neonates question the actual power of the harpies, claiming that all it should take is the strength to ignore their japes to render them totally impotent in the face of Kindred with real power. Such naïveté rarely lasts long, as all of the elder Cainites have a vested interest in the power of the harpies: It keeps conflicts within Elysium confined to the social arena, and that keeps the elder vampires that much safer. Younger vampires who underestimate the harpies' power soon learn the error of their ways — as lack of proper respect for one's elders is one of the foibles harpies most love to point out.

There is usually one primary harpy, but she may sponsor others as described in *Laws of the Night* p. 219. In addition, harpies may employ or encourage other Cainites to bring news, gossip and information their way. Such duty is doubly dangerous, for it will certainly draw the ire of those whose faults are so bought to light, and being in such close proximity to the harpies increases the chance that they will notice and broadcast their servant's faults. Nevertheless, for Kindred clever and circumspect enough to handle the demands of this situation, being a spy for the harpies can be an effective route to information, and possibly even an entry into their elite number.

### THE LITTLE PEOPLE

In addition to the major stations, important Kindred often enjoy keeping personal aides, secretaries, bodyguards or whatever in attendance. As a rule, such subordinates possess no special authority unless their masters can and do grant it to them. For senior vampires, granting such powers is always a double-edged sword. One wants one's servant to have the influence to complete his assignments expeditiously, but one does not want him gaining enough power to become a threat. Additionally, these subordinates are often the targets of plots and even recruitment by opposing Kindred, so they must be watched carefully. Nevertheless, as the world becomes more and more complex, it has become harder for vampires from past centuries to keep apace with it all, and more of them have taken to relying on their aides to keep their interests running smoothly.

Even more than the seneschal, harpies need to keep in communication with the game's Gossip, if one is present, to record the objects of their displeasure, to verify the activities of others who are altering the status of other Kindred and — as a simulation of their network of informants — to keep them abreast of the latest developments in their chosen arena. In games where there is no Gossip and the Storyteller feels that one of the harpies is sufficiently responsible, that harpy may fulfill the role of Gossip for the game. Additionally, Storytellers will want to make sure that harpies are kept apprised of any critical gaffes the other characters may have made.

As a final note, harpy players must exercise caution to ensure that their characters direct their comments at the mistakes of the other characters, not at the players. It is all right to mock a character's choice of clothes when he attends Elysium; it is not proper to make fun of the player himself. Always keep the distinction between character and player in mind.

### KEEPER OF ELYSIUM

The Keeper of Elysium has broad powers within the Camarilla, but only within certain strictly delimited boundaries. Within the confines of Elysium, the keeper has the authority to take whatever actions she feels are necessary to preserve the Masquerade and the sanctity of Elysium. Keepers are charged with the physical security of Elysium as well as the societal ramifications of what transpires there. Though such power may seem trivial in the face of the strength of the sheriff or the coercion of the harpies, Kindred know that Elysium is one of the few safe, neutral places where they can interact. As the master thereof, the keeper of Elysium possesses a particularly focused power.

If the keeper feels that a function planned for her domain would be a threat to the Masquerade or the Kindred, she is entitled to cancel it without notice even if it is already in progress. Many Cainites derive prestige, power and pleasure from events held in Elysium. Venttrue hold business dealings and entertain visiting dignitaries from distant domains. Toreador host balls and exhibits. Brujah have their raves and Tremere their discourses. And, of course, those who wish to speak

with the prince must usually enter Elysium to do so. When such meetings are aborted as threats to the Masquerade, not only can it be remarkably inconvenient, but the host's image is tarnished. Additionally, the keeper is expected to control the presence of weapons within Elysium. As such, she has the right to search any Kindred who requests entrance. Such searches are rarely more than an embarrassing nuisance, but they too reduce the image of those subject to them. Additionally, one never knows what unfortunate items may turn up when one searches a vampire. Finally, some keepers have been caught spying upon certain guests, "out of concern for the Masquerade" of course. For these reasons, most Kindred try not to offend the keeper of Elysium. On the other hand, those Cainites with anarch leanings or who do not respect the tradition of Elysium often see the keeper as embodying all that they detest about Camarilla: petty, artificial tyranny, arbitrary rules and no real power to speak of.

The keeper of Elysium is one of the most public of stations. Keepers regularly interact with the primogen, the seneschal, the sheriff, any other Kindred who would have a use for a quiet neutral ground and even mortals who merely see it as another museum or library. These relationships are often professional, for example, the keeper may ask the sheriff to aid in security matters in Elysium. They can easily degenerate into rivalries, though, especially when one Cainite sees another as interfering with her duties and rights. Thus, though the station is prestigious, being keeper of Elysium is demanding, politically risky and often held only for a brief term. In some cases, the position is given to a troublemaker in the hopes that she will humiliate herself. Such cases are rare, however, for few domains can afford to have an incompetent keeper.

In addition to whatever security, catering and maintenance forces she controls, a keeper may have a significant collection of assistants. Usually keepers use ghouls, but in larger cities, lesser Kindred may fill these positions. A keeper usually wants to have at least one assistant for each separate geographical location that comprises Elysium within the city. She may also have a lieutenant in charge of security, and possibly another whose sole purpose is to act as liaison with other Kindred of note such as the seneschal and the sheriff.

### SHERIFF

The sheriff is the strong arm of the Camarilla, the Cainite who ensures that even the more rebellious vampires obey the prince's orders. Though he is often seen as little more than the prince's enforcer, the predations of the Sabbat and the approach of the Final Nights have forced successful sheriffs to become more cautious, disciplined and astute. In addition to policing the local Kindred population for violations of the Masquerade — a task made more vital and dangerous by the rise of public media — the sheriff must be prepared for such crises as have been erupting in these dangerous times, up to and including being a general in an all-out war with the Sabbat.

Most Kindred are wary of the sheriff. Though princes are increasingly employing cautious, tactically savvy enforcers, Cainite folklore continues to view the sheriff as the prince's favorite thug. Since they work in different theatres of conflict, harpies and sheriffs often detest each other. Unless the sheriff has shown favoritism concerning a particular clan, the primogen are usually willing to leave him to his job while they attend to their own concerns.

Most sheriffs see the scourge's duties as encroaching on their jurisdiction, so there is rarely any love lost between the two positions. The rest of the city's Kindred usually just try to stay out of his way.

Though the prince may use the sheriff for whatever tasks he deems necessary, most sheriffs spend their time policing the Kindred community for violations of the Masquerade. Sheriffs and their deputies visit the racks and whatever hunting grounds are trendy this month to ensure that everything is suitably quiet. They listen to EMTs, the police, the local media and anybody else for rumors of suspicious happenings. Most sheriffs also keep a fair number of stool pigeons among the neonates. If they hear something, they track down the offender and drag his sorry carcass back to the prince for judgment.

Given the dangerous nature of their duties, sheriffs often take on deputies. In most cases these deputies are merely less experienced and less powerful enforcers. In certain situations the sheriff may want to have specialized deputies to handle specialized problems. Sheriffs may call for deputies who have skill fighting Lupines, experience with Sabbat tactics, rapport with anarchs or whatever expert knowledge is necessary for the protection of the domain and the execution of the prince's orders. Such specialists usually receive more respect than the sheriff's ordinary deputies do; this sometimes creates tension among the ranks. Sheriffs also employ any number of spies to bring them information about breaches in the Masquerade and about the movements of suspect Kindred. Such vampires do not count as deputies, though—they only serve the sheriff through the occasional bit of intelligence offered for some money or a minor boon.

#### SCOURGE

The scourge is charged with culling the city of undesirable vampires, specifically those created without the permission of the prince. Most of these vampires are of the 14th and 15th generation, but some are Caitiff or unrecognized childer of lower generation. Though many cities have not instituted the station of the scourge, others have, trying to stave off the "Time of Thin Blood" prophesied in the *Book of Nod*. Though some claim that the station of scourge is an ancient post dating back to the Dark Ages and resurrected in modern times, others argue that it is an entirely new creation. Regardless of the historical truth, in those cities where the scourge stalks the night, she stands as a mythic bogeyman and source of fear among those illegitimate vampires who have heard of her and among those legitimate Kindred who wonder what she might become.

In cities where one exists, most Cainites shun the scourge. Even those who perceive her existence as necessary seem troubled by her presence, perhaps worrying that the martial prowess she wields against the undesirables may one night be turned against them. For their part, most scourges shun the company of those they protect, perhaps sensing their unease, perhaps seeing them as the source of the problem that they have been called upon to correct. The few Kindred who attempt to keep the scourge fully integrated in Camarilla society are rarely appreciated by the scourge or their fellow Kindred.

On a typical night, a scourge may travel to the more dismal, less populated parts of the city, where even Nosferatu and Malkavians rarely have reason to

venture. There, she searches for signs of fugitives, such as rats and stray dogs drained of blood or street people who are more jumpy than usual. Some scourges set traps, while others hunt the Caitiff down like beasts. Some princes demand that the prey be brought back alive for questioning, in hopes of learning who is being sloppy. Others are content to see the heads or fangs of the night's take. Occasionally, sometimes based on a rumor or a tip, sometimes not, the scourge visits the city's regular Kindred, looking to see if they are harboring illegally created childer. On such occasions wise scourges are even more cautious than normal, since older vampires are far more cunning and dangerous than the untrained fledglings they normally hunt.

Unlike the other stations, the position of scourge is almost universally a solitary role. Whether out of princely fear of her violent, anti-social ways or because of the general undesirability of the position, there are few cities with more than one or where the scourge has assistants.

#### KEEPING THE SCOURGE CLEAN

A scourge can easily make a chronicle unpleasant for any troupe. The scourge ranks second to only the prince in potential for game-disrupting player abuse. Examining the theme of petty power as represented by a scourge could be a fascinating element of a chronicle if properly handled. Poorly handled, a runaway scourge could ruin the game for any players with Caitiff characters. Fortunately, there are myriad ways for a Storyteller to address this problem, ranging from the discarding of the position by the prince to an unexpected encounter, such as a young Lupine undergoing his First Change or an elder who did not feel the need to inform the prince of her presence.

## THE ELTERS OF THE CAMARILLA

#### WHAT IS AN ELDER?

An elder is a vampire who has seen the passing of at least three centuries. Many are far older. Vampires of the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Generation are typically considered elders. They are typically the most visible players of the Jihad—the secret, centuries-long war waged among the Antediluvian vampires—though most elders find it preposterous that they could be the unwitting pawns of their forbearers. Sired long before the modern nights and closer to Caine's blood than their younger cousins, elders often occupy—or seize—the most prominent stations in the Camarilla sect: Many princes, primogen, archons and justicars are drawn from the elder ranks. Other elders are lone wolves, prowling just outside the acknowledged perimeter of Kindred society, watching and observing for purposes known only to them. Regardless of their visibility, younger Kindred are expected to defer to their elders and show respect for their age, though this custom is taken for granted more and more in these modern nights when the winds of change blow through every city the Camarilla still holds.



A rare few Kindred who claim the mantle of elder really don't qualify. These are the pretenders, vampires who are strong in generation but not in chronological age. Most true elders have existed far longer than any pretender, but since Kindred emphasize respect for purity of bloodline, they admit the pretenders into their society, albeit grudgingly. Pretenders normally boast a powerful sire, who may or may not be an elder herself; such vampires are honored for their lineage and not for their own merit. A few pretenders achieve their status not through the Embrace, but via a more sinister means — they steal the power of their elders through the heinous crime of diablerie.

### THE RAVAGES OF TIME

What happens to the typical Kindred when he reaches the age of consideration? The most obvious result is the nominal respect and status accorded to him by the younger vampires and his peers. But the passage of time itself also works distinct alterations into the mind, spirit and heart of the Kindred who survives long enough to join this august community of ancients. Sometimes subtle, other times painfully obvious, these changes affect nearly every aspect of the elder's behavior, and therefore the manner in which the elders are played.

### MORALITY

All vampires begin to lose their connection to their lives and humanity shortly after the Embrace. It is difficult, after all, even for the most ethical and determined being to pursue the exacting ideals of human morality in the face of the nightly pressures, dangers and temptations that both surround and create Kindred society. Try as the vampire might to cling to previous ideals, she finds inevitably that love, warmth, kindness and compassion all fade slowly as the years pass. As the years become decades and the decades centuries, this disassociation from humanity becomes even more pronounced. Most elders are very close to the Beast: They feel it roiling and tearing in their gut, demanding release, and they sense it growing stronger with each casual murder or act of base cruelty they commit. Ancient elders sustain only by the most rigorous exercises in self-control. They fear that each frenzy may be their last. Those wretched souls who cross that final threshold into the ultimate ravening frenzy are disposed of like the mad dogs they resemble before they can do irreparable harm to the Camarilla's Masquerade.

In practical game terms, it is rare to encounter a true elder with a total of Morality Traits higher than 3. The number of casual murders, premeditated thefts and wanton cruelties an elder inflicts just to survive that long usually precludes any greater total. Elders on the Path of Humanity are more likely to develop Conviction and Self-Control, though the latter is often in short supply when an elder's pride is pricked or ego bruised. It is not uncommon for the Humanity of an ancient elder to have eroded to the point where she possesses only two Morality Traits. Such elders often find that only the most base cruelties and deranged pleasures can excite senses so totally jaded by centuries of stimuli that those senses might well be described as non-existent. At this point, these Kindred have difficulty relating not only to humans but to many younger Kindred as well; there is so little left within them that is recognizably human that they become a mystery to the neonates and ancillae with whom they still interact.

### APPEARANCE

A vampire's loss of Humanity is reflected not only in her behavior and psyche, but her outward appearance as well. As Humanity fades, she begins to resemble a pale, desiccated corpse — further evidence of her extreme distance from her human origins. Many elders can no longer be mistaken for human except under the most favorable (or carefully orchestrated) conditions, to the point where they cannot interact successfully with any kine who is not one of their servants. Naturally, this condition reduces the amount of contact elders may have with humans, which in turn increases their spiritual separation from them, and so the downward spiral continues toward its near-inevitable grim conclusion.

Her age and state of mind also influence the outward trappings the elder chooses to don before making a public appearance. Some elders, particularly those most insistent on maintaining both the letter and spirit of the First Tradition, play the fashion game with almost as much zeal as mortals, keeping abreast of the latest developments coming out of the European fashion houses. They retain entire staffs of ghouls who serve no purpose other than to attend to their masters' clothing and grooming. Other elders are so jaded that the entire notion offashion palls for them; they could not care less what adorns their bodies, so long as modesty is preserved. That is not to say that the latter sort will choose clothing that risks the Masquerade, but that they are less likely to be concerned that their suit jacket or evening gown is some four decades out of date.

When deciding what your elder will wear, concentrate on the details. Unless you're extraordinarily fortunate, you probably can't afford an entire wardrobe of authentic period garb, and must make do with one or two serviceable pieces and some good accessories. The latter can suggest age and status without being elaborate: Lapel pins, brooches, rings, cigarette cases, canes, gloves, etc. can provide all the suggestion of the Old (or even Classical) World that you are likely to need. That is not to say that you should abandon the idea of looking the part to the best of your ability. LARP is even more fun when players do all that they can to create and preserve the illusion that they are indeed someone else for the evening. Try your luck at vintage clothing shops and consignment stores, and bring your friends along!

### BEHAVIOR

Being something both more and less than human, all vampires are more or less monstrous. Vampire elders, however, definitely tip the scales on the "more" side of the equation. They are among the most fearful, suspicious, unfeeling and jaded beings the night has ever known, and their behavior reflects these characteristics. It is the elders who created the Camarilla and who determine its culture. The sect is ostensibly a shield designed to protect the Kindred from the horrors of a second Inquisition. But it might also be said that the Camarilla is a means of protecting the Kindred from themselves, providing a codified rationale for minimizing contact between vampires and humans, contact that becomes only more painful as the vampires age. The mental and spiritual barriers that time erects between the elders and humans is reflected in the Camarilla's Masquerade, which beyond its practical utility also provides a convenient excuse for the elders to spare themselves the acute discomfort they experience when interacting with mortals.

## PLAYING THE PART

You age, but you do not improve. Certainly your intellect, your cunning and your powers grow more vast, and if you are fortunate and clever, you may come to understand more fully the nature of your existence and environment, and the longer you survive, the more impressive these characteristics may become. But you can never grow *better*. You left that capacity far, far behind you — it belongs to the Canaille, to the mortals whom you dismiss as cattle, from whom you are now so distant in nature and thought that you might as well be an alien visitor from another planet. But that's not the worst of it. The worst of it is that you know it, whether you admit it to yourself or not. You're painfully aware, in the deepest recesses of what's left of your desiccated heart, that your existence is a testimony to an appalling decay of the soul that you are powerless to halt, even if you wanted to. And you don't want to, because you're an elder, and this is what enables you to survive. Even this paranoid, flavorless and dull existence is better than the Final Death.

Playing an elder character isn't easy. You can imagine what it might feel like to be a bloodsucking, animated corpse who's lived hundreds of years and lost all vestiges of human emotion, but you can't really draw from personal experience to guide you in portraying this creature. Few roleplayers have centuries of experience at their disposal with which to hone their skills at courtly intrigue, social etiquette and secret murder. But you can touch on the cornerstones of good elder portrayal: paranoia, fear, hatred and cruelty.

### FEARFUL PASSAGES

Your elder character isn't going to be like any other player's elder, but your character will share some similarities with others of your ilk; indeed, in many ways you will have more in common with the creatures who may prove your greatest rivals than with the incomprehensible younger generations. The ways of the past bind you together, and so does the fear that such longevity engenders. Indeed, it is fear that is your most constant companion on the long road of undeath. You might think that an elder character has little to fear from anything or anyone. After all, he has the advantages of age — higher Trait maximums, a larger Blood Pool, resistance to the formidable powers of *Dominate*, ample Willpower Traits and (if you're fortunate) more Discipline powers than the average ancillae or neonate character. But playing an elder who believes herself to be indestructible or unstoppable is the quickest way to become a dead elder. There's plenty for an elder to fear out there, and with good reason.

### CHANGE

First and foremost on your character's list of Most Feared Things is, paradoxically, something that has proven inevitable — at least so far: change. Elders may be a paranoid and jaded lot, but only those who are utterly insane fail to recognize one inescapable fact: If the fragile cords of the ancient laws and customs that bind the Camarilla together were to unravel, the elders and many Kindred with them would be plunged screaming into an eternal nightmare of chaos and bloodshed from which they might never hope to awaken. Therefore, they *must* preserve the status quo, no matter how confining, sterile or twisted it might be, so that the

Camarilla and its adherents might continue to exist. This lesson, which younger Kindred feel to be merely a reactionary foible, is actually that which has allowed many of the most ancient elders to survive long enough to see the modern nights.

Change is the one thing your character has good reason to fear more than anything else. Change, particularly of the abrupt and unexpected variety, unsettles all those cunning plans that your character has so painstakingly crafted over the centuries. Change disrupts the careful routines and rhythms that enable you to stave off the downward spiral into which the Beast tries to force you. So great is this fear of change that many elders go to great lengths to immunize themselves from its ravages. Unfortunately, the modern world is so complex that even a seemingly minor alteration in the local environment can be the harbinger of much greater change later. Therefore, some elders perceive *all* change to be undesirable, something to be avoided whenever possible. For them, no display of conservatism is too great if it enables them to stifle a significant change to the environment.

The fear an elder instills in other Kindred by the threat of his awesome powers is but a wan reflection of the fear of change that leaves that same elder quaking as he retires to his slumber each morning. The fear your elder character might experience at the thought of an imminent Sabbat incursion, or at the imagined sound of a diablerist's footstep in the hallway, is dwarfed by his terror that the status quo will shift once again and leave him trying desperately to understand the new paradigm before it proves his undoing. Elders who find themselves in the uncomfortable position of justifying this wholesale rejection of change to younger Kindred often point out that all one requires to understand this philosophy is the advantage of perspective. Elders need only look to the lessons of their own past for all the justification they will ever need.

Strangely, elders are less fearful of losing their unives to the forces of change than they are of losing their power and prestige. The elder sits at the apex of the Camarilla social strata, and few are capable of divesting themselves willingly of the sweet rewards of control. It is difficult — too difficult — for them to pass on the reins of power to their younger kin, of whom they also possess a justifiable and intense fear. Consequently, elders hang on to every scrap of authority with bloody nails. They can no longer know the joys of gentler emotions, but they can still savor the darkly satisfying fruits of control, deference and obedience from those over whom they hold sway.

### DISCOVERY

Many elders recall the halcyon nights of Rome and the Dark Ages, when the eldest vampires were often in complete control of the great population centers of Europe. The elders' hand held both carrot and stick, and entire nations danced to their whims. They hunted and killed as they wished, and none dared stand against them. Then came the Inquisition, with its priests and bonfires and *auto-da-fe*, slaughtering uncounted numbers of less fortunate vampires. Consider your character's history when confronted with a decision that could potentially shift the balance of the moment away from the status quo and toward significant change: Perhaps you remember this terrible period in Cainite history only too well from personal experience. If so, you should remember how very near the



miserable, zealous Canaille came to destroying every last Cainite while armed only with crude weapons and torches. True, the Church has ceased to be the monolithic force it was in those nights, but it has not disappeared, nor has the Inquisition — a fact that should never be too far from your character's mind whenever discussion of serious change arises. Rapid change could tear great, ragged holes in the Masquerade, exposing the Kindred again to the watchful eyes of the hunters. Given that the wisest and longest-lived elders weigh the potential value of change against the threat of discovery and destruction at the hands of the kine, it is a wonder that they are not even more socially conservative.

Roleplaying this fear should prove an exercise in common sense. Decide exactly how paranoid your character is about the possibility that humans might one day discover the truth about your existence and decide to pursue you with all the modern devices and weapons at their disposal. Most elders feel their blood turn to water at the very thought of a second Inquisition sweeping across their city, and their reaction to anything that promises even the barest potential for this disaster is usually swift and harsh. Among many elders, there is no greater crime than violation of the First Tradition. Any Kindred who compromises the security of all should be punished by nothing short of the Final Death. Many also believe that this punishment should be inflicted in a manner as gruesome and horrible as can be devised — the better to demonstrate to other would-be security risks the penalty of breaching this most sacred rule. It is this very fear that often lies at the root of another hallmark of elder paranoia: fear of the modern.

#### TECHNOLOGY

Unless you're a pretender, you come from an age where significant technological or scientific advancement was something that happened once a century, if that. Now innovations that border on the miraculous are now a matter of course — they occur annually, monthly and sometimes *nightly*. Even as you sit in your haven and contemplate the next 20 moves in your game of political chess against your hated rival, the kine are inventing devices that can kill millions in an instant, wipe all life from the planet and leave the earth's surface boiling hot for millennia. Even the humans cannot keep abreast of their own progress with anything approaching confidence! How then can you, the product of an age in which such inventions would be considered the rankest and most vile sort of heresy, hope to comprehend the significance of each and every new development? The hard truth is that you can't, and you must increasingly turn to your inferiors for help in understanding or even utilizing the newer technologies.

This aspect of the elder character's psychology represents an inconvenience to you, the player. It's a fact that many players utilize the Internet to facilitate their roleplaying. It's a great communications tool with many applications, and it allows players and Storytellers to continue the game between actual sessions. But if the typical elder is uncomfortable with most newer forms of technology, shouldn't she be equally apprehensive about this most recent revolution in global communications? The answer is yes, she should, and not just because it's an unfamiliar tool. Encryption and safeguards notwithstanding, the Internet is a breach of the Masquerade just waiting to happen. Talk with your Storyteller about how you can address this



issue. She might allow your character to be one of the few elders who has managed to keep up with the times and for whom new technology holds no inherent fear. But in games with more than a few elder characters, this exception becomes less believable and desirable. Given the degree to which elders value their privacy and personal safety, it is simply beyond the bounds of believability for them to sit huddled at their computer terminals writing messages to one another around the globe every night. The Internet and other such devices belong to the younger generations, and if your elder utilizes such technology frequently and easily, you aren't getting the full elder experience. Consequently, try to limit the extent to which your elder character communicates via Internet: It might be less convenient for you as a player, but you'll be doing your character more justice.

#### PEERS

They glide through the marble halls of Elysium with the same graceful ease and predator's smile that you, too, affect for the benefit of the younger Kindred — your fellow elders. Despite the fact that your character will have a great deal in common with them, don't be misled. They aren't your friends. The elders who dwell in a given city must deal with the omnipresent politics of scarcity that govern the ebb and flow of nightly urban life. There are only so many resources — kine, Influences, Contacts, etc. — to go around, and most of them are held in the hands of the elders. It follows then that elders must circle one another like sharks, each hoping that another will show a sign of weakness that allows her to take what another has. Each elder knows, whether she wishes to admit it or not, that one of the few ways to give her existence meaning is to claim victory over her peers. Otherwise, all the treacheries, crimes and sins she committed to achieve that victory were for nothing, and the thought of that is simply too hateful and ghastly to bear.

#### THE SABBAT

Every elder of the Camarilla knows that the Sabbat is out there, watching and waiting for an opportunity to come howling through the night and wreak bloody havoc on the beleaguered defenses of the Camarilla. This fear is not unfounded: The vampires of the Sabbat clamor loudly for the utter destruction of the elders as one of their sect's key principles. Every loss of Camarilla territory to its enemy sends a shiver of dread through the decayed hearts of the elders, followed quickly by the heat of shame and the parching desire for revenge. Many elders project their terror of the Sabbat onto the younger generations, using their own fears to exert yet another degree of control over their progeny. The elders' desire to retake every foot of ground lost to the Sabbat, but most of them are unwilling to put themselves on the front lines of the fight, seeking instead to manipulate or even order younger Kindred into taking the brunt of the enemy's vicious attacks. With each Camarilla victory seeming more fleeting than the last, some elders even begin to harbor the secret fear that their sect is doomed and will fall to the Sabbat's seemingly limitless numbers within the foreseeable future. These elders aren't wasting any more time devising stratagems to combat the enemy and instead devote their energies into creating elaborate methods of escape and defense should the worst finally occur.

## THE SUM OF ALL FEARS: THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS

In your wildest dreams, you might hope that the shocking speed with which change rips across and reshapes the face of the world would drive the Kindred whimpering into the arms of the Camarilla, begging for its comfort and shelter. But while this world might seem alien and incomprehensible to you, the younger generations are quite at home here — it is, by and large, *their* world. The ancillae and neonates grew to adulthood and were Embraced amid the riotous changes that rumble through this odious world. So it is with eagerness that these younger, weaker Kindred master so easily what remains barely comprehensible to you: radio, television, fiber optics, nuclear physics, computers, Internet. Too often, you find yourself on the receiving end of an appalling hour-long lesson on the applications of one these marvels, during which time a droning neonate or ancilla attempts to instruct you in its function and operation. Sometimes you think you will go mad just from the sheer horror of it all.

It would be almost bearable, though, if it weren't so very clear that the younger have somehow fallen under the spell of humanity's most heretical notion: Technology and change are not only desirable, but necessary. Clearly, this viewpoint is evidence of a serious deficiency of character. But like a tooth that rots from within, so too does the Camarilla suffer from this pervasive disease among its junior members. Despite all the rationales, not to mention the awesome force, that the elders can bring to bear, the twin demons of democracy and freedom demand to make themselves heard throughout the halls of Elysium. It is almost as if these words are a virus that the younger Kindred contract when they feed upon the kine, a sickness that spreads further with each subsequent generation.

Consider how your elder character will react when she hears these words fall eagerly, as they will, from the lips of the younger vampires in Elysium. Does she believe them idle words, little more than the folly of youth? Or are they a chilling reminder of another time, when similar phrases were the ill-favored omen of resentment that welled up from the hearts of the younger Kindred, leading to the horror now known as the Anarch Revolt and followed by the founding of the hated Sabbat? Your character may well decide that such talk, however casual, is nothing less than another wave of resentment building against the wise and experienced guidance of her peers, and that the inevitable cries for change will quickly follow. Your character may well ask herself how long it will be before these cries for reform bring the Camarilla to its knees. Is the sect's life span measured in millennia or minutes? What can be done to stave off this rot, to shore up the crumbling walls of the sect before it collapses in on itself, burying everyone under its weight?

Fear of younger vampires reflects the elder's parallel fear of her own growing irrelevancy. As an elder ages, she grows ever more distant from the mortal world, until she reaches an age at which she no longer desires to undertake the labors that would enable her to remain relevant. Consequently, whenever an ambitious ancilla or energetic neonate embarks on a crusade or plan to reform the stale and perverse world that is Camarilla society, the elders collaborate on his destruction — or, at the very least, to thwart his plans totally. Political skullduggery, social ridicule, perverse machinations — no

ploy or tactic, however vile, is beyond the capacity of an elder driven by the desire to preserve the status quo in which she is so irretrievably invested.

## DIGNIFIED DESPERATION

Any one of the elders' many fears, taken singly, would be sufficient to produce a significant impact on their nightly behavior. Combined, they create a near paralysis that prevents many elders from committing to any course of action that is not calculated, analyzed, scrutinized and considered from a dozen different angles and weighed carefully against a myriad of possible outcomes. Consequently, the elders are relatively slow to react except in the face of clear, obvious threats, and even then they often prefer to stall for time before acting decisively. Relative to their younger relations, the elders of the Camarilla thus appear to be practically unmoving as they struggle to freeze their perverted society in place so that they need not risk parting with even a fraction of their power.

Your elder character should therefore seem, at least on the surface and in public, to face the prospect of risk with extreme reluctance. Consider carefully your character's response to any situation that threatens to upset her long-term plans or disrupt the status quo on which her power base depends. Don't be afraid to bide your time before answering questions that might lead down unwelcome paths; don't hesitate to make your persona's actions seem frustratingly conservative in the eyes of the more energetic and younger characters. Privately, of course, your character can give full vent to her emotions, particularly when dealing with younger Kindred or your own progeny, though in doing so you run the risk of being perceived as something less than dignified should word of your outbursts reach the ever-waiting ears of your peers and enemies.

## STIFLING PARANOIA: THE HATE OF AGES

Fear inevitably breeds hate. We hate what we fear, and vice versa. Alone among the Kindred, elders know only too well the maddening paradox that seeps slowly into the vampire's mind after they pass a certain age. The irony of their existence is that on the one hand they enjoy nearly limitless power, but on the other they are held in the inescapable grip of paralyzing fear. This sick duality weighs heavily on their minds, and yet they prefer to face the ennui of the long centuries still to come rather than the alternative. Consequently, the elders cannot mend the wounds torn in their psyches by their own constant terrors, nor can they combat the multitude of pressures that create them. Their only recourse is to mask their boredom and horror with white-hot layers of hatred.

Elders collect grudges and nurse them with almost loving care, for these are the thoughts that sustain them when other hopes and sensations grow dim. Their memories are as long as their existences: They do not forget slights or insults, however small, and they know for a certainty that none of their peers will, either. Perversely, this capacity for hate is what enables some elders to continue on, decade after decade, century after century, when everything else that even approximates meaning has been snuffed out. No longer able to feel the gentler emotions, they cling desperately to those sensations that they can still grasp. The sharp, steely pang of hatred has enabled more than a few elders to persevere through terrible calamities and setbacks — the hot, coppery taste of vengeance yet to come is a pleasure so rarified that only an elder may truly appreciate its subtle



nuances. Hatred comes easily to elders, and so becomes a welcome companion, even a diversion, on the long and dark road down into their own personal hells.

As an elder player, don't pass up an opportunity to establish a new hatred for your character, whether it is of an individual, a place or even a point of view. Hatred can restore meaning to your character's existence when all else has been lost. Your character could suffer crushing losses that might send a lesser Kindred plummeting downward into the depths of despair, never to escape, but she clings to her hatreds the way a drowning person clings to a bit of driftwood. If your character lacks even one such hatred, you aren't getting the full elder experience. Try creating a situation so that your character is sure to gain a focus for her hate. It could be a rival, an institution or a city, but regardless it should occupy your character's waking thoughts frequently. Such emotional excesses can become the basis of some of the most challenging and memorable roleplaying experiences you'll have.

Always keep in mind two important truths about hatreds, one for your character and one for you. With every grudge your character seizes upon to sustain him in his otherwise empty existence, he grows that much more distant from his humanity, and that much more close to the Beast. Likewise, the more deeply your character feels his hatred, the more likely it is that he will act on it, and so place himself in the position of risking even more of his Humanity.

More importantly, however, remember that you are responsible for understanding that your character's hatreds are not your own. The fact that your elder character feels bitter hatred toward Justine, the Toreador whip, doesn't mean that you should feel any animosity whatsoever toward Justine's player. Indeed, if you ever catch yourself confusing the emotions your character experiences with those that you experience, stop playing at once and evaluate your situation. Roleplaying a hatred that helps your character stave off the crushing ennui of the passing millennia is one thing, but transferring that hatred onto real people is quite another, and it's not acceptable. Likewise, don't abuse the privilege of playing an elder character by bringing real-life grudges and problems into the game: If you have a beef with another player, it's inappropriate (not to mention poor gamesmanship) to use that as an excuse to have your character hate hers.

The bottom line: Playing an elder requires you to be even more conscientious and responsible about observing and respecting the line that separates the game from reality.

#### **BASER PLEASURES: CRUELTY FOR CRUELTY'S SAKE**

Jealousy, spite, lies and intrigue — these are the elder's meat and drink, the grease that turns the wheels of Elysium and court, and the pleasantries that divert her mind from the ghastly truth of her existence. While these characteristics permeate nearly all aspects of Kindred society, it is the elders who perpetuate them most often. Indeed, by applying them consistently and judiciously, it might be said that elders train successive generations of vampires to perpetuate these cruelties on one another and those who may be Embraced later. Younger Kindred often accept this treatment as an inevitable product of dwelling side-by-side with their less human elders, but until the neonates and ancillae also reach a similar age, they will not fully understand what drives elder vampires to these extremes of behavior.



When elders reach the point where the gentler emotions no longer have any meaning for them, when compassion and sympathy have vanished completely from their emotional landscape, they must rely on the intentional infliction of suffering to stir their aged blood. The pain of others is less important and less meaningful to them, except as a means of exciting their own dulled senses. The elder who inflicts misery on another Kindred does not care how this pain makes her victim feel; she cares only that his suffering be sufficiently powerful that she might observe it and enjoy the sensations it awakens within her jaded and decayed soul, alleviating her boredom and diverting her attention from other problems.

Elders inflict injury in this fashion almost out of habit — they feud for the sake of it rather than for any justifiable reason. This habit rises not only from the need to experience strong emotion again, but also from the stultifying boredom of nightly fare. The sheer banality of the same hatreds, grudges and fears can be a force sufficient to crush the most resilient spirit, but it must be so. All other forms of conflict are too dangerous to contemplate, given what is at stake when one reacts to a threat in a direct fashion. The ancient strictures of Elysium forbid any sort of warfare more open than the cutting remark or the petty lie, and so these are the weapons that elders turn upon one another for lack of anything more lethal. In some ways it is fortunate for all that this is the case, for imagine the disaster that would befall the Camarilla if the elders were free to give full vent to all the petty jealousies and hatreds that seethe beneath the dignified masks they wear in Elysium?

Decide how your elder character will participate in this clandestine war of intrigue. For participate she must, lest she be the target of those elders who do. Will she become the queen of rumors, spreading malicious (but untraceable) gossip of her enemies' foibles, or will she manipulate younger Kindred into taking up her causes and inflicting wounds upon her rivals? Consider your character's long-term goals and how you can use this aspect of elder behavior to further them. Want to be prince? Start that whispering campaign early, and build your network of informants so that you always have fresh — though not necessarily accurate — information at your fingertips. Want to bring a rival low? Focus on penetrating your rival's defenses to locate his weakness, and then exploit it; don't forget to discuss a mutually beneficial alliance with the other enemies of your rival. Be careful not to tip your hand or spring your traps too soon. You'll gain far more satisfaction from stalking your prey and playing with your food than devouring it whole.

#### **BUILDING AN ELDER POWER BASE**

You are old, possibly older than the city or even nation in which you now reside. You have seen countless nights pass since your Embrace, and you stand to see countless more if you are careful and cunning. You are close to your Beast. Sometimes you think that you can actually feel its fetid breath against the back of your neck, or feel its covetous eyes burning a hole in your skull. You have struggled to remain free of the talons that tear at your gut, but you've been unable to prevent the slow, inexorable downward spiral. And you are afraid. Your fear is a paralyzing, dizzying thing. Constrained on every side by enemies and rivals and threatened by the rapidly changing mortal world, one cannot help but wonder how elders manage to maintain such a firm grip on the reins.

The answer lies in the most fundamental characteristic that defines an elder—longevity. Immortal beings who experience nightly terror for their very existence either work fervently to increase their own personal power or else they perish at the hands of the stronger. Time is the one resource that, come what may, the elders have in abundance. Elders have spent many mortal lifetimes learning how to sow the seeds of power and reap that harvest while denying the same benefits to others. The accumulation of hundreds of small but carefully orchestrated actions over the course of centuries can often more than offset a reluctance to risk potential gain on a sudden decision. True, the elders often miss opportunities to increase their power through windfall profits, but they also do not stand to lose all that they have accrued to a single toss of the dice.

#### STATUS

Status is one of the coins of the Kindred realm, and many elders cannot bear to be without it. The perception of strength, the favor of the harpies and the possession of unpaid debts are all trappings of power that are measured in status. Those who possess status therefore possess the ultimate currency of the night. In the rarified atmosphere of Elysium or the court, only those who hold this coin in hand can expect to enjoy the more choice benefits of Kindred society. Elders of the Toreador clan are among the most prominent adjudicators of Status, for they are possessed of the ability to judge the value of style over substance better than anyone.

Guard your Status Traits jealously. Because Status can rise and fall rapidly, it is unwise to risk even a single Temporary Status Trait on a dubious individual or cause, unless you know that you stand to gain by the outcome. Status is too precious a commodity to throw it away frivolously on questionable endeavors. If your character enjoys numerous Status Traits, it's time to start thinking about how to use them best. For example, you might suggest to the prince that only Kindred who possess a certain number of Status Traits might be allowed to gain access to Her Majesty (just make sure that you have the requisite number of Traits!), or mention to the harpies the woeful state of your rival's financial condition in order to score a hit on his own Status.

#### DISCIPLINES

Elders of the Sixth and Seventh Generations enjoy an additional benefit of their old age: They have the potential to increase their mastery over the supernatural powers bestowed by Caine's curse. Centuries of practice have made even passive Disciplines into deadly tools. It is ironic that many younger Kindred spend their early unlives delighting in the capabilities bestowed on them by their blood rights; by the time these Kindred reach the age of consideration, they find that their powers have become the weapon of last resort. Elders have few compunctions about using their more subtle powers, particularly *Dominate* and *Presence*, to establish their authority over the younger Cainites. But only when all other contests are ruled out or stalemated do elders turn to their Disciplines in earnest for the means of settling conflicts among themselves. To use such godlike force casually would not only be a hideous risk to the Masquerade, but it would reveal too much of the elders' true power to those who covet it. The Tremere are perhaps the clan with the most faith in the security granted by their Discipline, though other elders smile at this presumption.

Some Master Discipline powers can forever alter the course of a chronicle, destroying character concepts and eliminating plot threads with frightening speed. It is incumbent upon you, whether as the elder player or the Storyteller, to accept the responsibility that comes with access to these powers. You may find that sometimes the temptation to misuse them is nearly overwhelming, but resist: Your fellow players will thank you, and the game itself will benefit from your restraint. Exercise care and discretion when bringing these big guns to bear: Don't use a bazooka to shoot a mosquito. Kindred don't become elders by using their most powerful capabilities routinely or openly: Those who do so find themselves the target of unwanted attention, and are weeded out by their more competent and masterful peers or cannibalistic childer. If your character harbors her strength and keeps her cool, she'll gain far more in the long run than she will by crushing a pesky neonate with a swipe of her Master-level Potence.

#### Tainted Authority: Elders and Other Characters

One of the most appalling truths that any young Kindred must learn and, to a greater or lesser degree, accept is that the elders who occupy the topmost rung of Camarilla society aren't ever going to willingly step aside to allow their juniors to take their place in the driver's seat. Camarilla society functions as the classic zero-sum game: Each and every winner exists only at the expense of a loser. Elders can advance in the ranks of the Camarilla only on the backs of their rivals, but with the ancillae and neonates pushing continuously from below, even an elder who chooses to remain stationary will earn the enmity of those beneath him.

Elders thus occupy the keystone role in the Camarilla, a position that brings them into nightly contact and conflict with other Kindred. Most princes and more than a few primogen are elders. They are the visible embodiment of Camarilla society. No Kindred can afford to ignore them, not even the rebellious anarchs or the lowly Caitiff. Dealing with an elder at some point is an inevitability for nearly every member of the sect, whether they like it or not. While not every encounter with an elder need occur in the rarified atmosphere of Elysium, such interactions in a *Masquerade* game are much more likely to be of the direct, rather than the indirect, variety.

#### RELATIONS WITH NEONATES

Most elders believe that the best way to rear childer is with a generous helping of harsh discipline, coupled with constant admonitions against the evils of rebellion and a pernicious hatred of the Sabbat. They believe that in so doing they instill within their progeny the requisite attitudes and beliefs that will keep them in line. Some elders, notably the Malkavian and Nosferatu, believe that strict control only makes childer even more rebellious; they advocate less harsh treatment of neonates, and believe this will stem the flow of the youngest Camarilla vampires who reject their sires' sect in favor of the Sabbat or anarchs. Ironically, advocates of both positions may be wrong, for what most neonates want isn't better treatment, but radical changes in the very foundation and superstructure of Kindred society, something they aren't likely to achieve as long as the elders are making the rules.

## RELATIONS WITH ANCILLAE

Individual ancillae wield only marginal power, but collectively they form the "middle class" on which much of the Camarilla's past achievements and future survival depend. Fortunately for older Kindred, the ancillae are as divided by clan rivalries and petty grudges as the elders themselves, making any significant organization among their ranks unlikely at best. Nevertheless, many elders fear exactly that potential, and with good reason: Most of them rose to power through secret arrangements with other ancillae. Thus, they habitually remain alert for signs of similar pacts among the rank and file, and act quickly to render them null and void, sometimes uniting briefly with other elders for the purpose, only to return to their mutual jealousies when the threat is quashed.

Elders often devote extensive time and energy exercising subtle control over ancilla pawns through a system of judicious rewards and punishments. But this sort of manipulation is a double-edged sword. The more capable the ancilla, the greater her rewards are. But the more rewards she earns, the more powerful she grows. Eventually, she grows too powerful and begins to become a source of anxiety to her elder patrons, who cannot help but fear that her ambitions will turn next toward what they possess and control. Thus, the elders make every effort to slow the pace of advancement within Camarilla society in order to prevent the ancillae from accumulating power too quickly. But even this stratagem has its drawbacks, as the ancillae inevitably chafe with frustration at the tortuously slow pace of their climb through the ranks.

### INTERACTION GUIDELINES: DO'S AND DON'TS

Do cultivate the key elements of elder behavior—fear, hatred and cruelty. These are the indispensable elements of your elder disguise kit. Remember, though, that an elder keeps these emotions subdued while displaying the all-important veneer of surface calm, whether you're on the giving or receiving end of an inconvenience. No elder worthy of the title loses his cool over meaningless insults hurled by social nobodies, or engages in petty bickering with riffraff. Save your full vampiric rage for climactic scenes in which it will heighten tension, rather than unleashing every time some snot-nosed anarch punk sticks her tongue out at you.

Don't misuse your character. Demanding that every character younger than yours bend the knee or die is a gross abuse of your character's authority and role in the game. Using your character's age as a club with which to beat other players so that you can "win" is the hallmark of the abusive player. The object of the game is to have fun, and it's the object of all the players, not just you. If you can't have fun playing your elder character without being abusive, do everyone else a favor and don't play at all.

Do find reasons to interact with other characters. You're not doing yourself or anyone else any favors by hugging the dark corner for the entire game session. While it's true that your elder character may have little use for the younger members of the sect, you must recognize as a player that the game cannot proceed if the character does not make at least a token effort to approach others and be approachable. Neonates and ancillae may be annoying, but they are also useful. Does your character really want to do all her dirty work herself? Didn't think so. So persuade, charm, seduce, blackmail, intimidate and otherwise manipulate

other characters into helping you get it done. This simultaneously advances your character's goals, while helping other players get involved in the game.

Don't hog the spotlight. You aren't the only player in the game, and although elders play a key role in games set in Camarilla-controlled cities, be sure to give other players ample opportunity to shine. You'll make a lot more friends and contribute more to the chronicle by helping others to enjoy themselves than you will by demanding all the attention.

## ELDERS CLAN BY CLAN

### BRUJAH

The elders of this clan are something of a mystery to their juniors. To younger Brujah, it often seems as if the fires of rebellion that once burned in the breasts of their elders must have been extinguished at some point. Almost all the older members of this clan realize, eventually, that revolution for its own sake leads only to a waste of resources, and so the elder Brujah turn their attentions toward subverting and controlling the system from within. It is for this reason that many elder Brujah are consummate politicians and power-brokers, and it is why so many younger Brujah believe that their elders have sold them out to become card-carrying members of the Camarilla's "old vampire network." The truth is that younger Brujah, filled with the fire of revolt, have almost no hope of understanding their elders, whose ancient dream of a rebuilt Carthage still flickers behind their thoughtful expressions.

Elder Brujah are forced to walk an unenviable tightrope. You must somehow overcome your clan's Iconoclast image in order to be accepted and taken seriously by your elder peers, and yet by doing so you risk losing credibility among the juniors of your blood. Contemptuous pronouncements of "Upstart" might be followed by outraged cries of "Sell out!" if you aren't careful in presenting your public face to these rival factions. If you're a truly ancient Brujah — one who recalls the glories of Carthage, for instance — pay careful attention to choosing motivations that further the goals and dreams still burning brightly in the memory, if not in the heart.

### MALKAVIAN

The elders of Malkav's line are among the most enigmatic, wise, insightful and dangerous Kindred to claim membership in the Camarilla. They know that only they can perceive that which is truly important, and that only if they pay attention to these signs and portents will they truly understand the riddle that is their existence. Those who refuse to see these things — that is, almost all other Kindred — earn only scant attention from the elders, who are increasingly concerned only with comprehending the ominous pattern their fractured visions reveal to them.

Embodying the elder Malkavian's enigmatic lunacy isn't a task for inexperienced players. Elder Malkavians have the benefit not only of the lunatic's insight, but the advantage of seeing the modern through the cracked lens of the past. You know only too well that the signs of imminent and radical change are everywhere to be seen, and you should consider how your behavior will reflect the truths and portents you see in the night. What is it that you hear

that you wish to relate to other Cainites, and how does what you've seen in ages before relate to what you're sensing now?

#### NOSFERATU

It is likely that only the elder Nosferatu, of all the clans, suspect how very costly choosing the incorrect course of action will be at this dangerous crossroads in Kindred history. Never have they felt less certain about what they should do and never quite so alone and isolated, not only from the elders of other clans but from the younger members of their own as well. Elder Nosferatu hear the stealthy approach of the legendary Nicktuku in the echo of every sound that permeates their underground lairs, while the modern world above reshapes itself a hundred times in a single year, changes spurred on by technological advancements with which even these masters of information are hard-pressed to keep pace. Many prefer to play the waiting game they know so well, hoping that the proper course of action will reveal itself if they wait and watch just a little longer.

The elder Nosferatu character finds that time is running out too fast for him to rely on his clan's customary reticence and careful neutrality to see him through what he fears may be coming. Any scrap of information, no matter how trivial it seems, may be a vital clue that will help you determine the proper course of action — you can't afford to play the same games that allowed you to gather this data slowly and carefully in the past. You fear that you're running out of time, and that if you don't get some answers you can trust very quickly, your inability to see a clear path may well doom not only yourself but your clanmates as well. Desperation isn't a characteristic of the Nosferatu, but you feel it gnawing at your gut and mind with increasing frequency.

#### TOREADOR

The heart of the elder Toreador must surely know the cold grip of desperation. The art forms she knew and loved in her youth are now musty relics of bygone nights, fit only to be mocked and ridiculed, or at best imitated without feeling or substance. Can art even be said to have relevance in a world where artists seem to exist only to tear down any form of expression that is not a product of their own technologically incomprehensible world? Some Toreador elders actually manage to cling to their preferred art forms despite these assaults, but even they find little solace, for the work of an artist so far removed from the emotions that originally drove her to create often loses the ability to reflect anything even remotely human, despite its technical brilliance.

Elder Toreador often lash out blindly at the younger members of their clan, even — or perhaps especially — those who display genuine artistic talent. How dare these childer attempt to set foot on the very path that you have already determined is hollow at best? Why should they know the joy of creation without the burden of pain? Some ancient Toreador seek to beguile the tedium by concocting positively Byzantine schemes of social manipulation, designed sometimes to improve their own social or political standing, and sometimes simply to inflict as much misery as possible on someone. If you have few Morality Traits, you may begin to delve into shockingly degenerate behaviors that you claim inspire you to new heights of artistry, but which in truth serve only to satisfy your growing demand for new and different pleasures.

#### CREATING ELDER CHARACTERS

Because Generation is a Background Trait acquired in exactly the same manner as Allies, Contacts, Influences, etc., elder characters are created no differently than other characters. Refer to *Laws of the Night* and the earlier chapters of this book for all the tools necessary for creating your elder character. The only exception to this situation is if your elder is a Narrator character and the Storyteller has some special plans for her role in the chronicle.

#### TREMERE

Until recently, Tremere elders felt a smug self-assurance that their dominion over magic would enable them to survive whatever may be ahead for the Kindred in general, and for the Camarilla in particular. But when the Assamites somehow threw off their ancient curse, the elders' confidence faded rapidly. Now they face destruction and diablerie at the hands of their ancient enemies, and no longer do they feel safe. Despite this disaster, elder Tremere have less to fear from their juniors, thanks to the strict discipline of their clan structure.

Elder Tremere often behave in a manner that seems designed to throw their heartless nature into sharp relief. It is not that the Tremere are inherently more cruel than other Cainites, but rather that they are often better prepared to accept the inevitable price of their unliving condition. Your attitude toward your own powers will in part determine your behavior: Do you believe firmly that Thaumaturgy holds the key to surviving Gehenna and ruling what remains of the Kindred after it passes, or do you prefer to utilize your magical heritage in order to pursue the mysteries of the universe and ignore all that political claptrap? Is your control of the arcane arts a tool that will allow you to amass even more power, or have you yet to come to terms with your thaumaturgical abilities, making you indeed a rarity within the Tremere ranks?

#### VENTRUE

In these modern nights, the Venttrue feel themselves surrounded by a sea of dangers. Claiming that they bear the burden of guiding their fellow Kindred into the future, they feel the Camarilla's recent losses against the Sabbat quite sharply indeed. Yet even while they point to these setbacks as evidence that the other clans must contribute more effort to shoring up the Camarilla's defenses, the Venttrue are certain that the very Kindred they are attempting to protect are working at cross-purposes to them. Some might even be obstructing the Venttrue plans to defend the Camarilla deliberately, a concern that frustrates even the most junior bean counter in the clan's ranks.

Venttrue elder characters are the very soul of nobility. Their pride borders dangerously close to arrogance, and their desire to protect the Camarilla from the ham-handed efforts of their brethren often expresses itself as condescension. You may have been helping carry the Camarilla burden for the entirety of the sect's existence, and while you might still feel a certain *noblesse oblige*, even immortal patience grows thin. The thought that other clans might be thwarting your clan's efforts to defend the Camarilla may send you into paroxysms of rage, especially when



you compare this ingratitude to all the battles and crises the Ventre have faced on the Camarilla's behalf. The time is coming when you feel that the clan may have no other choice but to impose order, whether the rest of the clans like it or not.

### STORYTELLING FOR ELDERS

Ideally, you should treat elder characters in your chronicle as you would spices in a meal. They're meant to season and accentuate the main ingredients of a dish, not overpower their flavor. Elders can be easily overused, so be cautious when adding more of them to an existing chronicle. The bulk of Kindred society is comprised of neonates and ancillae. The actual number of elders in a given game can vary depending on the game's focus and scope. If you're telling a story for more than 30 characters, you're probably going to have a larger percentage of elders in the game than in a story for a dozen characters. However, the number of elders in any given game isn't as important as how well and consistently those characters are played, and how well you weave them into the tale.

### ELDER MOODS

Elders radiate menace and embody the very essence of power. They can quiet an entire room with their inhuman attitudes and appearance; they can tip the balance of power in an entire city with a few well-chosen words. Work with the players who will play the elders in your chronicle to create the mood you desire by helping them highlight their characters' distance from Humanity. By providing them with reasons to be envious and fearful of one another, you create a mood of black paranoia as the elders begin plotting against one another. Encourage these players to involve the other characters in their schemes; this heightens the tension and invokes a mood of jealous suspicion or manic fear, depending on the lengths to which the elders go to achieve their ambitions.

### ELDER THEMES

Elders embody myriad and often contradictory themes, most of which work very well as the central idea of a chronicle. Here are some examples:

**Spoiled Love:** What turns love into hate, or worse, indifference? How do Kindred cope when a love they thought was genuine turns out to be corrupt and false? Why can't Kindred maintain their hold on the finer emotions they knew in life?

**Thwarted Ambition:** What happens when we don't get what we want most? Who do we damage when pursuing goals that remain just out of our reach? What sorts of revenge does a heart devise when it is denied its innermost desires?

**Inner Decay:** Is every elder corrupt? How does their compromised integrity affect the Camarilla? Is the rot visible, or hidden like a disease that rots a tree from within? Can younger Kindred do anything to combat this problem?

**Repression and Rebellion:** What hope do younger Kindred have in a society where the elders cling to old glories and undeserved authority with bloody talons? What happens in a city wherein the young dare to ask this question, and are met with a backlash of furious anger from their elders?

### HOW TO KEEP ELDERS BUSY

Elders are some of the most useful plot devices in the Storyteller's toolkit. Entire plots can hang on elder characters or be driven by their actions. Unfortunately, elder characters can also wipe out an entire plot with a few ill-chosen words



or actions, often unintentionally. How do you achieve the former utility without suffering the latter disaster? First choose the right players for elder characters, and then communicate clearly and consistently with them. If you hand out elder characters to just any player, and fail to describe your expectations, you'll have no one to blame but yourself for the disaster you've unleashed on your game.

Communicate with the players while they are creating their elder characters. If there are multiple elder characters in your chronicle, do yourself and your players a favor by suggesting some threads of common history between them. If they've all been in the same city together for any length of time, they should definitely begin the game with at least one healthy rivalry per elder character, as well as an assortment of grudges, intrigues and gossip bubbling merrily away under the surface. None of these relationships or idiosyncrasies need be obvious to the other characters when the story begins — let them discover this seething cauldron of trouble naturally. Encourage elder players to create detailed character histories, and perhaps offer a bonus Freebie Trait or two for those who build useful story hooks into their backgrounds.

Describe to the elder players what sort of story you want to tell, and solicit their feedback. Don't be afraid to share your thoughts on mood and theme with them; if you trust them enough to play elder characters, you might as well trust them to collaborate with you. Get their input; ask them what they'd like their characters to do in the story, and talk about how the characters can pursue their goals actively but indirectly, so as not to turn each game into a Discipline stand-off. Encourage them to involve other characters in their machinations, and teach them how to share the main plots with other player characters rather than accruing all the story threads for themselves. Help them understand that when they foster intrigue and tension through their characters, it pays off for everyone who is playing in the game.

### DISCIPLINING ERRANT ELDERS

Most players present no problems, and they will both appreciate your efforts at telling good stories and be eager to cooperate in helping you do so. Keep a weather eye out for the player who doesn't. In games where there is only one elder, caution that player against acting petty and spiteful: This sort of behavior will annoy the other players quickly. Be alert, too, for the player who abuses his elder character's powers or authority. Powergamers can be a nuisance in any game session; a powergamer with an elder character can destroy an entire chronicle. You'll recognize these players fast: They're the ones who get a cheap ego trip at the other players' expense. There is no excuse for allowing players of this nature to ruin the game for everyone else. If you observe a player behaving in this fashion, at the very least you must take that player aside as soon as possible and explain why this sort of behavior is unacceptable. Don't be confrontational if it isn't necessary — most powergamers think that their playing style is how the game is supposed to be played — but be firm nonetheless. Your goal is to tell a story that allows all the players to have fun, and you need the support of each player in order to reach that goal. Consider carefully whether to allow the player to return to play with an elder character; if you decide to allow him to do so, continue to watch him carefully for any problematic behavior. If the player persists despite your attempts to explain the problem, then remove him from the game at the earliest possible opportunity.



# CHAPTER FIVE: THE CITY

## WHERE IT ALL GOES DOWN

It is easy to overlook the importance of the city your *Masquerade* chronicle is set in. Often, it's just the place where things happen — a somewhat vague backdrop for adventures, left largely undefined except perhaps for a few details here and there.

There's much more to a city than that, though. It is a vampire's lifeline — the only thing that allows him to continue his existence. Only large gatherings of humans allow vampires to gather; after all, without blood, a vampire cannot survive. And while many vampires deem themselves to be the hidden masters of the human society, they are still quite dependent on the very society they claim to control.

This chapter is primarily intended for Storyteller use. It doesn't contain any secrets, so players can read it without feeling guilty. However, its primary use is in creating cities for *Masquerade* chronicles, and it's thus likely to be far more useful to Storytellers than it is to players. That said, reading through this chapter will probably help players think of the city where the game takes place as more than just a generic location. In addition, players will get some insight into the life of a Camarilla vampire.

### If You Build It, They Will Come

Fictional cities give you a lot of leeway; after all, you can do whatever you want, and no one can tell you that you got something wrong. However, it takes more than just coming up with a nice round number for the population and a cool Gothic name for the place to create a proper city for your *Masquerade* chronicle.

If you feel like creating a city of your own, you probably have some kind of an idea for it already. It may not be anything very definite; then again, it doesn't have to be. As long as you have a concept of what you're going for, you should be doing all right. Indeed, creating a city isn't that different from creating a character; the details may be different, but the process is much the



same — it all comes down to working up from an idea, stage by stage, bit by bit, until you reach whatever it is that you wanted. Of course, more work goes into creating an entire city than creating a single character, but when broken down, the process is very similar.

#### FRIENDLY WORDS OF ADVICE, PART ONE

Using all of the techniques and ideas described in the following text may well lead to an extremely detailed and complicated chronicle that the players will love to death. To the Storyteller's death, that is. The workload can be enormous, especially if you are new to the game. It's strongly recommended that you read the material, write down notes about the things you think you should incorporate into your chronicle and then try and come up with a list of things you think you can handle without being reduced to a gibbering nervous wreck. Be realistic! Remember that if you find out later that you can handle more than you're doing at the moment, you can always increase the level of detail and the game will only improve, but removing depth from the game may cause problems if players have become accustomed to things that are no longer there. Most sections won't have a "you don't have to use all or any of this" disclaimer; you should assume that to be in effect at all times.

Also, keep in mind that five items to keep track of won't simply be five times the workload of a single item. When all of these items begin to interact with each other and the player's characters, you can expect your workload to increase exponentially.

In short, don't bite off more than you can chew.

#### LOCATION

First of all, you need to decide where your city is. There may be instances when you prefer to leave the actual location somewhat vague — after all, placing Gotham City or other fictional cities on a map can often be difficult at best, and doing so might even detract from the mood — it doesn't really matter where they are, as long as the place feels right. Still, even if you're going for a mood like this, it's good to come up with the approximate location of the city. Knowing where your city is can be a very important factor in deciding what your city feels like. A city located in the middle of a desert is going to be markedly different from one located on the coast — no one would ever mistake New Orleans for Las Vegas. Climate and resources can also be easily decided once you know where the city is — and from there, you can move on to what kind of industries the city has. Mining? Fishing? Tourism? It all depends on where you are.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

There are dozens of questions you must answer. Is there a subway system? Are there skyscrapers? Is there an airport? Is the city easy to navigate, or is it a maze of small streets and alleys? Does it have sections where ethnic groups



have settled — a Chinatown, or a Little Italy? Does it have slums? Is it modern and shiny, or old and built largely of stone?

These things define the very basics of any city — what the place looks like, how you get around. For example, all cities have extensive networks of sewers, maintenance tunnels, air shafts and whatnot, but the existence of a subway system still means happier times for the local Nosferatu. Airports and train stations are important locations — they provide means to enter and exit the city; something every cautious prince makes a point of keeping an eye on.

A Chinatown? Good news for those Tremere who look for occult lore in mysterious small shops (see *Laws of the East* for ideas about what they might find) — or certain Ventre who tend to be picky about their meals.

Slums? Food, plain and simple. Who's going to miss a couple of bums? It may not be a gourmet meal, but it's safe feeding.

What's the industry like? What are the major imports and exports? How's the local economy doing? A poor city and a rich city can be two very different things indeed. Note that these matters may very well be two-sided — a thriving chemical industry may well improve the local overall quality of living, but it might have an adverse effect on the surrounding environment.

You shouldn't feel pressured to draw the map of the entire city (although if you happen to have the free time and the skill, go for it — your players will love you), but you should put some thought into its layout nonetheless. For example, if there are hills and a river, you should decide which neighborhoods are located on the hill and which ones by the river. Decide where the industrial areas are, what the docks are like and so forth. After all, a city is really a patchwork of many different areas; it's not a homogenous environment where everything looks the same throughout. You should also pay attention to when certain areas were constructed and how the city has expanded — there may be neighborhoods that are brand new and areas that have been around for a century or longer. These things may well be of importance to the vampiric population; if someone has lived somewhere for a hundred years but has been forced to move when the area has been rebuilt, he may not be very amused, or, in order to feel comfortable, an old vampire may have used her influence to keep a certain area from becoming too modern.

#### WHAT MAKES IT GO?

You should also think about your city's needs a bit and see that they are taken care of. In the simplest of terms, that means that people must have food, shelter and warmth, although you can certainly make it more complicated than that if you want to. Where do the local industries' raw materials come from? Who do they sell their products to?

You don't need to go into too much detail here, but it's a good idea to think about the basics a bit. For example, is the city buying some of its required electricity from somewhere else or does it have a power source of its own? It could be that the power is coming from a local hydroelectric dam, a coal plant or perhaps a nuclear reactor. Some characters may well have an interest in these matters — an ecologically minded vampire might well want to shut down a polluting coal plant.



## POPULATION

The people who live in a city are perhaps the most important thing for a Storyteller to think about. What kind of people live there? Are they rich? Is everyone employed? Are they religious? Are they happy? A city with unhappy citizens is a city in trouble — it affects work morale, and unhappy people don't feel inclined to contribute to the city's well-being. Some Kindred may consider humans to be cattle, but even the most bullheaded vampire usually understands that even cattle must be cared for. A happy citizen is a productive citizen, and a healthy citizen is a lasting resource.

People are more than just automatons who eat, sleep, breed and work, though. They're what makes a city live. In most **Masquerade** games, completely normal, mortal humans don't play a very large part, as the player characters tend to be vampires, ghouls or other strange beings. Still, most Kindred spend most of their time interacting with the human society, even if most chronicles don't pay much attention to that. After all, that's what the *Masquerade* is about: hiding in plain sight. Vampires exist by feeding on real, living human beings. While all the talk of the angst and humanity of it all may not appeal to everyone, it is still something that is bound to have an impact on the characters, and you should try and make people as much a part of your city as everything else — perhaps even more so.

## AUTHORITIES

Are the authorities efficient? Are there any major criminal organizations operating in the city? Who's got the political clout? Is there corruption? There's a great difference between a peaceful city where violent crime is relatively rare and a city where criminal gangs run free and fight with each other over the control of their turfs — a city where the politicians do their jobs properly and a city where politicians are on a short leash and draw fat paychecks from the people who make you offers you can't refuse. This also has a direct impact on the citizens. Joe Average prefers to live in a place where it's safe to walk the streets at night and will become displeased if he cannot do so.

Of course, criminal activities aren't the only possible problems. An economic crisis is likely to result in unhappy citizens. Without suitable funds, the city's infrastructure starts to break down, bit by bit. Public services are no longer as efficient as before. Garbage cans may be overflowing because the city can't afford proper waste disposal. Broken streetlights may not get fixed. Bureaucracy becomes slow if the people responsible for it get laid off, leaving the remaining people to handle a bigger workload, which in turn increases stress both for the overworked and the unemployed — and so forth. These are things that may easily become important factors in a chronicle if the Storyteller prepares properly. What's more, they are problems that cannot be fixed with force; it takes planning and work from the characters. While these events aren't likely to become centerpieces, they are certainly things that are likely to interest the characters quite a bit. It's largely a question of survival and quality of life for them.

These are hardly all of the important questions, of course. When was the city founded? Have there been major disasters, such as fires or earthquakes? How did they affect the Kindred population? Was there more to these disasters

than the mortal world knows? There is no master list of questions; these are all things that define what your city is like — the more detail you can come up with, the better. A good way to get a handle on these things is to look at events — especially everyday events — in your own city and ask yourself "Why are things like this? How would they be in my city?" It may seem like a lot of work to go through, and it is, but it'll pay off if it makes your players feel like they really are in a city that is more than just a shallow backdrop for adventures.

Note that it's a good idea to pay some attention to the real locations you'll be using for the game when you're designing your city. Imagination is an impressive tool, but if your fictional city has a large park, it can make your life much easier to really have access to a large park which can be used for the game. The same thing goes for everything from the climate to the generic look of the city. This is by no means a requirement, but it can make things easier if you intend to play in public locations. Of course, if you're only playing indoors, such things cease to matter and you can go wild.

## HISTORY

Coming up with an extensive and detailed history for your city can be a problem. Overdo it, and you end up with a huge, boring book that no one really wants to read. Still, figuring out when your city was founded and why is a good idea, as is determining the major points in its history. Why did people want to move there and make it grow? What kind of industry did it have in the past? Who were the important people who made it all happen? Are there statues or buildings dedicated to their memory? Have there been battles in the city? Has anyone fought over the city itself?

Your city's history can be just an overview of the important events, and you can elaborate on certain things as necessary. As long as it is consistent and answers all the important questions players might have, it'll do just fine. For most games, defining the present is far more important than defining the distant past.

That said, if your chronicle deals with the past, or includes many characters who have lived in the city for a long time — perhaps for a hundred years or more — they'll need to know enough to play their roles convincingly, and that will obviously require more attention to the city's history.

It's recommended that Storytellers who face this task pay attention to real world history to see what happened in the world at any given time. Events such as the Civil War or the Great Depression or, in Europe, the World Wars and the resulting aftermath or the Inquisition (if you want to go that far into the past) have probably affected your city a great deal. In the end, it's not very difficult to do; all it requires is time, patience and a little bit of effort.

Finally, make sure that the history of your city is known to your players. How much they know should depend on what kind of characters they're playing, of course; elders are secretive beings and don't reveal their precious information easily. In any case, knowing the history helps them understand the city, and once they understand their surroundings properly, they'll have a far easier time settling into their characters comfortably. It is absolutely pointless to come up with a comprehensive and well-organized history for the city if it is never presented to the players.



### PAST TREASURES

The history of your city is an excellent place to look for plot hooks. They can range from ancient secrets to lost treasures; anything you feel fits the plot. If they're directly connected to your city's history, they can become quite entertaining. As long as everything is written carefully and the background story is solid and detailed enough to provide a feeling of continuity, everything is all right.

For example, there must be a reason for those continuing Sabbat attacks — why do they want this place so badly? Maybe one of those few elders who was around a hundred years ago, when the attacks began, has the answer. Or perhaps some of the local vampires are loyally guarding their sire's body that has lain in torpor for the past 50 years somewhere below the city, ever since that infamous battle with the Lupines — except now those damn Nosferatu have been snooping around in all the wrong places.... Or perhaps someone diablerized Prince Trevor all those years ago, and he didn't just get fed up with the job and leave. Now his childe is here, back from the Old World, and he's asking all of those annoying questions....

If you're feeling enterprising, you can come up with incredibly elaborate plots that were conceived centuries ago and are just now reaching fruition (or, perhaps, just getting started; after all, if you live forever, you may not be in a hurry) — not that the key players necessarily realize this themselves. Manipulation is something many of the Kindred take rather seriously, and they excel in doing so without ever actively taking part in the actual events. The possibilities are endless.

### Who's Doing What?

There are some organizations in any and all cities that are of supreme importance to the Kindred. Political offices, police and fire departments and the media are the first ones that come to mind, and thus you should spend time thinking about them. Unlike superficial things, such as what things look like, this is something that may have a direct impact on your game. What's more, knowing what your city is like allows you to use that information properly — it means that if someone uses her influence to order the local police around, you're not dealing with abstract police units, you can actually determine how that affects the rest of the city. The Kindred don't exist in a vacuum, and though they may influence the city, the city also influences them. Never forget that.

Most organizations can be defined in a few simple steps:

*What does the organization do?* This is simply a question of defining the organization's goals and agendas. A police department's goal is to uphold the law and catch the bad guys; a software company wants to develop software and turn a profit. Agendas may be rather simple or extremely complicated. In most cases, it's not necessary for the Storyteller to define them down to the smallest

### WHO'S PULLING THE STRINGS?

Vampires like to think that they are in control of the human society. At times, they are even correct; after all, if you control an influential member of a society, you can control certain areas of the society itself through that person. However, humans still have minds and concerns of their own, and vampires who forget that will find that they've bitten off more than they can chew. A city is bustling with activity; there may very well be millions and millions of people going through their lives there. While vampires may steer humans in a direction favorable to Kindred goals and use their Influence to advance their own agendas, ultimately humans may do things that damage the Kindred.

This can take many forms. It may be as simple as a Nosferatu being forced to move because his subterranean haven gets invaded by a horde of sewer workers, or it may be a Ventrie finding some of her stock losing its value because the company's CEO is making foolish decisions — or suddenly losing an important ghoul because he was shot in a mugging attempt. These things happen, and the more it feels like the characters are just a part of a bigger whole, the easier it is for the players to get into the game. Note that this doesn't mean that these should be random events; rather, they should be a logical part of the whole. A cunning vampire using her power over mortals may well be able to keep events like this from occurring at all.

details; a general understanding will do. Then again, if the organization is a major plot element, it's probably worth the trouble to get the details.

*What can the organization accomplish?* In other words, what kind of power and resources does it have. A police department has a great deal of authority due to their status as the local law enforcement agency, not to mention plenty of resources in the form of manpower, equipment and so forth. A huge software company has plenty of money and with money comes power — if nothing else, hiring a ravenous horde of highly paid lawyers gets you a long way. Furthermore, if their software is popular enough, they have a subtle influence over people, as changing their software also means changing the habits of the users. If nothing else, if you know the ins and outs of the software being used by everyone, you already have a potential weapon.

*Who does the organization have direct influence over?* A police department can disrupt most criminal operations with ease because our society grants them the authority to do so. Indeed, they may have a great deal of influence over the software company, if the software company commits a crime. That said, if the police department's computers run on the software company's software, the company can probably cause a lot of trouble for the department simply by releasing an extremely troublesome update for said software. Which would, of course, be illegal if done intentionally, but these things can be somewhat hazy at best....



What kind of weaknesses does the organization have? In many cases, weaknesses are something inherent to organizations — a flip side of their very nature, so to speak. While a police department has a great deal of authority while acting within the confines of the law, unless they have evidence that a crime has occurred or is occurring, they cannot legally do anything, even if they know what's going on. A software company that spreads its software everywhere and controls the market may end up in legal trouble because of that monopoly. There can be many additional weaknesses that don't follow this pattern, of course.

#### CONTROL

Numerous references to control and influence can be found here. Storytellers are encouraged to think about how these things are accomplished — be that through direct authority, blackmail, supernatural mind control or whatever. The Influences characters may have certainly come into play here, but instead of treating them as abstract tokens of influence, figure out exactly how the character has come by that Influence over the mortal society and how he wields it. Influences represent a certain amount of control, but it is up to the Storyteller to decide just what that means in her chronicle — is it a ghoul politican, a seat on the board of directors or a fake personality with equally fake authority?

Defining all of the major organizations in your city in this manner can take some time, but in the end you will have a good understanding of who's doing what and why. You will also know what kind of effects vampires who use their Influence will have on the big picture. Considering that in large games you may have a dozen or more powerful Kindred who use their different Influences at the same time, it's good to be able to see the big picture clearly.

Certain very important organizations exist in every city — police and fire departments, political offices, the media, power companies, schools, hospitals and so forth. They are crucial to mortal society — without them, it cannot function properly. Therefore, you should pay more attention to them; after all, they are the things that your players will be most interested in. Having a couple of cops or reporters in your back pocket can be a blessing at the time of a serious Masquerade breach. ("Nothing to see here, ma'am, you just move right along, please. You can read it in the paper tomorrow.")

However, note that micromanaging your city can quickly lead to disaster. While a certain degree of detail is fun and will improve the game, it means that you have far more work to do. A good rule of thumb is, "Is it likely that this will come up in the game?" If the answer is yes, by all means, spend time on thinking about the intricacies of the local public health services, but don't do it unless you need to. After all, chances are that you'll have plenty of other things to do, and there are only so many hours in the day.

You'll find more to this process than just defining all of these things, though. For this information to be meaningful, it must also be distributed to the players

#### FRIENDLY WORDS OF ADVICE, PART TWO

Write down everything that you do, and everything that happens in the game. *Everything*. The importance of this can hardly be stressed enough. Just do it.

This way, when the player of that Ventrue comes to you and asks if there's any way he can try and take over the company the other character just purchased, you don't have to fidget and say something off the top of your head — you'll *know* the right answers since you have it written down. If you're following even half of the suggestions presented here, chances are that your city will be a large, complicated place that lives a life of its own, especially once the players get their hands on it. While you as the Storyteller control it, you should expect the players to change things around to better their characters' lives. Yes, this is a lot of work, but once you have it all down, you'll find that making changes to things isn't nearly as much of a hassle as you might think.

Note that it's quite all right to expect players to write reports for you. You aren't asking for novels; you're asking for simple descriptions of what they did and what happened to their characters. Even the thickest player should be able to describe these things in less than 15 minutes if he takes the time to do so in the next few days following the game while everything is still fresh in his memory. An oral report with you writing down the details does equally well. As long as you get the information, the exact method is up to you. Don't let them talk you out of it — you *need* that information to properly run the game.

properly — preferably so that they know as much about the big picture as their characters do, as determined by their character backgrounds and whatever Influence they may have. This usually comes down to simply writing the appropriate bits down and handing them to the players.... And yes, that's more work. Luckily, it'll pay off once your players get into the mood and start to use that information. While Kindred matters certainly take a lot of time and attention, most Kindred who dabble in mortal affairs take them rather seriously. If you do your groundwork well, that means that the players can actually see the effect their actions have on the city their characters live in. Just remember that you must provide them with all the relevant information for all this to work properly.

#### THE DARK END OF THE STREET

And last, but certainly not least, you have to think about what makes this city a part of the Camarilla and the World of Darkness and not just another normal city. After all, the game is about vampires, and while paying attention to the city itself can be important, you certainly shouldn't do so and forget all about the supernatural. If the dynamics of mortal society can be troublesome and complicated, that can be a walk in the park compared to the complicated mess a single Camarilla city can hold for its vampiric occupants.



### BELow THE BELT?

While you're handing out all of that information about the city, consider the possibility that one of the characters has received faulty information, or is perhaps being tricked by someone — possibly another player character. After all, isn't that what controlling the mortal society is all about? Information and disinformation. Now think what might happen if the character acts on disinformation — say, a financial tip — firmly believing it to be true.

### THE CLANS

Of all the power groups in a Camarilla city, the clans are the most obvious ones. Everyone knows the exaggerated stereotypes, ranging from the artsy Toreador who goes around waving at things with his pinky pointing delicately at just the right angle, to the feral hillbilly Gangrel who has trouble spelling her name — and certainly, there's a seed of truth in all that; clan members do share common traits and characteristics and usually tend to feel varying degrees of loyalty toward each other — in many ways, a clan is similar to a family.

Clan elders tend to rule over the younger members of their clan, and their demands tend to be met with obedience. After all, doing otherwise means falling out of favor, and with falling out of favor comes all sorts of problems that most Kindred would rather avoid entirely. Besides, doing favors to an elder usually pays off — it's not just the elder who gets something out of the deal. Looking good in the eyes of a powerful Kindred tends to mean more status, influence and protection.

Therefore, clans tend to stick together. Still, it's a mistake to assume that just because someone is a member of a certain clan, she instantly shares her clanmates' agendas, goals and ideals. From the Storyteller's point of view, it is a mistake to lump all members of a certain clan into one big group and assign a certain amount of power, status and resources to them — there's usually infighting and rivalry, and even if there isn't, there's absolutely nothing that keeps a Brujah from being a poet or a Malkavian from being a quite serious and responsible scientist. The archetypes can be good for illustrating the generic nature the group in question, but they shouldn't be allowed to become rigid stereotypes. In other words, no, all Brujah do not wear leather and beat each other up, nor do all Tremere wear evil-looking cloaks and lie and cheat and backstab whenever they get the opportunity.

Furthermore, there is plenty of cooperation between the clans of the Camarilla. The "This guy is not of my clan, therefore I will not cooperate with him, but I'm sure the Camarilla will still stay united and protect me against the hordes of anarchs, Sabbat, Lupines and who knows what else out there" mode of thought is rather faulty at best, for obvious reasons. Cooperation exists partly out of necessity — the Camarilla must stay united or it will fall, and the elders realize this. They may play their own games, but very rarely do they do so at the expense of the Camarilla. Vampires who display no concern for the Camarilla's continued survival are considered security risks and rightly so, and while they may survive

the experience, it's safe to say that they make quite a number of enemies in the process. The local elders may not care about a feud between two neonates, but if said feud threatens the Camarilla, they make it their business. Indeed, many princes consider such matters direct threats to their domain and act accordingly.

The other reason for cooperation is simple — despite all the intrigue and plotting that goes on, most Kindred are mature enough to be able to form relationships with other beings. They can sit down and talk about the events of the day. They can have friends and lovers — and they do. Why? Because they are immortal, and immortality without entertainment gets old rather quickly. Most Kindred, all of their famed inhumanity notwithstanding, have still many basic human characteristics. If you live forever, you'll learn to enjoy a good debate. It'll be far more interesting than counting bricks or wiggling your toes. Watching a movie is a far more pleasant way of spending two hours than sitting down and scheming. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," as it were.

Yes, there are those who spend their nights plotting and planning and scheming, but despite the stereotype, this certainly doesn't apply to all, or even the majority of, the Kindred. Many of them just hang out and try to make the best of their unives. Storytellers and players alike should always keep this in mind when designing characters. It'll make for better roleplaying, and it'll make for a better game. After all, there is little drama in becoming the primogen or gaining power for its own sake — if it's the norm and the only objective of the game, who cares? A bad guy isn't a bad guy if he's no different from everyone else. Friendship loses its meaning if everyone can always be depended to backstab everyone else — as does backstabbing. The game becomes predictable and pointless. A master of intrigue rarely looks like one — no one likes to do business with someone like that; after all, why cooperate with someone if you know you're going to get hurt in the process?

These things should always be kept in mind. Not only do they play a major part when determining the nature of the Kindred population of your city, but they are also likely to be some of the most important things in actual gameplay. After all, in the end, most games consist of a group of vampires getting together and talking.

### OTHER POWER GROUPS

The clans, powerful though they are, are hardly the only supernatural power groups in the city. Often, coteries form across clan lines. Common interests cause vampires to band together — a group of Kindred who share strong anti-Sabbat sentiments might form a secret society to battle Sabbat even during a cease-fire, or financial interests might cause a group of vampires to pool their resources to gain control of the city's economy.

Also, there may be other supernatural creatures in the city — see "Things That Go Bump In The Night" p. 164.

### IMPORTANT POSITIONS

There are many important offices to be filled in any Camarilla city. The prince, the sheriff, the members of the primogen, the harpies, the keeper of Elysium — all of these positions come with quite a bit of power and influence. All of these characters will need players — some of them may be played by the Storyteller or the Narrators, but even those need good backgrounds. How did they reach their



positions? Are they comfortable where they are? Do they have any major rivals who want in their place? How long have they held their positions?

While the specifics of those are detailed elsewhere — see “Positions of Power” p. 121, it’s a good idea to keep in mind that the characters are also likely to have Influence in mortal society in addition to their Camarilla duties. These positions should be treated much like any authority in the mortal world, and while the actual details depend greatly on the personality of the character holding the position, the Storyteller should probably spend some time thinking about the balance of power between these positions — both within the Camarilla and within the mortal city.

#### HAVENS

All but the most nomadic vampires have a haven of some kind, and said locations are considered to be the vampire’s domain. Even princes — despite holding great authority in the city — tend to respect others’ havens unless given good reason to violate them. After all, that pesky Tradition about respecting others’ domains is still taken somewhat seriously, and while it mostly applies to princes, many feel that it also extends to personal havens. The details vary from city to city, but in most cases, in a vampire’s haven, her word is law. Obviously, this doesn’t mean that a vampire can kill a member of the primogen (or, indeed, anyone) in her own haven and get away with it, but it does mean that showing proper respect to a vampire while paying a visit to her home is a good idea; a good beating or loss of Status may well follow from failing to do so.

The location of a vampire’s haven should always be thought out; every player should know where and what kind of a place his character lives in. Basic security (or lack of it) should be covered. After all, these details will make a great deal of difference if the vampire’s haven gets invaded.

#### ELYSIUMS

Think about the Elysium locations carefully. While the art museums and similar locations are popular choices, they are by no means the only options. The average Elysium will be in an easily accessible location, and is likely to be well-protected. You should think about what kind of guards the Elysium has, where they’re coming from (are they the keeper’s personal ghouls, or merely hirelings from a mortal security firm someone has Influence in?), and whether the Elysium directly interacts with the mortal world somehow or not? (An Elysium might be located in a public building that is closed for the night, such as a library or a building that houses the city’s political offices.) Is it in the middle of the city, in a public location, where the Masquerade may be far more easily breached by accident, or is it located someplace more private? What kind of entrances and exits does it have? Do the Nosferatu have tunnels there? Furthermore, as gathering places during dangerous times, they make lovely targets for the Sabbat or other enemies; after all, blowing up the place where the ruling elite is located makes for a good tactical move. Thus most Elysiums tend to be in easily defended locations.

#### OTHER LOCATIONS

Other important locations may include (but aren’t limited to) Tremere chantries, popular clubs or restaurants patronized by vampires and the shops



of black market arms dealers. Anything that seems to suit the local vampire population’s needs and desires should be thought out. The Camarilla can get organized if need be, and some cities have been known to set up safehouses for Camarilla members in case of an emergency — especially during wartime conditions. All of these things should be pre-determined (or placed in a definite location in the city if the characters decide to organize something like this during the game).

#### HUNTING GROUNDS

The Kindred have established hunting grounds, and the prince of the city usually grants each clan or coterie certain areas as theirs to hunt on as they please. There are other methods of dividing up the city, ranging from simply having the strongest vampires or clans feeding where they please and the lesser vampires doing their best to stay out of their way, to the prince declaring contests or quests to establish which clans or coteries deserve to have the best hunting grounds. Some princes make an elaborate spectacle out of it all, while others toss a coin.

In most cases, groups of vampires tend to regard their hunting grounds as their territory. Passing through them is certainly permitted, unless the area happens to be headed by a particularly troublesome vampire (in which case said vampire had better be prepared to defend his territory), but making trouble on someone else’s dinner table is considered bad form and may well get the culprit in trouble. Of course, the prince of the city still holds supreme power in the area — unless said prince is a particularly unimpressive weakling, in which case she’s probably on her way out anyway — but the prince isn’t likely to get annoyed over someone getting slapped around because he couldn’t behave.

The Storyteller should pay close attention to the hunting grounds instead of just defining them randomly. The Kindred can be rather picky about their diets; therefore, hunting locations can become an important issue in the chronicle. For example, a Nosferatu may be quite happy to feed in the slums — after all, chances are that it’s close to home — but the Toreador might have somewhat different opinions about looking for convenient bums when they start to feel peckish. While the prince’s word is certainly law and tends to be obeyed, most princes go out of their way to make sure the inhabitants of their domains are at least relatively comfortable. After all, the Camarilla is based on cooperation, and while there’s plenty of petty bickering and plotting going on, in the end it’s the Camarilla against the rest of the world. It pays to keep the troops happy.

Of course, if the prince is just another player character, the player should certainly have as much input in this as she desires.

#### OVERPOPULATION

An average city needs about 100,000 citizens to sustain a single vampire’s existence. (For thoughts about exceptions, see “Size Does Matter,” p. 167.) This number may be stretched a bit, but after a certain point, problems start to crop up. Unexplained deaths and disappearances will start to cause problems in the mortal society, and the vampires will inevitably feel the pressure and start to argue about hunting grounds and hunting rights. It’s not necessarily a question of there not being enough blood to feed on (although that may be an issue as well), but rather a question of having easily accessible blood sources.



There is more to feeding than having enough people around — the people in question have to be of the type the vampires can safely feed on. After all, every time a vampire feeds is a potential Masquerade violation, and a city where the vampires have to struggle to find safe sources of blood is a city where the Masquerade is just waiting to be breached.

This is merely the beginning, though, since there are other matters as well — there are only so many vampires who can pull strings in the mortal society until they start heavily stepping on each others' toes. This may not be a problem in all cities, but most vampires tend to be rather protective of their own resources, and if they are constantly being accidentally torpedoed by someone else's plans, tempers will flare. Indeed, in many cases unintentional sabotage may be considered more offensive. ("Are you saying that my plans are so poorly laid that you do not even have to try to ruin them?")

Even if there are no such conflicts, most vampires don't like feeling crowded or boxed in. The nature of the Camarilla makes most vampires feel somewhat uncomfortable or even threatened if there are too many vampires around. They like to have the equivalent of personal space if only because they know that if there are too many Kindred around, the prince will kick some out, and that may mean a power struggle as everyone attempts to maintain their presence in the city.

The problem is whenever there are large-scale conflicts between vampires, the Masquerade is at risk. Whatever the specifics, sooner or later a competent prince will simply clean house and toss out the vampires she considers least useful, most dangerous and easiest to get rid of in order to preserve the Masquerade and, perhaps more importantly, her own sanity.

#### THE HIDDEN HISTORY

You should pay special attention to supernatural events as these may very well have shaped the history of your city. If there have been vampire elders struggling for the control of the city for the past hundred years, that will undoubtedly have had an effect, directly or indirectly, on the mortal population as well as the local Kindred. If the city has been repeatedly under Sabbat attack in the past, that will certainly make the local vampires adopt a rather defensive and cautious mindset. Strangers may not get a very warm welcome and are likely to find themselves on the receiving end of some rather intensive questioning if the city has a history of infiltrators or traitors.

Pay special attention to the following things when thinking about your city's history — they're things that are likely to come up in play:

- Why is this a Camarilla city? "Because that's what folks want to play" is a good reason to play a Camarilla game, but doesn't hold much weight in the chronicle itself.

- Why is the balance of power what it is? This refers both to the Camarilla's internal balance of power and to the balance of power between the Camarilla and other supernatural groups. It may simply be a question of unsurpassed power and influence, or it may be that blackmail, dirty tricks or even open warfare are in play. Or perhaps the current balance of power is something that has just recently been achieved and has yet to stabilize.

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- What exactly have the different power groups been up to in the past? For example, if the prince of the city has been replaced, that has probably shifted the balance of power considerably from one clan to another. More importantly, you should think about recent events and what has been accomplished — it's not like the clans just popped into existence two nights ago; chances are that they've been busy.

- Have there been major conflicts between supernatural beings? While such battles tend to stay hidden from the public, especially if it's an internal conflict within the Camarilla, it may very well have an indirect effect on the city, especially once the Kindred in question start to use their Influences to gain an edge against their opponents.

#### WHY GO THROUGH ALL THIS TROUBLE?

At this point, having read all of the above, you may be wondering why you should bother. An excellent question.

First of all, no one is expected to pick up the book and go through all of these steps one by one, in great detail, while creating a city. Rather, these ideas exist to heighten awareness of these issues and give advice and pointers on what to do when the Storyteller decides that she does want to create more depth and realism for her city. It's up to each individual Storyteller to use what she likes and not use what she doesn't like.

Secondly, a good background gives players the chance to play their characters properly. Instead of being vampires who convene in some generic location to plot and bicker amongst themselves for no good reason, the characters can become a part of a greater whole and occupy a particular niche within the society. Simply put, it's a roleplaying tool no different from dressing up for the part — except that it's happening inside the players' heads. Some would even argue that this is far more important than playing around with props. If the players can really feel that they are in the city and that there's far more happening around them than what they see, it will make it far easier for them to get in character and treat the city like a city instead of a shallow and meaningless backdrop.

Third: plot hooks, plain and simple. If the Storyteller wants to go beyond the basic "creepy one-eyed Tremere bastard plots to overthrow the regal and self-centered Ventrue prince" storyline, this is an excellent way to do it. It's rare for a sneaky vampire in the Camarilla to directly attack anyone, especially as that tends to be more trouble than it's worth. Why assassinate someone and risk being found out when you can just as easily capture his power base by gaining influence within the city — and do so while following the Camarilla's rules? There's an entire human society just waiting to be exploited, and if the Storyteller wants the city to become something more than just Influence Traits and the occasional Rock-Paper-Scissors test (hardly something that improves the mood), she must define it in sufficient detail for the players to get the feeling that it really works in a logical manner.

#### ISN'T ALL THIS WAY TOO MUCH?

No. Well, it shouldn't be. People tend to be able to absorb information relatively well. If your players aren't willing to study up on the game world you've spent all that time creating, they probably aren't very interested in the game, either.



However, always remember that it's a two-way street. While the players have the responsibility to know the rules of the game and know their characters' statistics, background and everything else that is relevant, the Storyteller has the responsibility to provide them with all of that — preferably in a format that can be easily understood. Taking the time to prepare the material is a definite requirement. If you hand them stacks of messy notes, they aren't going to be very impressed, but a document that contains all the important information will very likely do the trick. Note that a well-prepared document can be rather long and sink in just fine, whereas a short but poorly organized document may go unread.

And remember — don't overdo it. While players can be expected to read and understand information relevant to the chronicle, it's probably safe to say that most players aren't willing to memorize hundreds of pages of setting material just because you're on a roll. The exact limits differ from group to group; it's probably best to talk about this with your players beforehand so that you know where your limits are.

## THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

A Storyteller often gets the urge to throw all sorts of supernatural creatures into the mix. More often than not, the best advice here is "Think it through, and consider the possibility that this could be a very bad idea." Admittedly, this is somewhat harsh, but experience has shown that it is very easy to fill up a city with so many supernatural beings that you can't cross a street without bumping into something huge and horrifying.

This is not to say that it is impossible or wrong to use a pack of Lupines or a group of wraiths as worthy antagonists, but the "monster of the week" approach gets old very quickly. Vampires rarely interact with other supernatural creatures, and such encounters shouldn't become commonplace. If they do, you'll find your players yawning. "Oh, it's just a pack of Black Spiral Dancers. We see them all the time."

What's more, chances are that your players aren't stupid, and if it becomes obvious to them that the only reason these beings exist is to pose a threat, the game world loses much of its integrity. It's far better to keep the players wondering about what is really going on with them especially as it also gives you easy access to good plot hooks.

Rather, if you want your game to have supernatural beings in it, create a place for them from the start. Maybe the furballs like the central park or the woods outside the town, and maybe the old university holds a gathering of mortal sorcerers. The retro club downtown may serve a number of faerie customers who have a big thing for the '70s. That's all very well and good, but that means that all of these groups must have spheres of influence, agendas and weak spots, whatever they may be. Preferably, you should map them out from the very beginning of your chronicle and have them react accordingly to what the player characters might do. In most cases, what the local vampires do is of very little interest to these groups unless it threatens their existence. Most vampires' agendas tend to be so different from the others' plans that direct conflict is relatively rare. This is not to say that a suitably enraged werewolf won't call up his posse and go kick some leech butts, but in most cases it's

something that can be avoided. Your average furball won't care one bit about some vampires' internal power struggles.

## BREAD AND CIRCUSES

If you're going for a high-action game with lots of excitement, there's nothing inherently wrong about having hordes of evil monsters descend upon the trenchcoated characters whose silver-plated twin katanas and death-dealing chain guns are already brought to bear — never mind where they're coming from. It will ruin your game's internal logic, but who cares? It may not be excellent roleplaying, but it can be fun.

Just be warned that if you go down this path, returning to status quo can be extremely difficult if not completely impossible; this is the kind of a thing that will mark a game forever. Also keep in mind that players who expect to play in a more serious game will not be pleased about this. It's probably a good idea to make up your mind about this before you begin the chronicle and give fair warning just to avoid ending up with justifiably disappointed and resentful players.

Also note that just because there are such beings in your city, that doesn't mean that the player characters necessarily know about them. There is no good reason to construct the equivalent of a neon sign that says, "Here be monsters!" — it's often better that the characters find out about them by accident, if at all. Keep them guessing.

## RUNNING WITH IT ALL

As you have been told repeatedly by now, you have probably realized that this is a lot of work. Depending on the nature of your chronicle, these things may or may not come up in your game. It all depends on a number of factors, such as how much time you want to spend on these matters and whether or not you want to let your players do anything in between the games (and if so, in what detail?).

Some Storytellers like to run their games both as regular tabletop roleplaying games (using the *Vampire: The Masquerade*) and as live-action games (using the *Mind's Eye Theatre*). Obviously that allows for a great deal of detail as all of the major tasks the characters undertake can be played out. The problem with this approach is that most Storytellers prefer to have lives beyond the game.

Luckily, there are other, less time-consuming options. Some Storytellers allow characters to perform certain actions between games, like do research, use Influences or make deals with other characters, but don't let them attack other characters or significantly advance the plot. Others let them do as they please — attempt to firebomb other characters' havens, travel to other cities, recruit allies, gain Influences, whatever, but draw the line at some point, saying "That's enough for now." There are many different ways to deal with this, but



the bottom line is: Let them do as much as you think is appropriate. Of course, the more realism and internal consistency you want, the more they should be allowed to do, but don't let that bog you down. Chances are that you have a real life somewhere in all of this, and you shouldn't let the game take all of your time. Burnout will ruin the game more certainly than not letting a player go over to someone's house and Dominate everyone there into submission.

It's also important to determine how fast (or slow) time moves. Some games span decades or even centuries, while others move forward slowly, one night at a time while in the real world months or even years pass. If you do allow characters to act between games, you should take this into account — once the period of time between games becomes months or years instead of days, the actions the characters take tend to become far more generic and the scope of the game changes. This is not a bad thing by any means, but it does require a different approach from the Storyteller.

## THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

You may wish to use a real city in your *Masquerade* chronicle — most likely the city where you live in. After all, that's easy enough for the players to get a feel of, and perhaps more importantly, it saves you a lot of work since the players already know the place. Furthermore, it's often fun to take the real world and rewrite it into the World of Darkness, but it takes more than a coat of black paint and a bunch of monsters to accomplish that.

A good place to start creating a Gothic-Punk version of your city is simply taking a look at its history. Chances are that there have been vampires there for a while now — for decades or even centuries. Considering that some cities in the Old World may be well over a thousand years old, that can be quite a bit of history to cover. If there have been vampires in the city, they have undoubtedly meddled in its affairs quite a bit over the years.

Note that this certainly doesn't mean that all significant events were initiated by vampires. Quite the contrary — humans are rather good at making decisions all by themselves. Still, if it has an impact on the city, it has an impact on the vampire population. Thus, the Kindred have a vested interest in keeping on top of local events, and if your city's history includes a heated political battle, it may happen to be the perfect manifestation of the power struggle of two elders — so much the better. The Kindred don't run the entire show, but they can certainly make things happen if they so desire.

In many ways, the process of converting a real city is very similar to creating a fictional city. However, there are some marked differences. Instead of coming up with organizations, you'll most likely want to take a look at the organizations in your city and use them (in addition to creating fictional ones, if you feel like it). The only way to do this accurately is research and brainwork. Note that nobody expects you to mirror everything completely; your city can and probably should be different, but it's a good idea to try and get the details right. That way the players can depend on their knowledge of the place, and that alone cuts your workload into a fraction of what it would be with a fictional city.

### "ACTUALLY, THAT'S CLOSED ON SUNDAYS."

The problem with playing with people who know the place is that they really know the place — possibly far better than you do. There are legitimate corrections, of course. Besides, most people understand that it's unreasonable to expect that every single detail in your chronicle mirrors reality. Still, sooner or later, you're likely to run into someone who feels like correcting you, over and over again, until you start to feel like changing things just to shut him up. Don't. It's your chronicle, and you get to decide what your fictional version of the city looks like. Smart players will understand this. Accepting constructive criticism is a good thing, but putting up with continuous carping about small details is just silly.

### SIZE DOES MATTER

The size of your own city is certainly a factor, as it directly affects the vampire population. In *Mind's Eye Theatre* games the size limits are often stretched, and that's all right — after all, not everyone lives in a city populated by millions of people. However, in certain cases it becomes obvious that there are simply far more vampires in any given area than it can support.

There are three ways you can handle this:

You can stretch the limit and say that vampires can survive on smaller populations, or ignore the matter entirely. This is a simple solution, but there's a downside to this: It does mess with the game's internal logic. Depending on what kind of a chronicle you want to run, it may not be a problem at all, or it may become a huge problem. The challenge in deciding your city's Kindred-to-population ratio is to make sure it makes sense and is consistent. Otherwise the story may develop logical flaws that cause problems for the whole chronicle.

Alternatively, you can increase the size of your home town. It may well be that Smallville, Oregon only has a few hundred-thousand inhabitants (or less), but you can always pretend that it's a huge city. After all, if you can pretend that the Ventrue you're talking to actually has Majesty and that you can't see the Nosferatu listening in on you two just because he has his hands crossed over his chest, pretending that you live in a big city shouldn't be that hard.

The third option is to decide that there really are far more vampires in this area than usual and work out reasons why they are there and how they can survive without being detected. For example, an area with a large meat industry will produce great amounts of animal blood and no one is likely to notice if some of it ends up in the local Elysium. It's not very glamorous, but in the end, blood is blood... and blood, as we all know, is the life. Or maybe the humans do notice and take action. That should make for a different kind of a chronicle....

### REAL PEOPLE AS CHARACTERS

When you're busy converting your city, sooner or later you're likely to get the urge to make a real person a part of your game either as a player or Storyteller character. It may be the mayor of the city, the local chief of police, a local artist — anyone who seems to fit in. It adds a lot of color and realism

## MAPS

Using maps is a good idea. Buying a decent map of the city probably won't be too expensive; you may even get local tourist maps for free if you're lucky. You can easily use them to define important areas — hunting grounds, havens, Elysium — simply by marking them on the map. You'll get a much better understanding of the big picture if you can just take a look at the map and see where everything is. Suitably prepared, they can also make very good props for the game. After all, a fledgling Nosferatu may well carry a map with the most commonly used entrances and passage routes of the sewer system marked on it, or a group of elders planning the defense of the city against an upcoming Sabbat attack will certainly want to look at a map.

if a local politician becomes a part of the chronicle (after all, it nicely explains just where all of that Influence comes from). What's more, this allows you to have characters directly associated with all of those organizations you've spent so much time developing.

Still, some pitfalls do exist.

Perhaps your opinions and the players' opinions differ — you may dislike someone's politics immensely and end up making him a founding member of the Gentlemen's Club of Evil Powermongers, but the player who ends up playing him may well disagree — or vice versa. While this is probably something that can be sorted out with a simple conversation, you should always remember that the players don't necessarily agree with your views. Politics can make people touchy, and if someone believes that you're making a person she respects look bad because you dislike his politics, it's not likely to improve the game. It's a good idea to make sure that the game doesn't become anyone's personal soapbox.

Also, this is somewhat touchy ground. Let's face it, it may very well be that the person the character is based on would take offense if he finds out that he is portrayed as an immoral undead monster that sucks blood out of people, and you can't really blame him for that. Discretion is certainly advised, and you should make it clear to your players that this is a fictional character based on a real person and doesn't represent the real person. Storytellers are strongly advised to refrain from using the game as an excuse to abuse someone. It's your game, and you can do as you please, but you have been warned.

As an alternative, you can always create caricatures of people instead of using their real identities. The practice is certainly commonly used in the entertainment industry — it's a good way of making it clear to everyone what's going on, but without the risk of offending people too badly. It may not be quite as effective as using the name of a real person, but in most cases it will probably be a workable solution. Changing someone's name and background while giving her similar mannerisms and history can be just as good as the real thing — and potentially far less troublesome.

## REAL-LIFE ORGANIZATIONS

The same applies to converting local organizations into whatever they are in your version of the city. You can certainly do so, and there's nothing wrong with that — quite the contrary; having the same landmarks and corporations in your game as your real city does probably enhance the mood quite a bit. Still, caution is advised. Some corporations are extremely touchy about where and how their names are being used. Again, it goes beyond the scope of this book to tell you specifically what to do about situations like this; it all comes down to the Storyteller's discretion, but it's good to pay attention to these things.

## FROM THE ASHES OF THE OLD...

Certain *Masquerade* chronicles out there have been running for years now, and more often than not, sooner or later, the people running the game are going to sit down, take a look at their creation and decide that it needs an overhaul — after all, people grow. What seemed like an incredibly cool idea when you were a teenager might seem lame five years later. Perhaps the chronicle was originally founded by someone who had a quite different idea of how to go about doing things, or perhaps things have simply gotten out of control — maybe someone said "yes" when he should have said "no" a couple of times too often. These things happen. There are many chronicles that can stand to keep on chugging along just fine without intervention, but at times emergency procedures are required to keep the patient alive.

There are different levels to this — it may simply be a question of tweaking relatively small things here and there, or it may be a total overhaul that requires the brainpower equivalent of a dry dock and a huge crew of highly trained engineers and technicians. Much can be said about this, but in the end it comes down to three options: You can either subtly update your chronicle as much as is possible without changing it so much that it becomes something entirely different; you can tinker with it until you're totally satisfied with things, and accept the end result as your new chronicle, or, in some terminal cases, you can (and probably should) decide to dump it entirely and start over from scratch.

## MINOR FACELIFT

Perhaps surprisingly, this option is usually the most difficult one. Updating bits and pieces here and there while attempting to keep all of the previous continuity intact can be extremely difficult — especially if there are things in the chronicle's history that you would prefer to get rid of but they are linked rather solidly to other events. Everything in the chronicle is a part of a complicated, larger whole, and if you alter one thing, that will affect everything else. You may want to just change things around as you please, but the consequences will certainly influence the whole chronicle. If the players never notice, this may not be a problem, but taking the chance is usually not advisable.

Note that you don't necessarily need to change past events in the game to fix things; at times, it may simply be enough to change things now. ("Oh, he was called back to Vienna to be briefed. I hear they have a big job for him. They're making him the regent of this chantry in Budapest or something.") If you don't like the way a current storyline is going, you can always end it right now. It may be a bit blunt and sudden, but then again, that can happen in real

life as well; it all depends on how you handle it. "What? All of this was for nothing?" may not be as epic as it could be, but it may still make for a good story when the players try to pick up the pieces after everything suddenly changes.

Messing with continuity can present serious problems, and if you don't want to deal with those, you can just tell your players, "Okay, this was really stupid in the game, and I'm not going to say that it didn't happen, but let's just sort of gloss over that and start doing things right from now on." The downside of this technique is that if it's something that happened to the characters, it's probably affected them. Requiring the players to roleplay the changes brought on by that event while ignoring the cause of the change completely may be a bad idea—or vice versa: ignoring the changes but keeping the cause isn't likely to work out much better.

In most cases, unless you know that you only need to change a couple of things, you're probably better off chucking the current continuity out the window and accepting a few big changes, as it can be almost impossible to keep everything in check while still overhauling the chronicle.

Still, if all you want is to fix relatively small things here and there, this is probably the way you want to go. Be warned that despite your original intentions, in many cases you'll end up doing something bigger as you find that the small changes just aren't enough.

#### MAJOR SURGERY

The second option is considerably easier—it all comes down to taking a look at what you already have and then systematically changing things around until you like what you see. However, notice that "easy" doesn't mean "effortless." It'll be a lot of work, make no mistake: Not only do you have to make all of those changes, you also have to make sure that your players know what the changes are! This means yet more writing.

There's no nice way of putting this: There are plenty of incredibly bad characters out there, ranging from stereotypical cute teddy-bear-carrying Malkavians who do silly things because they're just so darn kooky, to incredibly powerful Tremere elders who use high levels of Thaumaturgy to lay waste upon anyone who looks at them funny. When played badly, such characters cripple a chronicle rather effectively, and removing or fixing characters like that may be just what the game needs.

Removing and fixing bad plotlines can be more difficult. It may be that for whatever reason, there are things you want to get rid of—maybe there's a group of anarchs with a thaumaturgically modified nuclear device that will destroy all supernatural beings on the planet unless they are accepted into the Camarilla, or maybe the idea about the prince becoming obsessed with painting everything black has simply gotten old, or maybe that conference for fifth-generation Methuselahs would really screw up the game, but everything you've done this far is setting things up for that. Simply erasing these plots from existence is difficult and probably a bad idea since it means that everything that has happened this far suddenly becomes pointless and makes no sense to anyone attempting to understand the events in the game. If a certain character has been played for years with a certain set of instructions from his superiors, and said instructions suddenly change for no good reason—because a Storyteller came up with a new idea—

it's going to make the player rather displeased at best. Not only is it frustrating to have done all that work for nothing, but it's also painfully obvious to him that it's happening just because you changed your mind. It makes it impossible for the player to justify his actions to other characters, and the player will have little choice but to drop out of character and explain that he had good reasons for doing what he did until the world changed around them—hardly something that improves the game. (Note that having such a sudden change of instructions happen as a part of the game is, of course, an entirely different thing—and yes, there is a major difference there. The character is still likely to be displeased, of course, but that's another matter.)

If you do change your plans, you should try to do so gracefully so that it makes sense to the players. If at all possible, the players should never become aware that things have changed, but this may not be an option. In such cases, it's extremely important that you document the changes and make sure the players know what the new situation is like. They depend on their Storyteller to give them all the relevant information about the game world. Without that information, they are practically blind. Of course, this is a two-way street; often it is the Storyteller who finds herself blind. If there are many players and a number of games have been played, that usually means that a lot has happened, and it's very hard to remember what happened a year and a half ago without good notes.

As a last resort, if you absolutely have to, you can always say, "Look, guys, this isn't working out, so I'm going to change things, and if it really makes your life suck, let me know and we'll see what we can do." It's nowhere near a perfect solution, but it's still better than just making a decision and then running with it as if nothing had happened. That'll just annoy the players; the players won't like the other decision, either, but it'll still be better—at least you'll be leveling with them. Treating them like idiots or presuming that it's all right to make up their minds for them is a sure way to get in an argument.

In all cases, you should keep in mind that players might not be too happy with the Storyteller coming over and telling them that the chronicle has just changed radically; such changes are bound to affect their characters, and players often take a dim view of someone simply telling them what happens to their characters—and rightly so. The Storyteller does get to decide what happens, and players don't really have much choice but to accept this, but they can always vote with their feet. It's important to ensure that the players know what's going on and that the Storyteller doesn't come off as an evil dictator who warps the game just because he feels like it. After all, a successful game is a group effort.

#### I THINK HE'S GONE, DOCTOR

The third option is something of a final solution, but a Storyteller who knows when to lay a chronicle to rest is a wise one indeed. If the players are concentrating on showing off their cool Disciplines, the major plotlines revolve around silver abominations who slaughter characters left and right while waiting for Caine to make his weekly appearance, and just thinking about the whole thing makes you cringe and fervently wish that you were somewhere else drinking beer, there is absolutely nothing wrong with calling it quits. Indeed, it's probably a good idea. There's no point in running a game that's no fun.



That said, this is hardly the only reason a chronicle should be allowed to end. Perhaps the whole thing just isn't working properly. Maybe the players who were supposed to play certain characters couldn't make it, or that great overall plot idea that looked so good on paper just didn't work out in play. Again, these things happen; assigning blame probably isn't the way to go here.

There are no valid guidelines for identifying a game that isn't working; at least none that everyone agrees on. That said, if the Storyteller is no longer enjoying the game or if the majority of players aren't satisfied with it and it looks like it wouldn't be worth the trouble of fixing everything that's broken, there are good indications that it's probably time to put an end to the chronicle.

After all, you can always start over again and learn from your previous mistakes.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL

The Masquerade is perhaps the only common goal that all Kindred in the Camarilla can agree upon. Its members fight a constant battle, not only to keep the kine from witnessing vampiric activity, but also to discredit any that would try to bring forth evidence of supernatural existence. The primary weapon in this battle is the influence that the sect has developed within mortal society.

This network extends from CEOs and political officials all the way down to the gangs and the bums on the street. It can be as direct as blackmail or as subtle as misdirection. In some cases, it may be garnered through use of Disciplines or Abilities. Most often, it is bought through knowing precisely how the "machine" works and what rewards corrupted mortals desire.

Though the goal may be common, the implementation of this control is as varied as the clans and ages of the Kindred themselves. Each clan — and each individual within the clan — has its own agenda and approach toward the kine's operations. Some exert control over events that affect them. Others seek information to use as currency. Older Kindred prefer stable enterprises that have high stability and little turnover. Younger Cainites prefer innovation, which involves more risk, but promises a higher return.

Regardless of approach, such resources are coveted by Kindred with differing agendas. When this occurs, they are contested. Some of the most vicious battles fought by the Camarilla are not fought against enemies but over influence. Both sides will weave intricate plots to seize control while others stand aside to witness the maneuvering and see the outcome.

Status may be a reflection of an individual's notoriety and standing within the Camarilla, but Influence is the measure of power. The Kindred with the most sway are the ones that garner the most favor. Likewise, the ones with the most favor are rewarded with the opportunities to generate more sway. Thus, the vicious circle is created and maintained.

### RUNNING IN THE SHADOWS

Kindred in the Camarilla jockey for power and position, often at the expense of each other. Many have come to realize that the easiest way to overcome a rival is to take what is hers and make it yours. A delicate balance is created, and an intriguing dilemma. In order to be perceived as powerful,



your power must be evident. But if your power is too readily apparent, it is vulnerable to those who covet it. There is no Tradition within the Camarilla that ensures a Kindred can keep what he cannot hold.

The best way to maintain any degree of power in the Camarilla is to keep it hidden in mystery. It is hard to destroy what you cannot find. It is hard to steal what you cannot grasp. Most important, it is hard to prepare for something you cannot conceive. Within these shadows, power-bases are built and grown. The same practices that hide the truth about vampires from the mortal world are used to conceal plots and maneuvers from fellow Kindred.

### TEN TENETS OF INFLUENTIAL ENTERPRISE: INFLUENCES FROM AN ELDER'S VIEW

- *Try to act remotely.* Many Camarilla Kindred use agents and retainers to implement their control. This serves as a stopgap for those attempting to trace the actions back to the master. It also allows for a convenient scapegoat when the prince or archon gets a little too close for comfort. A setback can easily become beneficial if the minion of one of your rivals can be your scapegoat. You may not always win, but you should never lose.

- *Maneuver with discretion.* Kindred seldom directly influence mortals in power. Such individuals are carefully monitored, often by rivals. Such scrutiny can attract conflict and attention. If the mortal's watchdogs do not interfere, the Kindred's competitors will. Indirect methods are harder to trace and to sabotage. Sometimes the best place to hide is where no one will think to look.

- *Avoid mortal contact when possible.* One way not to reveal to a mortal that he is being controlled is to not deal with the mortal at all. Accidents can erase valuable files. Itineraries can be altered at the printer. Evidence can mysteriously disappear. Objects tell no tales — to most mortals at least.

- *Be wary of strong-willed prey.* Mortals are beasts of conscience and arrogance no matter how much they may declare otherwise. When a mortal realizes he is being controlled, he will try to free himself. If he is unable to, he will become desperate. In the end, like a trapped animal, he will go to extreme lengths to be freed, even if he must harm himself or others in the process. This is far too messy for Kindred who wish to remain in the shadows.

- *Create contingencies.* A master plan should never be set in stone. It should be solid enough to be reliable and not left to chance, but it must also be flexible enough to adapt to adversity. The willow bends in the breeze that breaks mighty oaks.

- *Create redundancies.* Most matters of intrigue are maintained by departmentalizing your efforts. No single minion should factor too heavily in the success of your project. A lost piece should never cost you the game.

- *Conceal the scope of your power.* If none of your agents knows more than a piece of the overall puzzle, then no one will be able to discover the entirety by compromising one part. If you are only as strong as your weakest link, it is best if your weakest link knows only a small part of the chain. This practice was used when the Americans developed the first atomic weapons.

- *Establish a cover.* Nothing should be as it appears. Create a facade around your operations that is as different from the reality as possible. Plant rumors and false evidence supporting the charade. Pretend to fail in covering

them up so that the investigators will feel they have found your true intentions. Many times, it is easier to believe a well-told lie than a hard-to-find truth.

- *Benefit those who can support you.* Create enterprises that are more beneficial if left alone than contested. Support a strong prince by making her stronger. Do not monopolize or hoard resources; instead, control the flow. If you cut others out, they will try harder to remove you, but if the price they pay for acquiring what you have is less than that of doing the work themselves, it would be a waste of their effort. You gain more from their addictions than from their fits of withdrawal.

- *Never create that which you cannot destroy.* No vampire can withstand the united front of several Kindred — ask the Brujah. If what you control is valuable, someone will eventually seek it. If control cannot be maintained, it is better to disassemble it than to see it used against you. It takes much planning and effort to acquire someone else's domain. Frustrate them further by making it all for nothing. When there are no spoils, there is no war.

**Example:** Nicolaus, the Ventre primogen, wishes to expand his control into Underworld. Unfortunately, that Influence is currently controlled by the Brujah Prince. Nicolaus makes a proposal to the prince to open a chemical factory that could conceal the production of munitions. What Nicolaus does not mention is that this factory will also conceal the production of narcotics that Nicolaus will distribute to generate contacts. Slowly, he will sneak into a market that was closed to him.

**Example:** Joshua, a Brujah, wants to exert some control over the local police. He sends some of his female retainers to act drunk and disorderly at the bars. When the officers arrive, the women seduce them and take them into side room where the whole encounter is captured on hidden surveillance cameras. Josh will use the tapes to convince the officers to lay off the gangs he has contact with. With one plot he strengthens his hold on two areas.

#### MAKING YOUR OWN BREAKS: A NEONATE'S TAKE ON INFLUENCES

- *Try the hands-on approach.* One way to control an organization is to understand how it works from the inside. By understanding the procedures and protocols, a Kindred can become aware of the loopholes that can later be exploited.

- *Take chances.* The riskier endeavors offer larger returns and are often neglected by more conservative Kindred. In addition to uncontested operation, the gamble itself can provide a rush.

- *Identify with the kine.* Getting to know how the kine feel and react can provide insight into how to best utilize them. Familiarity can also reveal the vices that would tempt kine in positions of power to benefit your operations.

- *Play on emotions.* Befriend those who seek friendship. Intimidate those who fear you. Lie to those who are easily deceived. Kine are easily swayed by their feelings.

- *Focus your efforts.* Try to avoid juggling more than you can handle. Sometimes, it is better to do one thing really well than several things adequately.

- *Cooperate with others.* Resources pooled with other Kindred of similar interests can sometimes grant access to larger schemes than one can manage on her own.

- *Market your power base.* Sometimes, other Kindred will give prestation or favors to those with influence in a certain aspect of kine society. Perhaps it is to save their time, or to conserve their efforts for larger endeavors. Deals could be made that would expand your power base.

- *It is not wise to poke a lion with a stick.* Avoid coming into conflict with those with more power than you control. Assist them if you need to; avoid them if possible. Strike only if you feel you can win.

**Example:** Estacado and Sasha, both Brujah, wish to influence the local gangs. Since the gangs rely mostly on the camaraderie they have built, the Kindred are initiated into the gang. After a few months of fighting rival gang members, staging successful robberies and facing position challenges, they have built a rep for themselves within the gang. With an understanding of what motivates the members of the gang, they are able to use them when needed.

**Example:** Joseph, a Ventre, wishes to impress the prince and decides to create a more suitable Elysium for the domain. Although he has the resources to secure the building, he knows that there is more to an Elysium than a structure. To overcome this obstacle, he agrees to assist a Toreador, in exchange for a few pieces of art, with purchasing a gallery. He further agrees to finance the upgrade of some of the Nosferatu's computer equipment in exchange for forged permits and licenses. Once he has completed the deals, he presents the complete project to the prince for approval.

#### MAPPING THE CITY

Each city has a unique influential scope. Some cities are industrial centers, others are university towns. Some lie along commerce routes, others may have international airports. All these factors must be considered when deciding not only what can be accomplished with Influences but how often Kindred will come into conflict trying to in using them.

The first thing that needs to be developed is how much potential Influence exists in the city. For each of the categories, a maximum level of usable Influence Traits should be set. This level will depend on how strong the Influence category is in relation to the surrounding area. Washington, D.C. influences the politics of neighboring cities more than Muncie, Indiana. A Kindred would be able to create a higher level of influence in the former. Most towns and cities are diverse enough to allow for obtaining considerable levels of Influence. Cities of importance to states or regions would allow for exceptional levels, but are rare, and will only affect a few categories. Cities of national or international importance would allow for expansion into the highest levels that are best left to elders.

Individual limits should be placed on Influence Traits depending on what is available in the city at the start of the chronicle. If the city has little or no representation in an area of Influence, then the highest an Influence could get to is 3 or 4. A city with normal representation of an Influence would have a 5. Cities with exceptional representation may grant levels of 6 or above.

Take into account the things your city is known for and the things it may lack. Pick at least three Influences to be considered exceptional, and at least three to be lacking. The rest should be average. A small town may have Street 4, a college town might have University 5, and a state capital would have Political 6 or more.



The second step is to determine how accessible these Influences are. This will determine how easily Kindred can expand their control over of that Influence. It will also determine what kind of storylines will develop from the endeavors. Small town clinics are easier to infiltrate than military hospitals. Advertising agencies are easier to get into than a federal depository. Public schools are more accessible than private institutions. Overall, this ease of access provides a balance of sorts to the limited capacity. Larger metropolises allow for larger actions, but smaller cities are easier for individuals to control.

These definitions do not involve mechanics other than shaping the justifications for Experience Trait expenditures or altering the caps placed on Influence availability. It does determine what actions can be used. A small town sheriff's department might not have access to Kevlar vests. Some countries have strict gun control, and gangs may not have access to firearms. Rural areas may not have many businesses with access to higher finances.

The next step is to determine how prevalent the Influence is. How much can Kindred expand before their goals work counter to the goals of other Kindred? Mortals will only allow themselves to be pushed so many times before they become desperate and prone to irrational judgments. They will only be pulled in so many directions before they become unreliable. This places further limits on the city's Influence portfolio. A city with several universities can allow several Kindred to exert control over academics. If a city holds only one, no matter how large it is, these Kindred may come into conflict while trying to influence its operations.

Storytellers can use several systems to ensure that players understand Influence is a limited resource. It is important that they realize that roleplaying and planning, not just Experience Traits, expand Influence. Influence, more than most other Traits, encourages cooperation, but such cooperation must not encroach upon the overall themes of conspiracy and infighting that World of Darkness games rely on.

One possible system is to only allow a certain number of cumulative levels to exist in the city. Count the number of players and multiply that by a modifier based on the prevalence of the Influence. For poor Influences, the modifier would be one; for average, it would be two; for exceptional, three. Of the 15 categories, only a few should be either poor or exceptional, and they should be offset for game balance. Once all of those levels have been acquired by characters, no one can expand or develop influence in that area unless they do so at the expense of another character or by expanding the prevalence of the Influence (expending resources, markets, etc.). For instance, a state capital would have a larger pool of people involved with politics, while an industrial center with many factories would have room for several to build that Influence. Cities that are distribution centers, like Chicago or Atlanta, would have a lot of Transportation Influence.

Some Influence Traits should be left for the Storyteller characters. No matter how well the Kindred feel they have developed their networks, they are just a few individuals. They should never feel they know everything or can stop anything from happening. Humans often act erratically. They are prone to fits of conscience or delusions of grandeur. More often than not, they are independent, self-interested individuals who will do everything they can to



turn matters to their own benefit. Most business takes place during the day when no vampire can act. In the end, the Camarilla is only one of the Cainite factions, and they have a lot of enemies.

#### A CITY DEVELOPED: AN EXAMPLE

After thinking about the city and researching tourist guides, encyclopedia entries and even the Yellow Pages, Jennifer the Storyteller decides to develop an Influence portfolio for her chronicle's city.

It has a major state university and two local colleges. On the outskirts of town, there are several factories, which have not yet been affected by work going overseas. There are also a number of churches of varying faiths and sizes, and the city is in the Bible Belt. However, the city only has a small mall and very few businesses. There are no local television stations, and the local newspaper is overshadowed by the larger newspaper from another city nearby. It also has no theater and only one museum.

Jennifer decides that at the start of the chronicle, the individual limits will reflect these considerations. Levels 6 or higher in University, Industrial and Church can be possessed by characters (these Influences have strong, thriving bases). Finance capacity is at 4 (from the local banks). Media and High Society can only be at 3 (there isn't enough to anchor more unless more fine arts arrive or the newspaper gets a shot in the arm). All others can be purchased up to 5.

Next, Jennifer has to decide how available the Influence fields are. Media and High Society are rare, so for the 12 characters in the chronicle, there will only be 12 levels of Influence available. After those levels are claimed, the characters will have to roleplay expanding the market or cutting in on the levels owned by other characters. University, Industrial and Church are more prevalent, so there are 36 levels available. The rest of the Influences will have 24 overall levels.

Her final step is to decide the amount of influence Storyteller characters will have. At the start of the chronicle, she feels the Storyteller characters should have more Influence than individual player character. However, she decides that the levels for the individual Storyteller characters should be less than the combined totals available for the player characters to encourage political deals between characters who rely on subtle Influence over direct interaction.

#### IN THE DETAILS

Okay. You've got the blueprint for your city all laid out. You know where the hot spots are, where the low-lives live and where you want your plot to go. Now that you've chosen your ZIP code and built your new city, you need to take the time and figure out how to put all that into motion. A chronicle is built game by game. The techniques you use to bring your hometown to life make all the difference between building scenery and building a world. Remember, humanity is a terribly important part of a *Masquerade* game. If the ordinary humans in your town are just faceless mannequins, no one's going to get worked up over them. If you keep a few things in mind as you get your chronicle in motion, it'll be easier to keep things on track. Your players are going to push, pull, prod and occasionally blow up your new creation. Don't be afraid to let it push back.

## WHAT DO I SEE?

First impressions mean a lot. The way a person looks conveys a sense of style that's hard to remove. The same thing applies to the character of the city. The physical descriptions you provide your players are the most effective weapons in your arsenal for defining the style of a game. Keeping your scene descriptions consistent and thematic will go a long way toward keeping your city alive. You may well know what you want your brave new world to look like, but unless you convey that effectively to the players, you may as well not have bothered.

You'll want to start off by focusing on your game's "home base"—the locale that you start off in every night. Most Camarilla games will kick off in Elysium or the prince's court. An anarch game may not be as well-centered, but even then, characters will usually end up gathering at the same diner or courtyard every session to do their business. It's natural for people to come together at the same place regularly to hang out, whether they're mortal or Kindred.

A central point like this is a great opportunity for you to make that first impression. The more details you can give your players, the easier it'll be for them to get into the game world. This opening site is the anchor point for your chronicle. Everything in the game begins and ends here. If you use this place to define the theme and mood of your chronicle, the rest of the world will flow naturally.

If you've created your game's home city from whole cloth, then you have a lot of freedom in building your game's setting. On the other hand, you're also going to have to work harder at reminding players they aren't in the real world any more. Your best bet is to write out a page or two describing the location. Go into as much detail as you can, and remember to use all five senses in your description. The smell of a place can be just as important as how it looks. Post your description near the entry hall of your game so your players can read it before they start play. You may also wish to quickly describe the game's setting before actual play begins, just to make sure that everyone's on the same page. If there's a particularly important object or plot hook in your setting, like the prince's throne or a jukebox, you may want to put a sign near it to inform players about the relevant details of this prop.

On the other hand, if you're using your actual home city as a game setting, you may want to use a real-world location as the game's center. Again, you're probably going to have to use your imagination somewhat — while it may be possible to play a game regularly in the grand ballroom of a hotel, odds are you're going to have to find a different site most of the time. You can save yourself a lot of work by gathering background information on the "real" site. Most of the usual suspects for Elysium (museums, galleries, etc.) will happily give you source material.

## ON THE ROAD

When your players do decide to leave Elysium, things get interesting. There's no way on earth that a Storyteller can anticipate all the different ideas that a group of players can throw at her. While some advance planning can help when players go out on the town, occasionally a Storyteller is just going to have to work on the fly.

First, if a group of characters decides to leave the central location of the game, make every effort to isolate them from the game's main area. Designate a specific room or corner of your game as "off site," and keep your departing characters from interacting with the main game area as much as possible. There's nothing more distracting than wandering up to another player, intent on roleplaying a conversation, only to learn that he's 10 blocks away.

When you take a group off site, always begin by giving a full description of the scene. Include as much detail as you think you can get away with — sight, sound, smell and even taste are important when creating a mood. Keep the core themes of your game in mind as you do this. Everything should match your game as a whole. While it's important to keep the scene moving, it's easier to tell when you've given too much detail as opposed to too little. Make sure that you give this description before you do anything else. Doing so helps the players to stay in character, especially if they've had to wait for you.

Be ready to give an extra level of description on demand. Many characters make a habit of using *Heightened Senses* on any strange place or thing they encounter. Players like to get some extra detail when they use a power like this. It's disappointing to examine a rusty knife for five minutes only to hear: "There doesn't seem to be anything unusual about it." That rusty knife might not have anything to do with what's going on, but players should always get something for their efforts. Again, a little advance preparation can have a big payoff. If you know ahead of time where that rusty knife has been, things get a lot easier.

If you don't have the time or creative energy to give every non-Elysium location this treatment, a "photo gallery" of sorts might be in order. Most places that characters will go can be divided up into broad categories — a church, a street, an office, etc. A day or so of wandering around your hometown with a disposable camera should provide several good snapshots of these kinds of places. Place them in a photo album, and when players go to a nearby alley, refer them to the appropriate photo. You'll be surprised at how much this can do for a chronicle. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words. Use common sense when taking these photos, however — shooting pictures of a dangerous alley late at night is not recommended!

## A MILLION STORIES...

Making people a part of your city is one of the most important — and demanding — tasks you face as a Storyteller. How do you come up with the names and faces that make up your city? You can't be expected to come up with all the friends, enemies, and neighbors that players meet in their unives. The players, however, can easily come up with this information for you... with a little prompting.

Encourage the players to flesh out the incidental contacts they make as they go about a typical day. Every character should have a supporting cast of friends, neighbors and enemies. Where does a character hang out to relax? In a bar? Who's the bartender? Does the character go to church? Who's the priest? Where does the character feed regularly? Is there someone he encounters there more than once? The list of possibilities is endless.

Backgrounds are also a great place to start generating names. Every time a Kindred uses her Influences, she's calling in a favor or making a bribe. Who's



giving the favor? Why are they helping the character? What are they getting out of the deal? The same thing applies to the *Contacts* background. Every contact is a snitch or a whistleblower that is helping the character for reasons all his own. Characters with *Fame* have agents, fans, and assistants. High levels of *Resources* need stockbrokers, bankers, accountants and caretakers to survive. *Herds* are an automatic source of intimate contacts for a character. A day should not go by without the character trying to get something out of a mortal.

This, of course, brings up the most intimate contact a Kindred has with a mortal: feeding. Getting blood should never be as easy as a game of Rock-Paper-Scissors. Where does the character go to hunt? Whom does she choose to feed from? Why does she choose these people? In a small game, the Storyteller may well play out a short scene with each character concerning their nightly hunt. In larger games, you may well wish to write up several "generic hunting" scenarios and let the players draw them randomly. To survive, a Kindred has to perform an act of near-rape every night. The characters — and players — should never be permitted to become blasé about this.

Don't sweat coming up with all this background material yourself. Most players will happily generate this information with little prodding. Rewarding an extra Experience Trait to players that provide this information isn't out of line — in a real sense, they're doing your work for you. If a player is truly stumped, try asking him a few leading questions to get his creative juices flowing: "Where do you feed?" "Whom do you talk to about your *Street Influence*?" Don't push too hard, and be patient. You should see some results soon.

Once these background characters are defined, don't hesitate to use them as part of the story. If someone destroys another player's *Influences*, she is threatening or killing the contacts that make those *Influences* possible. It's one thing to tell a player that her *Political Influence* has diminished from 4 to 3. It's another to tell them that Rosa, the secretary she knew at City Hall, was found dead in an alley. One is a maneuver in a game; another is a personal attack on a friend. Keep the gamespeak to a minimum. Make all the *Contacts* and *Influences* people, not numbers. You'll get a far more intimate, high-stakes game as a result.

Make sure that you don't use this background data arbitrarily or without taking the players into account. These people are important to the characters — they're just as much the player's extras as they are yours, in a sense. Killing one off just to make a point or further the plot is not going to go over well. At a minimum, players should be allowed to seek revenge for such things. Better still, give them just enough advance warning to let them save their friends... this time. If you don't want your players to treat mortals as pawns, you'd better avoid treating them as pawns yourself. These are people here, not stooges. If you kill one off for no good reason, players will hesitate to create more for you to abuse.

On the flip side, you should reward players who take the time to help their supporting characters out. Suppose that one character knows a cop in Internal Affairs who's having difficulty with his wife. This cop is the source of his *Police Influence*. If the character takes the time to help this cop patch up his marriage, he should be rewarded for the extra roleplay. Maybe you could give him a chance to resist a hostile takeover of his *Influences* if another player assaults it. The final call is up to you, but in general, players who devote time and energy to playing out their actions in the mortal world should be rewarded.



And hey — if the character engineered the cop's wife trouble in the first place, just so he could get a favor out of him, then you're really getting into the spirit of things.

#### ACTIONS AND REACTIONS

Whenever a player starts talking to a mortal, you need to take two things into account: how human the player acts and how human the character acts. Humanity really comes into play when Kindred and ordinary mortals start interacting.

A character with low Humanity should always have a rough time of it. Humans always know something is "wrong" with such a person, even if *Obfuscate* or disguises are in place. You might dress up a serial killer in a nice suit and tie, but people will still shy away from him on the bus, no matter how much he smiles. Humans can sense Kindred the way that the deer can sense the wolf, and their first impulse should be to get away.

A character with low Humanity should never have a normal, ordinary relationship with a human. That loss should always shake a character if you can manage it. Players might not pick up on it the first time around, or even the second, but consistently giving mortal contacts an edginess when they meet a low-Humanity vampire should eventually have an effect.

Likewise, if a character has a high Humanity rating, they should be able to get along well with an ordinary person... but not perfectly. Even a Humanity 5 Kindred isn't quite kosher, and eventually, a human will notice it. Kindred have to work at being human. It doesn't come naturally anymore. Eventually, the prey will pick up the scent of the wolf again. It's only a matter of time.

So here's the setup: You've asked your players to create bunch of interesting, exciting mortals. These mortals are integral to the character's lives. However, these interesting people can never understand the characters and will always fear and hate them on some level. This may seem a little cruel.

#### Welcome to Vampire.

What are your players going to do about this dilemma? Pay close attention to what happens next. If a character treats humans like slime or gets angry with these uncomprehending mortals, take a note of it. It'll make that next meeting with those humans that much harder. Kindred can forget how to deal with a human being after a while. If a character consistently deals with mortals poorly, you might want to start making it harder for him to use his *Contacts* and *Influences*.

On the other hand, characters that work to overcome their handicap should be rewarded. The loss of Humanity is challenging, but it isn't insurmountable. Someone who spends time in the real world should find it easier to deal with human beings, maybe even gaining a little bonus in their application of Backgrounds.

That challenge to stay human should never go away, however. It's one of the foundations of the horror in this game. It's oh-so-easy to lose a grip on your Humanity. It can slip away if you don't keep an eye on it, and you may never get it back. Don't make the fight easy.

And then, of course, there are the wild cards. The innocent can see right through *Obfuscated* characters — imagine the startled look on a Nosferatu's face when a toddler comes up and asks him for help finding his mommy. True Faith has a habit of cropping up in unlikely places, even in this day and age.



And every supernatural creature can disguise herself as human in some fashion. No interaction with the human world should be seen as casual or commonplace. There's always a chance that the mortal world will surprise Kindred. Never permit the players to forget this.

#### LET THE TIMES WRITE YOUR CHRONICLE

The World of Darkness is essentially our own world — a darker, cockeyed version of our world, perhaps, but it's still home. Storytellers can get a lot of inspiration for the Chronicle just by reading the local newspaper on a regular basis.

With a little bit of paranoia, nearly any routine event could have a supernatural hand behind it. A robbery or fire might well be the signs of a cover-up for more sinister events. A new high-rise building or industrial park may have a Kindred owner. Any of these things can serve as the seed for a story line for a chronicle.

Sometimes, the newspaper can generate an entire story line without the Storyteller doing a thing. If a large news event happens in your area — a hurricane blowing through or a casino opening — let the players try and do things about it. Weathering a major storm becomes a great deal more difficult when Kindred can't evacuate and the blood supply leaves town. Hostile forces such as the Sabbat may choose to use the storm as cover for an invasion. On the other hand, a casino offers an opportunity for vast Influence and wealth. However, a war could erupt over the profits if too many parties get involved. Big stories like this can serve as the focus for an entire game session and impact the chronicle for a long time after things settle down.

Big events are a great way to keep the game world in motion. Even something like a convention or a political rally can generate a hive of activity among the power brokers in your game. Power doesn't just stay put in the hands of Kindred. It moves around all on its own. If a museum exhibit comes into town, Kindred might recognize some of the pieces — and want to recover their "lost" property. A politician's rise or fall on Election Day could cripple a Kindred's Influence for months. The world is always changing, despite the Camarilla's best efforts, and characters should always be scrambling to keep up.

Keeping the local paper a mainstay in the game also reminds players of another important fact — they aren't the only things happening in town. Indeed, often they aren't even the most important things in town. They certainly shouldn't be if the Masquerade is in place. The real world keeps moving past the Kindred and beyond them, no matter how much they might wish otherwise. Using stories in the game that don't begin and end with the supernatural keeps the everyday world alive behind the players as they work in the shadows.

Keep your players advised of these "real world stories" as they occur. If a particular news article grabs you as the center of a Kindred plot, copy it and give it to your players before a game begins. E-mail can be a marvelous way to keep players abreast of important actions, especially if there's a long time between games. Bear in mind that e-mail isn't always 100 percent reliable, however, and not every player may have e-mail access. It's best to give this information to players in multiple formats and at different times.



Once players get used to the notion that the Storyteller is cribbing plot lines from the newspaper, they may well decide to take action on things printed in the local news before the Storyteller officially calls notice to them. The Storyteller should pay attention to these ideas. In essence, the players are letting the Storyteller know what they want to see in the game. Even if there's too much going on in the game for the Storyteller to give the player's actions a full treatment, she should remember what the players do for later stories. Players want to feel like they are having an impact on their world. Let them do so... and suffer the consequences.

These current events supply some grand side quests and red herrings for players to investigate while you hit them with your main plot line. While it's important to have a direction for your chronicle to pursue, occasionally players simply won't want to chase the bait you're providing. In a large game, there simply may be too many people to chase down the Sabbat pack all at once. Instead of letting these players sit around Elysium waiting for the main plot to finish, they should have the opportunity to chase other stories. A good game should be like a buffet, with multiple plots and quests available for your players to sample. Many of these choices may have nothing to do with what you consider to be the true focus of your game, but that doesn't keep them from being entertaining choices in their own right. Using resources like the local news gives you the chance to provide multiple plots at once without having to invent all the details yourself.

Of course, you may very well want to put some hints concerning the main story line into your local news as you go along. Don't be afraid to write something new as you go. After all, it's your world, and you can do with it as you see fit. Once you get the local paper established as a plot engine, anything dropped into the mix, whether generated by you or the Sunday edition, is going to keep the game going. Just try and avoid putting too much wishful thinking in there. It might be painful to see your favorite team lose the Super Bowl, but erasing that fourth-quarter touchdown for your own peace of mind is a bit much. Remember that you're running this game for your players, not for your betting pool.

#### HOME-GROWN INTRIGUE

Now that you have all of these busy people bustling about in your detailed town, reacting to current events, you're ready to have some fun. A dynamic environment like this allows you to create convoluted, intrigue-laden plot lines without breaking a sweat.

A good intrigue plot line is like a chain of dominos. A Kindred takes an action — he kills someone for blood. That action affects two other people — the deceased has a wife and son who can't find him. Those people affect others — the wife reports her missing husband to the police, while the son cruises the alleyways looking for his lost father. Those actions affect someone else, and on and on, until the entire system is in motion because of one simple act.

Each of these mortals your players have created can serve as a domino in your game of intrigue. Every action that your players take can serve to set the chain off. If you have a solid grip on who lives in the city and how they're related, the connections should be easy to make.



The keys to making this system work are a careful record of the actions your players take during a game and a brisk imagination. When a player does something interesting, write it down. You are writing everything that happens in the game down, aren't you? This is one of those reasons why keeping track of everything that happens in a game is so important. We'll say it again: Write everything down that happens in the game. It's important. You'll be glad you did.

The imagination comes in when you ask yourself one question: "What if...?" As you read over your notes on player's actions, keep a list of your supporting characters handy. As you look at a player's actions, ask yourself "What if this character was seen by somebody? What if someone saw her break into the abandoned warehouse? What would the witness do next? What would those actions change in turn?" Eventually, who hurt whom and who helped whom should become fairly clear, and all of your "dominoes" should be in motion.

Here's the best part of this system: Players will get things in motion all by themselves without any prompting by you. Every action that a player takes has the potential to start the domino chain, forcing Storyteller and player characters alike into motion until every life of the city touches everyone somehow.

This may be a little startling at first: You may very well feel like the game is starting to take a life of its own — *a la* Frankenstein's monster. If your players are interested in chasing a story that started three months ago with a random act, then they're busy and entertained, and you don't have to do a thing. If you really don't want a plot to keep rolling along like this, just stop helping it along. Don't ask "what ifs" about this plot and keep the number of people affected by it to a minimum. Eventually, things will die down.

But don't stop a plot just because it's not "yours" anymore. If you just drop a plot like a lead balloon, without giving any closure or hints to players, they're going to end up feeling cheated. You may be fresh out of ideas on that red herring your players are chasing, but abruptly ending things without so much as a "boo" can be a major letdown. Try redirecting this wild goose chase back into the main plotline — perhaps a minion of your main villain has been following the characters around and gets caught at an inopportune moment. Failing that, leave enough of a dangling plot thread for your characters to keep going once your batteries recharge. But the players' interest in a plot should guide you just as much as your own plans for the game. One of the great pleasures of running a *Mind's Eye Theatre* game is watching a world take shape around you without any outside help. Don't deny yourself that opportunity.

Jump in and start some intrigue yourself every once in a while and see what happens. In many games, a group of players will feel left out of the current plot. It may be that they're naturally too shy to jump in and include themselves with other players, or they may simply be too late to jump on the bandwagon. This is an ideal time to pick on one of their background characters. Give them a piece of a puzzle, or a small, personal dilemma... and then watch it spread. You should never design problems that are small enough for one person to solve — make your players ask each other for help and information. *Mind's Eye Theatre* is at its best when characters start dealing directly with each other and stop relying on the Storyteller for everything. Encourage this whenever you can.



Here are some things that you can toss into the game to keep things moving:

**Offer a reward.** The classic model for this sort of thing is an object that a number of players want to get a hold of. A treasure hunt like this can set off a wild web of intrigue. *The Maltese Falcon* is a classic example of a plot focusing on this sort of object. This film features enough double-crosses and scams to make your head spin — if you can encourage your players to anywhere near this level of intrigue, you'll have done well.

You shouldn't have to look hard for a good prize for your players to chase. If you have a lot of Toreador players, a piece of rare artwork will do nicely. If the Tremere are popular, offer a lost magical text or item. If you want to really draw everyone out of the woodwork, a rumor concerning a long-lost fragment of the Book of Nod will work wonders. Tailor your bait to your audience, and you'll inevitably get a response.

The prize in this hunt doesn't even have to be a physical item. An informant who knows some damning information about the prince or a fugitive from another city that has a price on his head can serve very well as a prize in this game. "Live bait" like this is a little trickier to manage, however — it tends to have ideas all its own about who will take possession of it. Keep the actions of your "bait" in mind as the player try to capture it.

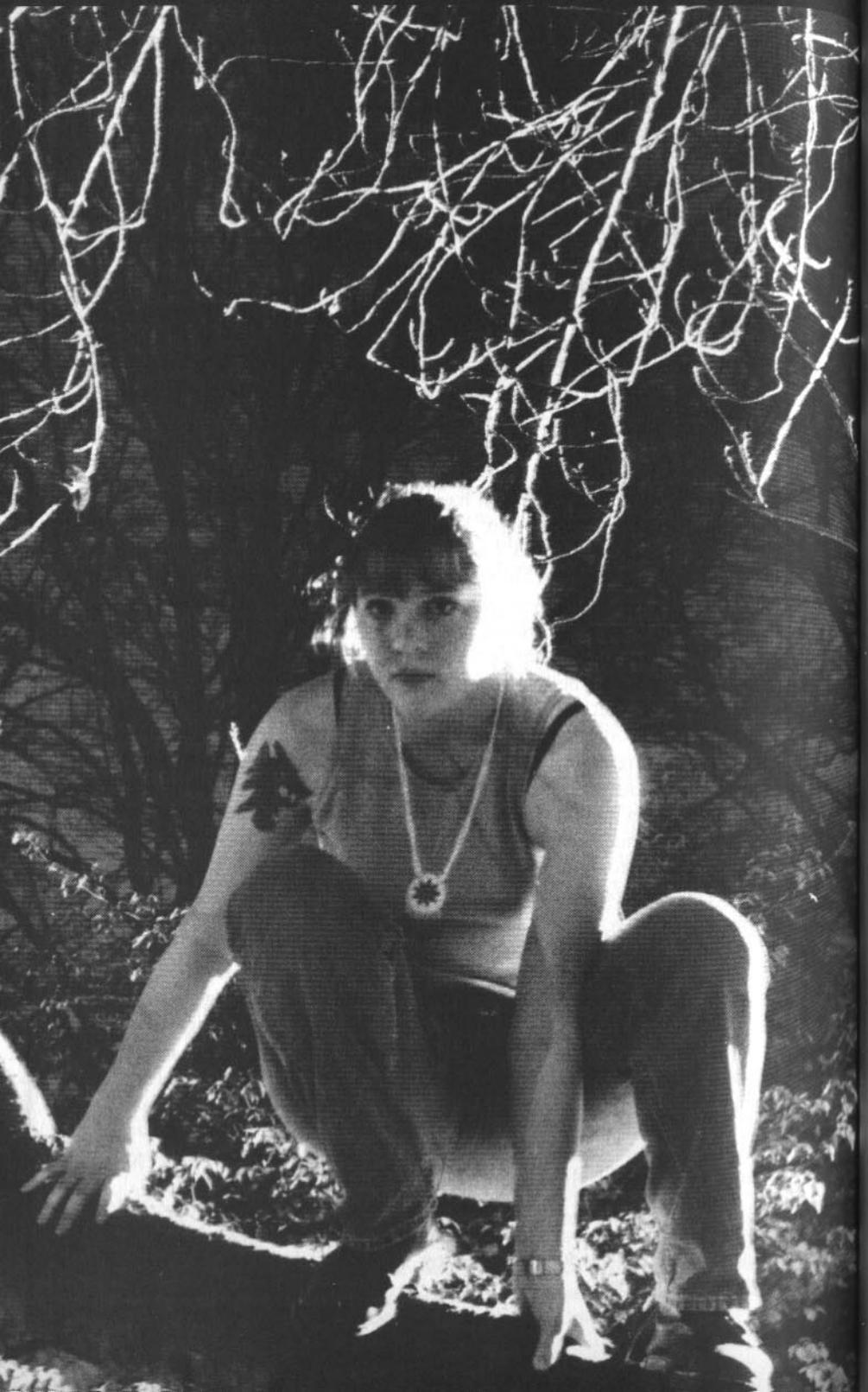
No matter what the prize in the game is, don't let players obtain it easily or cheaply. Most rare artwork is tucked away very securely in museums and auctioned off at very high prices. Artifacts of magic often have... odd... guardians, and can be inherently dangerous in their own right. And a living trophy should actively defend itself from all takers. A prize like this isn't valuable if it comes cheap. Force your players to call in favors and ask others for help. Doing so lets the plot grow and the web of intrigue spread.

Be cautious about letting your prize stay in play after one of the players finally gets her hands on it, however. If it's an especially potent magic item or weapon, you may want to get rid of it after the hunt is over. One of the more amusing ways to do this is...

**Threaten a punishment.** A "hot potato" tossed into the game can make for a very fast paced and frenetic game of intrigue. Place something in the game that will cause all kinds of problems for its owner and watch how fast it changes hands. Objects can turn into hot potatoes with frightening speed at times: If the elder who originally owned that fascinating piece of artwork shows up, or the fragment of the Book of Nod turns out to be cursed, things can get very interesting.

While it's hard to obtain a prize, it should be very difficult to get rid of a punishment. Cursed items have a way of staying with their owners. Tossing that priceless painting into the garbage doesn't mean that the elder won't trace the piece to its new owner... and once the elder does so, he's going to ask some hard questions. Again, make players rely on each other for help to get out of trouble and watch the fun begin.

No matter what you decide to throw into the mix, keep track of who does what to whom and make sure that all the actions have consequences. With any luck, the activity your toy generates will affect characters who didn't even know it was in play.



# APPENDIX: FOR STORYTELLERS

## INCONNUS, MONITORS AND THE STORYTELLER

### THE ANCIENT ONES

The Camarilla would have its constituent members believe that the two major sects of Cainites — itself and the Sabbat — are the only significant adversaries vying for supremacy of the night. But the hours of darkness do not necessarily belong to either group. Indeed, in these uncertain modern nights a growing number of vampires prefer to avoid (or reject outright) the political posturing and machinations of both groups, remaining aloof and unaligned.

Among those who would carve their own futures are beings of unimaginable antiquity and power. These individuals intentionally set themselves apart from their lesser kin, observing them from the shadows and remaining unseen by all but those to whom they wish to appear. Vampires of the Camarilla and Sabbat call them by various names, the most common being Inconnu. As the Final Nights approach, as the rumors of Gehenna arrive on ill-fated wings of omen, many eyes in both sects probe the shadows for signs of these elusive Cainites and for an indication of what role these potent Kindred will play in the unfolding drama of the Jihad.

### THE INCONNUS

The Inconnu are less of a sect in the accepted sense and more of a loosely affiliated community built on the principles of mutual respect and privacy. They seem to be a band of individuals that share some common interests and experiences, and yet remain at a discreet distance from each other out of respect and fear for one another's power. If there is some governing body or other rulership that leads the Inconnu, only they know about it, and they aren't talking. The few Cainites who might be willing to identify themselves as members of this

clandestine group sometimes verify these "facts," but almost never elaborate or offer more detailed information about themselves or their secretive associates.

## THE MONITORS

Encounters between the Inconnu and other vampires are exceedingly rare at best, but the younger Kindred who do come into contact with one most likely meet their city's Monitor. For reasons and by means known only to themselves, Monitors accept the duty of observing all that transpires within a chosen city, perhaps trying to comprehend the true meanings behind the events that unfold before their watchful eyes.

Not every city has a Monitor, but those rare few that do tend to be the focus of intense Cainite activity. How these secret observers choose the cities they watch over is a mystery to everyone but themselves (the few Monitors willing to speak about themselves at all appear to have almost no discernable connections to the metropolises they inhabit), a fact that gives rise to all variety of speculations and rumors. Perhaps the most popular theory in these modern nights is that the Monitors are somehow connected with the portents that herald the advent of the Final Nights.

## STORYTELLING CONSIDERATIONS

The Inconnu and Monitors hold many temptations for the unwary or inexperienced Storyteller. The thought of introducing such a tantalizing mystery into the ongoing chronicle is nearly irresistible, and with good reason: Few events in a Kindred character's existence could match an encounter with one of these ancients for sheer drama and memorability. But using these creatures in a story demands that you take special care: Mishandled contact between player characters and one of the Inconnu can plunge your otherwise smoothly run chronicle into a tailspin from which it may never recover. The primary considerations when running such a plotline are properly casting the roles, maintaining a sense of mystery and carefully using character types. The following guidelines will help you tell Inconnu and Monitor stories with confidence while leaving your ongoing chronicle intact.

### CASTING THE PARTS

Only Narrators should play characters who embody power of this magnitude. It should be obvious that only a portrayal by a Narrator—and a skilled one at that—can realize the full potential of such a being. It's inevitable that one or more players will ask for the opportunity to portray one of these creatures as a player character, but the answer must always be "No." Do yourself, your players and your chronicle a big favor and practice answering this question properly until you can do so with confidence. In fact, the only point at which you should even consider including a member of the Inconnu in your story is when you can give the role to a Narrator whom you can trust implicitly. The Narrator must be able to portray the awesome presence and barely contained power of the character believably while still adhering to your principles of interaction.

After you decide on the right Narrator for the part, involve her in creating the character she will play. Ask her to help you answer these important questions about the Inconnu persona, so that she can be confident in portraying the character as convincingly as possible:

- Where does she come from?
- What was her mortal life like?
- Who Embraced her?
- What are her most important hopes, dreams and fears?
- What tactics, strategies and schemes does she employ?
- What are her plans for the future, both hers and others?

The answers to these questions will help you decide exactly how the character behaves and how she might come to be involved in the unlivess of your characters.

## CHARACTER INTERACTIONS

Once you see the kind of dread and curiosity an Inconnu character can inspire, you'll be tempted to utilize one or more of them with some regularity. Resist this impulse, and employ the Inconnu and Monitors sparingly. Otherwise, you will sharply reduce their effectiveness and dilute the awe and terror they should inspire. These Kindred tend to overshadow entire chronicles with the sheer scale of their power: Their goals start to pervade all the plots and subplots if they are not used with restraint and portrayed with maturity and discretion.

Regardless of how many centuries they survive, most vampires will never meet one of the Inconnu, and even those who do often fail to realize the significance of the occasion. Most often, an Inconnu is merely an identifiable but nearly intangible presence felt in the mind rather than the senses. On those rarest of occasions when a member of the Inconnu interacts directly with a character, remember that the exchange occurs on the ancient's terms. She only meets at times and places of her own choosing, and even then, such encounters may appear to be something entirely different than what her true purpose might suggest. Strive to make these meetings as portentous and memorable as possible without revealing the exact nature of what is transpiring. Rather than reveal the character's true identity, the Narrator portraying the Inconnu should be prepared to present a false persona and use the character's powers to reinforce the disguise in the eyes and minds of those younger Kindred with whom she interacts. Before you allow a single Inconnu to appear even once in the game, even for a brief moment, establish with the Narrator playing the role the manner in which she will use the persona to evoke these feelings of fear and respect in the other characters. This need not be a flamboyant display of obvious power: Less is often more when utilizing these particular story tools.

Kindred who have never met one of these beings often imagine that they are among the most cryptic and indirect of all vampires. On the contrary, the ancients seem to have no patience for such games: They are wont to be surprisingly plain-spoken and alarmingly direct. No Monitor wishes to commit the extraordinary risk of revealing herself only to have the younger vampires with whom she wishes to converse miss the entire point she was trying to make! No matter what happens, do not allow the recipients of the Inconnu's attentions to be blasé about it—no one encounters one of these creatures and escapes unchanged, and whether that change is for good or ill is something that should plague the characters' minds for some time to come. Even the most



brash and intractable young Kindred should feel compelled to treat these ancients with the respect, even reverence, that is their due.

During the course of the interactions, younger Kindred should find it next to impossible to discern the true natures, identities and goals of these ancient beings: They should remain inscrutable in the eyes of their lessers. The Inconnu have untold centuries, even millennia, of experience and wisdom on which to draw. You can choose to stage such an encounter as a one-shot scene that isn't connected to your greater plot, or as an event that underscores the themes and moods you're incorporating into your ongoing chronicle. A member of the Inconnu might show up to deliver a warning, utter a cryptic threat, render a puzzling congratulation, conduct a subtle indoctrination or even recruit for a cause. If the encounter is between an Inconnu and a single weaker vampire, try to develop the scene in such a way that the player character is impressed with the benefits of keeping the nature of the meeting to himself. If the encounter is between an Inconnu and multiple lesser vampires, strive to give the occasion the feel of a state visit or an audience with a sovereign power rather than an informal chat.

#### USING THE CHARACTERS

Conflicts that include a Monitor or other member of the Inconnu must necessarily be stable enough to carry the story forward for a significant amount of time. If the story features only a single member of this mysterious sect, decrease the ancient Cainite's power so that she does not currently enjoy the full benefit of her many advantages. Perhaps she awakened only recently and requires time to restore herself to her former heights of power. Perhaps, during her convalescence, she plans to gather useful information about the Kindred of the city. If the story involves multiple ancients, the best way to achieve story stability is to make each side relatively equal in strength, at least as the story opens. A degree of parity ensures that no side will defeat the other too quickly, and instead the Inconnu must vie for pawns and allies from among the weaker Cainites of the vicinity before they can make any significant strides toward victory.

#### INCONNU STORIES

**The Sleeper Must Awaken** — A Cainite of incalculable power slumbers beneath the city. But even in her sleep, her restless mind has the ability to affect the nightly lives of the lesser vampires who populate the area. Perhaps some of the characters suffer from strange, inexplicable dreams as the result of the sleeper's slow striving toward wakefulness. And what happens when she finally awakens and emerges? Will she move among the weaker Cainites, or will she observe them clandestinely? Will she select pawns or allies from their number, or will she treat each with equal disdain or enmity? Perhaps her behavior will be so bizarre and inhuman that even the elder Cainites are at a complete loss to understand her. The mood of this story should be one of deep mystery.

**Rivals to the End** — The characters' home is the newest backdrop against which a pair or trio of ancients fight the latest battle in their shadow war. This conflict has raged across continents and centuries without resolution, destroying lives and unlivings with equal disdain. Now, as the Final Nights loom ever closer, it threatens to engulf still more unwitting victims and devastate yet another city. The characters become the scouts, standard bearers and armies — or perhaps the chess pieces — in this latest chapter in a saga that will undoubtedly continue until



one or all of the combatants are swept from the board. Paranoia is the watchword for this tale, with a healthy dose of fear thrown in for good measure.

**There Can Be Only One** — Driven by rivals who are hot on his heels and thirsting for his destruction, a single ancient arrives in the characters' midst. The newcomer is battered and shaken from his ordeal and needs time to lick his wounds. Reluctant to continue running despite the power of those who hound him, he casts about for a weapon... and finds the characters conveniently at hand. He uses what little time remains to hone his unwitting allies, pitting them against foes both real and imagined but all of his own manufacture. How will the characters react when they learn that this creature has orchestrated their woes? What will happen when the pursuers finally catch up to their quarry? This is a fast-paced story that features lots of action; try to evoke a mood of excitement and escalating tension.

#### PORTRAIT GALLERY

Below are some basic templates and roleplaying notes for the vampires and mortals that populate Camarilla strongholds. Innocent bystanders, ghouls for cannon fodder, princes briefly glimpsed in the shadows — they're all here.

However, none of these templates will hold up under any sort of extended use. These templates exist for use as backdrops to the main action and as examples for creating more fully rounded characters. If a template starts showing up regularly, it's up to the Storyteller to build a true character sheet for this person — a cookie-cutter set of statistics just won't do.

If the players wise up to the statistics of these Narrator characters and start metagaming ("Well, we know this thug is going to be *Callous*..."), don't hesitate to doctor these templates as you see fit. Who says that this thug isn't a *Wily, Observant* little fellow who just wants to get away and report to his boss? Occasionally throwing the players a curve ball keeps them in the game and on their toes.

#### PLAYING TO TYPE

The difference between a good story and a great story is all in the details. It's easy to let Thug Number One become just a set of numbers so that you can roll on to the next encounter. Don't let that happen. Even ordinary thugs can be interesting people — just watch *Pulp Fiction* or *Reservoir Dogs* to see how. Every time one of your players kills that thug sent by the prince, he kills an actual human being, with hopes and dreams just as valid as his own. That's the essence of letting Humanity slip away and succumbing to the Beast.

Likewise, the second neonate on the left could just as easily be the players. Don't forget to remind them of that as the prince sends her off to execution for a *faux pas* during court. Each and every encounter is a chance to deepen the roleplaying in your chronicle. Don't let it slip by.



### THE RELENTLESS JUSTICAR

**Clan:** Malkavian

**Nature:** Autocrat

**Demeanor:** Perfectionist

**Generation:** 6th

**Physical Traits (16):** Athletic, Brawny, Quick x 3, Resilient x 3, Tough x 2, Steady x 3, Wiry x 3

**Social Traits (18):** Charismatic x 3, Commanding x 3, Dignified x 3, Intimidating x 6, Persuasive x 3

**Mental Traits (17):** Attentive x 3, Determined x 6, Disciplined x 2, Knowledgeable x 3, Observant x 3

**Abilities:** Athletics x 4, Brawl x 3, Dodge x 5, Firearms x 4, Intimidation x 3, Law (Kindred) x 5, Leadership x 3, Lore (Camarilla) x 5, Lore (Sabbat) x 4, Melee x 4, Politics x 4, Subterfuge x 2

**Disciplines:**

Auspex: Heightened Senses, Aura Perception, Spirit's Touch, Telepathy

Celerity: Alacrity, Swiftness, Rapidity, Legerity

Dementation: Passion, The Haunting, Eyes of Chaos, Voice of Madness, Total Insanity

Fortitude: Endurance, Mettle, Resilience

Obfuscate: Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Presence, Mask of a Thousand Faces, Vanish from the Mind's Eye, Cloak the Gathering

**Path:** Humanity 2

**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self Control 3, Courage 2

**Backgrounds:** Contacts x 5, Resources x 4, Herd x 2

**Derangement:** Sanguinary Animism

**Status (5):** Acknowledged, Faultless, Feared, Just, Revered

**Blood:** 30 (May spend 6/round)

**Willpower:** 16

**Roleplaying Hints:** You date back to the days of Rome. You have seen the birth of the Camarilla itself. There is nothing a group of neonates can do that can impress you, surprise you, upset you or even slow you down. Your derangement is something you indulge away from work. When you are performing the role of justicar, Malkav's curse never shows. When you arrive in a city, it is for only one reason — something has gone terribly, terribly wrong. Use whatever tools you have to put things right again, be they political, social or supernatural. Then leave as soon as you can. No matter how bad things are, the Kindred should fear your arrival and look forward to your departure.

### THE CAREFUL ARCHON

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Judge

**Demeanor:** Soldier

**Generation:** 9th

**Physical Traits (12):** Agile x 3, Quick x 3, Tough x 3, Wiry x 3

**Social Traits (11):** Charismatic x 3, Commanding x 3, Diplomatic x 2, Intimidating x 3

**Mental Traits (13):** Clever x 2, Discerning x 3, Disciplined x 3, Insightful x 3, Observant x 3

**Abilities:** Athletics x 3, Brawl x 2, Dodge x 4, Drive x 2, Firearms x 4, Investigation x 5, Law (Camarilla) x 3, Leadership x 3, Lore (Camarilla) x 4, Lore (Sabbat) x 4, Melee x 2, Politics x 3, Security x 3, Stealth x 4, Streetwise x 4, Subterfuge x 4, Survival x 2

**Disciplines:**

Auspex: Heightened Senses, Aura Perception, Spirit's Touch

Celerity: Alacrity, Swiftness, Rapidity, Legerity

Fortitude: Endurance, Mettle, Resilience

Obfuscate: Cloak of Shadows, Unseen Presence

Presence: Awe, Dread Gaze, Entrancement

**Path:** Humanity 4

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

**Backgrounds:** Contacts x 3, Resources x 2

**Status (4):** Acknowledged, Esteemed, Honorable, Just

**Blood:** 13 (May spend 1/round).

**Willpower:** 10

**Roleplaying Hints:** You are here to discover a secret. Somewhere, somehow, the justicar has learned that something is wrong in this town, and you are here to figure out what. Never announce yourself as an archon right away. Doing so wastes one of the best weapons in your arsenal. Use all the tools in your bag of tricks — small talk, glamour, violence, stealth — to discover the truth first. You can use all of them well, but only when you need to. You can even pose as a neonate if you have to. After you've found out what the city's dirty secret is, announce yourself and watch all the petty players run for cover as they realize how much trouble they're truly in.

### THE WEARY ANARCH

**Clan:** Brujah

**Nature:** Rebel

**Demeanor:** Curmudgeon

**Generation:** 13th

**Physical Traits (10):** Brawny x 2, Brutal x 2, Quick x 2, Tough x 4

**Social Traits (8):** Commanding x 2, Intimidating x 4, Magnetic x 2

**Mental Traits (9):** Cunning x 3, Determined x 3, Patient x 3, Violent (N)

**Abilities:** Brawl x 3, Dodge x 3, Drive x 3, Firearms x 3, Intimidation x 2, Leadership x 2, Lore (Anarch), Melee x 2, Security x 2, Stealth x 2, Streetwise x 4

**Disciplines:**

Celerity: Alacrity, Swiftness, Rapidity

Potence: Prowess, Might, Vigor

Presence: Awe, Dread Gaze.





**Path:** Humanity 3

**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self Control 3, Courage 4

**Backgrounds:** Contacts x 3, Influence: Police x 1, Street x 3, Underworld x 1, Resources x 2

**Status (0):**

**Blood:** 10 (May spend 1/round)

**Willpower:** 6

**Roleplaying Hints:** You've been at this a long time for an anarch, nearly 20 years. You've seen a lot of dreams die. You've still got the guts, the muscle and the cojones to make the masses see the truth and fight the system — but each night you have to work a little harder to get up and do it all over again. That's all right. You don't mind. You were strong enough to break away from the Camarilla 20 years ago. You're strong enough to stick to your guns now. You just know enough to be careful, like an old weary alley cat, ready to run and start all over again when the dream dies.

#### THE COMMITTED ANARCH

**Clan:** Brujah

**Nature:** Rebel

**Demeanor:** Visionary

**Generation:** 13th

**Physical Traits (10):** Brawny x 3, Quick x 4, Tough x 3

**Social Traits (9):** Expressive x 3, Magnetic x 3, Persuasive x 3

**Mental Traits (8):** Cunning x 3, Dedicated x 3, Determined x 2, Violent (N)

**Abilities:** Brawl x 2, Firearms x 2, Leadership x 3

**Disciplines:**

Celerity: Alacrity, Swiftmess

Potence: Prowess

Presence: Awe

**Path:** Humanity 4

**Virtues:** Conscience 4, Self Control 3, Courage 4

**Backgrounds:** Influence: Street x 2

**Status (0):**

**Blood:** 10 (May spend 1/round)

**Willpower:** 6

**Roleplaying Hints:** You didn't let anyone back you down or tell you what to do when you were alive. Damned if you're going to let death stop you. You are a zealot for the anarch cause — you've seen the rotting shell of the Camarilla, and you know in your heart that it has to come down. You're not quite sure what being a vampire is all about yet — things like "immortality" still haven't sunk in. After 20 years you'll either be just like the Weary Anarch, or you'll be ash on the wind. But right now, you live for the moment and the cause. Give your every waking moment to making sure the Anarch movement rolls into the millennium like a freight train. There's nothing sweeter than freedom. Never let it go.



#### THE INNOCENT NEONATE

**Clan:** Toreador

**Nature:** Celebrant

**Demeanor:** Conformist

**Generation:** 13th

**Physical Traits (8):** Lithe x 3, Nimble x 2, Quick x 3, Docile (N)

**Social Traits (10):** Expressive x 3, Gorgeous, Ingratiating x 3, Persuasive x 3

**Mental Traits (9):** Clever x 3, Creative x 3, Observant x 3

**Abilities:** Dodge x 2, Performance, Subterfuge

**Disciplines:**

Auspex: Heightened Senses, Aura Perception

Presence: Awe

**Path:** Humanity 4

**Virtues:** Conscience 5, Self Control 2, Courage 1

**Backgrounds:** Herd, Influence: High Society, Resources

**Status (1):** Acknowledged

**Blood:** 10 (May spend 1/round)

**Willpower:** 3

**Roleplaying Hints:** Why let death stop the party? You were a pretty college kid who liked running with the wrong crowd. Well, you're really running with the wrong crowd now, and you really like it. Traditions? Whatever — all you have to do is suck up to the elders like dear old Daddy, and everything will be all right, right? You have a lot to learn before you can be considered competent at being Kindred, but your sire drummed all the rules into your head before she released you. All you have to do is enjoy yourself and stay out of trouble, and everything will be just fine. That's what you keep telling yourself, anyway....

#### THE BITTER ANCILLA

**Clan:** Tremere

**Nature:** Bravo

**Demeanor:** Pedagogue

**Generation:** 10th

**Physical Traits (10):** Brutal x 3, Nimble x 3, Resilient x 3, Tireless

**Social Traits (11):** Charming x 3, Dignified x 3, Ingratiating x 3, Witty x 2

**Mental Traits (12):** Cunning x 3, Determined x 2, Knowledgeable x 3, Rational x 3

**Abilities:** Awareness x 3, Intimidation x 3, Law, Lore (Camarilla) x 2, Occult x 3, Politics x 2, Stealth x 2, Subterfuge x 2

**Disciplines:**

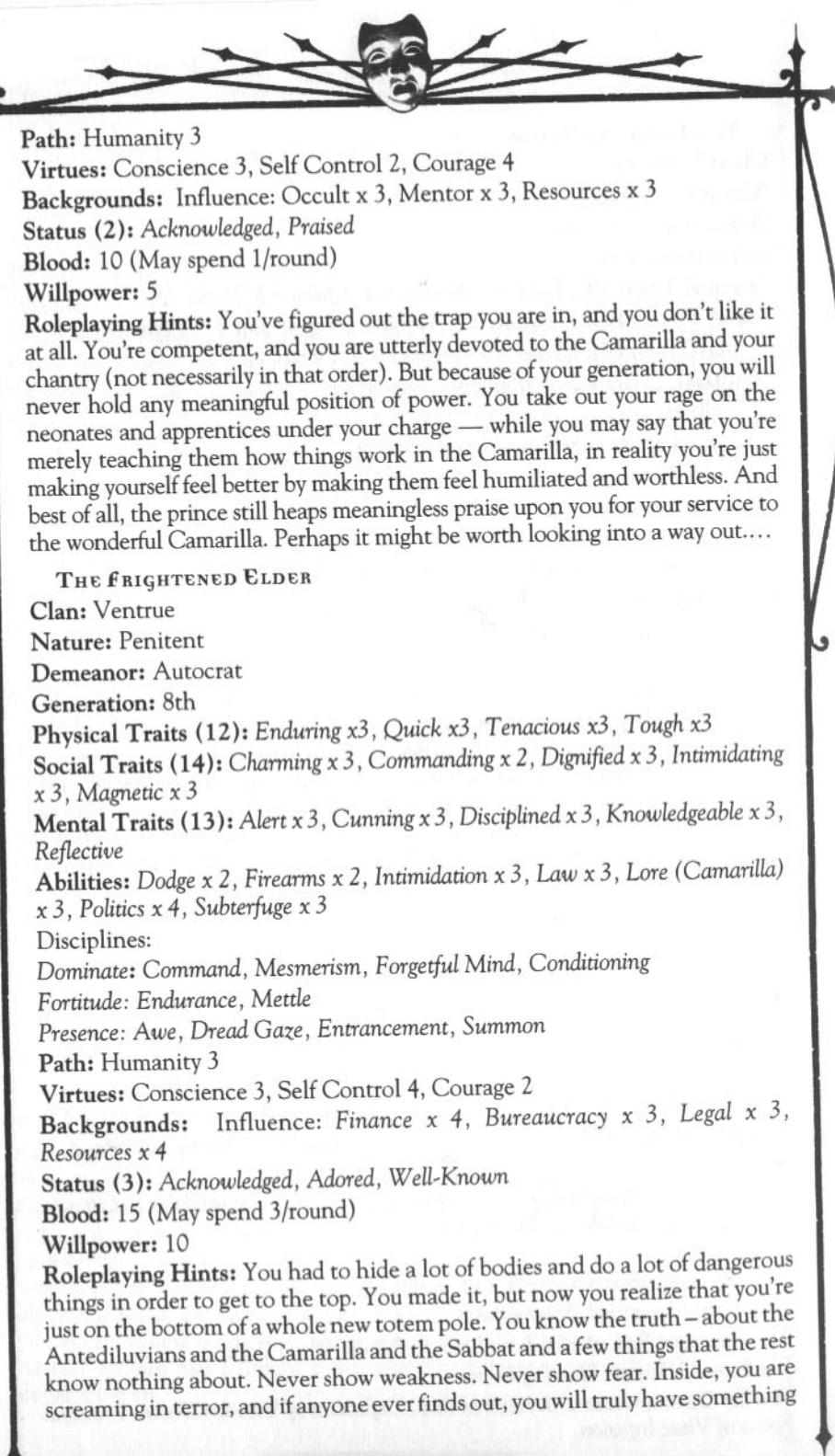
Auspex: Heightened Senses, Aura Perception

Dominate: Command, Mesmerism

Thaumaturgy: Path of Blood: A Taste for Blood, Blood Rage

The Lure of Flames: Hand of Flame

**Rituals:** Communicate with Kindred Sire, Deflection of Wooden Doom, Principal Focus of Vitae Infusion



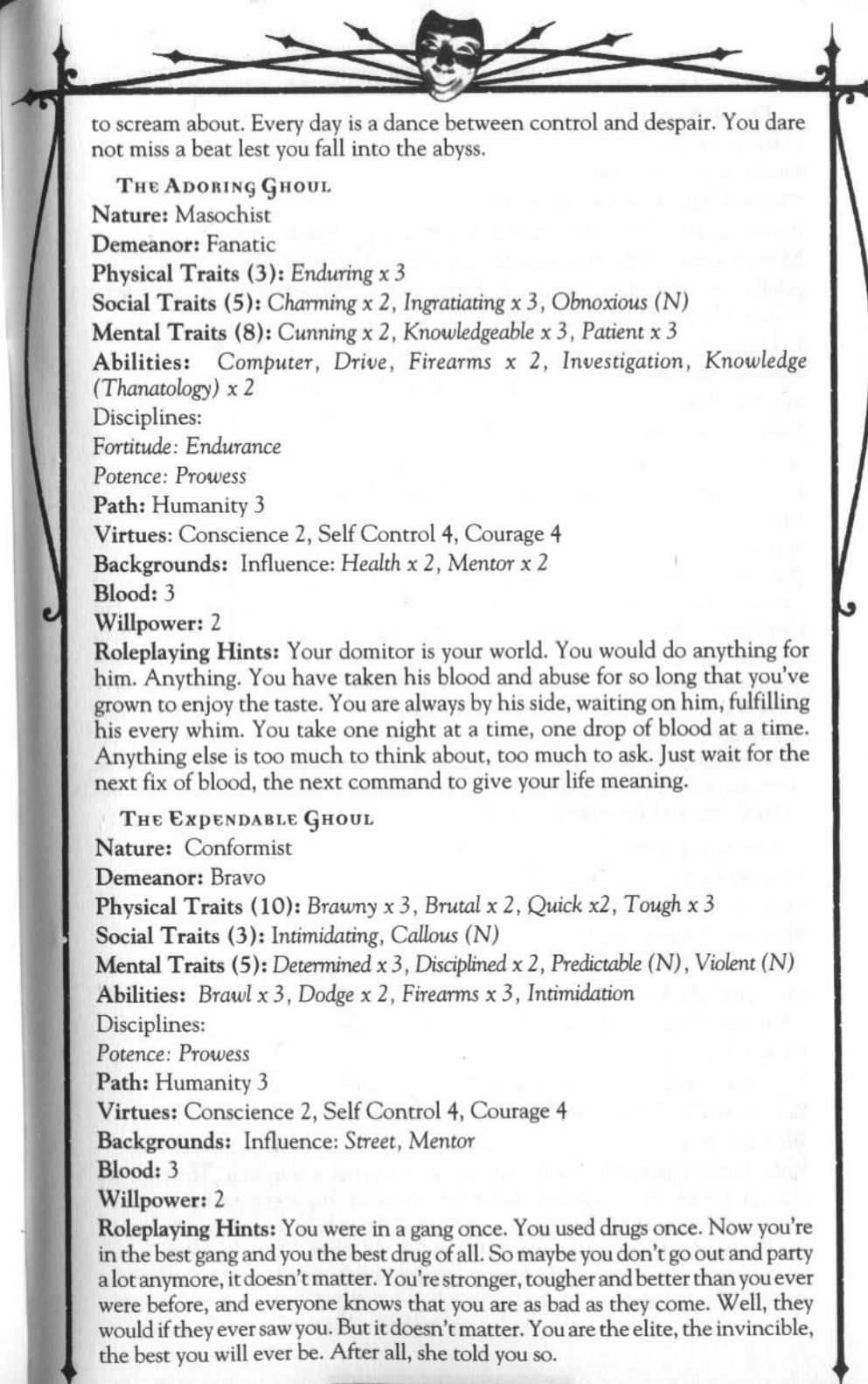
**Path:** Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self Control 2, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Occult x 3, Mentor x 3, Resources x 3  
**Status (2):** Acknowledged, Praised  
**Blood:** 10 (May spend 1/round)  
**Willpower:** 5

**Roleplaying Hints:** You've figured out the trap you are in, and you don't like it at all. You're competent, and you are utterly devoted to the Camarilla and your chantry (not necessarily in that order). But because of your generation, you will never hold any meaningful position of power. You take out your rage on the neonates and apprentices under your charge — while you may say that you're merely teaching them how things work in the Camarilla, in reality you're just making yourself feel better by making them feel humiliated and worthless. And best of all, the prince still heaps meaningless praise upon you for your service to the wonderful Camarilla. Perhaps it might be worth looking into a way out....

**THE FRIGHTENED ELDER**

**Clan:** Ventre  
**Nature:** Penitent  
**Demeanor:** Autocrat  
**Generation:** 8th  
**Physical Traits (12):** Enduring x3, Quick x3, Tenacious x3, Tough x3  
**Social Traits (14):** Charming x 3, Commanding x 2, Dignified x 3, Intimidating x 3, Magnetic x 3  
**Mental Traits (13):** Alert x 3, Cunning x 3, Disciplined x 3, Knowledgeable x 3, Reflective  
**Abilities:** Dodge x 2, Firearms x 2, Intimidation x 3, Law x 3, Lore (Camarilla) x 3, Politics x 4, Subterfuge x 3  
**Disciplines:**  
*Dominate: Command, Mesmerism, Forgetful Mind, Conditioning*  
*Fortitude: Endurance, Mettle*  
*Presence: Awe, Dread Gaze, Entrancement, Summon*  
**Path:** Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self Control 4, Courage 2  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Finance x 4, Bureaucracy x 3, Legal x 3, Resources x 4  
**Status (3):** Acknowledged, Adored, Well-Known  
**Blood:** 15 (May spend 3/round)  
**Willpower:** 10

**Roleplaying Hints:** You had to hide a lot of bodies and do a lot of dangerous things in order to get to the top. You made it, but now you realize that you're just on the bottom of a whole new totem pole. You know the truth — about the Antediluvians and the Camarilla and the Sabbat and a few things that the rest know nothing about. Never show weakness. Never show fear. Inside, you are screaming in terror, and if anyone ever finds out, you will truly have something



to scream about. Every day is a dance between control and despair. You dare not miss a beat lest you fall into the abyss.

**THE ADORING GHoul**

**Nature:** Masochist  
**Demeanor:** Fanatic  
**Physical Traits (3):** Enduring x 3  
**Social Traits (5):** Charming x 2, Ingratiating x 3, Obnoxious (N)  
**Mental Traits (8):** Cunning x 2, Knowledgeable x 3, Patient x 3  
**Abilities:** Computer, Drive, Firearms x 2, Investigation, Knowledge (Thanatology) x 2  
**Disciplines:**  
*Fortitude: Endurance*  
*Potence: Prowess*  
**Path:** Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self Control 4, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Health x 2, Mentor x 2  
**Blood:** 3  
**Willpower:** 2

**Roleplaying Hints:** Your domitor is your world. You would do anything for him. Anything. You have taken his blood and abuse for so long that you've grown to enjoy the taste. You are always by his side, waiting on him, fulfilling his every whim. You take one night at a time, one drop of blood at a time. Anything else is too much to think about, too much to ask. Just wait for the next fix of blood, the next command to give your life meaning.

**THE EXPENDABLE GHoul**

**Nature:** Conformist  
**Demeanor:** Bravo  
**Physical Traits (10):** Brawny x 3, Brutal x 2, Quick x2, Tough x 3  
**Social Traits (3):** Intimidating, Callous (N)  
**Mental Traits (5):** Determined x 3, Disciplined x 2, Predictable (N), Violent (N)  
**Abilities:** Brawl x 3, Dodge x 2, Firearms x 3, Intimidation  
**Disciplines:**  
*Potence: Prowess*  
**Path:** Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self Control 4, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Street, Mentor  
**Blood:** 3  
**Willpower:** 2

**Roleplaying Hints:** You were in a gang once. You used drugs once. Now you're in the best gang and you the best drug of all. So maybe you don't go out and party a lot anymore, it doesn't matter. You're stronger, tougher and better than you ever were before, and everyone knows that you are as bad as they come. Well, they would if they ever saw you. But it doesn't matter. You are the elite, the invincible, the best you will ever be. After all, she told you so.

## THE REALISTIC GHUL

**Nature:** Survivor  
**Demeanor:** Conformist  
**Physical Traits (3):** Enduring x 3  
**Social Traits (7):** Ingratiating x 3, Observant x 2, Rational x 2  
**Mental Traits (5):** Knowledgeable x 3, Rational, Shrewd  
**Abilities:** Computer, Drive x 2, Firearms x 3, Investigation x 3, Knowledge (Thanatology) x 3, Lore (Kindred) x 2  
**Disciplines:**  
Fortitude: Endurance  
Potence: Prowess  
Path: Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 2, Self Control 4, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Health x 1, Street x 1, Mentor x 3  
**Blood:** 3  
**Willpower:** 3

**Roleplaying Hints:** You've done this for a while. The blood that was your salvation and glory is now a routine part of your existence — a central one, but routine nonetheless. You don't get excited about it anymore. You've stood by your domitor through a lot, and though you have suffered terribly, you've somehow managed to get through it all in one piece. Your domitor keeps you around out of habit and maybe because he hopes your luck will rub off on him. Luck never had anything to do with it, though. It was the hunger for the blood and the will to live. That was all. You don't understand how the Kindred can underestimate that delicious power flowing through their veins. Maybe someday you'll have the will to break free and show them. Someday.

## THE GOOD COP

**Nature:** Judge  
**Demeanor:** Conformist  
**Physical Traits (7):** Brawny x 2, Quick x 2, Steady, Tough x 2  
**Social Traits (5):** Dignified x 2, Intimidating x 2, Persuasive  
**Mental Traits (3):** Observant x 2, Patient  
**Abilities:** Brawl x 2, Dodge x 2, Firearms x 2, Law x 2  
**Path:** Humanity 4  
**Virtues:** Conscience 4, Self Control 4, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Police x 2, Resources x 2  
**Willpower:** 3

**Roleplaying Hints:** To protect and serve — you believe in that. The system's corrupt as hell, and it'd be easy to let this one slide. But someone has to watch out for the innocents, that someone is you. All you have is a badge, a gun and the knowledge that you are right. Be careful out there. Don't be afraid to call for backup if things look bad. Here's hoping you never find out the truth about the world you serve.

## THE COCKY THUG

**Nature:** Bravo  
**Demeanor:** Bravo  
**Physical Traits (10):** Brawny x 2, Brutal x 3, Quick x 2, Tough x 2  
**Social Traits (5):** Intimidating x 5, Callous (N)  
**Mental Traits (3):** Determined x 2, Reflective, Violent (N)  
**Abilities:** Brawl x 2, Dodge x 2, Firearms x 2, Streetwise x 2  
**Path:** Humanity 3  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self Control 3, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Underworld x 1, Resources x 1  
**Willpower:** 2

**Roleplaying Hints:** Hey, you're not a bad guy. You just want something, and you're going to get it, right? Here's your gun, here's your knife, and nobody needs to get hurt if you pay attention. You're cool. You have it all under control. Maybe you're as funny, as witty and as cool as you think you are. Probably not. Who's going to argue, hey?

## THE NOSEY REPORTER

**Nature:** Competitor  
**Demeanor:** Visionary  
**Physical Traits (3):** Quick, Steady, Tenacious  
**Social Traits (9):** Charismatic x 3, Charming x 2, Dignified x 2, Persuasive x 2, Callous (N)  
**Mental Traits (5):** Dedicated, Determined, Observant x 3, shortsighted (N)  
**Abilities:** Computer, Dodge, Investigation x 3  
**Path:** Humanity 4  
**Virtues:** Conscience 3, Self Control 4, Courage 4  
**Backgrounds:** Influence: Media x 2, Resources x 2  
**Willpower:** 3

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're on the front line of the ratings war. Every night you and your crew have to find the awful tragedy of the hour — you're on the prowl for the eleven o'clock homicide, accident or fire to make those couch potatoes tune in. You have the instincts of a bloodhound when it comes to hunting down these nightly terrors, and a heart made of stone when you report them. Pack up the cameras and keep moving: there's another knifing across town. Maybe someday you'll find that big story, the conspiracy that makes it all make sense. Yeah, right. Hurry up, we're live.

## THE HAPLESS BYSTANDER

**Nature:** Survivor  
**Demeanor:** Conformist  
**Physical Traits (5):** Energetic x 2, Quick x 2, Tough  
**Social Traits (6):** Friendly x 2, Genial x 2, Ingratiating x 2, Naïve (N)  
**Mental Traits (5):** Observant x 2, Patient, Rational  
**Abilities:** Brawl, Computer, Dodge, Drive, Finance or Streetwise  
**Path:** Humanity 4



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

**Backgrounds:** Resources x 2

**Willpower:** 3

**Roleplaying Hints:** You didn't see anything. You don't know anything. Why is he asking you? You were just minding your own business, doing what you do every day to get by, nothing special, and you didn't see anything, okay? You just want to get your paycheck, go home, watch TV and go to bed. You don't want any trouble, okay?

#### THE FRIGHTENED CHILD:

**Nature:** Child

**Demeanor:** Child

**Physical Traits (3):** Agile, Quick, Resilient, Puny (N)

**Social Traits (3):** Friendly, Genial, Ingratiating

**Mental Traits (3):** Attentive, Clever, Creative

**Abilities:** Awareness x 3

**Path:** Humanity 5

**Virtues:** Conscience 5, Self Control 2, Courage 3

**Backgrounds:** Mentor x 2

**Willpower:** 0

**Roleplaying Hints:** You're lost. Your daddy rushed off a while ago, and you're alone. Maybe the funny man chased him away — the one that's standing in a corner, looking at you all surprised. Maybe he's lost too. If you go and ask him nicely, he might be able to tell you where your daddy went or at least take you home. Mind your manners now, like mommy taught you, and everything will be just fine.



Mind's Eye Theatre™

# Flaws of the Night

## CAMARILLA GUIDE

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