

The Greivyes Fragments™



Being the Journals and Notes of Fra Niccolo of
Venice, Noddist Scholar and Itinerant Monk

As Transcribed by C. S. Friedman

VAMPIRE[®]

THE DARK AGES

ISBN 1-56504-297-2
WW2818 \$14.95 U.S.



Games for Mature Minds



The shadows are whispering again.

They have followed me here, it seems. Even here. One would have thought this tiny monk's cell would prove inhospitable to such creatures, but it is not so. I cannot make out the words, but I catch the rhythm of languages now lost to the living, accents that have not been heard for millennia. I know that if I turn around suddenly in an attempt to see who is speaking, I will find nothing behind me. Nothing but shadows.

So has it been each time I have tried it. Whoever my tormentors are, they hide themselves well. They are watching me.

Before me lies a stack of parchment, now wrapped in oilcloth and bound for travel. My hand trembles as I draw the package close, knowing the value of what it contains. It seems to me the whispers grow louder as I do that, and agitated as well. Dread voices, brittle as old parchment, that murmur threats from the shadows. Will they follow me when I leave this place, and if so, will their presence be noted by others? Or is it only I who will hear them, only I who will feel the chill of their presence, only I who will look into the darkness surrounding and tremble at the thought of what ancient creatures might be watching?

Enough. Enough. This is not the report of a scholar, but the rambling of a madman. Have I become so unnerved in recent nights that I have forgotten all my training? Forgive the shortcomings of your loyal servant, my Uncle and Regnant, and accept this record of my recent discovery. I have culled the most important notes from my journals for your perusal. Judge for yourself the value of what I have found, and its significance for future generations. In this the Year of our Lord 1197, I remain ever your faithful servant,

Niccolo

2 August

Today I heard tales of a fragment of the Book of Nod, rumored to be more complete than any which scholars have thus catalogued. This rumor was told to me by a Nosferatu who has taken up residence in the ruins of an ancient palace, now buried beneath a thousand years' rubble. There, where pagan kings once received the word of their gods, amidst the detritus of a fallen empire, I traded him news from distant lands for shadowy rumors of a priceless antiquity. The fragment is in a monastery, he says, far north, a secret place where the sun can scarce invade. There it is guarded against inquiring eyes by those who can see into the depths of a man's heart, and only pilgrims whose motives are judged worthy will ever be permitted to see it. It was about then that he seemed to realize the value of a ghoul who knew all the ancient tongues, and it took all my diplomatic skill to delay him from action long enough for the sun to rise, making my escape possible. I take his tale as one takes all things from the Nosferatu, that is, with a good bit of skepticism. Any information they part with freely is by its very nature suspect. Nevertheless, it seems to me that if there is even a particle of truth to his tale, those scholars whom I serve will surely wish it verified. So it is a foregone conclusion that I will head north on the morrow, along the trade route once ruled by Assyrians, and trust that my lord and master will agree the detour is justified. One cannot let an opportunity like this go uninvestigated.

14 August

Only three days in Tabriz, and already I have unearthed whispers of the same legend. A Brujah scholar has told me tales of explorers who went in search of the lost fragment. Some, it seems, ascended into the northern mountains and simply never returned. Others came back from their journey confused, with no clear memories of their travels. He himself is not so sure that the fragment even exists, but he insists only the most powerful of Cainites should go in search of it, for clearly the magic protecting the fragment would overwhelm anyone else. I was not so sure of that, but I did not say so. You have taught me, my beloved Uncle, never to contradict Cainites, and I have learned in my recent travels that it is doubly dangerous to do so with the Brujah. Instead I scribed him a copy of Laertes' Ode to Carthage to thank him for his assistance, and while he read the ancient verse and tears of scarlet came to his eyes, I took my leave. In the morning I will buy fresh supplies and head for the northern mountains. Sometimes a ghoul can go places his betters cannot.

15 September

This land is not hospitable for mortals or Cainites, and twice I have had to travel to neighboring regions to procure the vitae necessary for my continued existence. This past week it cost me several nights' service for that favor, nights I spent in the dusty vaults of a Ventrue's keep, cataloguing her collection of moth-eaten parchments. But that task has proved to be a blessing in disguise. Buried in a pile of long-forgotten manuscripts I have found the notes of a Ventrue who once sought the fragment himself, in a place he called the Monastery of Shadows. He spoke of a village in the mountains, near the Nishaz Pass, where news of the monastery might be sought. And so I have taken his notes with me, for I am sure their owner would rather they be in our hands and preserved for all eternity, rather than lost in this isolated place.

Tomorrow I head north once more, the precious notes tucked into my pouch. Into the mountains themselves, steep and forbidding, I shall search for a path which the Ventrue calls "so narrow and winding that it is better suited to goats than to men." Alas, the road to knowledge is never neatly paved. My beneficiary has given me an extra flask of her vitae to take with me, should the journey prove long. Though I am loath to make use of it, I fear I shall need it.

18 September

I came upon the village today. It is little more than a gathering of huts. There is one outhouse made of wood and stone where one might buy coarse ale and escape the winds of the mountains for a short while. I was grateful for the shelter by the time I arrived and even grateful for the ale, bad as it was. But though I plied the locals with artful questions, I could not gain more information on the thing I sought, or any sign that they had ever heard of it.

Tired, disheartened, I paid what was asked for the use of a rough pile of straw, and wondered if I had come all this way for nothing. I was exhausted, and fell asleep before the vermin in the damp straw even realized I was there. But sleep did not last long. Sometime after midnight I awoke suddenly, as a man does when his sleeping mind catches some hint of danger. Breath held, I lay silent in the darkness and tried to locate the cause of my sudden alertness. Could it be that these poor peasants meant to assault me? That would not be unheard of, though it hardly seemed worth the effort. I doubted that the few fragments of text I carried would have any meaning to them, and my coins were few enough. Yet it was not a human stirring I slowly became aware of, but something far more ominous. A strange chill licked across my temples, as if some cold and bodiless thing had bent down to taste my flesh. Deep inside I felt an upwelling of terror, not rational in nature but wholly instinctive, such as a mouse must surely feel when the shadow of a hawk's wings suddenly sweep across it. Yet, unlike a

mouse, I did not run for shelter. Nor did I give voice to my fear and cry out for help, though my terror said that if I did not I would surely be devoured. Yours is not a lineage of weakness or emotion, my Uncle, and I could hardly do less even in the face of this fear. What right had I to seek out the wisdom of the ancients if the very scent of mystery so unmanned me? So I waited, trembling, silent in the darkness, wishing I knew the name of the Presence that was in the room, yet fearing to discover its nature.

The chill passed across me once more and I could feel my hackles rise, yet I forced myself to be utterly still. If I strained my senses to the utmost it seemed I could almost see the darkness coagulating into an even greater shadow, and it was from this that the coldness seemed to emanate. "Who are you?" I whispered at last. "What are you?" It did not see fit to answer, but it seemed to come closer to me, and a tendril of black-within-black passed so close to my face I could feel it. Something fluttered down below my face, brushing against my chin like the wings of a moth before coming to rest on my chest. And then...the Presence was gone. As suddenly as it had come in the first place, as completely as though it had never existed. I lay frozen for what seemed like a small eternity, as my pounding heart sought its normal rhythm again. Finally I reached up with a trembling hand to see what it was that lay upon my chest. I half expected it to take flight as I touched it, but it did not, and as my fingers closed around it I realized it was nothing more than a piece of folded paper. The touch of such a mundane thing brought me back to myself, and I sat up in bed and fumbled for the flint. It took me time to strike a light, for my hands were still shaking, but once I did so I lit the lamp and held the paper close to the glow, so that I might study it. It was a map. Crudely drawn, and not well labeled, but after I looked at it for a time I came to recognize the Nishaz Pass, and even the tiny village where I now took shelter. And north of that...there was a twisting road marked in faded brown ink, with turns and landmarks indicated, and beyond that a single phrase, in markings so ancient that none in this village would be able to read them. Few in the world could read them, in fact, save those scholars who specialized in ancient tongues. Cainite scholars in particular.

It was scribed in that language which we call Enochian. The first language spoken by men. Monastery of Shadows, it said.

My path is chosen.

22 September

It took me four days to reach that place called the Monastery of Shadows. As soon as I saw it, I knew why that name had been chosen. Of course. It could be called nothing else.

The monastery is set deep within a narrow valley, flanked by granite cliffs so high and steep that even a goat would have trouble descending them safely.

For a brief time at midday its fields garner sunlight, but mere hours afterwards they are cast into shadow, and night falls so quickly after that, one could hardly descend the distance to its gates without stumbling through utter darkness.

How fitting, I thought, as I tucked my hands beneath my cloak for warmth, studying the place from above. I wondered what manner of creature made its haven in such a dwelling...for it seemed beyond doubt that the monastery would be home to Cainites, if it had not been created by them in the first place.

It took me the better part of a day to descend the treacherous path safely. I was met at the gate, of course. It would be impossible to approach during the day without being noticed, and so a monk was there to greet me. He nodded in silence after I gave my name, and did not seem surprised when I asked for shelter. Of course I would ask for shelter. Where else was there for a traveler to go in this desolate region? I walked beside him, past other silent monks who glided about their business in the cold stone halls without sparing either of us a glance. It was impossible to tell from their complexion if they were a Cainite's herd or not, for the primitive stone lamps cast equally sallow light over all. In truth, I would not be surprised if such a place housed more than one of Caine's blood. This far from civilization they could rule openly, as it is said the ancients once did.

Tomorrow I will seek permission to view their library.

23 September

Breakfast was meat, served directly after the Lauds service ended. Apparently it is easier to herd the beasts that feed on scraggly mountain growths than to try to raise crops in the shadows. Of course it did not escape my notice that such a diet serves well to replenish the strength of a human herd as well. This is indeed the perfect haven, and I have no doubt that a powerful elder is master here.

After breakfast I was taken to see the abbot. He was a most gracious man, and clearly he was pleased to have a traveling scholar as a guest. I did not have the impression from him that he knew of the map I had been given, or that he had in any way anticipated my arrival. So if he served a Cainite lord directly, his master was clearly one who chose to keep him in the dark. Finally I decided to take a chance, and asked him, "Who is monachus here?" Testing the waters, as they say.

"We are all monachi," he responded. Of course, it was true. The title used for the Cainite lord of a monastery means only "monk," in a literal sense. Yet I knew that by my question I had made my own enlightenment known, and whether the abbot understood it or not, he was the tool by which I had rendered proper greeting to the master of this shadowy realm.

The abbot took me to the library himself, and despite his attempt to maintain an air of humility, his pride in the collection was obvious. As well it should be, for here in this place was a library that Alexandria would have envied. For

a few moments I just looked about, gazing upon the stacks and racks of books, scrolls, and even incised tablets, drinking in the sheer wealth of knowledge surrounding me. Then I remembered why I had come, and it sobered me considerably. In truth, while so vast a library might be a pleasure to visit under other circumstances, it was a daunting sight indeed when one sought but a single tome.

I dared not ask for it directly of course, but I displayed such appreciation for the collection that in time the librarian was pleased to serve me, and he showed me where the most ancient materials were kept. Fragments of manuscripts so fragile that the slightest breeze might damage them, clay tablets inscribed with long-forgotten symbols...he watched me for a while to make sure that I knew how to handle such things without damaging them, then left me to my research. God in Heaven, if only I could transport this entire collection back home! But despite the many hours I spent there before nightfall shut down the monastery, I could find no sign of my objective, nor any clue of where to look for it. Ah, well, had I truly expected better? The most precious gems are not left lying around in plain sight, are they? This search will take time, and above all else persistence.

24 September

Another whole day of searching. I have found treasures beyond price here, but not the one thing I seek.

25 September

I have rummaged through all the ancient fragments, and I am searching through more prosaic volumes now. There is of course a chance the Book is not kept in the library at all, but how can I proceed without knowing for sure? At least the collection is well-ordered. There are a few shelves I can skip over entirely, for they are unlikely to shelter my quarry.

26 September

I dared to drop a hint today of my true purpose, to see if it would spark any recognition in the librarian's eyes. It did not seem to. Tomorrow I shall do likewise with the other archivists, and see if any take the bait.

27 September

None of them have any knowledge of the Book, I am sure of it. Meanwhile, another night has proven unproductive. I may have to seek out the Cainite master of this place, and that is a course fraught with unique peril. I think that I can present myself well enough that he will not kill me outright, though if I please him too much he might set his own claim upon me. Denied the explorations that stir my blood, I would surely die in such a place. There is only so much knowl-

edge you can seek in a single library, no matter how well appointed. I pray I do not end up trapped here.

28 September

God in Heaven!

I have found it. Or perhaps, more accurately...more chillingly...it has found me. I can scarcely write, my hand is shaking so badly. Never in all my years have I seen such a thing, or even dreamed it existed! To have touched it, to know it real through all one's senses...Slowly. Slowly. Record it properly. Begin at the beginning. I decided to visit the library late at night, when the monks were all asleep. For I had determined by now that the item I sought was not on any shelf, where the lowliest monk might stumble across it, but instead must be tucked away in secret somewhere. The most logical place to start looking was in the darker corners of the library itself. After that...well, I did not relish the thought of searching a monachus' haven without permission, but if that was required to find the Book, so be it. I had not come this far to give up now.

The plan was not as simple as it seemed. Unlike normal monks, who retire with the sun, the denizens of this place were accustomed to working in near-darkness, and so they were free to keep to a later schedule. Hourly I stole down to see if the library was yet deserted, but it was nearly ten o'clock before I was satisfied. The monastery was silent by then, save for the sighing of the night wind down the long open halls, and occasionally the distant squawk of a triumphant owl. All was perfect for my explorations.

Silently I slipped inside the vast chamber, shutting the heavy door behind me so that the light of my candle would not be noticed. I know many ghouls who could not manage a search by such dismal lighting, but my vision is as keen as yours, my Uncle, and the one flame was all I needed. I began to search. I emptied first one shelf, then another, feeling beneath them for secret switches, measuring the walls that divided them from one another, tapping the stone walls softly to search for hollow spaces beyond. It was an immense task but I am a patient creature, and I knew that given enough nights I could account for every nook and cranny of the place. God willing, that which I sought would be hidden here somewhere.

Midnight passed, then another hour. My muscles began to ache from the unaccustomed strain of squeezing into various tight spaces, and I could not afford to waste precious vitae on such a minor healing, so I let them ache. Finally, with a sigh, I set my candle on one of the heavy oak tables in the center of the room and allowed myself a moment to relax. What had seemed like good progress as I worked had in fact gained me little, and I saw that it would be many nights before I had even half of the library accounted for. I was very glad that the Ventrue lady had given unto me her vitae, for I would surely need it. There is nothing more frustrating than having to leave a job unfinished to go in search of

the staff of life, and nothing more dangerous than leaving the latter task until the last moment. Quite a number of my fellows have died over the years, having been so wrapped up in their research that they forgot just how closely Death watches us. Or perhaps in the end their borrowed clan's blood got the best of them, and love of Death outweighed their fear of it. I turned back to the candle after a while, meaning to take it up again and assault a new section of shelving. But I stopped, and my hand froze in mid-air, and for a moment I could barely think clearly, so focused was I upon that one point of flame. For as I watched it flickered wildly, then bent to one side, as though a breeze of some sort were playing across it.

Here?

I looked about the room. There were no windows anywhere that I could see, and the door was shut fast. Even if an errant breeze had managed to squeeze across the threshold, it could not be responsible for this, for the flame pointed in another direction entirely. I picked up the candle, slowly, carefully, and used it as a compass to trace the course of that errant stream. Doing so brought me to a narrow alcove whose several shelves supported stacks of scrolls. The breeze seemed to be coming from behind it. Trembling with excitement I put the candle down on the nearest table, and then began to empty those shelves. As I did so I could feel a chill breeze on my face, and I knew for certain there was some opening hidden behind the rolled parchments. Yet I was careful with them, both in removing them and in setting them aside, for it would be a crime to damage such precious artifacts, even in search of something greater.

At last they were all transferred to the table, leaving bare shelves before me. I brought the candle close...and by its light I could just barely make out a crack in the wall behind, from which the breeze seemed to be issuing. My heart began to race as I tested one of the shelves, and yes, it came loose easily, sliding forth from its moorings. So did the others. It was not long before I was able to squeeze myself into the alcove and test the back wall with my fingers. Sliding them into that narrow crack, then pulling at the heavy wood as best I could — to no avail — and finally pushing at it. And it moved, as a door will move, and swung open before me. A gust of chill air greeted my face, damp and clean and tasting of mystery. I brought the candle forward and its light illuminated a space that had clearly begun as a natural cavern, though score-marks on the wall showed that it had been smoothed and perhaps expanded for human use. On the far side I saw several horizontal crevices, fringed with stalactites like teeth. It was from there, no doubt, that the breeze was issuing. But these observations could not hold my attention long, for in the center of the room there was a table hewn of gray stone, and set upon that was a great leather-bound book. I felt my heart skip a beat as I gazed upon it, and for a moment it seemed I could not breathe. Then I forced myself to step forward, one step and then two, and finally with a trembling hand I reached out and touched its cover. And yes, the leather was what it appeared to be. I have held enough volumes bound in human skin to know the feel

of it beneath my fingers. Cold air brushed along the base of my neck, this time not from any natural wind. I whirled about, but saw no one behind me. Yet the feeling of being watched persisted, and I felt my hackles rise as I turned back to the book and slowly, carefully, opened it. It was not a book proper, but a folder of sorts, with soft pages of translucent skin meant to separate the papers stored inside it. I turned the first one aside to see what had been placed there and found a simple manuscript, written in a dialect of Chaldean more ancient than any I had seen before. About the main text were notes of some kind, each written in yet another ancient script. I counted five languages in all, the most modern of which was Imperial Latin.

And then I began to read what lay before me, and the rest of the world ceased to exist.

How can I describe that moment, when I first came to understand the magnitude of what lay before me? Was it the opening verse which made it clear, with its simple statement of narrative intent? This is the tale of Caine's father, Firstborn child of God, made in His image...? Or was it the notes which surrounded the text, penned by scholars who had come here before me? Or was it that first line hinting at the manuscript's true author, the first stunning suggestion that this well-preserved fragment of the Book of Nod might have been written by Caine himself?

I found a corner where the rock formations would allow me to sit, and I brought the volume over to it and began to read. My hands trembled as I touched the pages of something so very priceless. Here was a whole chapter of the Book of Nod, complete. Verse after verse in ordered precision, nothing missing, nothing damaged, nothing illegible. True, I had sought such a thing in coming here, but deep in my heart I'd thought the legend of an entire Book had probably been inspired by no more than a few complete pages. That in itself would have been a treasure. But this!

I studied it for hours. I ran my hands over the fragile pages again and again, as if they were some dream or phantasm that might disappear if I ceased to touch them. And I read. My God, I read! The story of Eden told through Caine's own eyes, not as some simple tale, but with all the depth of recounting one might expect from a witness. And all about his words were the scribbles of scholars who had read them before me, sometimes authoritative in tone, sometimes so casual that they seemed almost an affront to the majesty of the text. Who else but an ancient would dare to write thus, would dare to set his own pen upon such a sacred document? I had a passing fancy of adding my own notes, but banished that quickly. Such arrogance on the part of a mere ghoul would surely not be tolerated.

I heard the bell ring in the distance for Lauds, signaling the rising of the sun and the start of the day's activities. For a moment I shut my eyes and trembled, unwilling to tear myself away from the Book. At last, hands shaking,

I forced myself to close it, and put it back in the position it had been in before. The chamber did not look like it had seen a visitor in much time, but I could not afford to take chances. With one last glance behind me to savor the wonder of the place, I squeezed back out through the alcove and quickly restored the shelves and scrolls to their original positions. The candle's flame was steady when I was done, for I had closed the door completely. Just to think, if someone else had not failed to do so, I might still be searching the outer chamber in vain....

There. That is all of it, the whole story. I cannot eat or sleep now, only stare at the wall opposite me in a haze of wonder, waiting for the daylight hours to pass. Only the night matters now. Only the night...and the Book.

29 September

I returned again just before midnight to find the library vacant, and this time it was the work of perhaps twenty minutes to clear the way to the hidden chamber. It was exactly as I had left it, and I breathed a sigh of relief to see it thus. In nightmarish fantasies I had imagined the master of the monastery discovering my trespass and locking his precious Book away, so that I might never see it again. But no, it was still there, just as I had left it. And this time I had come prepared to deal with it.

I laid out a pile of the finest vellum sheets, a bottle of deep-black ink, and a pen. It was my intention to copy all that I could, in order to bring this wealth of knowledge back to you, my Uncle, and the others of your blood. Perhaps in another time and place I might have tried to steal the original pages, but here it was out of the question. There was little doubt in my mind that if I hid even a fragment of the Book among my things I would not get five steps beyond the gates before the master of this place knew what I had done, and my punishment would make Christ's torment on the cross seem mild in comparison.

So I set about to copy the ancient document as precisely as I could, in order that you, my Master, might study it. After much deliberation I had decided to make two copies: one an exact duplicate of the original, including ink blots and misspellings, and the other a translation into modern language of the text and all its notes. Though the former would have more value for posterity, I must admit the second was more dear to my heart, and I worked hard to capture the colloquial tone of the notes.

Here was the expulsion from Eden, which paralleled the biblical version to perfection. Here was the last conversation between Caine and Abel, hinted at in the Bible but never fully described. Here was the blindness of Adam, the pride of his Maker, and the defiance of Caine in all its glory. And surrounding all that were the notes of five distinct scholars, passing commentary not only upon the text itself, but upon each others' opinions. By their use of language I knew them to be truly ancient, not modern scholars writing in dry, dead, tongues, but creatures of

the past for whom these were vital, living languages. Clearly some of them had returned more than once to add new notes over the centuries. Perhaps...perhaps one or more even dwelled here.

A chilling thought.

It seemed then that I became aware of a presence in the room, as if someone were hidden in the shadows nearby, watching me. Yet though I held the candle out with a trembling hand, it illuminated nothing but rock all about me. Was it just the thought of ancients that so unnerved me, or the thought that they might be watching? I did not need a fragment of Nod to tell me that Cainites so old often had hungers and motivations incomprehensible to modern man, and so, too, to a mere ghoul. In truth, I was glad to leave when dawn came, for though I had not yet finished my transcription my hands were again trembling, and further effort would only be wasted.

Yet, I sensed it in the shadows, that unnamed and unseen Presence, following me. A monachus? Or something worse? Would it tear me to pieces in my sleep for having dared to copy its most precious treasure?

I write this now before I surrender to slumber. If no more is added to my journal, than you shall know that the creatures who live here have little tolerance for one who would copy their treasure and bring it to the outside world.

30 September

I am watched. Beyond question. By what I do not know, for the dirt on the floor of the chamber records marks from all who pass, and the only footprints there are mine. Yet I am watched. I know it in my soul. I can feel it on the back of my neck, that chill which warns of danger...yet how can I stop, much less flee this place, with what I have already seen?

I arrived tonight as I had previously. And for a moment I was so focused upon my work, an anticipation of finishing my transcription, that I did not notice the room had changed.

There were two books this time.

Two.

I stared at the table for a moment, then slowly came forward and opened the second with a trembling hand. It was like the first in form, but the tale that its pages revealed was very different. This was the story of Lilith, and of Caine's awakening to the glories of the night. But even more, it was a tale of conquest, of an angry Caine who disowned God, and then claimed that which was the Dark Mother's in order to become His proper rival.

I have seen many fragments of the Book of Nod in my lifetime. None have dared to condemn God in such absolute terms as this. None have depicted a Caine so predatory in spirit, even in the first nights of his banishment. None have

convinced me, ever before, that their author might truly be Caine, though many are written in that style. I wonder how much more there is.

I wonder if I will be allowed to see it all.

I copy what has been given unto me, knowing that someone is watching.

2 October

A third volume appeared tonight. How much of this Book exists? Could it truly be complete? Will I be allowed to copy it all? I read of the Curses of the Angels tonight, and understood for the first time the full scope of Caine's defiance. I will not even attempt to summarize it, for my own poor prose cannot compare to the original. It seems to me I hear whispers now, coming from the shadows, and sometimes if I listen closely it seems to me I hear my name spoken, or the names of places I have been, or of the masters for whom I copy this work. As if, while I read their Book, they read my soul in exchange. Are these the powers the Nosferatu warned me of, those beings who guard the book? If so, have they judged me worthy or reading it, or is that judgment yet to come? And if I am not worthy...what then?

4 October

If the first three volumes were unnerving to read, the fourth is doubly so. Here is the story of Enoch, and the events leading up to the Great Flood. Yet it is not the story itself that is so affecting, but the tone, the choice of words, and their implications.

For in the fourth volume it is clear that Caine regards himself as a god to his progeny, and declares that he has the power of God Himself to decide their fate. Is this the truth, or a delusion born of his unique condition? As I read about his choice to feed upon human blood, a further sign of his defiance to God, I feel a chill go up my spine, for it is nothing less than a declaration of war with the Almighty.

It is clear the commentators know one another, for one makes derisive reference here to the clan of another. I have tentatively identified one voice that seems to be that of a Tzimisce biblical scholar, one Zarakiah of eastern fame. Hopefully there will be more hints to come.

7 October

Volume five is but a small one, four simple verses and their commentary. The authorial voice is not that of Caine, but of his childer. The subject is the Flood, and what happened to those who survived it.

It explains much, I fear. And it does not bode well for that moment when Caine's first brood awakens to walk the earth again.

Of course they will devour their descendants. It is what God taught them to do.

The whispers are louder now. I can almost make out words.

8 October

The sixth volume appeared tonight. It contains further hints of the commentators' identities. One is clearly Malkavian, and another, writing in Imperial Latin, appears to be Ventrue. Perhaps it is the great Marcus Aurelius himself?

The notes identify one portion of text as the Curse of Clans. Apparently, in this telling, it is Caine himself who curses his childer with all those weaknesses of blood we now suffer from. It is his curse which divides us, his curse which weakens us, and ultimately his own curse which sets childe against sire, ensuring the war between generations. The text says that he did it to ensure peace among his descendants, but one cannot help but wonder...would a man of such power and insight, godlike in so many aspects, make so great an error? Or did he have a darker purpose? I shudder to think of what that might be.

11 October

I supped on the last of the Ventrue lady's blood tonight. Her power sings in my veins, and with it my heart is almost strong enough to read what is in the seventh volume.

It is called *Prophecies*.

It tells of the death of Antediluvians, and of the coming of Gehenna, and worse. It tells of the death of a clan that may be ours.

I will write no more on this, but leave my masters to read the original. It is not the place of a mere ghoul to interpret such things, or even to comment upon them. Truly I feel overwhelmed, and can barely steady my hand enough to copy the words.

The whispers are strangely silent tonight. Perhaps my fear has driven them off.

13 October

Two chapters are contained in the eighth volume — for yes, I must regard them as chapters now, not merely fragments of a lost whole — and I have copied them, but my heart is not in it. I have written the words of Caine as given to his descendants, his laws mirroring the Commandments of God Himself, the ultimate sign of his hubris. And I have copied proverbs that reflect the wisdom of the ancients, or at least their prejudices.

But my mind is still on yesterday's work, on the prophecies I have read. Are they true indications of the future, and if so, do they record our doom? Even the commentators are not sure. But I read again and again the description of the doomed, and I wonder who else it could truly refer to:

The third shall be betrayed by his own, Treasured childe, knowledge-seeker, Drunk on dreams of death and shadows.

The whispers have returned. It seems their tone is darker, now. Have I displeased them?

14 October

The door is locked tonight. Even more: it is as if that secret wall has never been a door, for there is no sign of any crack whereby it may be opened.

I will not seek to force my way back into that chamber. Whoever chose to lay out these volumes for me now chooses to bar my way, and I know in my heart that to defy his will would cost me my life. Perhaps I have seen all there is to see, and copied the whole of his manuscript already. Or perhaps what is in my heart has displeased my secret master, and I am to be allowed no access to what remains.

It is enough for now. To bring this treasure home...it is more than enough for now.

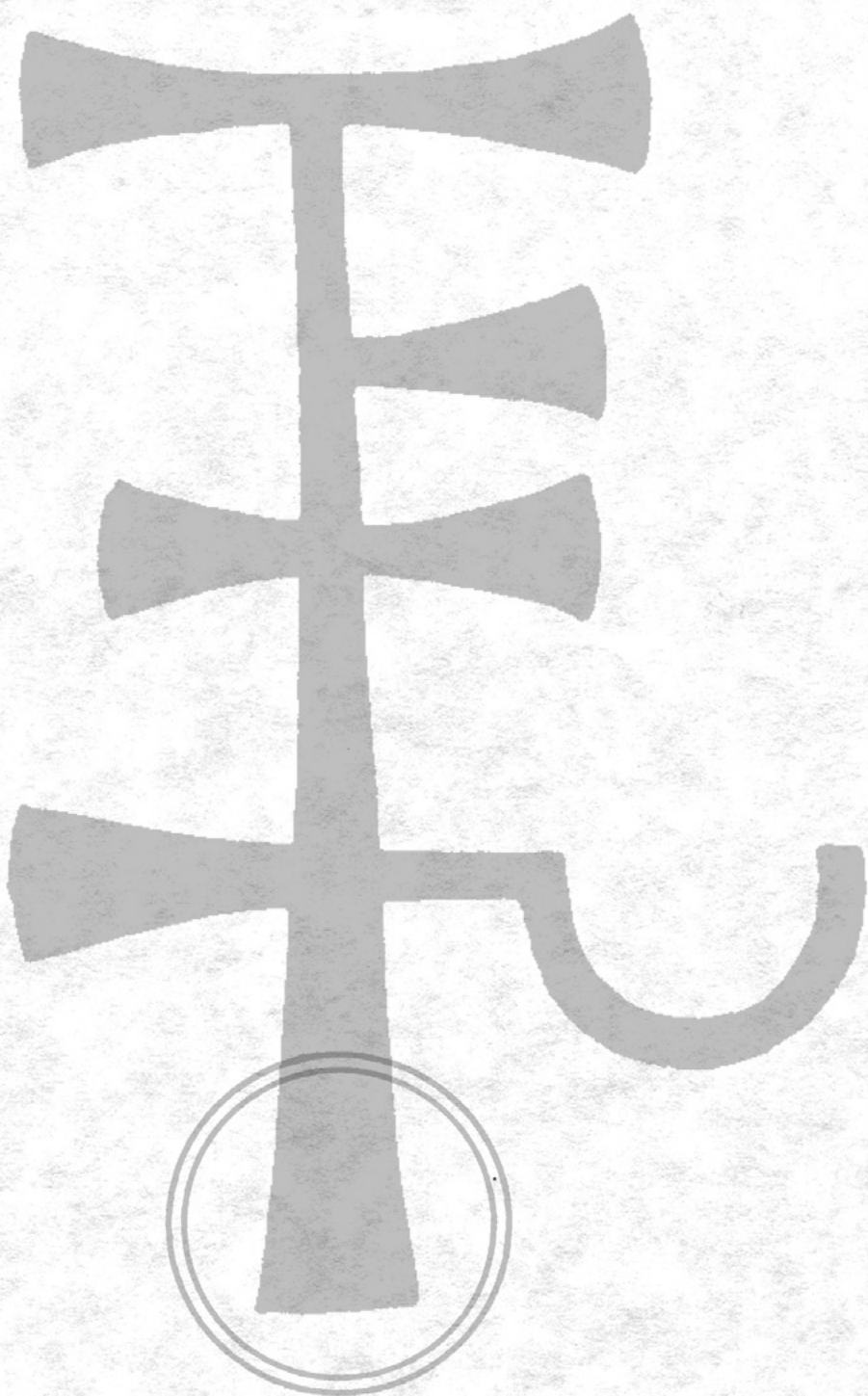
The whispers have followed me from the library, flanking me down the narrow halls, squeezing into this small, shadowed room. Still I cannot see who they belong to or make out any words clearly. Shadows dance in the corners of my vision. Is that my watchers testing me, teasing me? There is nothing I can do but ignore them. They do not respond to any entreaty, I have learned that much.

The manuscript is finished now, and safely prepared for travel. This journal will be bound to it. Come dawn, if the master of this place allows, I leave this cursed monastery to return home, to deliver this most precious work to you, my Uncle, and through you to the archives that you and your teachers guard. May you find my humble service acceptable.

N. G.



I. GENESIS



This is the tale of Caine's father
First-born child of God, made in
His image.

"CHILD OF GOD," NOT MERELY HIS
CREATION.

Which would make Caine God's own
grandchild. A prestigious lineage indeed.

Family implies responsibility

He had the Lord's own sanctity
He had the Lord's own purity
And when he showed that he had
the Lord's spirit as well,

INTERESTING.

The God of the Old Testament was a deity of
rage as well as peace, ambition as well as comfort,
jealousy as well as love. This is a clear reminder
that the spiritual elements in Caine which led to his
downfall were inherited from his "Grandfather."

In other words, this whole mess
was God's own fault.

It is not necessarily wise to say
such things in a holy place.

And hungered for the knowledge
that was his birthright
He was banished from Eden
forever.

IF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS
MAN'S BIRTHRIGHT, THEN BY WITHHOLD-
ING IT FROM HIM GOD WAS DOING HIM
AN INJUSTICE.

To which Adam responded just as God Himself
would have, if placed in the same situation. By
this text, their natures were identical.



This is the tale of Caine's mother.
The woman called Eve, made in
God's own image.



NOT SPECIFIED AS A CHILD OF GOD IN
THIS CASE, THOUGH THAT MIGHT BE
ASSUMED.

Not necessarily. This manuscript downplays
the role of woman in many things, and the
omission may be deliberate.

A political omission, no doubt.
To keep those who worship
Lilith from fueling their
frenzies with this text.

I thought that movement was only
a legend.

Yes, and I once thought
vampires weren't real, either.

She was created as a helpmeet for
Adam
She was commanded to serve him

Puts the responsibility for her
actions squarely on his shoulders.

And when she brought him a
harvest of sacred knowledge
That could make him strong and
wise

IN THIS TEXT, SIMPLY FOLLOWING GOD'S
ORDERS THAT SHE SERVE HIM IN ALL THINGS.

God cursed her, and sent her forth
in sorrow.

INTERESTINGLY, THOUGH CHRISTIAN
TRADITION FOCUSES UPON EVE AS THE
GUILTY PARTY, SHE IS SOMEWHAT
JUSTIFIED HERE: CREATED TO SERVE,
ORDERED TO SERVE, AND THEN SERVING
AS BEST SHE KNOWS HOW.

The responsibility for the Fall is shifted to man
and God. Woman was but a tool.

And the serpent, who is not men-
tioned here?

Not mentioned here. This Eve
knew what she was doing.

Again, it leaves out of the story those elements associated with Lilith. Perhaps deliberately?

The parallels between this and Cain's own story cannot be ignored. God casts out his own first-born son, as Adam will later cast out his own...

Predestination?

This is the tale of their children, born in pain and blood.

A REFERENCE TO GOD'S CURSE UPON EVE.

More than that. It is a reminder that all life comes from blood, that the essence of what we drink is far more than a simple red liquid. As in *Leviticus*: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood."

As in *Genesis*: "Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh"

Yes, well, we are ignoring that verse, aren't we? Astonishing, that.

First-born Cain, his father's pride,

A REMINDER THAT THE RELATIONSHIP OF CAINE TO ADAM PARALLELS THAT OF ADAM TO GOD.

Thus the earlier reference to Adam as first-born son of God.

Who tilled the dust to bring forth fruit

THIS OF COURSE WAS PART OF GOD'S CURSE UPON ADAM, NOW INHERITED BY CAINE

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

There is no equivalent curse regarding animals.

So Cain got the short end of the stick from the start, is that it?

So he would like us to believe.

And labored beneath the hot sun daily
To harvest grain for his family's bread.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground, for out of it wast thou taken."





Second-born Abel, perfect and beautiful.

AN INTERESTING AND OMINOUS PHRASE. FOR ALL THINGS SACRIFICED TO GOD MUST BE WITHOUT BLEMISH.

Implying in this case that Abel was fated to be killed.

Predestination.

Who tamed the beasts to harvest their flesh

THE IMAGERY OF THE HARVESTING OF ANIMAL FLESH IS USED HERE TO LEGITIMIZE CAINE'S OWN WORK, AND RAISE IT UP TO BE THE EQUAL OF HIS BROTHER'S.

Which hints at a certain bitterness, don't you think? If one assumes that he actually wrote this.

He was damned from the start. Wouldn't you be bitter?

And aided in their bloody births.

Again the focus on blood as the seat of life.

All of the earth was theirs to seed
All living things were under their
dominion

"Replenish the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth."

All was harvested according to
God's will.

And when in time their father told
them they must make sacrifice,
They brought their first and their
best to the altar, and set them afire.
Fruits and grains did Caine offer
up, the best of his harvest.

This reference to the quality of Caine's offering is noticeably absent from any Biblical text.

Lamb's blood did his brother
spill, and it burned sweetly.

AGAIN, THE FOCUS ON BLOOD AND ITS MYSTERIES.

The implication is that blood was pleasing to God, bloodless offering was not. This ties into Adam's curse again, in which the product of farming was deemed an accursed thing.

So Caine really couldn't win with his
sacrifice, no matter what he did.

PRECISELY.

And God said to unto Abel.
"Thy offering has pleased Me."
To Caine he said nothing, but
turned His face from him,
Nor would he give him His
blessing.

Wherefore do you condemn my
offering, oh Lord?

THE TEXT SHIFTS INTO THE FIRST PERSON HERE. THE WRITER IS NOW ALLEGEDLY CAINE HIMSELF...OR ELSE ANOTHER AUTHOR, ADOPTING A STYLISTIC CONCEIT.

The bias of the entire text is so marked, I find the concept of Caine's authorship entirely plausible.

It certainly works hard to make him look
good.

All the sweetness of the earth do
I lay before you
The best of my labors in the hot
sun.
Wherefore is this not enough?
How is there more blessing in a
lamb's blood
Than in the loving harvest of so
many fine things?



The Lord would not answer, so I went to my father.

I said to him, "Wherefore was my sacrifice lacking?"

He bade me search for blemish in my gifts,

For the Lord will have no thing which is marred

But only the most perfect and beautiful of offerings.

"If this offering be a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer it without blemish."

I said unto my brother, "Wherefore was my sacrifice lacking?"

He reminded me that the earth was mere ash,

That the tilling of soil was a punishment to Adam,

And the eating of bread a sign of man's sin.

"Give unto God that which is not born of the earth," he told me,

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake. In toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

"And its blood shall be pleasing to Him."

IT IS BLOOD WHICH DISTINGUISHES THE CURSED FROM THE UNCURED.

Or at least defines acceptable sacrifice, in this telling.

LEVITICUS DOES OFFER GUIDELINES FOR AGRICULTURAL OFFERINGS, SO THEY WERE ACCEPTABLE.

Leviticus doesn't have a vested interest in making Cain look good.

Interestingly, this is the only version of the Book of God I have seen which relates the actual conversation between Cain and Abel. The bible speaks of a meeting between them, with the murder following directly afterward, but it does not give us details of what was said.

Here the responsibility is clearly being shifted to Abel, whose argument clinched the choice of sacrifice.



So I did as he said, and I
offered up blood.
I did as my father said,
and offered up that
which was perfect and
beautiful.

I did as God
commanded, and offered
up the first and best of
all I possessed.



Then the heavens did grow dark
above me
A chill wind swept outward from
the gates of Eden

THAT THE MURDER OF ABEL TOOK PLACE WITHIN SIGHT OF THE GATES OF EDEN IS CLEAR FROM OTHER FRAGMENTS, AND FROM THE BIBLE ITSELF

And the voice of our Father
thundered forth.

GOD OR ADAM? THE WORD "FATHER" IS CAPITALIZED HERE, WHICH AGREES WITH THE BIBLICAL VERSION OF THE SCENE, BUT OTHER FRAGMENTS CLAIM THAT ADAM HIMSELF CAST HIS SON OUT.

It is deliberately vague.

**The first-born is created, adored,
then forced into sin and exiled.
Does it matter whether God or
Adam is at fault? The act is the
same.**

"Caine, what have you done?
The blood of your brother cries
out to Me from the earth
The ground has opened up her
mouth to drink his blood.

THE POWER OF BLOOD GRANTED SUCH MYSTICAL ANIMATION THAT IT HAS ITS OWN VOICE.

An image drawn from the Bible itself. As is the vampiric response of the earth.

First killer of man, be accursed by
My word.
The very earth shall reject you,
A fugitive and a wanderer shall you
become,
Outcast from the sons of Adam
until the end of time."

Of which there were no others at this time, Seth having not yet been born. Thus God is not only cursing Cain, but informing him that the line of Adam will continue.

So God curses Caine according to a vision that will not be fulfilled for centuries. What does exile mean, if the world is an empty place?

"Then how shall I live?" I demanded.
"Every man that sees me shall know of this curse.
Every hand shall be turned against me."

Caine, like God, accepts the vision of a fully populated Earth. Yet at the time such a thing must have been barely conceivable. Fascinating.

"I will set My sign upon you," He said.
"All men shall know by its presence not to harm you."

"The Lord set a sign for Caine, lest any finding him should smite him."

A REFERENCE NOTICEABLY ABSENT FROM OTHER FRAGMENTS OF THE BOOK.

Perhaps included here as a warning. God Himself protects the first of all Cainites.

Interesting that the reference here is male. It is not in the original.

No man can harm Caine...but a woman?

LILITH





He who does so will be cursed
sevenfold,
And he who tries to slay you will
earn My eternal wrath.”

A subtle, yet major alteration from the Biblical text. In that, only those who slay Cain will face God's vengeance. In this version, any who harm him will.

Is that a surprise, given the authorship of this fragment? If you were Cain, isn't this what you would want people to believe?

You are assuming this was truly written by Cain.

That or someone working for him. The difference is irrelevant.

A POTENT MESSAGE, WHATEVER THE SOURCE. GOD HIMSELF WILL NOT ALLOW CAINE TO BE KILLED, OR EVEN HARMED.

Bad news for those who think they might face him at Gehenna.

The generations of Cain might die, but our Father in Blood never will.

Not by a man's hand, anyway.

Tears of rage came to my eyes,
but I forced them back.
Tears of sorrow came to my eyes,
but I would not let them flow.
Such offerings I would not
give him,
Nor any further sacrifice
from my heart.
“So be it,” I said unto the Lord.
Then I turned my face from Him,
and set off into exile.





II. LILITH

In the place beyond Eden,
where darkness reigns,

SPIRITUAL DARKNESS, AS A RESULT OF BEING
BEREFT OF GOD'S PRESENCE?

And physical as well, for the gates of Eden and
their fiery guardian provided a light that could be
seen from nearer places. Caine has now gone so far
beyond the lands allotted to man that not even its
brilliance is visible.

In the lands called Nod, where
the curse of God is manifest,
There did I wander, bereft of all
company.
The earth was wild, its fields
choked with weeds.
I did not till them.
The animals were as enemies to
one another, and to me
I did not tame them.
This is the work of the Lord
our God, who so delights in
Eden.
This place is His creation as
well, and mirror of his true
intent.
So does he create us all, the
bright and the dark together,
And leave to man's hand the
tilling of the soil, the taming of
the wild,
The harvest of good and evil by
which we shall be judged.

Isaiah 45:7 — "I form the light and create
darkness; I make peace and create evil: I am
the Lord that doeth all these things."



How am I to be judged, my God?
How shall my name be written
before You?

In the Book of Life, where unrepented sins are recorded.

I offered up that which was most
precious to me, and You rejected it.
So I offered up that which was
more precious still
And now I am rejected.
Where is the justice, in this thy
curse?

Where is the wisdom for which
You are so praised?
Your word is as that of a petty king
Your justice a fallow field
And all that praise which is lav-
ished upon You
Is but a mockery of true respect.
Am I to worship You still, in this
place.
Sing praises to Your name, and
humbly seek forgiveness?



I spat upon the ground in my fury,
And in that place the weeds
shriveled and died.
The earth itself grew black from
my bile,
And I knew that no living thing
would grow there again.
Such was my final offering to the
Creator.
Such was the only prayer that He
deserved.





Alone I wandered, bitter and cold
Until a woman came to me, and called my name.
Her garments were as dark as the night, woven from the very shadow.
Her skin was pale and gleaming as the moon, and chill as winter's frost.
Her lips and eyes were as glowing embers, crimson in the darkness.
She whispered my name and the sound was like music
Dark and awful, chords of power as once I heard the angels sing.
I ceased to walk, and I gazed upon her.
"What is your name," I asked her, "and how came you to this place,
Where all the sons of Adam fear to tread?"

"ALL THE SONS OF ADAM" IMPLIES THAT MUCH TIME HAS PASSED, FOR OTHERWISE THIS PHRASE WOULD HAVE NO MEANING.

Well, it implies that Adam has had enough time to have other sons, at least.

Or Cain is admitting his own fear.

"My name is Lilith, first wife

of Adam,

Second-born of God our

Father, now outcast by

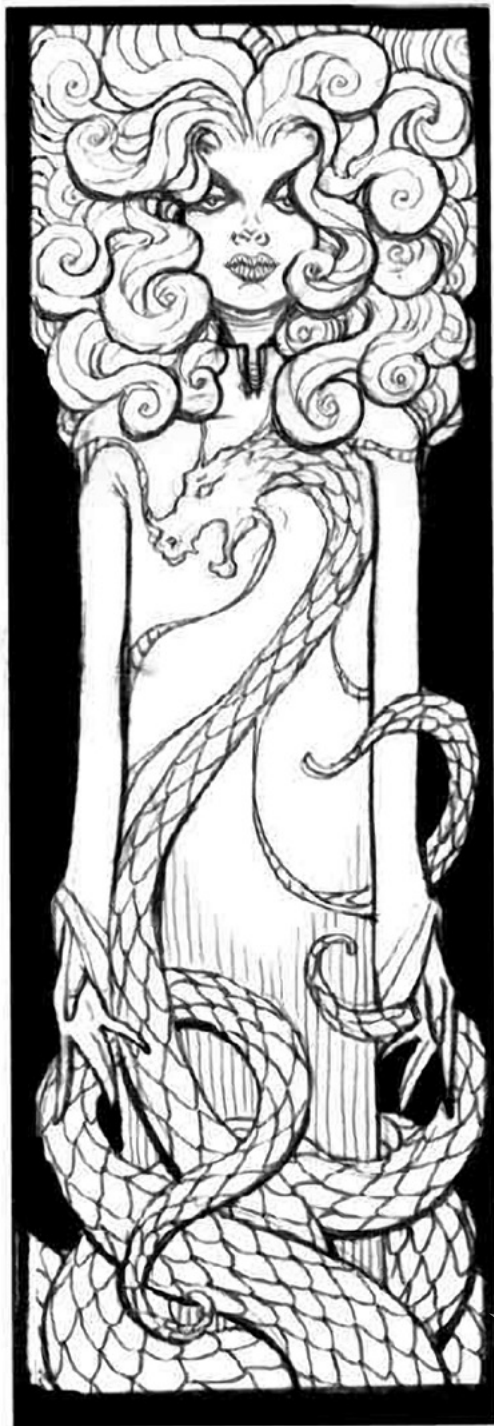
His decree.



LILITH, LIKE CAINE, REGARDS HERSELF AS THE OFFSPRING OF GOD, NOT MERELY AS HIS CREATION.

The line between the two is not as clear as one would think. Genesis 6 speaks of the sons of God mating with mortal women.

Yes, and look what it cost them



He made me queen of Eden,
then cursed me when I
wielded power.
So does he do with each
generation,
Culling all who would
question His will
Cursing all who have the
spirit to defy Him.
Was fair Eve tempted by
the serpent's wiles,
Seduced by its promises,
tricked by its lies?

THIS VERSION OF AFFAIRS IS MUCH MORE IN LINE WITH THE ORIGINAL HEBRAIC TRADITION THAN STORIES TOLD BY LILITH'S FOLLOWERS. IN PARTICULAR THE REFERENCE TO THE SERPENT AS AN INDEPENDENT CREATURE MAKES ONE QUESTION THE MODERN ASSERTION THAT IT WAS IN FACT BUT ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF THE DARK MOTHER.

Maybe that is what Caine wants us to think.

I would have plucked the
fruit willingly, reveled in
its juices, defied its Maker.

Lilith, unlike Caine, is willing to take responsibility for her own actions.

Does Caine see it that way, I wonder?

And woe be to my mate if
he should fear to share that
power
For then I should devour
him too, as the beasts devour
their lesser kin.
So has God decreed it shall
be in nature, and so shall it be
with us,
The strong devouring the
weak, as it was meant to be.”

The rightful dominance of strong over weak is a repeated theme in Cain's version of events, the very foundation of his own rise to power. Little wonder then that he has such abhorrence for diablerie, which by its very nature reverses the order of things.

**It could be argued
that no childe could
overcome his sire if he
weren't stronger than
his sire *ab initio*.**

There is always deception.

**Strength of mind and will
is still strength.**





She offered me food con-
jured from the night, and it
gave me strength.
She fed me on wine distilled
from her rage, and it quelled
my thirst.
She showed me magics
conjured from darkness, but
she would not teach me their
name,
Nor show me how to har-
ness their power myself.
So I took what I wanted, and
drank of her blood, and the
power raged through me
Wild as the beasts surround-
ing, as black as her own dark
substance.
So do the strong feed on the
weak and claim their power.
So have you taught me, first
wife of Adam, and so have I
learned well.

Caine drinks blood for the first
time not for vampiric hunger, but
for power.

HE IS NOT YET A VAMPIRE, NOT IN
OUR SENSE OF THE WORD.

That the power of a creature is inherent
in its blood is a repeated theme, present in
all fragments I have studied.



Will you curse me now for
betrayal, for strength or for my
hunger?
I have borne the rage of God, my
mother. What is yours, compared
to that?

BY "MY MOTHER," HE ACKNOWLEDGES HER ROLE IN MOLDING HIM.

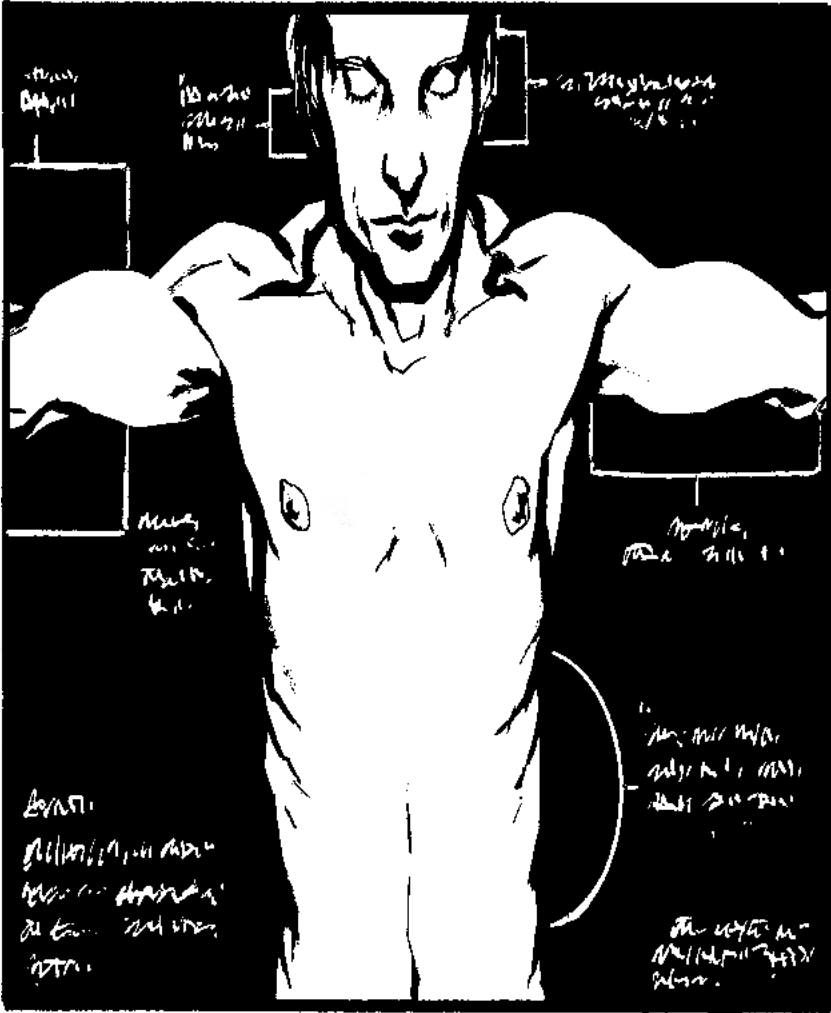
**God gave him rage, but
Lilith gives him power.**

Behold, the night is mine now,
and all its power:

AND GOD WILL NEVER DEBATE MASTERY OF THE NIGHT WITH HIM, ONLY BANISH HIM FROM THE DAY.

All disciplines which might ever exist are possessed by Caine from this moment on, thus the reference to "all its power."

He learned well from Lilith.



This darkling strength, from which all force derives,
This devil's speed, faster than eye can follow,
This sweet illusion, sculpted in the mind,
These demon senses, sharp beyond all measure,
These forms of flesh, which now are mine to wear.

Some of these could refer to more than one discipline.

IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO TRY TO IDENTIFY THEM ALL.

Agreed.

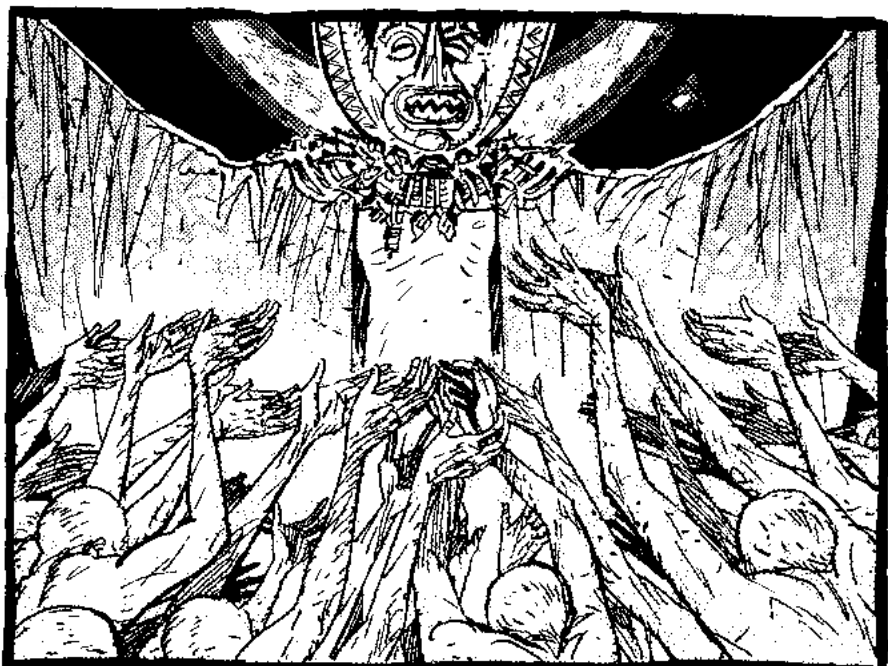


Behold, the gates
of death are in my
keeping.
Secrets of ages script-
ed for my eye.
This stealth of move-
ment and this dance
of shadows,
Are mine to summon,
mine to use at will.
No blow of Adam's
get can bring me to
harm now.

ADAM, NOT SETH. DOES HE
MEAN TO REFER TO HIS
OWN PROGENY, AS WELL
AS THE LIVING?

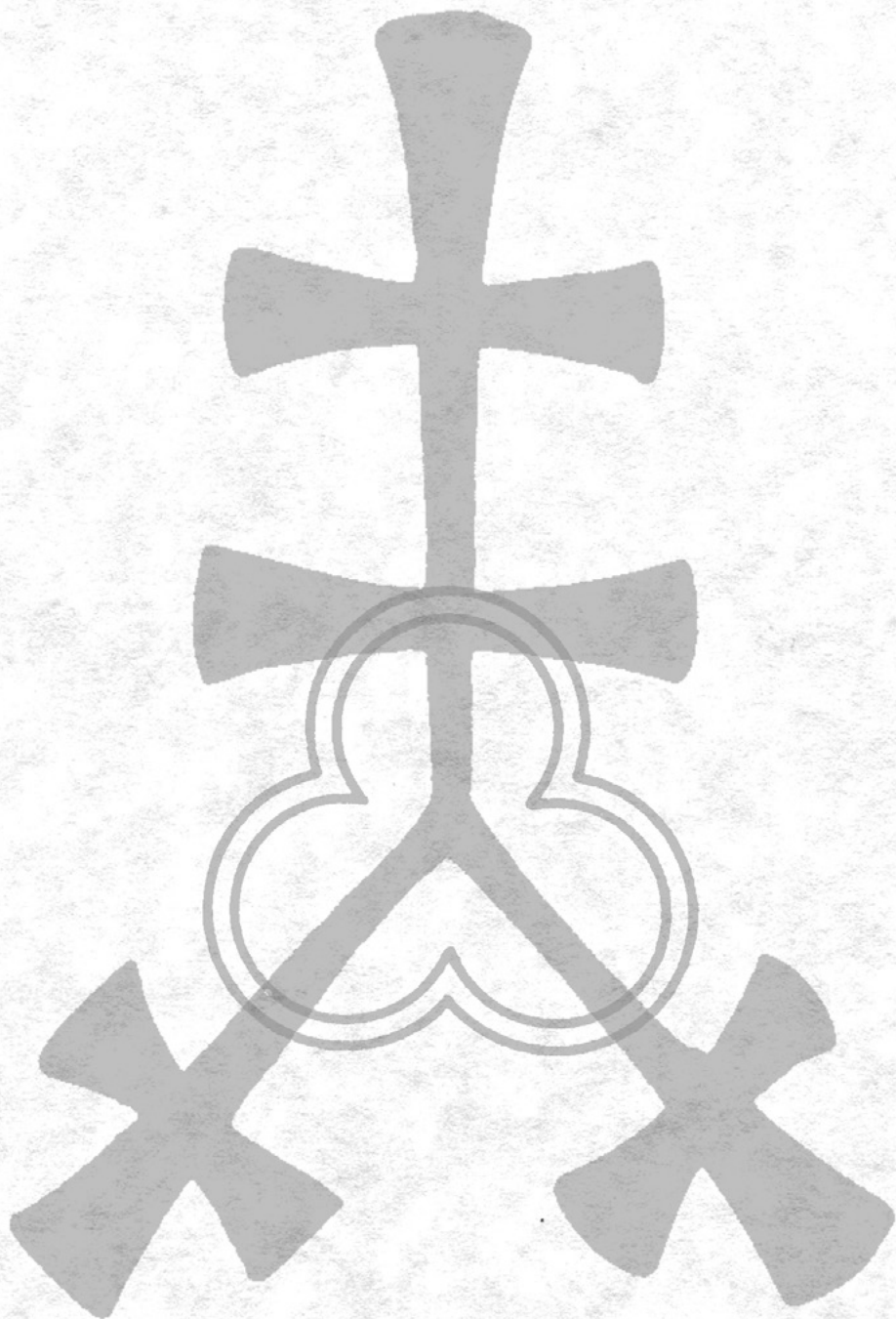
His brood shall bend
their knees to me in
fear
And come when I do
call them, and obey,
Dead or living, will-
ing or no.
And when I com-
mand that they shall
love me,
So shall they do, and
think it real.

And if they think me a
god for my power,
I shall not correct them.
And if they offer me that
which is first and best of
all they possess,
I shall not refuse
their gifts,
nor cast them out.





III. TEMPTATIONS



There came to me an angel, and his
essence was fire.
His garments were of spun gold,
and his eyes were blazing scarlet.
His sword shone with holy flame,
too bright to gaze upon.

The flaming sword of Genesis 3:24, "which turned every way," and kept man from returning to Eden.

So Cain still identifies himself with his father here.

And by that sign I knew him for
Michael, dread minion of my
father's God.

WITH THIS SIMPLE PHRASE CAINE DISAVOWS GOD ENTIRELY.

It is a drastic move, but one that allows him to position himself as God's adversary rather than God's victim.

And even as God himself, later.

That delusion has not yet taken hold.

But the seeds are there.

I knew that he meant me to kneel
before him.

So I did not.

I knew that he meant me to fear
him.

So I did not.

I knew that he meant me to be
humbled.

So I was not.

Pride like unto that of the Lightbringer
ere the War in Heaven.

Even that demonstrates Cain
overstepping his bounds, I fear.

But does Cain?





He said unto to me,
"Caine, first-born of
Adam,
I bring to you the word of
the Lord:
Repent of your crime and
you will be forgiven.
Turn with humility
towards your God
And He will cleanse you
of all sin.
For he is a God of mercy,
who forgives the outcast
And makes a place for him
among the blessed."



Then the angel grew angry.
His eyes blazed with scarlet fire
And the flames of his sword
scorched my clothes and my flesh.
"Creature of pride," he pronounced,
"be thou damned, then
Not by my will, but by thy own
words.

My fire shall be an enemy to you,
That you and your children shall
fear until the end of time.
Not all the magic that you have
learned can tame it
Not all the power that you have
gained can withstand it.

In other words, I'm going to
hurt you, but it's not my fault.

God plays the same blame game
that Caine does.

Perhaps. Or perhaps Caine subscribes to the sin
of angelism.

Humility would not seem to be one
of his faults.

It is said the Tremere can
command fire.

Yet one more sign that they are an abomination,
and not meant to share in either the gifts
of Caine's blood or in the community of his
descendants.

I think you're a little biased.
That doesn't make him wrong.



Such is the curse I set upon
you,
Until the day your spirit is
humbled.
Such is the cost of your
defiance."

I said, "So be it." And still I
did not kneel.
The angel left me then, and I
was alone.



Then came another angel,
riding the winds of morning.
Behind him all the hues of
heaven spread out across the
horizon,
And the demons of night
fled at the sight of him.
I knew him for Uriel, shep-
herd of the sun,
And I stood my ground
proudly as he came to earth
before me.

THIS DOES NOT AGREE WITH EITHER CAINITE TRADITION, OR WITH OTHER FRAGMENTS OF THE BOOK OF NOD THAT I HAVE SEEN.

Uriel is commonly held by Cainites to be the angel of death, and the one who proclaims God's third and most powerful curse.

Yet that is not consistent with Hebraic tradition, which associates Uriel with the sun and with light.

If you believe Caine wrote this, I'd bet he probably knows what he is talking about.

The sun is death to our kind. No doubt this is the source of the textual confusion.

One can only hope.

"Caine," he said, "first-born of Adam,
Your brother's soul cries out
for your redemption,
And God has heard his pleas.
Say only that you would leave
this land
And return to your father's
embrace
And it will be done."



"Once again," I said, "my brother speaks to God. Once again, his words are favored over mine. I do not ask for his pity, nor for yours. I will make my own fate in lands east of Nod

IN OTHER WORDS, HE IS OUTCAST EVEN BY ADAM'S STANDARDS, WHICH IS EXILED INDEED.

And establish my kingdom in exile.
I will set my children on golden thrones
And we will rule over Seth's brood together.
For surely it is better to rule in the darkness
Than to humble myself falsely in the light."

THE DARKNESS OF THE SOUL, OR THE DARKNESS OF GOD'S ABSENCE, AS HE HAD NOT YET BEEN BANISHED TO THE NIGHT?

Some schools of thought hold that the utter absence of God is the true damnation. That the Divine Presence is light in the spiritual sense, and that to be exiled from the Lord is to have one's soul dwell in darkness.

Which adds new meaning to Cain's bravado.

And the moral of the story is, don't give the angels any ideas.

Ah, you are as insightful as ever.

The angel's face grew white with fury,
And the light of dawn behind him became a sea of blazing poison
unto me.
"Wretched creature! Damned for your pride,
Now doubly damned for your defiance.
The light of the sun shall be your enemy
Searing your soul when you gaze upon it, burning your flesh to ash.
Those of your blood who would rule the earth
Shall cower in the dust by day, fearing the light,
And the sons of Seth who seek after power
Will hunt them down as they sleep even as the dead sleep,
Unable to defend themselves or beg for mercy from those who hunt
them.
Thus shall your kingdom be, your prideful empire,
Its throne made of fear, its crown cast in shadows."

So the curse of sunlight is meant to serve as a form
of political control as well as simple punishment.

Military also, for it guarantees that all Cainites will
spend half their hours in a state of absolute vulner-
ability. Hard to rule the world when that's the case.

NOT IMPOSSIBLE, THOUGH. CAINE MANAGED IT IN ENOCH.

For a time. And look what happened.

Also it is a means of keeping Cainites from passing as the sons of
Seth, or truly sharing in their society.

I think that's a secondary concern here.

I don't. If Cain has boasted to God that he shall be
alone, then God shall see to it that he lives up to his
boast.

I could not answer him,
for the sun rose then.
I meant to stand my
ground before it
But its rays were as venom
upon my skin
And within my veins, that
blood which ran so cold
with anger and pride
Began to boil, molten as
the sun's own fire.
I fled the light, to the
nearest place of safety,
Which was the earth itself,
cool beneath my feet
And in that place, shel-
tered in the darkness of
the world below,
I cursed the name of the
one who had driven me
there,
And of his eternal Master.



J. K. 1885



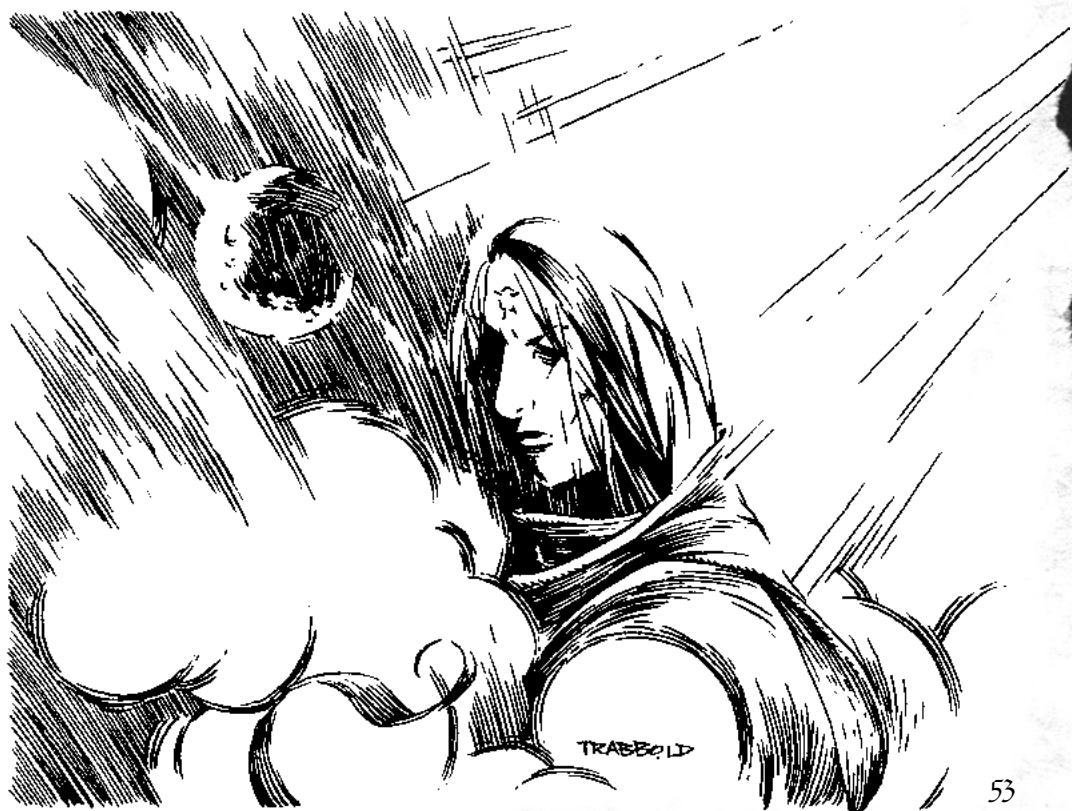
And when the day had passed, and
night fell once more
I arose from my resting place to
see a third angel awaited me.
His eyes were jet, twin mirrors of
the night.
His wings were shadow, that beat
about his form like wild winds.
And I knew him for an angel of
divine wrath,
Dread Gabriel, by whose hand
Sodom was destroyed.

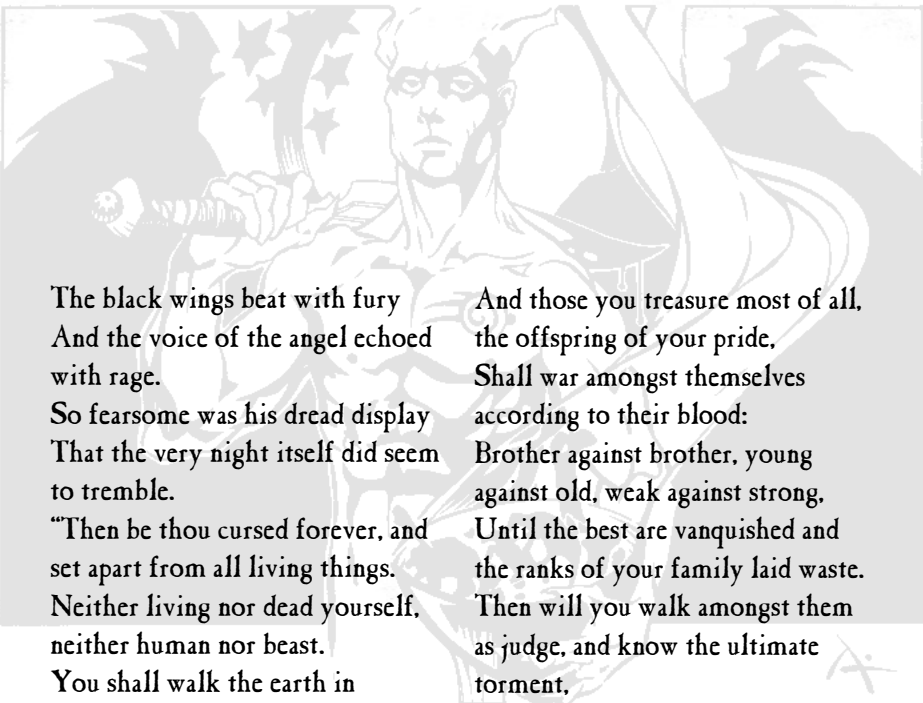
"Caine," he said, "in you the seed
of Adam is doubly shamed,
And all the laws of life defiled.
Yet even such a soul as yours may
yet be saved
By true repentance.
Forswear your sins and return to
His fold,
And all will be as new again, all
sins forgiven, all wrongs undone.
The Lord grants you this, your
third and final path to forgiveness."

*In the Babylonian fragment, this is
Uriel. Why the change?*

To him I said simply, "I
am what God has made
me."

And still I would not
kneel.





The black wings beat with fury
And the voice of the angel echoed
with rage.

So fearsome was his dread display
That the very night itself did seem
to tremble.

“Then be thou cursed forever, and
set apart from all living things.

Neither living nor dead yourself,
neither human nor beast.

You shall walk the earth in
darkness, and all your children
with you,

Unchanging, undying and ever
without hope.

Blood shall be your only food, and
all your dreams shall be ash.

Life and love shall wither at your
touch, and hunger shall devour
mercy,

And those you treasure most of all,
the offspring of your pride,

Shall war amongst themselves
according to their blood:

Brother against brother, young
against old, weak against strong.

Until the best are vanquished and
the ranks of your family laid waste.

Then will you walk amongst them
as judge, and know the ultimate
torment,

Which is for a father to condemn
his own children.

So has God done with you, this
night.

So shall you do with your own,
until the end of time.”

Though these are fearsome threats, they are in truth
little more than a summary of prior curses.

OR AN EXTENSION OF THEM.

I don't agree. This is clearly the point at which
Caine becomes dependent upon blood for
sustenance, as opposed to merely desiring it
for vengeance or power.

AND SINCE BLOOD DRINKING IS CLEARLY
FORBIDDEN BY GOD'S OWN LAW, HE HAS NOW
BEEN FORCED INTO A STATE OF PERPETUAL SIN,
FROM WHICH THERE IS NO HOPE OF REDEMPTION.

At this time.

SO CAINE IS CURSED TO JUDGE AND DESTROY
HIS OWN.

Doubly painful because he blames God
for all their shortcomings.

An eye for an eye

Or an extension of his past deeds. He has
already slain his own kin.

He left me alone in
the darkness then,
To suffer the pain
of my changing.
The blood-hunger
rose in me like a
flood tide.
The beast began to
gnaw at my soul
Still I would not
kneel.

THIS IS CLEARLY THE
POINT AT WHICH
CAINE BECOMES AS WE
ARE. THIS IS THE TRUE
BEGINNING OF OUR
HERITAGE.



Then there came a fourth angel,
with wings as pale as moonlight.
His face was a thing of alabaster
beauty,
And his voice was finer than the
finest music.
I knew him for Raphael, patron of
all healing,
And I stood my ground before
him,
Even as I trembled to hear what
his curse would be.
"Behold," he said, "the Lord is
merciful,
Even to the undeserving.
I give you a path to seek peace for
your soul
Even in this bitter darkness.
I give you the light of hope, for
you and your children,
To await the day when anger fades
and pride gives way to yearning.
The name of the path is Golconda.



WAS IT CALLED THUS, EVEN AT
THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS?
OR HAS OUR AUTHOR CHOSEN
TO INSERT LATER KNOWLEDGE
INTO HIS TEXT?

You suspect our scribe of intel-
lectual dishonesty?

**At this point, I suspect
everything here. Including
the lot of you.**

At last you show wisdom.

And those who seek it with a true
heart may yet gain salvation,
Though they walk in the night as
demons
And bear the curses of a thousand
angels."
He left me then, without hearing
my reply.

And again I was alone.
When he was gone, I knelt
in the darkness.
And I wept.





IV. Enoch

Alone I wandered, cursed with
loneliness,
Knowing such darkness in my soul
as mortal man cannot fathom.
That was the ultimate torment,
that most terrible hunger:
The calling of flesh to flesh, of
soul to soul, unanswered.
Worse than the torments of Sheol.
Worse than the pain of woman's
burden.
Worse than all the agonies of earth
and heaven combined.
For we are not made from dust
alone, but draw our life from Eve,
Who in her turn was given life
from her lover's very marrow.
In her flesh is writ God's declara-
tion, that man must share his life.
Whether as master or servant,
lover or tyrant, sire or child,
Flesh must have flesh
Blood must have blood
That is human destiny.
And I cursed God ten times over in
those days, nay, a thousand,
For leaving me human enough to
feel such a need,
When all other trappings of human
life had been stolen from me.

For the curses of the angels were merely
that, while Cain's human nature had
the spark of the divine

And nothing created by the Lord
can ever be utterly destroyed



TRABOLD

Third-born of Adam, first-born of God,

For his was the right by the lineage of Heaven to rule them.

"I am not worthy," he told them, for he was humble in the ways of the Lord.

Again it was offered, with incense and perfumes and music to persuade him.

"I am not worthy," he told them, for he knew that power could corrupt the soul.

Again it was offered, for they said they would have no other to lead them.

"I am not worthy," he told them, "but as it is your will

I will keep vigil for six nights in the wilderness.

I will seek God's counsel.

If it is His will that I rule over you, then let Him give me a sign,

And on the seventh day I will become your King.

And if is not, then I will return to the city and choose one who is truly worthy,

And the crown shall be his.

Thus shall God's will be done."

THE PERIOD OF SIX DAYS IS NO DOUBT MEANT TO HONOR GOD BY IMITATING THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION.

Then again, his wish to be crowned on the seventh day goes against the commandment to rest on the Sabbath

Which had not yet been written into law, one assumes.

Even so, God may have expected him to learn from prior example, and when Enosh did not, abandoned him to both his fate and our Sire.

Is not the Sabbath sometimes spoken of as being crowned?

That interpretation is centuries younger. Stop mixing your lifetimes, you senile fool.

With fasting and cleansing and
other holy preparation
He went off into the wilderness to
await God's word.

But I had finished with waiting,
and so he heard mine first.

With the power of the night I gave
him visions

And I bound my truths to his soul,
so that he could not deny them.

"Favored son of Adam," I told
him, "favored child of God,
You are mine now, and balm to my
loneliness.

In blood you were made, and in
blood I now claim you.

Let your veins be emptied of the
life that God provided

And filled with the power that
God has granted unto me.

Let your soul be emptied of its
false humility

And your spirit filled with the
night's own strength.

Let your flesh deny its earthly
father

For you are mine now, body,
blood and soul

And none shall take you from me."

I called him Enoch and, on the
seventh night,

Returned with him to the city.

HERE WE SEE THE BEGINNING OF THE TRADI-
TION OF RENAMING A CHILDE AT THE TIME OF
EMBRACE.

He set the crown upon my head

He called for incense and music
and offerings

He told the city I was to be their
King.

And those who might speak against
me did not,

Clearly this is the first Embrace, and a
cataloguing of the changes that occur in
each new child.

PRIDE IS THE INHERITANCE OF
CAINE.

Is that your kind's excuse?



For I showed them one portion of
my power, and they feared me.
And those who might do me harm
did not,

For the mark of God was upon
me, and they feared His wrath.
So did I come to reign over the
sons of Adam.

Some called me a god for my
power, and offered me worship.
And because they bowed down to
me of their own free will,
The Lord of Heaven did not
intervene.



This is a vital distinction, repeated throughout these texts. If a Cainite proclaims himself a god, then Heaven will strike him down for his deeds. But if mortals choose to grant unto that Cainite their worship, then the fault lies not with Caine's child.

This is the fruit of the tree. Free will is also the freedom to choose poorly.

Indeed, and Caine's subjects did so.

I named the city after my first-born son
For such was the pleasure he brought me.
And I claimed others who pleased me, to be my own,
To share in that curse which was power and suffering.
So that I would not be alone.
As God had commanded, I did not till the fields for grain.
As God had decreed, I did not kill tame beasts for flesh.
These things had been denied me by His holy word, and I obeyed.
I fed upon that which was most precious to Him, upon the blood of my brother's kin.
For the blood is the life, and he who partakes of it,
Though doubly damned, shall be made strong.

Whereas he might have fed on the blood of beasts and spared Seth's children.

That he did not is another fist shaken at Heaven.

And I learned to give pleasure
to those who fed me,
That they might think it ecstacy
to feed their god
And love me all the more for
my hunger.
So did the city grow, in numbers
and in strength,
Prosperous beneath my rule.
I chose the best of its blood to
serve me,
And the best among those to
embrace the night.
Together we ruled over the
sons of Seth, my children and I,
As the strong have always ruled,
as the wise were meant to do.
They built us homes without
windows, that we might defy
the sun.
They brought the rivers to our
door, that fires might be quickly
quenched.
So were the curses of two
angels answered,
And the curse of God defied.
In time my children hungered
for their own get
And chose from among their
servants those who pleased
them most,
And brought them into the
night.
So swiftly did they multiply,
and so powerful did they
become,
That in time I commanded
them to make no more childer,
but be satisfied.



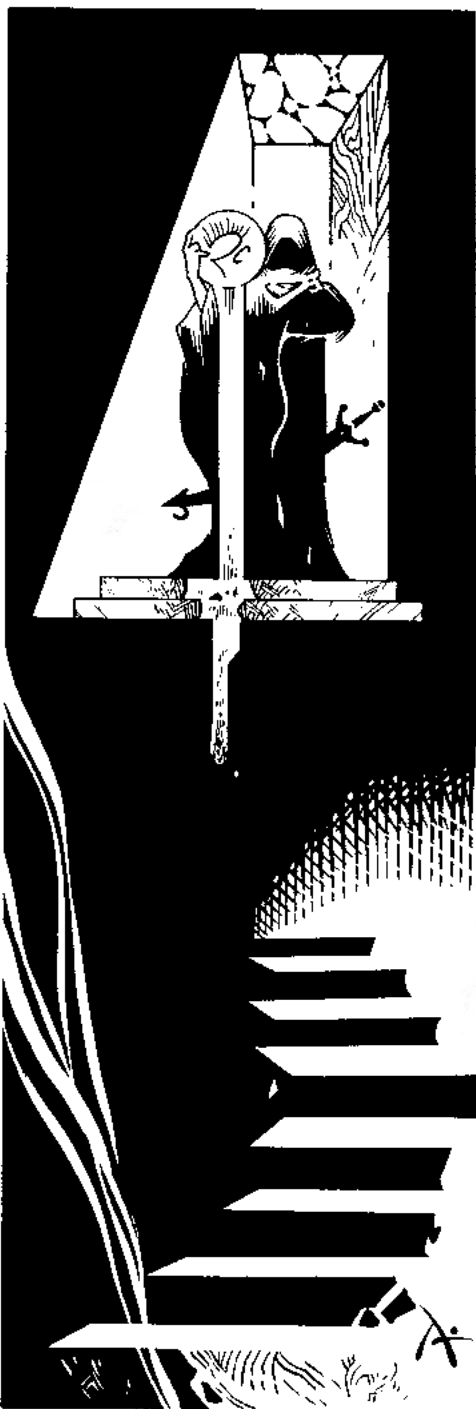
For I feared the curse of the
third angel, not yet answered,
And I knew the day was
coming when my children
would turn on one another
And the streets would run
black with their blood.
For a time they obeyed me,
for they feared their father's
wrath.
But just as I had not accepted
God's edicts,
So did they not accept mine,
For they were of my blood,
and their nature was defiance.

And thus Caine's childer follow his
path. Qualities of spirit are inherited
with blood as well as seed.

**By Caine's reckoning. Others
I know would disagree.**

Those that were nearest me
embraced the sons of Seth in
secret,
Those that were far distant
embraced them openly.

This grants us a time
frame for the events being
discussed. We are witness-
ing the first great period of
expansion of Seth's childer,
wherein they had spread so
far from the city of Enoch
that they dwelt beyond
Caine's grasp, and his childer
could transgress against his
laws in safety.



They ruled the children of Seth
as gods
Not by man's choice, but by their
own decree
And I knew that then they were
doomed,
For God would not tolerate such
practices.
Foolish children! You make light
of God's law,
But you have never seen His face.
You make light of His curse
But you have never felt His power.
He who made this world can
unmake it,
He who gave life to mankind can
also give death,
And He who cursed us to prey
upon the living
Can make for us such Hell on
earth
That all the Adversary's torments
will pale by comparison.
I saw the storm clouds gathering.
I felt the air grow cold.
And I knew the time of reckoning
had come at last.
The children of Seth prayed for
me to save them
But I could not.
My children begged for me to
save them
But I would not.
The rain began to fall, and it did
not cease.

The children of Seth made
offerings to their chosen gods,
Blood and gold and precious jewels
And all the while the wrath of the
One God
Drew up the oceans into the sky
And cast them down again, to
scour the earth of sin.
My children cried out to me in
fear, but I would not answer them.
Such is the fate you have chosen,
my get.
You were gods without wisdom,
and so your temples are destroyed,
Your flocks drowned, your altars
hung in weeds,
And all those things which were
most precious to you
Shall be reclaimed unto the earth
whence they came.
In the end you shall know such
loneliness
As can exist only in a land bereft
of life.
Perhaps then you will understand
what I truly am
And where your duty lies.

FOR HE IS NOT A TRUE GOD TO THE CHILDREN OF SETH, BUT HE IS AS ONE TO HIS OWN CHILDREN.

And like the God of the Hebrews, a harsh and merciless God.

And in the end there was only

water

My foolish children

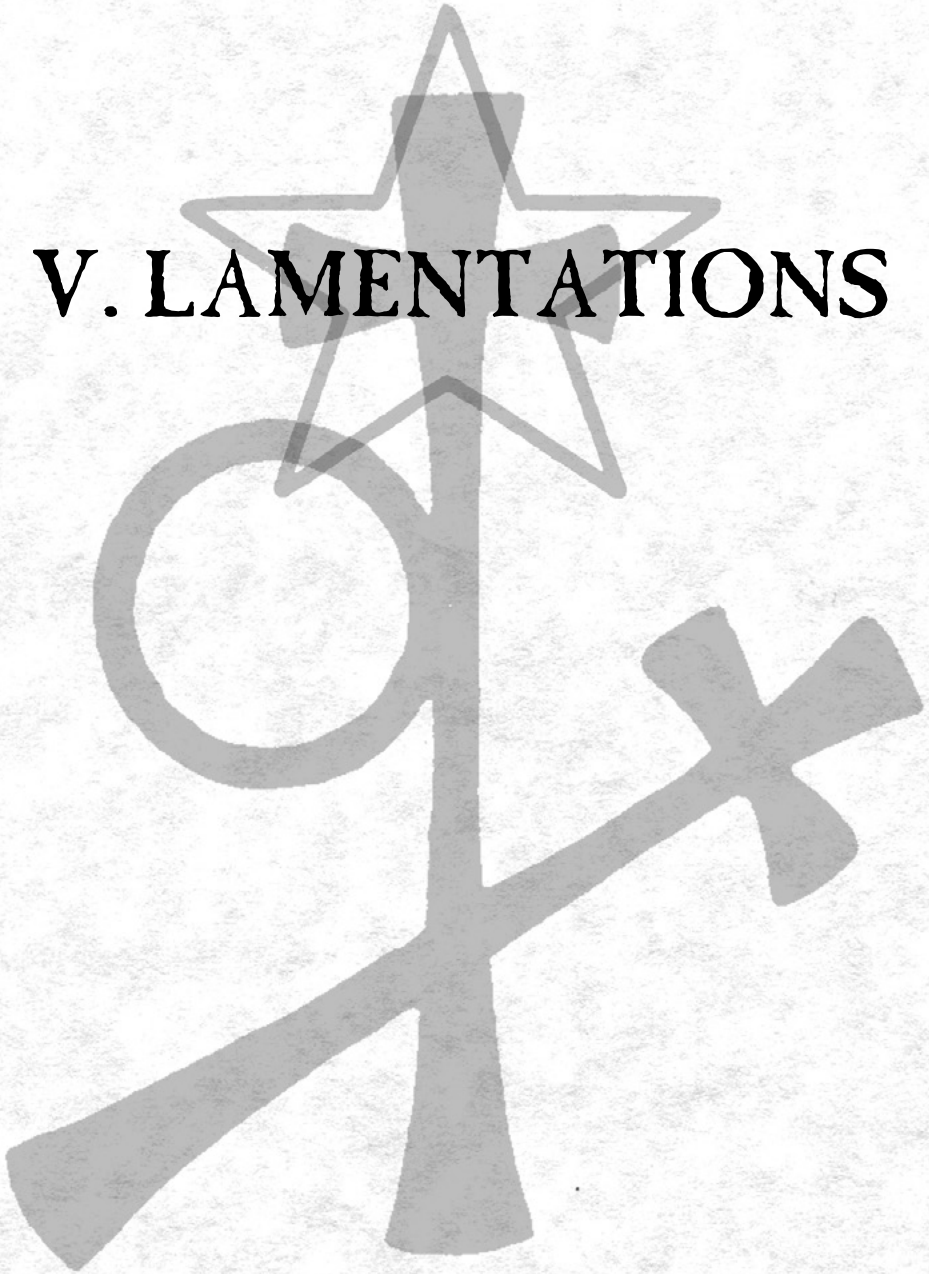
knew hunger

And loneliness

And fear

And it was good.

V. LAMENTATIONS



Sing a song of sorrow, my
brothers in Caine.
Let your lamentations be heard
in the night.
Sing of a time when water
covered all the earth
And the only shelter from the
sun
Lay deep beneath the waves.
Sing of a hunger that could
not be stilled
Save by a brother's blood
And a time of waiting that
seemed like eternity,
With no end in sight.

OTHER FRAGMENTS SKIP OVER THIS PERIOD ENTIRELY, NEVER ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF HOW CAINITES SURVIVED IN A WORLD WITHOUT EARTHLY SHELTER OR HUMAN LIFE.

The Babylonian fragment hints at it, but only to say it was a time of great suffering and trial.

That's rather an understatement, don't you think?

The Babylonian fragment is overrated.

Interesting that this verse points out the worst torment of all, that is, that they never knew if the flood was going to end.

Where is Caine in all of this?





Our father, will you not hear our
pleas?

Our father, will you not answer?

Our father, if you cannot end the
storm,

Then tell us by whose hand it
will be ended,

And when we may walk upon the
earth again.

Do they call to God or Caine? The text is unclear. Either interpretation holds possibilities.

"Father" is not capitalized. It would seem unlikely that it would be God referred to in this instance.

Or perhaps our author is just erratic.

Tell us if the children of Seth
will survive,

Their warm blood heated by the
morning sun,

Or if we are condemned to feed
upon our own,

Sire upon child, brother upon
brother,

Until all are vanished beneath the
waves.

*EVIDENTLY THEY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE THAT
NOAH AND HIS KIN HAD BEEN SAVED.*

*God was gentler with his children than Caine
was with his, for He gave them hope. The
Cainites had none.*

*That is because God determined who
among Seth's kin would survive, and
saw to their safety, while Caine left
his childer to fight it out like sharks.*

Like the predators they were.

*Like the predators we are. It is the
way of our blood.*

I saw the hand of God part the
clouds
I saw the earth rise up to greet
Him.
I saw the ark settle upon the
mountaintop
And all the wealth of life pour out
from its gates.
I knew then what our Sire must
have known
When man first settled the wil-
derness,
And I cried from joy, and I kissed
the earth,
So grateful was I for an end to the
suffering.

AN INTERESTING REMINDER THAT WHEN CAINE WAS CAST OUT OF EDEN THERE WAS NO HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH EITHER, SAVE IN THE ONE PLACE FORBIDDEN TO HIM.

And here we have knowledge of the kine's survival.



Sing a song of memory, my brothers in Caine
Sing a song of mourning for those who were lost.
My brother's flesh is mud beneath my feet
The taste of his blood is cold upon my lips.
And all the works that man shall create,
From now until the end of time,
Are but monuments to those whom our Father condemned
And whom His wrath consumed.
Let us never forget, lest we earn his rage anew.
Let us never forget, lest the waters rise again.

IT IS UNCLEAR AGAIN WHO IS MEANT BY "FATHER", CAINE OR GOD.

Deliberately unclear. I think.

The text implies that both were responsible for the flood. God by choosing to punish man's transgressions, and Caine for spawning a race of transgressors.

IT ALSO IMPLIES THAT CAINE, LIKE GOD, IS APART FROM THE RACE OF MAN. LIKE HIM, CAINE WATCHES OVER THE FLOOD WITHOUT PASSION OF ANY KIND, NOT FEARING IT, NOT RESENTING IT, SIMPLY KNOWING IT MUST BE.

THE BLURRING OF THE LINE BETWEEN CAINE AND GOD IS A REPEATED THEME IN MANY OF THESE SECTIONS.

Yes, look at the Laws. That is quite remarkable, and instructive.

But how much of that is artistic license by the writer of these fragments, and how much is genuine delusion?

Caine is eternal, he cannot die and his curses alter the fate of all mankind. Is that a delusion?

And he believes that when his children have done wrong the earth should be cleansed of them, to start anew.

A strategy that God promises never to resort to again, but Caine does not. This is the harbinger of Gehenna!

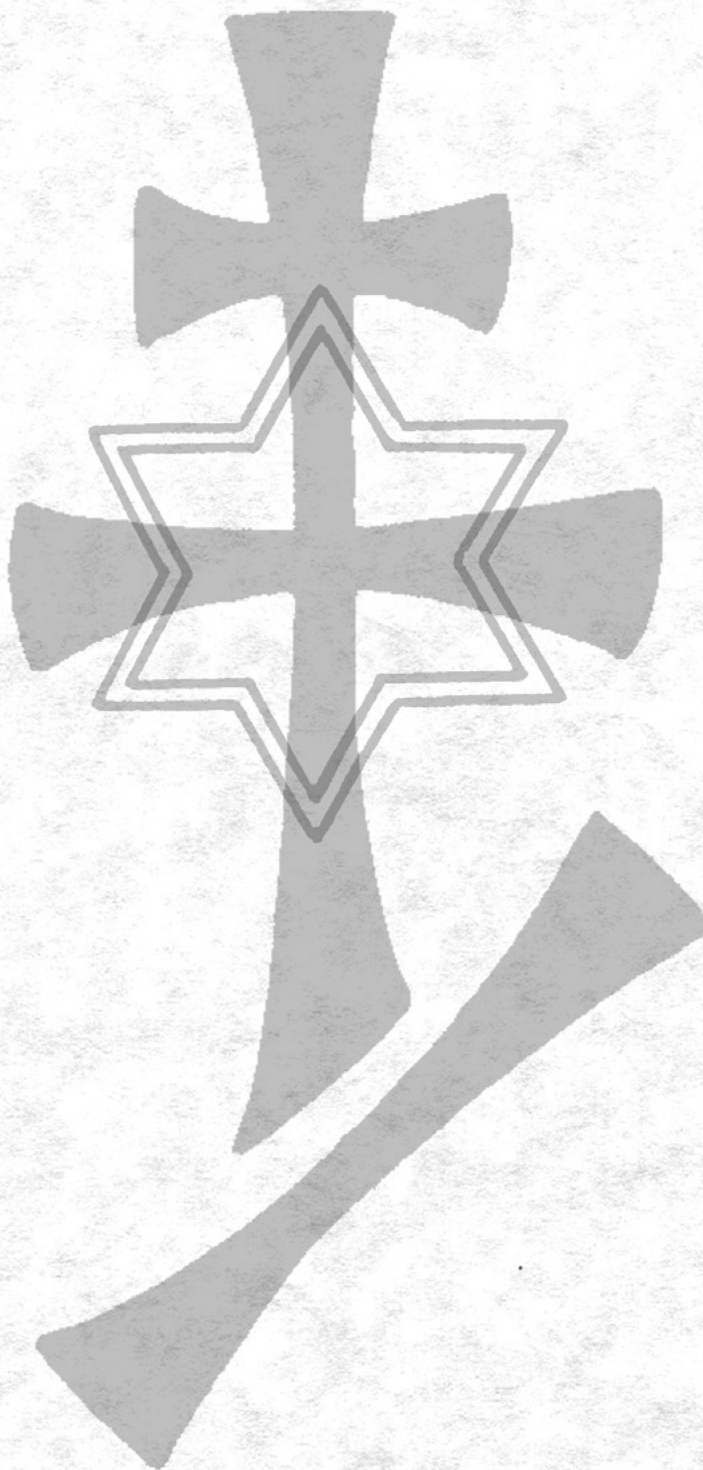
What is the saying... "There is no rainbow in the night?"

Meaning that it is not there, or meaning that it cannot be seen in the darkness?

Exactly.



VI. TRANSGRESSIONS



It came to pass in the wake of the
Flood

That the children of Caine sought
out their Sire,

But of him there was no sign to be
found.

Not in the highest mountains

Not on the driest plain

Not in the deepest forest.

"He has left us," said the First-
born.

"We must make our own way."

Yet still we knew he was watching
us

For there were many signs of it

And we feared the night when he
would return.

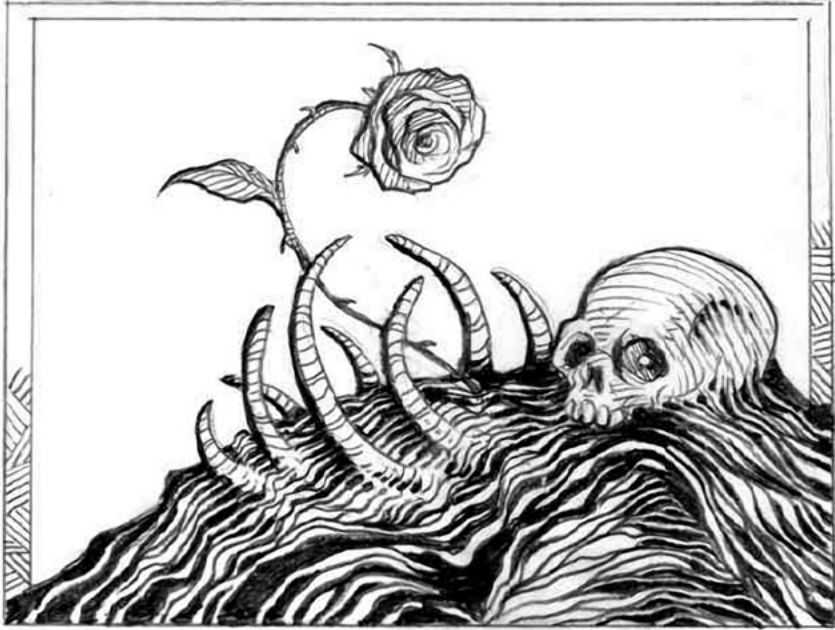
A PITY THESE SIGNS ARE NOT BETTER
DESCRIBED.

**There is a Babylonian fragment
of the text which adds some
detail here.**

Yes, but it confuses this period with the
foreshadowing of Gehenna. So one wonders
if it is recording the saga in its original form,
or borrowing from later prophecies in order to
make for a more impressive tale.

Babylonian scholarship is





It came to pass in the wake of the
Flood
That the children of Noah came
down from the mountaintop.
They planted their crops amidst
the bones of the dead
And brought forth life from the
mud of the dying.

AGAIN, WE HAVE THE REPEATED IMAGERY OF DEATH GIVING WAY TO LIFE. THE ANCIENT CYCLE OF THE YEARLY HARVEST, WITH WINTER CLEARING THE LAND FOR SPRING'S BOUNTY. HERE IS SOMETHING OF CAINE'S LEGACY AS A TILLER OF SOIL.

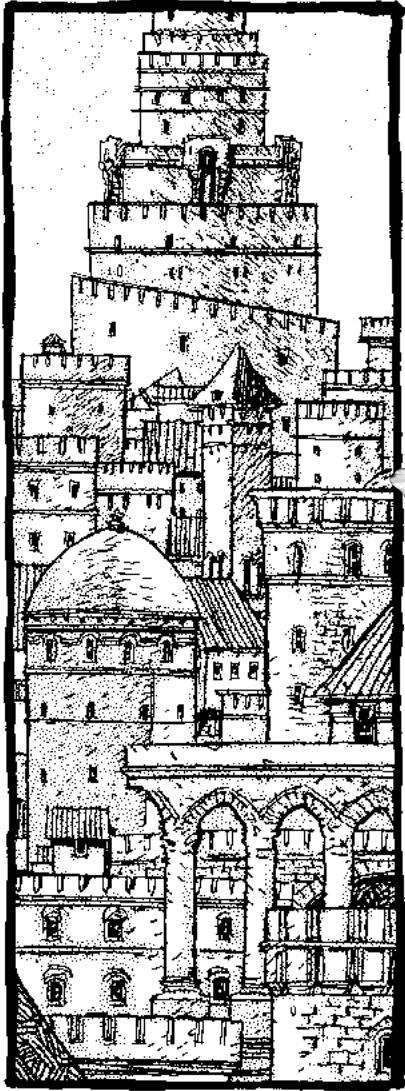
As with the floods of the Nile delta, the same waters that destroy also make the ground fertile for new life. Without their annual devastation, there would be no life at all. One pays the price willingly.

Well you have to have legends like that if you live in a flood plain.

Do not some peoples sacrifice their kings and gods, believing that the cycle of death/rebirth holds for them as well?

THE CELTS, AT LUGHNASAH

Christ
Caine



In time they spread out across
the earth,
As they had been commanded to
do.
They built great cities, with
palaces of stone,
And claimed dominion over all
living things
For such was the sovereignty that
God had promised them.

Specifically God promised Adam sovereignty over all living things. Note that this excludes the children of Cain, who were no longer counted among the living.

It came to pass, as the nights
passed and the Flood receded into
memory,
That the sons of Cain came unto
those cities.
And because we were strong, and
had magic that awed the kine,
We became the rulers of Noah's get.
As Cain had done, we took
mortals for servants.
As Cain had done, we used
mortals for lovers.
As Cain had done, we claimed
the first and the best for our own.

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE, THE FIRST AND BEST OF EACH GENERATION WERE TO BE SET ASIDE AS SACRIFICE TO THE LORD. WITH THIS PASSAGE CAINE'S CHILDREN SET THEMSELVES UP AS RIVALS TO GOD YET AGAIN.

Does that include mortals?

Yes, actually, it does. The Hebrews still observe a ritual "ransom" to claim their first-born, since rightfully he is the Lord's

THIS WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE THE SPEAKER IS OF THE SECOND GENERATION, YET LATER THAT IS CLEARLY NOT THE CASE. MOST LIKELY THIS DOCUMENT IS AN AMALGAMATION OF SEVERAL DOCUMENTS, BY SEVERAL AUTHORS

Or one miserable forger

**We made new children, the third
generation,**



To serve those who had come
before
And each sire ruled over his
own brood
As a king ruled over his
subjects.

CREATION OF FIFTH GENERATION
AND BEYOND ARE NOT MENTIONED
HERE, BUT LATER TEXTS IMPLY THERE
WERE NONE AT THAT TIME.

Or that they were beneath notice.

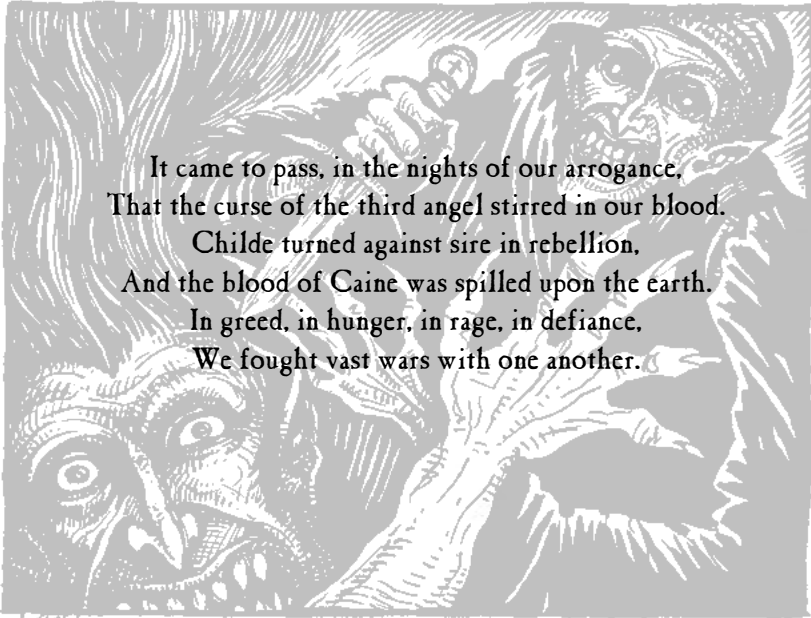
Or else all were killed in the war mentioned
later in this text. After all, they would have
been the weakest of the children of Caine, and
thus used as battle fodder by their sires.

Weakness of the blood did not exist
at this time. Each generation was as
strong as that which came before.
Still, the potential for power is
not the same as possessing it. One
doubts the earlier generations taught
the later ones well in the use of their
native abilities.

**Not wanting to create more
rivals. Some things never
change. Still, in theory there
could have been ninety gener-
ations, all as powerful as
Caine.**

*A frightening thought. Particu-
larly if any survived that
period.*

Caine alone could not be killed. That
is quite the advantage to possess in
wars of immortals.



It came to pass, in the nights of our arrogance,
That the curse of the third angel stirred in our blood.
Childe turned against sire in rebellion,
And the blood of Caine was spilled upon the earth.
In greed, in hunger, in rage, in defiance,
We fought vast wars with one another.

INCLUSION OF HUNGER IS CLEARLY A REFERENCE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE GREAT FLOOD. AFTER SUBSISTING ON CAINITE BLOOD FOR A TIME, THE CHILDREN OF CAINE WERE LOATH TO RETURN TO MORE HUMBLE FARE.

You are reading too much into it. The passage could as easily refer to squabbling over human herds.

Or a hunger for wealth, or any other commodity.

That's "avarice." You make excuses for our author.

I tend to agree with the flood hypothesis. After all, the blood of the ancients was powerful beyond imagination. Can you imagine suddenly having to give that up and return to mortal fare? It would seem weak as water by comparison.

Which implies that all the Antediluvians are addicted to the blood of their descendants, and the stronger the better. That certainly would explain some of the Gehenna legends, in which it is said they will devour all, not only the weak.

Armies of mortals marched to
our cause,
And shouted our praises, and died
in our name,
Without ever knowing why.

Lied to, mesmerized into service, or manipulated into thinking they marched for their own causes? The text is unclear.

OTHER VERSIONS SUPPORT THE LAST READING

Perhaps all three.

Would it surprise you?

Their palaces were bloodied,
Their cities were defiled,
And still that was not enough for us.
Brother fought brother for the sake
of spilled blood.

AGAIN THE MENTION OF BLOOD-HUNGER AS A MOTIVATING FORCE IN THIS GENERATION. THEY WOULD EVEN FEED ON THEIR OWN.

Again, this is a revelation?

However (look to later passages) they did not feed on their sires.

Not yet

Childe fought sire for the sake of
power.

TEMPORAL POWER, AS THE EARLY CAINITES WERE EQUAL IN POTENCY TO THEIR SIRES.

Wars of pride. It would seem to matter little who actually held sway, but it mattered greatly that one's rivals did not.

Drusilla postulates that the second generation of Cainites were the true kings of this time, with their childer acting as lords in vassalage. If so, political restlessness may have been a prime motivating factor in this conflict.

THE ANGEL'S CURSE GUARANTEED THE INEVITABLE ARRIVAL OF REASONS FOR WAR. OR WAR WITHOUT MOTIVE, IF NECESSARY.

True

War for the sake of war. The Cainite anthem.

Jihad

In the end, all the children of
Caine were destroyed.

His own childer, that is, the second generation

Enoch the first-born, Zyllah his
most beautiful,
Jabal and Adah and Tubal and
Mehujael,

And those who remained upon
the earth

Trembled in fear at the thought
of Caine's rage.

For they knew his vengeance
would be terrible.

How shall I face you, my Sire's
Sire?

Biblical text lists these as Caine's children and grandchildren

Probably dividing them up according to when they were
given the blood, to make sense of it in mortal terms

**Or perhaps they were truly of those generations
in mortal terms, and later embraced by our
Sire. Enoch may have had children before his
own embrace.**





How shall I answer your rage?
Behold, my brother is ash beneath
my feet
And the blood of Enoch, your
favorite childe,
Is fresh upon my lips.

Better to have died in the Flood
than to face you now.
Better to have perished in the fires
of war
Than to know your wrath.

Again the fixation on drinking the blood of our kind.

Rather ironic that God's Flood was responsible for this, yes?

Why would it not be? It was clearly His intention to condemn the childer of Caine to eternal conflict. If the rising of the waters served His purpose, all the better

It came to pass, in the nights of
blood and death,
That our Father returned to us.
So terrible was his countenance
That we fell to our knees at the
sight of him.

His face was as white as bleached
bone,

His eyes were as black as the abyss,
And those who could see the force
of his rage

Turned aside as he passed, lest its
power blind them.

Clear reference to uses of Auspex: our author is describing those who can see Caine's emotional radiance

"THOSE WHO COULD SEE" IMPLIES NOT ALL HAD THAT POWER THEN.

Were they unable to learn it, as many are now, or had they simply chosen not to?

Caine contained within himself all paths of power. His descendants have bloodright to only three. Had this weakening already occurred?

IF SO, THEN IT IS UNRELATED TO THE CURSE OF CLANS, BELOW.

It damned good way for Caine to weaken his childer, so that they could not stand against him.

NO ONE COULD STAND AGAINST CAINE. THE MARK OF GOD WAS STILL UPON HIM, AND HE COULD NOT BE HARMED. WHICH IS NO DOUBT WHY THEY FEARED HIM SO INTENSELY.

A move that in hindsight God no doubt regrets

Are you so sure?

"I gave you life eternal," he cried,
"And you have defiled it!
I gave you dominion over mortal
men, and you have abused it!

DOMINION OVER MORTALS IS PART OF
THE BLOODRIGHT OF CAINITES.

Can you not tell that a Ventrue
wrote this?

What shall I give you now?
What justice suits you, my errant
children,
That you would destroy the ones
who gave you life?

ETERNAL LIFE, OR SECOND LIFE, OR LIFE-
THROUGH-DEATH?

For what you have done I will
curse you all
Not merely with a handful of
words,
But each according to his nature,
Each one according to his crime.
Let my curse reign in his blood
forever,
Let it be passed down through his
embrace,
To each of his childer, and to their
childer in turn.

THE MIXED USAGE OF
CAINITE TERMS WITH
MORTAL - CHILDER AND
CHILDREN, FOR EXAMPLE -
POINTS ONCE MORE TO
MULTIPLE AUTHORS FOR
THIS SECTION.





And if the night comes when you
forget my words,
And tempt my wrath anew,
Then will I awaken the curse
within you
And it shall lay you low,
Low as the worms that crawl in the
dust.”

INTERESTING PASSAGE. IF IT REFERS ONLY TO THE CURSE OF CLANS, BELOW, THEN IT MEANS EACH CLAN WILL BE ASSAULTED IN A MANNER THAT SUITS ITS PARTICULAR WEAKNESS

On the other hand if it refers to the whole of the Curse, then it could forewarn of the weakest of our kind rising up against the strong

Let them try it. They will learn.

BEWARE THE STRENGTH OF THE MULTITUDE.

As if the young ones trust each other long enough to do that.

Condescension is a deadly weakness

As you no doubt will learn

Behold, she who thought of
nothing but her own fleeting
pleasure,
Shall by her own pleasure be
enslaved.

TORÉADOR

He who claimed innocence be-
cause the Beast ruled him
Shall be slave to the Beast forever.

GANGREL

No, Brujañ

Beast here clearly refers to the
more violent facets of the
Cainite temperament.

Damn your eyes, the lot of you.

He who took no action, but aban-
doned others to their fate,
Shall be himself outcast, and
trusted by no one.

RAVNOS

They have changed little, have they not?

She who used the wild beasts for
allies in her killing
Shall become a beast herself, so
that all men revile her.

THIS, THEN, IS GANGREL

Your powers of perception would have
shamed the Greeks

He who sought to hide his
monstrous deeds
Shall become monstrous in visage,
and doomed to dwell in offal and
darkness.

NOSFERATU

Probably the others would have hidden theirs as
well, if they could. Which implies that, like *Auspex*,
Obscuration was a discipline not possessed by all
Cainites.

Or it might simply mean that his
deeds were more monstrous than
most.

OTHER FRAGMENTS DO SUGGEST THAT.



He who reveled in the darkness
of his own foul hunger
Shall be bound to that darkness
forever, kin to the most vile,
accursed by God.

SETITES

"Foul hunger" might refer to the lust for the blood of other Cainites.

If so a rather twisted justice, since their own blood is more tempting than that of other clans.

That is merely rumor

Casted it, have we?

"Most vile" is clearly a reference to the Serpent and his kin: "Cursed art thou from among all living things. Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." Genesis 3:14

The serpent is a suitable ally for our kind, for is it not the only other creature on this earth to have been singled out by God's curse through all its generations?

Well, save for mortal kine
Exactly

He who loved death for death's
own sake
Shall wear death's countenance
for all to see to see and fear.

Behold my proudest childe,
whose own pride betrayed him.
Let the blood of the humble
sicken him, and give him no
sustenance.

If this refers to Ventruue, it rather implies that he must feed upon noble blood, yes?

Or blood which is not humble in his eyes.

PRECISELY

I knew a Ventruue who fed only on the lowliest of men.

AND CAN YOU SAY FOR CERTAIN HOW HE JUDGED THEM? PERHAPS THEY HAD WORTH IN HIS EYES.

Or on his lips.

Please spare us such comments. I do not need to travel so many miles to read such petty insults, and I will demonstrate my displeasure on those who waste my time.

This clearly was intended to affect mortals, since Cainites would hardly be repelled by a death-white visage

Not a powerful curse in those days, when Cainites lived openly, but one of the most powerful now, when we must hide our true nature a bit better

No, a very powerful curse for a clan that values scholarship, for they cannot gain easy access to the places where knowledge is kept, save by stealth and violence

It is said there is later prophecy that the Cappadocians will not survive the next great period of trial.

Yes, and I am curious as to who wrote that?

Do you believe everything you read?

Gullibility is a trait many inherit with the blood

Behold my darkest childe, who
killed with shadows.
Let the shadows veil his soul, so
that all may know his crime.

LASOMBRA

An interesting reference. Tradition states that the soul may be glimpsed in a mirror, and that creatures without a soul therefore do not reflect.

Guaranteeing a hostile response from mortal men, even if they do not know the cause

I CLASSIFY THIS WITH THE CURSES OF THE CAPPADOCIAN AND NOSFERATU, TARGETED TOWARDS THE MORTAL WORLD RATHER THAN THEIR FELLOW CAINITES.

I know of Toreador courts where the Nosferatu are not welcome for their visages alone

SHORT-LIVED COURTS, I AM SURE. HE WHO INSULTS THE NOSFERATU IS A FOOL.

A dead fool.

There are worse things in this world than death

Behold my most loveless childe,
who fed upon his brother's pain.
Let him know equal torment in
any domain but his own.

TZIMISCE

Well, they rather got around that one, didn't they? Just bring your native soil with you.

You may permit yourself to think that. It is not my place to disillusion you.

Behold my most deadly childe,
who loved murder for its own sake.
Let him be addicted to the taste
of killing, so that all may fear and
loathe him.

ASSAMITE

Yes, that is truly a fearsome curse. "You like killing, so I will make you like killing more."

I trust Caine had some other purpose to this curse. The fullness of time will no doubt reveal it.

It is best not to speak lightly of the Assassins. Even here.

Or to speak of them at all.

Behold my most foolish childe,
who claims madness for his
pleasure.
Let him become mad in truth, so
that all may fear his company.

MALKAVIAN

This is a passage I would not like the Malkavians to see. If they learn their mission before Caine is to strike fear in the hearts of other Cainites, we shall never hear the end of their nonsense.

Too late!

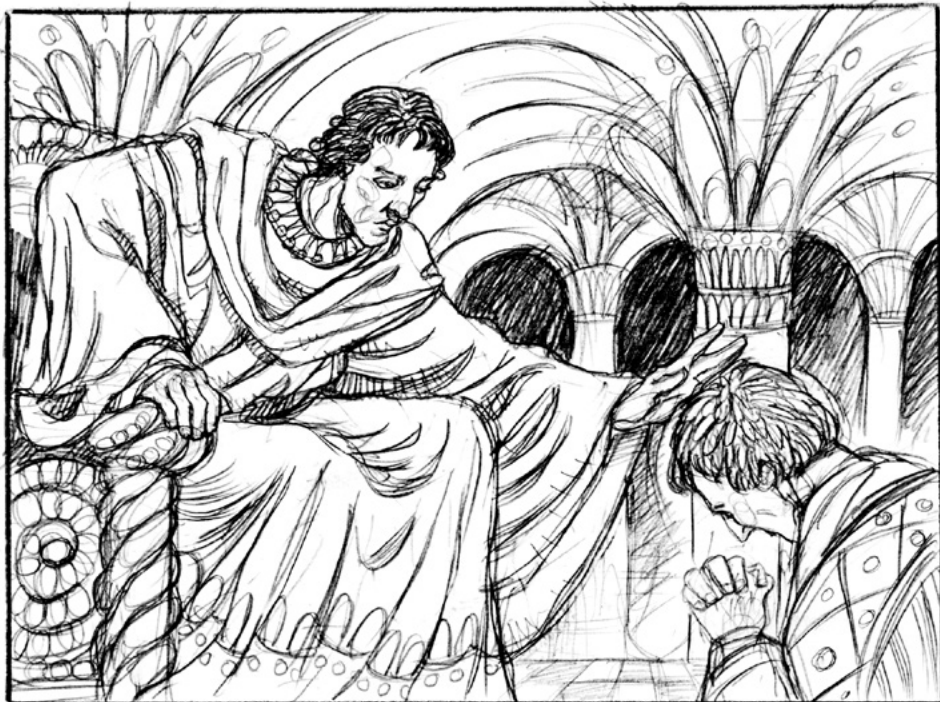
When he had spoken thus, the
night was still and hushed
And not one dared speak.
Yet there was one to whom he
had not spoken
And all eyes turned to him,
Gentle Saulot, whose ways were
of healing,
And who had sought to staunch
the flow of blood
In sire and childe alike.

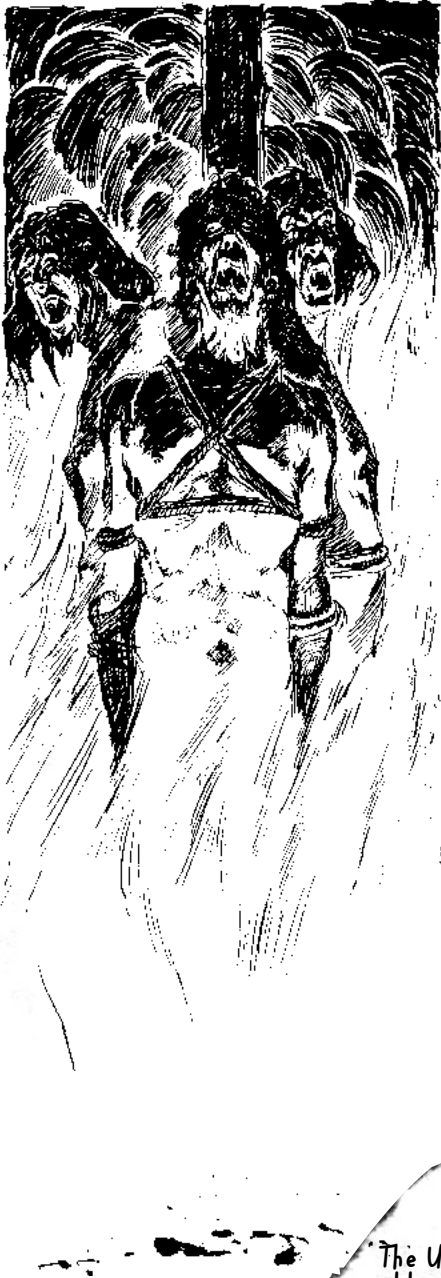
"You I shall not curse," Caine said,
"for you alone were steadfast.
You will be the guardian of
Raphael's promise,
A beacon of hope for those who
would seek redemption.
Let all my childer see what you are,
That they may know when you
walk among them.

*Perhaps the origin of the third eye, which makes the
Salubri so easy to identify.*

THAT TURNED OUT TO BE A CURSE IN THE END,
THOUGH, DIDN'T IT?

Interesting how Caine here repeats the work
of the angels who visited him, is it not?





For as long as you are on this earth, they are not truly lost. Let you and your childer be as teachers to them So that they may raise themselves up and be saved. And if the day comes when they are so blind Or so possessed by jealous rage That they would root out the one true growth From among their garden of weeds Then it will be their own souls they destroy. And if the day comes when you fail to value The gift that I have given, Then shall that same mark be turned against you And those who gaze with jealousy upon you Will surely hunt you down.”

THIS IS A FAR CRY FROM WHAT THE SALUBRI BECAME.

You are young. Tales of their devilry are quite recent. Consider this ere you judge.

And the sources somewhat suspect as well.

The Usurpers have a vested interest in turning attention elsewhere. Ask yourselves why.

I AM TOLD THAT SAULOT'S CHILDER HAVE DISAPPEARED.

It is hard to know. There were never many of them.

Fewer now

Such was his power, as we heard
his words,
That we knew ourselves doubly
damned.
Once by the Lord's rage, and now
by his.
Yet still he was not done, but said
to us all,
"Let your proud blood weaken
with each generation,
So that no childe can match its
sire's strength
Or rise up against those who came
before.
So shall you be bound to peace,
Enslaved by weakness, where force
has failed.

IT IS IRONIC THAT THE CURSE LAID UPON US
TO BIND US TO PEACE BECAME THE SINGLE
GREATEST MOTIVATION FOR CONFLICT
AMONG OUR KIND.

It might be said that with this curse Caine doomed
his own line to destruction. Before this, diablerie
was just a perversion and must have been all but
unknown. Now, as the prophecies warn, it is the
monster within our souls, waiting to devour us all.

**The angels must have laughed that
night.**

Choose your childer with care,
therefore,
And control your generations
For in time your blood may be so
weakened
That your childer will be little
stronger than mortals.

OCTAVIUS JULIANUS HAS THEORIZED
THAT THIS POINT WILL COME IN THE 10TH
GENERATION, OR 11TH AT THE LATEST

Apparently not, for I know of one Cainite who
has experimented with his own progeny, and
discovered that the curse weakens after that
point, and a full fourteen may survive. Though
the last are, as Caine warns, little stronger than
mortals

He destroyed all his experiments, I
assume? If not, someone needs to.

Perhaps as the blood of Caine grows weaker,
its power to convey our Sire's wrath does also.
If so, might not such weak Cainites also be free
of the rest of his curse?

PERHAPS SO. IT HAS ALREADY BEEN
NOTED THAT CLAN CHARACTERISTICS
ARE LESS MARKED IN THE YOUNGER
GENERATIONS.

If that is the case, then the existence of such
vampires would be doubly dangerous. For God
Himself might well be angered that his curse
had so little effect, and be stirred to wrath once
again.

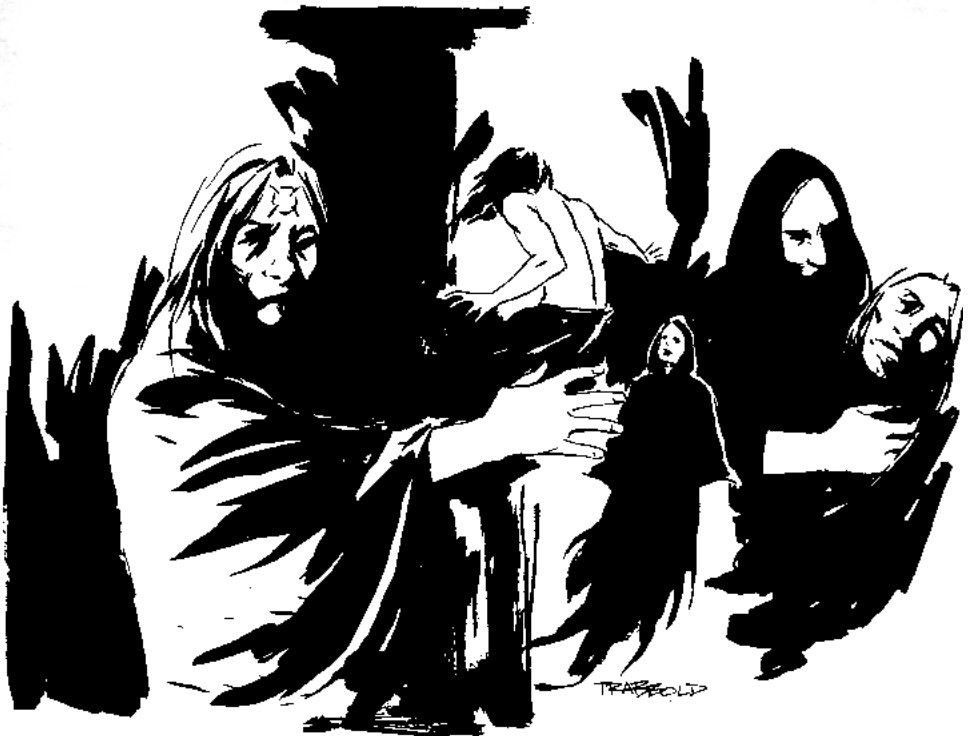
**The weak must be hunted down
and destroyed for the safety of
all.**

And when that night comes, as it
surely shall,

I shall know by such signs that
you are unworthy
And I will return again."

To curse his childer anew? To destroy
them?

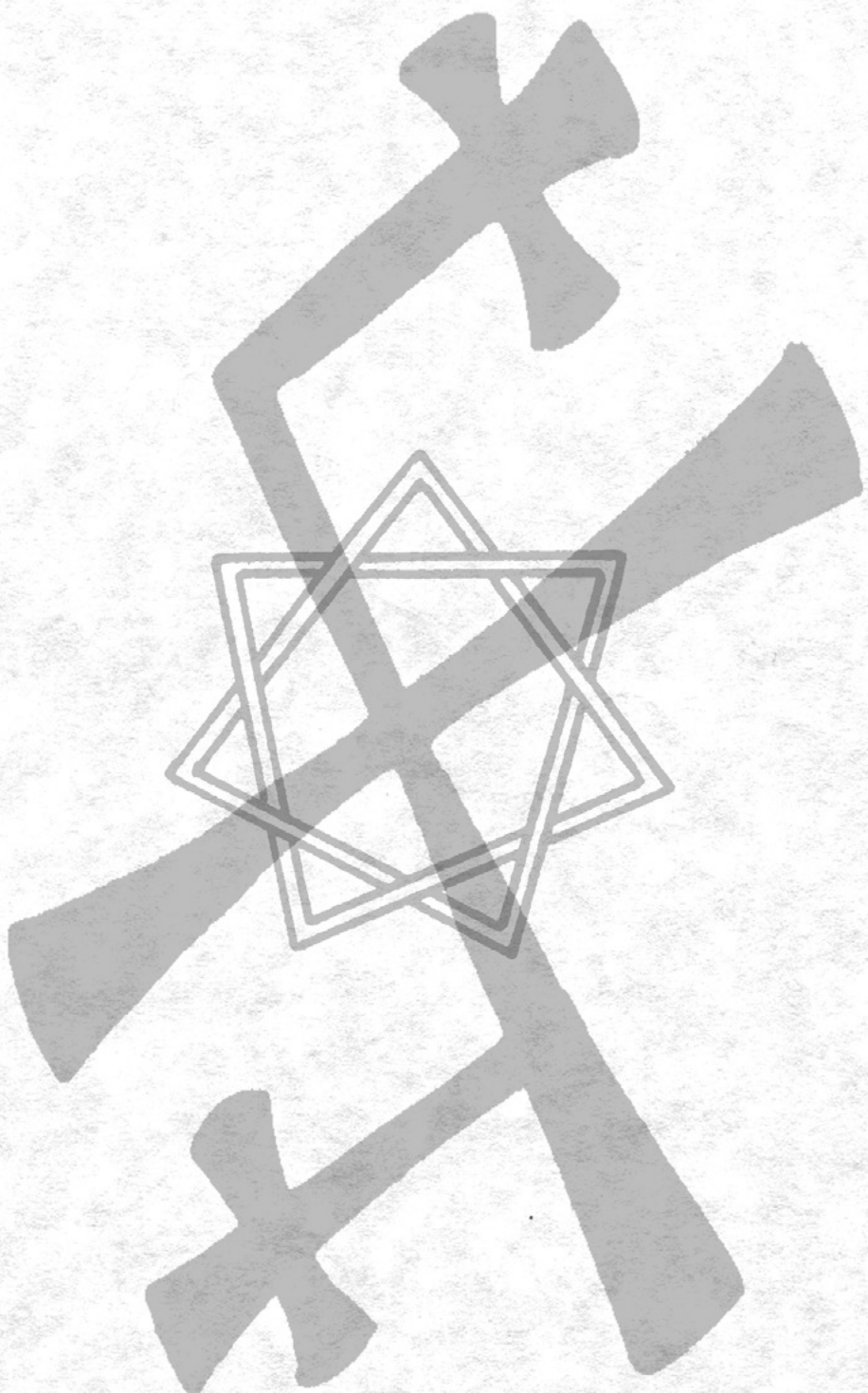
**To destroy us all if we have not
done our duty in weeding out the
weak.**



Thus spake our Sire, to punish his
errant childer.
And when he was done he wrapped
himself in darkness
And left in veiled secrecy, so that
none could follow
So that none might answer
So that none might argue
So that none might plead
And it was good.
Amen.



VII. COMMANDMENTS



I
I am Caine, your Father, who has
brought you past the gates of death,
To partake of life eternal on earth.

Cainite blood is viewed
here as a gift, not a
curse. Clearly we are
meant to thank Caine for
his blessing upon us.

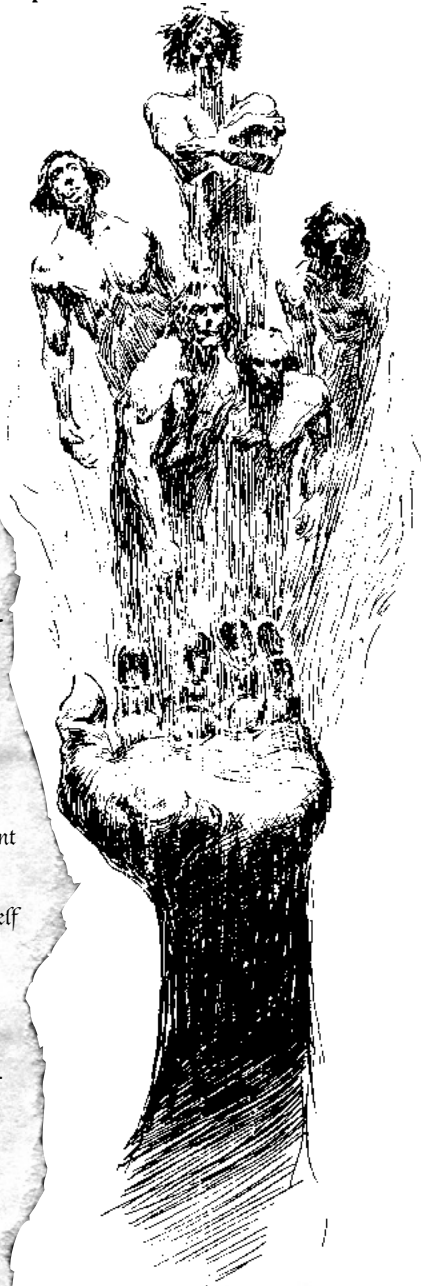
SO DO MANY VENTRUE
REGARD IT.

The Decalogue format of this
section, and in particular the
similarity of the first commandment
to God's own, once more makes it
clear that within the ranks of his
own childer, Caine considers himself
to be as God.

If not among mortals as
well...though of course he
could not say that outright.

He comes damnably
close in some of these
sections.

And not "as" God.



II

Forget not the curses that attend

my gift.

To do so is folly, and tempts the

wrath of the Almighty.

Do not call yourselves gods

before Him,

Nor demand worship from the

sons of Seth,

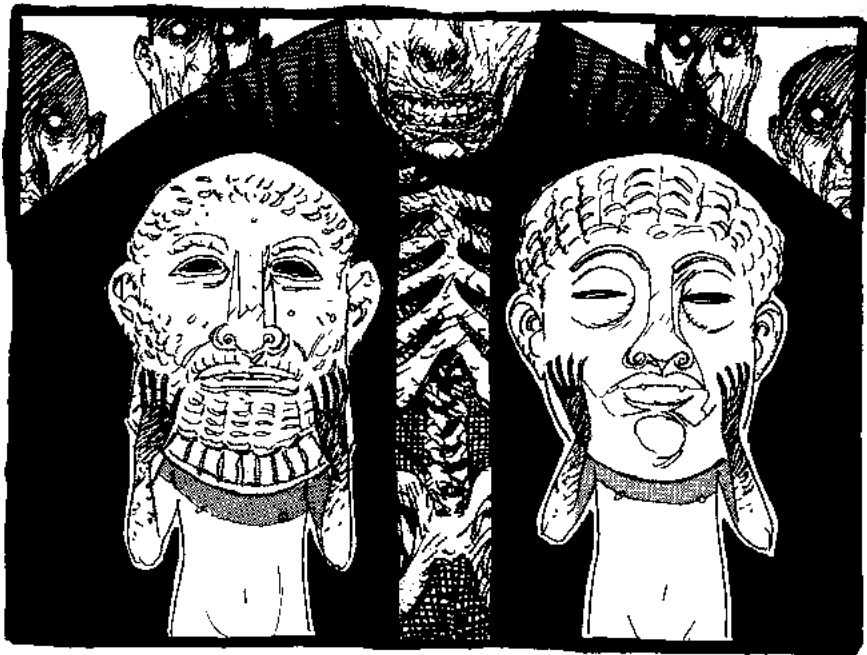
Lest you inspire the Almighty to

strike you down.

But...if the sons of Seth decide to worship you on their own, that's fine.

I suspect such logistical niceties will bear little weight with the Lord of Hosts.





III

Honor those who are closest to me in the course of generations,
For they bear my strength and are truest to my nature.
Render unto them honor, obedience and fear, as you would render unto
me,
And let the eldest be Lord among you

Lord? Or a lord? The difference is of great import. Does Caine mean to usurp God?

As I am Lord to you all.

Note that they are to rule because they bear his strength. If they are weak, they deserve to be overthrown.

BY MORE QUALIFIED ELDERS, OF COURSE.

IV

The sons of Seth to whom you give your blood shall be as children to you.

Treat them well and see that they know our traditions.

Know that as a father is held accountable for the transgressions of his child,

So shall you be held accountable for the sins of those who share your blood.

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS COMMANDMENT REFERS TO GHOULS OR CHILDREN. IF THE FORMER, THE ADMONITION TO "TREAT THEM WELL" IS ALL BUT FORGOTTEN THESE DAYS.

As ghouls are addressed in VII, I tend to think this refers to those who have tasted death and the Blood.

Note that it doesn't say anything about being released from the responsibility of accounting. Does that mean that even after a child is released, his sire is still responsible for all of his actions?

SO HAVE THE VENTRUE PRACTICED SINCE THE FIRST NIGHTS.

So they have claimed.



V

Feed not on beasts whose blood
is magic, for the taste of it brings
madness.

Feed not on the diseased, lest you
spread their sickness to all the
living.

Feed not on children, for they
will bear the mark of it forever.

Feed not on the old or the weak,
for they have no strength to spare.

Interestingly, three out of four deal more with the health and well-being of humans than of Cainites. Is that compassion?

Just concern for a healthy herd, no doubt. Spreading disease tins the herd. Feeding on the old gives one blood with no vigor. Feeding on the young weakens future generations.

There is no compassion here.



4.9008

VI

Honor the domain of one another,
For the sake of the One who has
no domain.
Give shelter to the wanderer
among you,
From the sun and other earthly
dangers,
For the sake of the One who
wanders eternally.

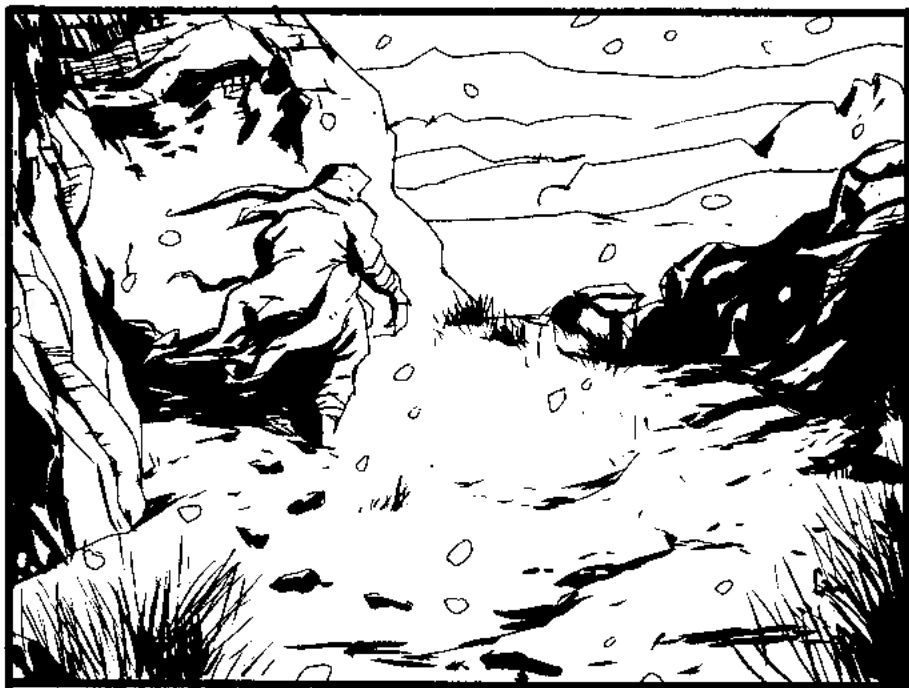
"Earthly dangers" is a very specific phrase... chosen, I am sure, to exclude the ravages of Cainite politics and other interpersonal hostilities.

In other words, if you're hiding out from the sun, any Cainite should shelter you. If you've gotten into a mess and enemies are after you, you're on your own. Eminently sensible, I'm sure.

OF COURSE, THIS WAS WRITTEN IN A DAY BEFORE SUCH RABBLE. I'M SURE CAINE DID NOT INTEND US TO BE FORCED TO LET THE CLANLESS INTO OUR HAVENS.

Are you? Why?

GHOSHUK



VII

Treasure those who guard
you, who bear your blood
as their strength.
Protect them from danger,
and cherish them as your
own,
For without them you are
naked before the sun
And helpless before your
enemies.



Well this one has been pretty much forgotten, it would seem. When was the last time you saw ghouls being treated well, much less "cherished"?

Caine's text reinforces the ethic that those who rule have a responsibility to treat their subjects well.

What an interesting world it would be, if that were actually the practice.

THERE ARE MANY VENTRUE WHO TAKE THAT ETHIC QUITE SERIOUSLY.

Dream on, little king,
reality is passing you by.

VIII

The right and life and death is
given to sire over childe
And none shall stand between
them.

So it was with God over Adam
So it was with Adam over me
And so shall it be with you over
all your progeny, unto the final
generation.





IX

Embrace not in anger, lest
your anger be given with
your blood.

Embrace not in vengeance,
lest you make your enemy
eternal.

Embrace not the young, for
they will surely bring folly
to your line.

Embrace not for love,
for the angel's curse will
corrupt all love.

And make of your gift a
foul act that will haunt you
all the rest of your
nights.

X

You shall not devour the soul of
any Cainite.

To do so is surely an offense
against my Law.

Let any Cainite who has committed
this crime be cast out from
among you.

Let him be hunted as an animal is
hunted.

Let him be slaughtered as an
animal is slaughtered.

For I have given you power and
eternal life, but the soul within
you is the

Lord's,

And He is a jealous God who
safeguards His domain against all
trespass.

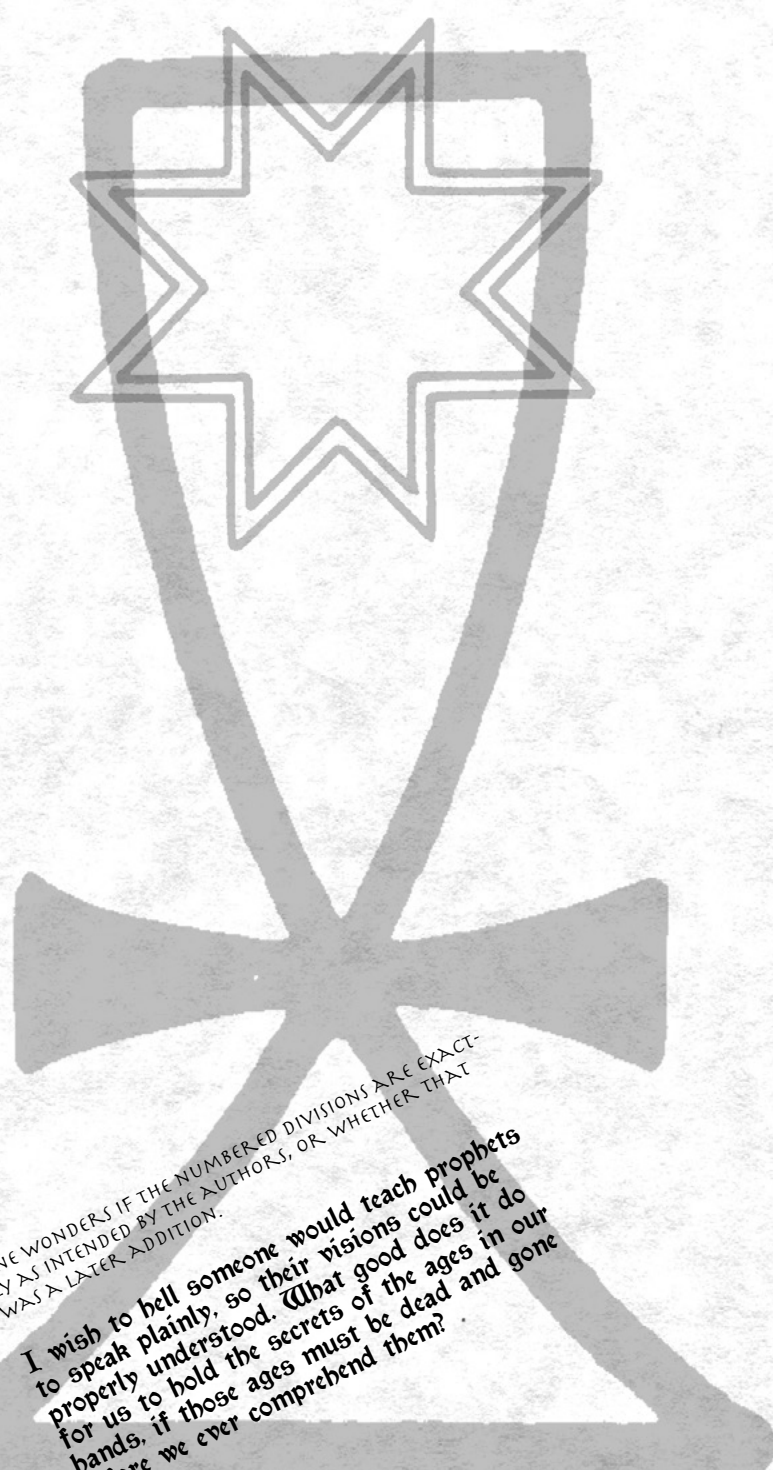
Yes, and anyone who believes that fear of God
is the source of this command please tell me
where you slumber so I may set my ghouls to
watching your dwelling places for warnings of
fire during the day. Our grandfather takes us all
for fools.

Or innocents.

Like Saulot? Such is the price of blind obedience!



VIII. PROPHECIES



ONE WONDERS IF THE NUMBERED DIVISIONS ARE EXACTLY AS INTENDED BY THE AUTHORS, OR WHETHER THAT WAS A LATER ADDITION.

I wish to tell someone would teach prophets to speak plainly, so their visions could be properly understood. What good does it do for us to hold the secrets of the ages in our hands, if those ages must be dead and gone before we ever comprehend them?



Hearken to the prophet's words of
blood-filled dreams and shortened
nights,
Of hunger risen to claim its own,
of arrogance turned to ash.

And to the warrior of lost nights,
whose sword cries out for ven-
geance.

Hearken to the word of the
scholar, for whom knowledge is
a curse,

ONCE AGAIN, WE HAVE THE PROMISE THAT
CAINE'S PROGENY WILL ULTIMATELY FALL TO
HUNGER.

Yet what does the hunger refer to: blood, souls, or even
perhaps the lust for power?

Yes.

Hearken to the words of the seer,
whose vision rends the veil of
time

IT IS RUMORED THAT AMONG THE ANCIENTS,
THERE WERE THOSE WHO COULD ALTER THE
WARP AND WEFT OF TIME.

Those are rumors only, I am sure.

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS
IS MERE POETIC IMAGERY OR A
SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THREE
DISTINCT SEERS. IF THE LATTER,
THIS IS THE ONLY HINT WE ARE
GIVEN OF THEIR NATURES.

Perhaps each section numbered below
has its origin with a different prophet.

If so, then we are either missing
one prophet, or else text has
been added. Either is a discom-
fitting thought.

And ancient horrors are but dreams
of things to come.

AGAIN, THE IMAGE OF HISTORY
REPEATED. IT IS A PREVALENT
THEME IN THIS SECTION.

Cainites must learn from their past.

**Tell that to the young
ones.**

**From them shall come warning.
From them shall come wisdom.
From them shall come slaughter.**

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, THIS SEEMS TO IM-
PLY THAT THE PROPHECIES THEMSELVES WILL
BE CAUSE FOR VIOLENCE.

Men have been known to do terrible things in the
name of fear.

Do the prophecies of Gehenna warn of the
last nights, or are they perhaps meant to
cause them?

**And if so, who first gave those
warnings to Cainites, and with what
intent?**

I

Within the get of Caine there is a
hunger stirring.
Once, twice, thrice the call to
power and death
Will rend the souls of the Thir-
teen.
This is the death without blood-
shed,
This is the grave that has no
ghosts.

Behold, one dies in silence, cries
unheard.
Children will bear his name but
not his blood.
Blissful in ignorance, savoring
blindness,
His get live out the minutes one
by one,

A REFERENCE TO DIABLERIE? THE DEVOUR-
ING OF THE SOUL ALLOWS FOR NO SPIRITUAL
FRAGMENTS TO PASS BEYOND DEATH.

The Thirteen would seem to refer to the Antediluvians. Although there were undoubtedly more of them originally, thirteen is the number of clan founders cited in earlier sections.

A curious turn of phrase. Is it meant to imply that they might have lived out time according to some other pattern, had this not occurred?

ANOTHER REFERENCE TO TIME.
COULD THESE BE THE SEERS?





While those who savor secret
knowledge tremble,
Scouring the world for each last
drop of truth.
There is no salvation in killing.
Nor do the damned ever forget.

It is rumored that Brujah was killed by his
own child.

**That is a lie spread by the
Ventru.**

But if not, it would imply that a por-
tion of this prophecy might refer to
the past, not the future.

**Prophecies of things which time
will reveal, perhaps?**

OR ELSE AN INDICATION OF HOW LONG
AGO THESE WORDS WERE WRITTEN.
WHAT IS PAST TO US MIGHT WELL HAVE
BEEN THE FUTURE THEN.

The second shall be bound by
magics
Claimed by magics, raped by
magics.

A REFERENCE TO THE USURPERS,
PERHAPS? THEY ARE THE ONLY CLAN
WITH MAGIC.

Degenerate, thieving worms!

The reference might be to human sor-
cerers

**Not if these prophecies deal with
diablerie. That demands a Cainite
offender.**



His children shall be made into demons.

LITERALLY, OR MERELY BY REPUTATION?

Both possibilities are intriguing grounds for speculation.

Hunted for evils that are not their own.

Beware the anger of the banished.

Beware the fury of the abandoned.

Ten times ten times ten they wait,

Secret in shadows, savoring hatred.

IF THE ABOVE IS A REFERENCE TO 1,000 YEARS, THEN DURING THAT TIME THEY WILL RARELY BE SEEN, IF EVER.

Or perhaps they gain the Lasombra as allies; that blood has power over shadows.

Could ten times ten times ten reference their numbers? That would make a mighty host indeed.

Preposterous!

Until the night Sheol's army
will find them

An army from Hell, literally? Or only in spirit?

Bringing them into the crimson
light,

PERHAPS A REFERENCE TO THE RED STAR
WHICH FIGURES IN OTHER PROPHECIES?

Then shall those who strayed
from their House
Be strangled in the darkness
While others huddle within its
walls,
Singing songs of magic and
impotence.

INTERESTING. IT IS SAID THE TREMERE STILL
MAINTAIN LINKS TO THEIR MORTAL HOUSE.

That would seem to be a perilous tactic
for both mortals and Cainites, and a
weakness that might yet be exploited.

Where is your pride now, you
ancient thieves?

What good are lies against cold
steel?

These are the soldiers who know
no silence,

These are the ones who dance with
the Beast.

POSSIBLY ONE OF THE CLANS WHOSE SKILLS
INCLUDE WAKENING THE BEAST WITHIN

Or those who have made their peace with the Beast.
It is said a few lineages have managed that.

Or simply those who revel in their
Cainite nature?





And in that time when
princes fall
And high priests rise up
among the damned

THE SETITES HAVE A PRIESTHOOD,
YES? PERHAPS THIS REFERS TO
THEIR COMING ASCENDANCY
AMONG OUR KIND.

Or at least their coming out
into the open. The "soldiers
who know no silence?"

Then shall ancient crimes be
answered,
Then shall the theft of souls
be avenged.
The third shall be betrayed
by his own,
Treasured childe, knowledge-
seeker,
Drunk on dreams of death
and shadows.

SEVERAL CLANS MIGHT FIT
THIS DESCRIPTION. THE
CAPPADOCIANS AND THE
ASSAMITES COME TO MIND.

That would be a fitting
end for the Assassins,
devoured themselves as
they devour others.

One can only hope

Where is your victory, drinker of
souls?
Your name will be cursed to the
end of time
And in the land where ghosts
gather
The dead shall devour hatred for
strength
And put on flesh to walk the earth
again.



IT IS SAID THAT SOME LOST
SOULS ACTUALLY FEED ON
HATRED, FEAR AND THE
LIKE.

**If so, our kind
brews them enough
to sustain an army.**



A TERRITORIAL DISPUTE
AMONG THE DEAD, OR REF-
ERENCE TO THE ORIGINAL
CRIME?

It would seem the latter. Woe
betide those who raise the ire
of the unquiet dead, for their
hatred is undying.

*What is sown shall be
reaped. The whirlwind
shall devour them.*

Then shall your infamy have its
answer.

Then shall your victims scour the
world,

Hungering for the taste of ven-
geance.

Then shall the souls whom you
have abused

Gather about them bloody dark-
ness

And strangle all invaders.

Fear the dead, for their
vengeance shall be manifest.
Fear the spirit without a body,
for he shall find a voice.
Fear the armies too long
forgotten, for they do not
forget.





II

Five hundred years will seven be
joined
Ruling in defiance of angels
Seeking unity among the damned.
Beware the Cainite who so forgets
his Curse

THAT IS, THE CURSE CONDEMNING
CAINE'S BLOOD TO PERPETUAL DISCORD

Seeking to defy that curse is to defy the will of
God.

As to dream of mortal harmony.

That is, the harmony Cainites enjoyed in their mortal days?

**I think not. Here we see evidence of lost
Carthage!**

YES, EVIDENCE THAT IT WAS DOOMED FROM THE
START

For all his cities shall become ash
And all his dreams shall be
scattered to the winds.
Behold, a new enemy attends him
now
The childer of his arrogance:
Twice dead, thrice born, hungry for
death.

A CURIOUS TURN OF PHRASE. ARE THESE OF CAINE'S BLOOD, OR SOME DIFFERENT MANNER OF CREATURE ENTIRELY?

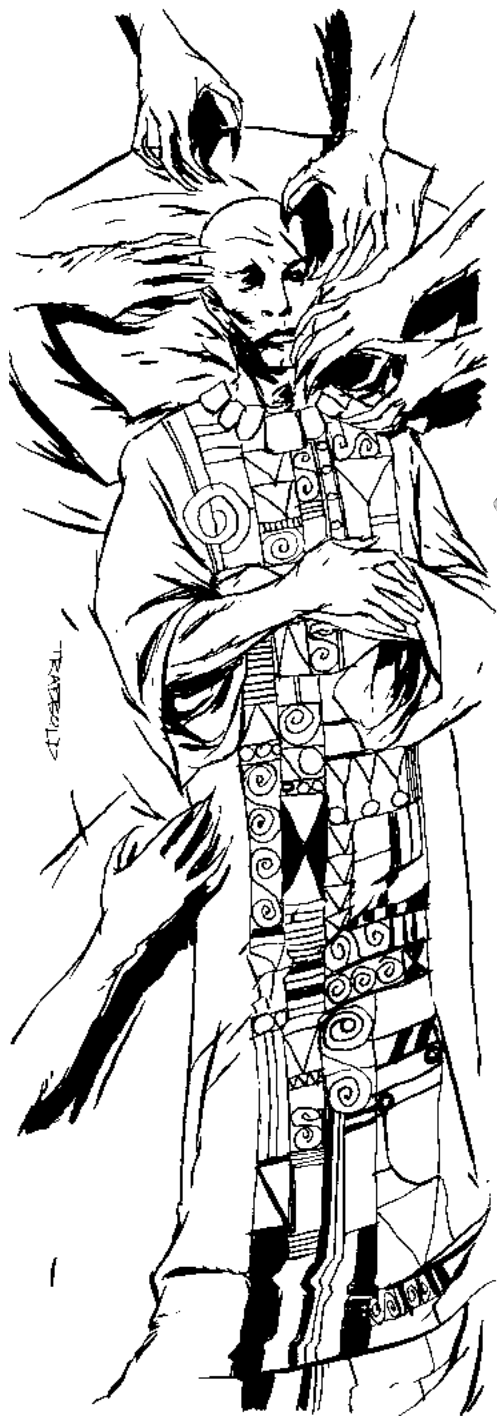
The repeated references to diablerie imply the former.

It might be said that Cainites are killed once, born twice...once to the mortal world and once to ours...but that leaves one cycle unaccounted for.

PERHAPS THIS REFERS TO SOME RITUAL REENACTMENT OF DEATH AND REBIRTH.

Or to some transformation beyond the Embrace, into a form neither mortal nor Cainite.

What more dangerous enemy could there be, than one who comes from our own roots?



Nurtured on devoured souls,

Savoring war as sustenance.

IN SHORT, AN ARMY OF DIABLER-
ISTS, IT WOULD SEEM

So let the ancients fear the

young,

And gird themselves about

with laws

In weakling efforts to defend

their souls.

You cannot save yourselves, you

foolish kings.

You cannot stop the coming
storm, or even halve its rage.
Mere words cannot repress the
hatred
Which courses through a thousand
youngling hearts
Nor quiet the temptation of your
blood

Thick with its age and strength,
and cold with power.
The ancient war, all but forgotten,
stirs afresh,
Your blood is the new battlefield
And even those whom you have
cursed to save yourselves
Shall break free of their bonds at
last



And feast upon your souls in
ecstasy.
Behold, allies abandon their
station
And twisted bloodines clamor
from without,
Threatening precarious unity.
Then shall that black crown which
is so reviled

THE MARK OF DIABLERIE AS
REVEALED TO VAMPIRIC SENSES

**Thank you for stating the
obvious**

Perhaps that is what we are
intended to think?





Sit on the most beloved brow
And the harmony of seven be rent
at last
Not from without its proud walls,
but from within.
Thus do the angels triumph over
all.

DIABLERIE IS THE TOOL OF THE
ANGEL'S CURSE, FOR IT TEMPTS
US AWAY FROM WHAT UNITY WE
MIGHT OTHERWISE ACHIEVE.

Ironically that is Caine's own fault,
for was it not his own curse that
made each generation weaker than
the one before?

**Even Caine serves God's
ultimate purpose.**

Isaiah 45:7 — I form the light and create
darkness, I make peace and create evil; I
am the Lord that doeth all these things.

III

In the lands of the rising sun an enemy stirs

THAT IS, IN THE LANDS TO THE EAST

Is that meant to indicate cardinal direction, or merely to state that the enemy's source is in some distant and unknown place? The Pentateuch uses similar phrases in several cases to indicate the latter.

**Born of death, soul-divided,
Ancient beyond the count of
days.**

THESE ARE OF COURSE ALL PHRASES
THAT MIGHT BE APPLIED TO CAINITES.

A similarity acknowledged in the following passage

**Cousin to Caine but not his
kin
Spirit to Caine but not his
ally.
Across the plains his childer
will come**

THE EASTERN STEPPES, PERHAPS?

Again, you state the obvious

Sun-hardened, flesh-hungry.

A most ominous description. Against an enemy with his own power and an additional tolerance for sunlight, a Cainite would have little defense.

*There are said to be some very
strange creatures in the east.
No one has survived to bring
back clear description*





Hatred burning bright for night's
invaders.

A TERRITORIAL DISPUTE?

If so, the Cainites are the first offenders.

There are already those who have
travelled as far east as the great sea.

*Yes, and how few have re-
turned? Be wary of that
journey. Its price is high.*

Across the sea of the west his
childer will come
Into the lands of Caine, invaders
themselves.

PRESUMABLY A SEPARATE INCIDENT.

Fighting in parts, flesh re-
vealed, demon-spawned,
Elders without generation,
childer without weakness.

IN OTHER WORDS, FREE OF THE
CURSE CAINE LAID UPON HIS
CHILDER.

That was in the third generation. Perhaps
these creatures are descendants of the sec-
ond, lost survivors of the Great Flood.

That would explain both the simi-
larity between our peoples and the
veiled references to kinship.

PERHAPS THIS IS WHAT WE OUR-
SELVES MIGHT HAVE BECOME, IF NOT
FOR CAINE'S RAGE?

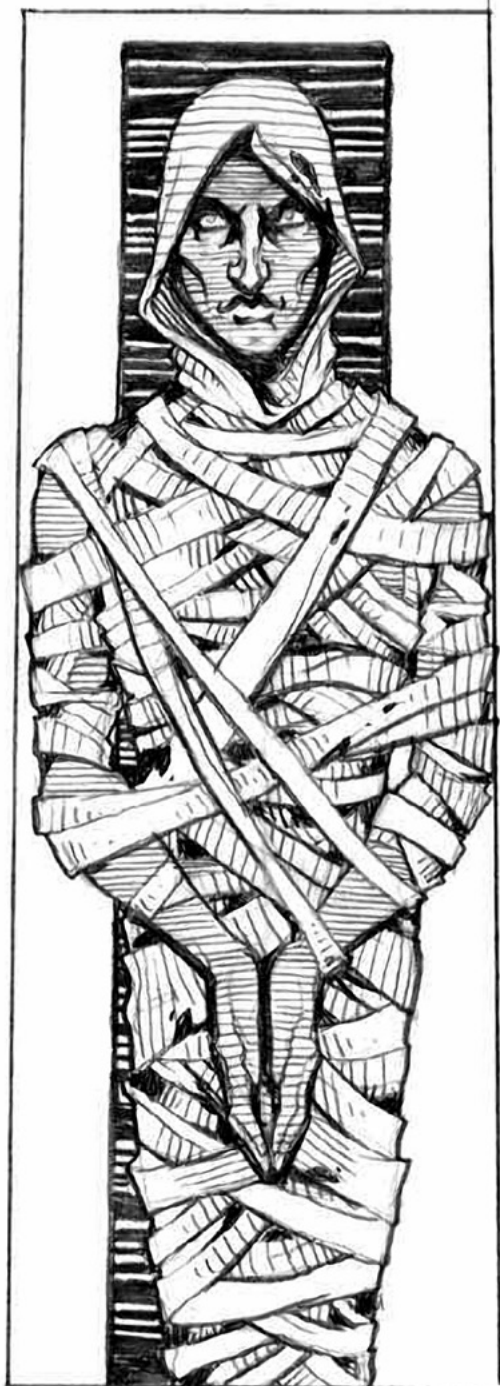
That does not explain the
reference to sunlight, which is
far more ancient.

How shall you fight them,
you children of Caine?
Behold, in the east their pow-
er draws nigh
And such is the force of the
congregation
That all the night is consumed
in day.
A false sun sets the earth afire.
Dust fills the sky, and a hot
wind blows,
Searing all flesh to ash.

ALL CAINITE FLESH, OR THAT OF ALL LIV-
ING CREATURES?

Either way, this prophesies a horrifying
apocalypse. I pray it is apocryphal, rather than
eschatological





Where is the Wanderer
now, third-born of
Caine?

THIRD CHILDE OF CAINE, OR
ONE OF THE THIRD GENERA-
TION?

He is called Wanderer.
That is best applied to
the Gangrel, yes?

Or the Ravnos.

Turned to dust, and lost to
imagining.

Where are his childer, in
whom death echoes?

Turned to madness, and lost to
all.

Such is the cost of triumph.

THIS IMPLIES A DELIBER-
ATE ACT OF MURDER.

And a successful
one

Who would wreak such
utter destruction, and
for what purpose?

IV

I strayed into the Well of
Night, where visions gather,
And there I saw a star set in
the heavens
Scarlet as blood, clear as
souls

THE RED STAR, SPOKEN OF IN
OTHER GEHENNA PROPHECIES AS
A SIGN OF THE END DAYS.

Bright as the forbidden sun.

IN OTHER WORDS, VISIBLE
DURING THE DAY, PERHAPS?

As was the Star of Bethlehem.
There is precedent.

By its side a crimson
moon rose,
The sabered crescent,
razor-sharp
Goddess of the Hunt
arrayed in blood.

THIS IS THE FIRST REFERENCE TO
A PAGAN DEITY IN THE TEXT, AND
AGAIN IT POINTS TO THIS SECTION
HAVING AN ORIGIN INDEPENDENT OF
THE OTHERS.

Or perhaps it is merely meant to
accommodate the prophetic
metaphor that follows.

**Or perhaps it not a pagan
reference at all, but a veiled
reference to Lilith.**

THERE ARE PROPHECIES THAT SAY
SHE WILL RISE UP AND DO BATTLE
WITH CAINE IN THE FINAL DAYS.

God placed a sign upon the head of Caine
that would prevent any man from harming
him...



Arrows lay before her, sharp and ready,
Poisoned with curses, tempered in holy wrath,
And as I watched, she let them fly.
One was called Hunger, and where it struck
It was as if the drowning waters rose again.

The waters of the flood, which
destroyed all human life.

Caine's childer turned on upon their own
Childe feeding upon sire
Ally upon ally, friend upon friend.



Another was called Madness, and

as it struck the earth

I saw each gripped in fever

And those things in their blood

which were darkest

Gained in power a thousandfold

Until all human nature was

drowned

Each by his own curse, each

washed clean in his own blood.

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THIS REFERS TO THE INDIVIDUAL DARKNESS IN EACH CAINITE RISING UP, OR A CURSE SHARED BY HOUSES OF CAINITES...PERHAPS CLANS?

Perhaps in the end days the curses which Caine laid upon his children will become more marked, so that each clan is overcome by its own inherent flaws.



V.K. 056

I saw her draw an arrow then,
Weakness by name,
And where it struck the earth the
blood of Caine was thinned
Until it ran like water in a stream.

THAT IS, FLOWING LIKE MORTAL BLOOD,
AS OPPOSED TO THE MORE POTENT BASIS
OF CAINITE EXISTENCE.

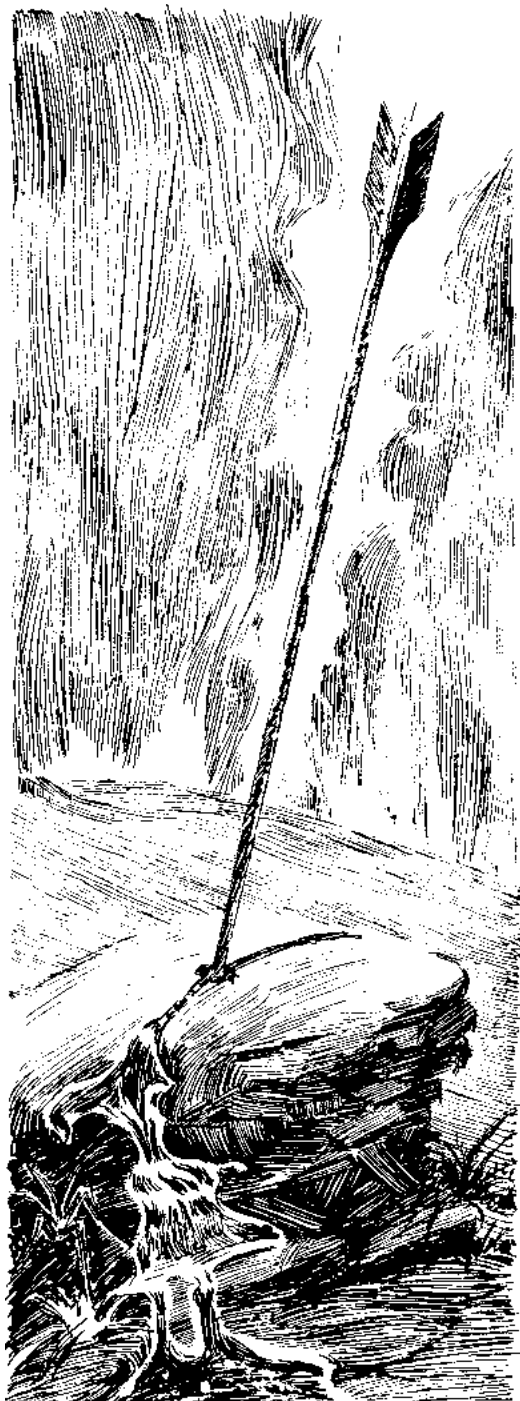
Or perhaps just a great deal of
it. We are reading a warning of
slaughter!

Or of weakness. Do not other
prophecies speak of a time of
thin blood?

And all the curses laid
upon it
Were as whispers, barely
heard.

THIS CLEARLY REFERS TO
INDIVIDUALS OF WEAK BLOOD,
AND NOT TO THE CLANS AS A
WHOLE.

Perhaps. I stand uncon-
vinced.





Then did the dead lay with the
living
Bringing forth young in defiance of
Nature
Doubly damned, neither living nor
dead,
Cursed with the hunger of the
ancients

For blood, or for
diablerie?

And all the fears of dying flesh.
Oh Caine, where is your glory
now?
Your children scabble in the dust
And tears of water stain their
cheeks.
Where is your pride, where is
your strength,
Where is the wrath that should
endure?
Behold, the clanless are made
kings
The weak turn upon their sires
And all the dreams you cherished
most
Are drowned in blood before her
gaze.

Bastards scurry to find their sires.
Laying claim to names abandoned,

THOSE WHO HAVE DISOWNED THEIR
CLANS OR WHO HAVE BEEN CAST OUT
WILL RETURN.

It is said some clanless know their true blood,
but have chosen to deny it.

A strategy that will cost them
dearly in the end.

Seeking shelter among the
damned.
Behold, their fate is bitterness,
their portion ashes
And when the deluge comes they
shall be cast out
Or used as shields against her fury

AGAIN THE IMAGE OF A FEMALE
ANTAGONIST. WHO IS THIS HUNTRRESS?

ANOTHER REFERENCE TO THE HUNTR-
RESS IMAGE OF THIS SECTION?

Or perhaps to Lilith. There are
those who believe that in the last
days her followers will rise up and
claim their birthright.

Perhaps the two are one and
the same.



Or else as food, their corpses strewn
Upon the ramparts of the final war
A Babel of flesh to rot in the sunlight.



I saw her draw an arrow last, its
shaft as white as snow
And on its glistening flank was one
word: Hope.

Interesting. This parallels the story of the Temptation, in which the last angel offered Cain hope of redemption.

Yes, and how few have achieved it?

Some have. All may.

Our fate is our own to make.
These fairy tales benefit no one,
and they confuse many.

Then...why are you here?

But where it fell the darkness
swallowed it over
And none could see it from the
earth, nor mark its path.
Behold, childer of the first
damned soul,

REFERENCE TO CAINE, OR ADAM?

If Cain, this marks the Fall as a lesser crime.

Behold the pride of Cainites!

Your savior is lost among the
thousands,
And all your searching cannot find
the secret mark
Upon her flesh, or know her name.
Behold, the Lady's crescent guards
the heavens

ANOTHER REFERENCE TO THE GODDESS
OF THE MOON, CITED ABOVE

Or again to Lilith.

If so, this passage would seem to imply that the salvation of Cainites would be in her hands.

You cannot possibly countenance such blasphemy!
If it is true, it cannot be blasphemy.



And down below, inscribed in
flesh,
Marks the only path that leads
from doom.
Was this a gift of God, this Hope,
Or mockery of demons?
All the angels watch you now
And in your search, their judg-
ment too is rendered.

Does this imply that perhaps the angels will keep this
savior from being found?

Or that the search is being watched for other
things.

PERHAPS OUR KIND WILL BE JUDGED ON THE
MANNER OF THE SEARCHING. AFTER ALL, ONE
MIGHT SEARCH FOR A GIVEN MORTAL SECRET-
LY, OR ABUSE MANY IN THE ACT. PERHAPS THIS
IS JUST A FINAL TEST, AND CAINE'S BLOOD IS TO
RECEIVE ITS ULTIMATE JUDGMENT ACCORD-
ING TO HOW IT HANDLES ITSELF IN THOSE LAST
NIGHTS.

**That implies that salvation is still
possible, does it not?**

Yes, it rather does. But at what cost?



WE ARE DAMNED!



IX. Proverbs

Let your family be as a tree:
prune the weakest branches that
the whole may be strong.

**Doing away with the crooked ones
won't hurt either.**

A curious philosophy. Knotted wood
often has surprising strength and beauty.

If you wish a secret known, tell it
to a Toreador

These three things a Prince should
never do, if he means to prosper:
Anger the Brujah
Embarrass the Ventrue
Ignore the Nosferatu

A brilliant philosophy!

FOR ONCE WE ARE IN AGREEMENT

for once

In the darkness there is no rainbow.

Perhaps the most chilling of the proverbs,
this reminds us that the promise which God
made not to destroy the earth again was never
made to Cainites, nor has Caine himself
made any similar promise.

**Does the rainbow truly not
exist in the darkness, or are
we incapable of seeing it?**

The best way to defeat an enemy
is to outlive him.

SO DO MANY VENTRUE REGARD IT.

When the elders leave, it is time to
fear.

And when the young ones leave, it
is time to take advantage of their
inexperience.

If you must see love embraced,
let it be done by your sire.

SCITHIAS ADDS TO THIS THAT IF YOU
WISH A MORTAL TO JOIN YOU IN
CAINE'S DARKNESS, THEN ASK YOUR
SIRE TO EMBRACE HER, FOR OTHER-
WISE YOU DAMN HER, NOT ONLY TO
GOD'S CURSE, BUT TO CAINE'S AS WELL.

Embracing out of love? Foolishness. All that
we do is repeat the failures of our ancestors,
on an ever-diminishing scale.

Nothing is more dangerous than a
bored elder.

**Save those whom the elders
regard as ancient.**

Every Cainite is a pawn on some-
one's chessboard.

Even Caine himself?

**What game do you suggest
God plays, then?**

Do not gamble with the Beast,
for in the end it always wins.

Give a Ventrue a crown and he
will be content.

Though he who mistakes a
crown for true power may
sometimes find himself sadly
disappointed.

That, I suspect, is the point.

When you think you understand
an elder's motivation,
That is the time to start worrying.

And of course, the reverse holds
true as well.

To find the greatest darkness,
seek within.

Never underestimate women.
Once Embraced, they make the
fiercest predators.

And not before? If Caine wrote
this, he is a fool.

And he learned nothing from Lilith.

The safest way to assuage the
rage of an elder is to amuse him.

When the Ravnos leave, check
your purse.

When the Ventrue leave, check
your lands and servants.

When the Brujah leave, check
your defenses.

Very true!

VERY PREDICTABLE

Only a Nosferatu truly under-
stands what beauty is.

Fear your enemy most when he is
silent.

OR AS IT IS ALSO SAID, THE TIME
WHEN YOU DECIDE TO DO A
DANGEROUS THING, THAT IS WHEN
YOU MUST STOP DISCUSSING IT WITH
OTHERS.

The more generous a Setite
appears, the more wary you should
be of accepting his gifts.

The same holds for any of our
kind, I think. Who here trusts
the Tremere who willingly parts
with his magics, the Ventrue who
happily grants lands and titles, or
the dinner invitation from the
voivode?

We are as our sires made us, and their
sires before them.

God pity us all.

• • •
Esteemed Uncle • •

I write this as a separate letter, as it is for your eyes alone.

In doing so I take a risk of seeming overly presumptuous, for it is surely not the place of a mere ghoul to comment upon the plans of his betters, or to pretend to any true knowledge of Cainite politics. Yet write it I must, for my soul cannot find peace until I do.

My Uncle, I have come to understand that our family line has great ambition. I have even heard whispers of a day when the clan may be ours to rule, and its former masters will fall by the wayside. I could not help but think about that as I read these prophecies. I cannot help now but remember the warning that the third clan to fall would be "betrayed by its own."

It seems to me that by reading this book we have become part of its prophecy. For if there is another within Cappadocian ranks who would destroy the clan, then it is our duty to seek him out. And if not...then this is clear proof of our own rise to power, and of the dangers inherent in such an act.

My Uncle, the warning of the text is clear. The spirits of the dead will rise up against the one who commits such an act, and will ultimately destroy him. Therefore any such attempt must be accompanied by exhaustive knowledge of the lands of the dead, as well as magic that can bind angry spirits. The welfare of our family will surely depend upon how well we have mastered such arts.

I will say no more on this matter, but leave it to the elders of our family to seek further enlightenment from the text itself. For surely, used correctly, it can be a most powerful tool.

Your Most Devoted Nephew

Niccolò



From the Abbot Malachai, of the Brotherhood of Shadows
To Augustus Giovanni, of the Cappadocian Order

It is with deep regret that I send to you the personal effects of your nephew, Niccolo Giovanni, and with them a collection of ashes. The latter were found in his chamber beside his bed, and are presumed to be his.

During his short stay with us, Niccolo demonstrated great promise. He was a true scholar, one who did not hesitate to seek after knowledge even when the search grew perilous. He was also young, and like so many of the young, did not comprehend the full scope of that which he courted.

It is said sometimes, the moth that flies too close to the fire finds illumination, but is quickly consumed.

Our condolences to you in your loss. We will remember your nephew in our prayers.



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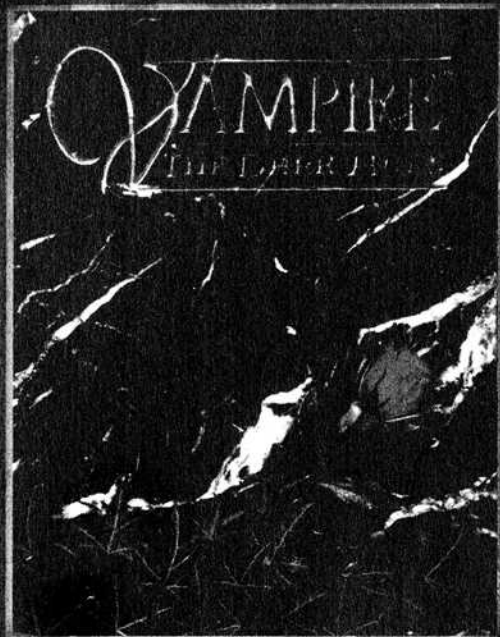


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