

WARHAMMER
FANTASY ROLEPLAY

NIGHT'S DARK MASTERS



A GUIDE TO VAMPIRES





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NIGHT'S DARK MASTERS

A GUIDE TO VAMPIRES

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INTRODUCTION

The people of the Old World do not care that there is no myth more enduring than the Vampire. They do not care that versions of the Vampire legend can be found amongst every race of their world. They do not care that Vampires are potent symbols of the fear of death, disease, predators, their dark sides, or of the night. They do not give a hoot about any of that old rubbish usually filling the introductions of scholarly works about Vampires. To them, Vampires are two things: deeply terrifying monsters

of darkest nightmare and everything they've ever wanted to be. Yes, Vampires are hideous abominations that no sane person would want to join, but they are also powerful beyond imagination, effectively immortal, and resistant to the depredations of Chaos. They represent the freedom and fearlessness that defies a strict and terrifying world; they have everything Old Worlders want, but to get it, Vampires have sacrificed the one thing Old Worlders value above all else—their souls.

— WELCOME TO NIGHT'S DARK MASTERS —

The world of Warhammer is full of a great many villainous forces—it is a world of grim and perilous adventure after all. From the hordes of Greenskins, the herds of Beastmen, cultists and warriors of Chaos, to the shuffling mobs of Undead, there are plenty of villains for Player Characters to face, fight, and defeat. Most of these opponents are faceless threats. They may have a little character—some flavourful elements tossed in to make the encounter memorable—but overall, after you've slain your fifteenth Mutant, they all seem to run together. However, not all monsters fit this mould. Some have a greater presence by their very nature. Some pull the strings, embroiling themselves in convoluted plots and sinister machinations to achieve their ambitions. They are the shadowy figures behind countless intrigues. They are Vampires.

Possessed of great power, majesty enough to rival the Emperor, and ambition enough for a dozen living men, Vampires are the movers and shakers of the Undead. They have the designs and plans to work their evil and carve a name for themselves in the annals of this dangerous world. They have incredible abilities, can dominate with a glance, break bones with ease, have mastery over the creatures of the night, and possess countless other talents that set them apart from the twitching, shrieking crowds of animated corpses.

Of course, this doesn't mean they are invulnerable. Vampires are cursed. They are vulnerable to ordinary things. They can be cut, they bleed, and they die. Silver is anathema to them, as is the purifying rays of the wholesome sun. To make matters worse, those arrayed against them know the ins and outs of fighting Vampires, and so these Undead masters must be vigilant in their defence, always watchful of those overreaching mortals with some misguided sense of justice who seek to destroy the Undead.

Whilst fraught with enemies at all sides, Vampires have learned much over the great ages of their existence. They are masters of necromancy, employ vast networks of spies and informants, and have accumulated great and profane treasures. With these resources, coupled with their own advantages, they truly deserve their title, *Night's Dark Masters*.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

The nine chapters that follow this introduction are a delicious feast, providing all of the information you will need to craft adventures involving Vampires.

Chapter I: The Prey

The first bite looses a dizzying rush of blood. This chapter looks at what the people of the Old World believe about Vampires, from myths and legends to the rumours of the woefully uninformed. It also

*"And where have you ridden, my fine noble lord?
Where have you ridden tonight?"
"I have been out a-hunting, my fine pretty lass
For the dogs hunt best in the moonlight
Yea the dogs hunt best in the moonlight."
"And where were you hunting, my fine noble lord?
Where were you hunting tonight?"
"I went to the ruin, my fine pretty lass
For the wolves hide there from the moonlight
Yea the wolves hide there from the moonlight."
"And whom did you hunt with, my fine noble lord?
Whom did you hunt with tonight?"
"I rode with a stranger, my fine pretty lass
Whose eyes flashed red in the moonlight
Yea his eyes flashed red in the moonlight."
"And what did you hunt for, my fine noble lord?
What did you hunt for tonight?"
"Twas my blood he hunted, my fine pretty lass
And I was his prey in the moonlight
A fine bit of prey in the moonlight."
"And why have you come here, my fine noble lord
Why have you come here tonight?"
"I have come for my feasting, my fine pretty lass
For you look so fair in the moonlight
And I'll have your blood in the moonlight."
And her life it fled with the moonlight
And she lay 'pon the Black Dragon Crest.*

—MARCELLAN THE MAGNIFICENT, MINSTREL OF L'ANGUILLE



introduces those dedicated to turning the tables, the Vampire hunters who become predators rather than prey.

Chapter II: A Mockery of Life

We peel off the skin and get our first glimpse of what lies beneath it. This chapter summarises scholarly works that could be read by Old Worlders who seek to learn the truth of the matter concerning Vampires. It contains text from the infamous and dubious *Vermin Alley Diary*, as well as *Vampires and Their Kin* by Maximillian Sommers of the Raven Knights—a primer for members of that order intended to teach them the basics of Vampire lore.

Chapter III: Chronicles of the Undying

The snaking trail of entrails unravels easily. This chapter is a history of the Vampires from their earliest days to the present, including a timeline of key events.

Chapter IV: The Nature of the Beast

The organs are scooped out to be examined. This section describes the characteristics of the Vampires, both physical and mental. It also seeks to explain their motives.

Chapter V: The Masters of the Night

Finally, we get to the heart of the matter. This chapter describes the various kinds of Vampires found in the Old World with specific examples of some of the most famous bloodlines. Individual histories and machinations, as well as descriptions of notable members and lairs, are included.

Chapter VI: Native Soil

Ah, the sweet meat of muscle and sinew. A description of the province of Sylvania, its history and people, with adventure hooks for your campaigns and a complete map.

Chapter VII: Rules of the Night

The crunchy bones of the dish. This chapter discusses new careers, the creation of unique Vampires and their minions, and the dark arts they practise. The marrow is sucked from them all.

Chapter VIII: The Vampire Campaign

The brain, a tart and juicy treat. This thoughtful chapter explains how to base a campaign around the Undead and how best to use them as villains.

Chapter IX: Creatures of the Night

The meal concludes with a sample of creatures commonly found in the service of Vampires.



DISASTER AT DUSKANY FALLS

When he first learned the locals believed a Vampire lived in a cave behind a waterfall, Reinhart laughed. Everyone knew Vampires couldn't stand the touch of running water. The cleansing power would wash them away. Yet, every report, every story, every eyewitness pointed to the same place, a cleft where the frigid snowmelt from the World's Edge Mountains spilled down from the heights to gather in a deep pool. One local claimed to see the beast burst through the curtain of water and land in the churning water easily a score of feet below. The local ran away, of course, but not before the beast fixed on him with crimson eyes that promised a slow and painful death.

Petra didn't believe it either. He claimed the thing must be a Beastman of some sort, for there was no way the Vampire could survive in such an environment. Reinhart trusted Petra. The man had been fighting Undead for a dozen years or more, and it was his experience that enabled their small team to destroy six of these horrors so far.

The Hawthorn Band, as they called themselves, had existed in one form or another for years. Petra, a pale, wiry man with dark circles under his eyes and a seeming inability to smile, founded the Hawthorn Band and used the motley bunch to aid him in his crusade against the masters of the night. Where other men flee such fiends, Petra sought them out and to great success.

Sure, they had their fair share of casualties. Many who had joined up fell to the cruel claws and teeth of the Vampires and their minions, and a few others were locked away, too mad from their experiences to be allowed to walk as free men. Now, there were four of them aside from their leader. Reinhart, now a veteran, had personally trained one of them, a youthful scamp named Edgar, who was too eager by half. The other two were a pair of dour Dwarfs, hired for their expertise in fighting underground and their vast knowledge of Undead.

The team came to this nameless village two days ago, invited by a desperate mayor who wrung his hands and mopped his brow. He claimed people all over his worthless community were falling ill, stricken by some maddening disease. When interviewing the toothless peasants, the Hawthorn Band gathered a bit more rubbish, including the thing in the falls. It was hard work sifting the lies from the facts, and sometimes you make mistakes. You just hope that such mistakes aren't lethal ones.

So it was the Hawthorn Band agreed to search this cave and put to rest whatever thing that had laired there. No one enjoyed slaying Beastmen: their eyes were too Human, and they mewled like babes when hurt. But the village paid in gold, and the duty to them and the Empire was clear. The thing needed to die. And the sickness that infested the village? Petra advised the folks to burn their stores of rye and start anew. He's probably right. He always is.

Mannslieb hung heavy in the sky, pregnant with light. It revealed the pool, the falls, and the rocks all around it. A small stream, fed by the pool, wandered away, passing through a clump of trees where it picked up speed and bubbled on its way to the village. The sound was intense, the rush of water spilling from some height shrouded in the mist sent up by its passage. The light was good enough that no torches were needed, but Petra advised lighting the storm lanterns, since it would be dark inside the cave. The Dwarfs dropped to the ground to ready their bellybows, pulling back the rope that would, when fired, send a stake through the middle of whatever confronted the team. Reinhart pulled his sword and ran his fingers along the silver edge he paid good clanks to have applied to the blade, whilst Edgar wiped his runny nose on the back of his hand as he looked for a way down to the pool. Petra grimly started climbing down, descending with practiced hands and feet until he stood on the mossy rocks, staring up at the fall and presumably the cave behind it.

It was a stupid mistake, exploring the place by night. Petra had advised against it, but everyone wanted to be on their way as quick as they could. It was clear this was no Vampire. A few bolts to the chest of whatever it was and they would claim their reward and head back to Nuln for some well-deserved rest. Fools. Every one of them.

Edgar followed, slipping a couple of times, but he finally reached the bottom, albeit with a damp leg from an accidental plunge into the water. Reinhart followed, whilst the Dwarfs covered the trio from above. When Reinhart reached the bottom, Petra pointed to the waterfall. "There, you see that. It's a bit darker than the rest." Reinhart saw nothing. The moonlight covered everything in strange light, and shadows appeared where they shouldn't; things seemed to move when they couldn't.

"Hey, lookit this!" whispered Edgar. He plucked something from the pool. It was covered in slime. A rock, perhaps. Petra moved to the young man. Edgar wiped off the dark mud and ooze. It was a skull.

Something moved above. A sharp report of a triggered crossbow bolt sounded followed by the splintering clatter of the quarrel striking stone.

A grunt. A sigh. The wet sound of entrails splattering on the ground.

Silence.

It was over before Reinhart could even turn his head to where the Dwarfs had waited. There was no sign of them. Petra abandoned Edgar and the skull to stand next to Reinhart. The two watched the night, tense and afraid. Where were the Dwarfs?

A scream sounded behind them, cut short by a horrible gurgling sound and accompanied by a spray of hot blood. As Reinhart and Petra turned, they just caught a glimpse of poor Edgar, sinking beneath the troubled waters of the pool. Even in the moonlight, they could see the water darken as whatever had him tore him to pieces. Moments later, an ear, an eye, and a foot bobbed to the surface, only to dart away, picked up by the current of the stream.

Three of them, down in seconds. This was no Beastman. Petra hissed, "Go!", and the two fled up the way they came, Reinhart leading, Petra following. The lead man risked a glance over his shoulder, and to his horror, he spied some great and horrible thing rising out from the centre of the darkened pool. It had an oblong head, crimson eyes, and a massive mouth filled with needle-sharp teeth. It was nude, but it had no shame. Its grey skin clung to its bones, and if it had a gender, it had long withered away. Reinhart climbed faster with Petra screaming, "Run! Run! Ru...", but then his voice fell silent too.

Reinhart never looked back. Never questioned why the thing in the pool let him escape. But he vowed, in the pale light of the dawn, that he would never hunt Vampires again. The mere thought sent him into helpless giggles as the priestess of Shallya helped him into the cart that would carry him to mandrake dreams and the comfort of a small room far from the bloody waters of Duskany Falls.



Sea of Ulthar

The Wasteland

Middenheim

Couronne

L'Anguille

Mariebunrg

Gisoreux

Mousillon

Siege of Aldorf

Aldorf

Bordeleaux

Skaven lair

Parravon

Mulh

Grey Fields

Brionne

Bretonnia

Grey Mountains

Loren Forest

Avenelles

Jorbie Marshes

Miragliano

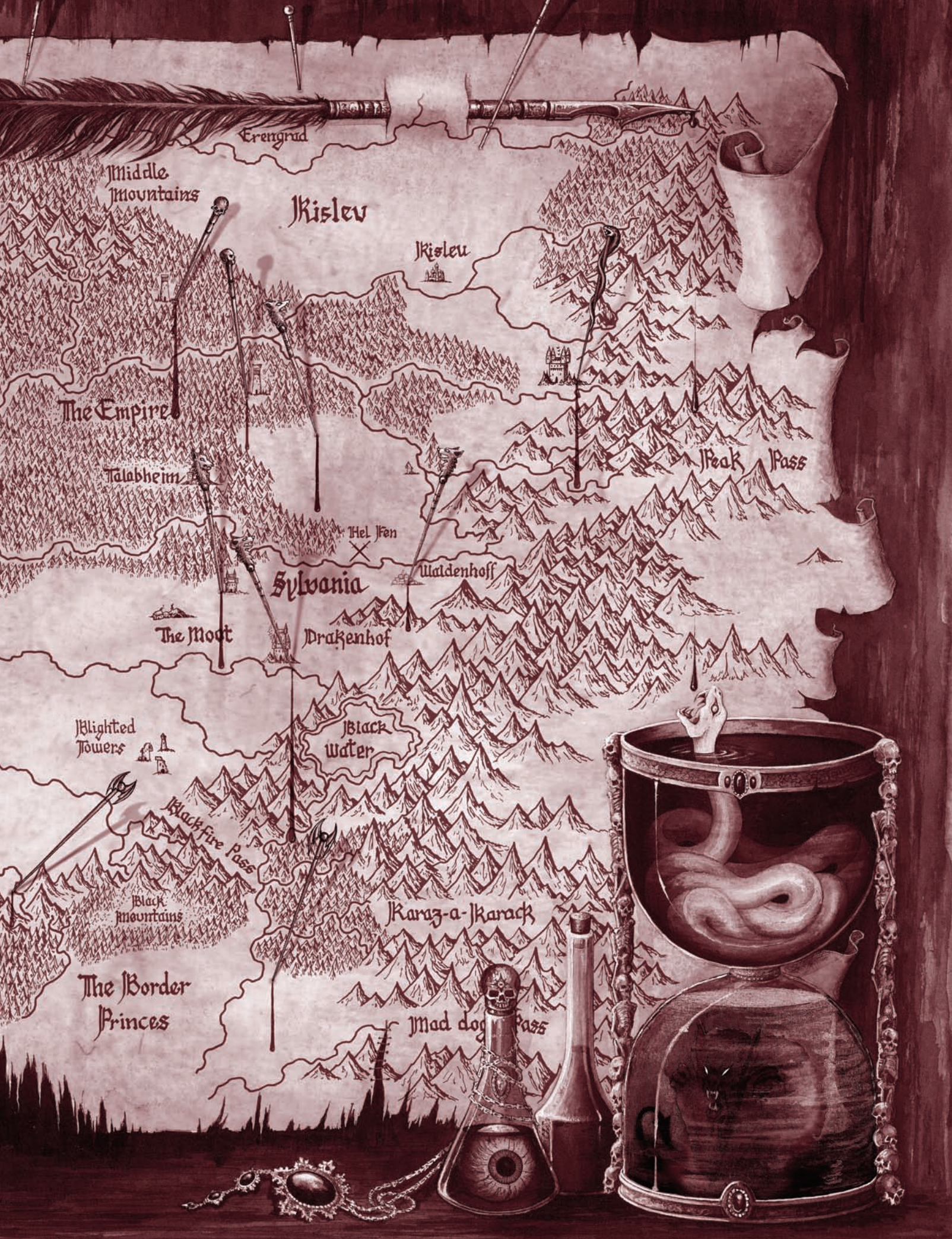
The Vaults

Tilea

Valmian Strigoi

Blood Dragon

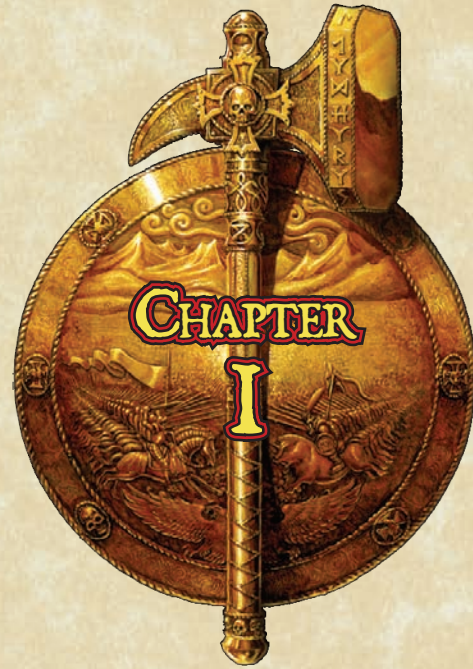
Necromancer



THE PREY

"I do not care what our prey think of us. Do you consider what opinion meat has of you?"

—CONSTANTIN VON CARSTEIN



Vampires are creatures of nightmare, unnatural, undying monsters to be feared and abhorred. Horror stories about them have been popular in the Empire since the Wars of the Vampire Counts. There are those who, paying too much heed to the romantic poems of Dvorjetski and Sierck,

see them as beautiful mysteries, and those who, through madness or lust for power, see them as Gods worthy of worship, but these exceptions are few compared to those who know only fear at these stories of predators who stalk the night.

— THE ORIGINS OF VAMPIRES —

Many myths purport to explain where Vampires come from, but it is unlikely any of them contain the truth of the matter. One cautionary fable has it that if you spend too long admiring your own reflection, then that reflection will murder you and take your place. These reflections then become Vampires, which, if true, would explain why they cast no reflections.

Some myths claim that Vampires are the product of incorrectly performed burial rituals. Those buried without the sanctification of a priest of Morr and, strangely, those who are buried with their name sewn into their clothing are said by some to rise as Vampires.

Myths in Ostland tell of a kind of Vampire called a Doppelsauger who were breastfed too long as infants and, upon death, return from the grave to suckle on Humans till they drain them of blood.

Other tales have it that Vampirism is caused by consuming blood or tomb dirt during life, whilst still others claim that those that commit suicide or those who died in tragic circumstances rise as Vampires if their connection to life is strong enough.

THE WHITE LADY

This story is told in many forms, differing from province to province. It has even been adapted for the stage in Altdorf. It illustrates the common folk's misunderstandings about the Undead and their origins. The story's Vampire is sometimes described more like a Banshee. To the typical Old Worlder, differences between the Undead are meaningless; an abomination is an abomination. The focus of the story is clearly not on the specifics of the curse afflicting the White Lady but the moral of the story, which is essentially "Don't fall in love above or below your station."

The story begins with two young lovers, a miller's daughter and a noble gentleman, whose forbidden love is kept secret. The secret is revealed, however, when the miller's daughter falls pregnant. Her father, a strict Sigmarite, abandons her as a harlot. Her lover is persuaded to abandon her as well, his shamed family finding a more suitable bride for him amongst the nobility. The miller's daughter is forced to live in the woods, where she gives birth to her child under the stars.

By chance, she sees her noble love riding through the woods one day and runs to him, holding out his son. But the noble



does not halt his horse, and she and the child are trampled to death beneath its hooves.

In the months that follow, some of the locals begin telling stories of a sad, ghostly white lady seen in the woods, wailing and calling out for her child. They are not taken seriously, even when the miller is found drowned in a pond on the edge of those woods.

A year later, the noble's new bride gives birth. Her screams are heard throughout the manor, and her husband runs to her aid to find both her and the midwife dead in a room drenched with blood. Standing over them is the White Lady, his dead lover, returned from the grave and holding his newborn child. In the stage adaptation, her Vampiric nature is made clear as she utters these closing lines:

*"Though from my grave I have been forced,
Still I love the lover I have lost.
So the sweet juice of his heart I will drink,
Then 'neath my vengeance his young shall sink."*

LEONORA AND LEONHART

These are a sequence of legends told in the Empire that deal with the tragic love of a fair maiden named Leonora and a soldier named Leonhart. Leonhart goes away to fight in a terrible war in the east, and on the day the soldiers return, Leonora races to the square to see them troop past, but her love is not amongst them. Believing him dead, she returns home and weeps till nightfall. After dark, she hears a knock at her door, and there stands Leonhart. His uniform is torn

and bloody, but he is alive. "Do you still love me?" he asks, and she replies she does. "Then let us ride away and be married immediately," he says.

They ride through the night to an old temple, and inside they find a host of wedding guests, all spirits of the dead. Leonora drinks from a cup of Leonhart's blood, and they kiss. Thus, she becomes a Vampire like him. Their joyous wedding is interrupted by a figure all in black who drives the guests back into their graves. Leonora and Leonhart escape on his steed, but the figure, who is Morr, gives chase.

There are many epic tales of Leonora and Leonhart's travels across the world to escape the clutches of Morr. These stories are considered heretical by the cult of Morr, not only for their misrepresentation of their God, but for the romantic image of Vampires the stories perpetuate, which some sentimental Old Worlders are foolish enough to believe.

IN THE REALM OF THE NIGHT QUEEN

Although this story does not state it explicitly, some scholars consider it to be a veiled Vampire tale. It is a Bretonnian ballad about two honourable knights who travel to the World's Edge Mountains to visit the palace of the legendary Night Queen. After the two knights travel for many weeks, facing various tests of their chivalry along the way, they arrive at a castle made entirely of silver. Here the Night Queen lives, a woman of unearthly beauty who is cursed to never see the sun until a truly virtuous man takes her as his bride. Naturally, the two knights fall in love with the Night Queen, and both seek her hand in marriage. Jealousy tears them

apart, and the two knights duel for her favour, resulting in both their deaths and leaving the Night Queen trapped in her castle to suffer from her supernatural curse for all time.

COMMON VIEW

"Yes, they drink blood. Yes, some of them have been known to command armies of the damned. But at least they're not Elves."

—NILS VALERA, AGITATOR

"I've heard Vampires travel around so easily because those filthy gypsies, the Strigany, shelter them in their caravans. I wouldn't put it past 'em. They're horse thieves and adulterers, and they all reek of cabbage. It's a short walk from there to harbouring the Undead if you ask me."

—AZMUS PACHER, HORSE TRADER

"The dead walk fast."

—SYLVANIAN PROVERB

"They tell you that you need to be bit by one of the Undead to become a Vampire, but of course, that's a lie. All you need to do to be a Vampire is drink blood. The rest comes natural, once you've drunk enough. It must be an awful lot, though. I've drank ever so much, and I'm still only a little pale."

—ESSIG STREICHELN, SHOP GIRL

"Vampires? I remember when the count brought one to the ball...just waltzed in with her on his arm as if it was nothing special and spent the rest of the night showing her off. Caused a dreadful scandal, but what can you do? Chap's the count after all. Terrible party that was, six of her ladyship's corgis savaged Sir Morley's plum tree as he tried to coax some bees out of the asparagus beds with his flute. I remember it well."

—SIR RAGSLAN VON TRIMBERG, IMPERIAL NOBLE

"Mama says that if I keep sucking my thumb, then Bat-backed Pieter will come and bite it off and suck out all my blood."

—WILLI, AGE FIVE

The common folk are so misinformed about Vampires it would be comical if it weren't a matter of life and death.

The basic ideas—they are immortal, drink blood, and have very specific weaknesses—are common knowledge, but specific details, such as exactly what those weaknesses are, are open to debate. Common folk also have no idea how many Vampires exist, and they may believe Vampires are rare creatures dwelling only in foreign badlands or, depending on personal inclination, Vampires are hiding around every corner.

"They're everywhere. They've infiltrated every level of society. They work beside us and walk past us down the street in daylight, plain as you please. You can't throw a rock in a crowded platz without it bouncing off two Vampires. And three Daemons."

—MAD HENRIK, VAGABOND

"Gerd always used to tell us that Vampires would come for us one day. He was petrified of them, used to hang holy symbols all around his room and slept with a clove of garlic in his mouth to keep them away from his neck. Well, one morning we found him pale as his sheets and dead as can be. Turned out he choked to death on that garlic."

—ELIGIUS BREYTENBACH, STUDENT

"They are stronger than us, smarter than us, live longer than us, and are far better looking than us. They are our superiors in every respect, and the taxes are lower when they rule. When they come back I will be the first to welcome them."

—HANSKARL DENK, SYLVANIAN

THE SCHOLAR'S EYE

"One thing we know about Vampires is that they are divided into families, or bloodlines, each with its own behaviours and powers. Some have charred black skin and blood-red eyebrows and lap up the blood of those who fall on the battlefield with long tongues. Others are covered in weeping sores and can only be differentiated from plague victims because they keep their left eye open at all times and grunt like pigs. Some appear as beautiful women who seduce their victims before killing them. They can only be destroyed after they feed, as they remove their eyeballs when they sleep off their gluttony and can then be approached unawares."

—URBANUS CARLSTADT, SCHOLAR

"The secretiveness and the rareness of the Vampires makes them hard to catalogue and leads to much contradiction between accounts. It is my belief that the consumption of Chaos-tainted blood or flesh has led to greater incidences of mutation amongst some Vampires, which have then been passed on to their progeny, adding to the discrepancies between accounts. Amongst the alterations in the Vampires I have encountered are a Ghoul-like appearance, eyes like

red marbles, wolfish fangs, non-functioning bat wings, and talons up to three inches in length. It has been noted that those Vampires who traffic with the dead are not immune to the foul disabilities that plague necromancers, which would also explain much of their twisted appearance.

"I have studied accounts such as those of Vladislav Dvorjetski that describe beautiful female Vampires whom mortal men have fallen in love with. Some

*In the middle of the night,
His grave, gaping wide,
Quietly outs the hungry Sprite,
On his horse to ride.
Hurrah! The dead do ride apace,
And over the land he speeds.
Finding prey they all give chase,
And on our blood he feeds.
Look forth, look forth, the moon shines bright,
He and the dead gallop fast through the night.*

—FROM THE RHYME OF THE VAMPIRE KNIGHT,
A POPULAR BRETONNIAN POEM

accounts describe these Vampiresses as being kind-hearted and good, but it is obvious to the trained Vampire hunter's eye that these writers were under the sway of the magical prowess of the she-devils who would tempt mortal men into that monstrous darkness from which only the bravest soul may ever return, black pits of corruption and degradation similar to that which warped my body till it was naught but a map of pain etched in scars, a disfigured husk that haunts me in my reflection, taunting me like the cruel barbs of that hell-spawned devil-woman who was my wife.

"That is all I have to say on the subject of Vampires."

—DAGMAR BENADAMSKI,
VAMPIRE HUNTER

One of the reasons knowledge of Vampires and their habits is hard to come by is that works discussing them are suppressed by religious authorities in the Empire. The only known complete copy of Frederick van Hel's (also known as Vanhel) *Liber Mortis* is kept in the vaults of the great temple of Sigmar in Altdorf, and a scholar would require special dispensation from the grand theologist to read it.

The Books of Blood, forbidden grimoires of Khaine, describe the Vampires as godlike beings who stride the centuries, letting blood flow like rivers of wine. However, *The Books of Blood* are almost impossible for an honest scholar to obtain copies of, and the fragments of them that do exist are often copied from remnants of the victims of Khaine's cultists. It is a common trial for initiates of the Murder Lord's cult to kidnap innocents and cut a passage of the books into their victims' flesh before letting them escape. The victims spend the rest of their lives with heresy scarred into their skin, an act which is said to greatly please the God of Murder.

Odric of Wurtbad's *Perilous Beasts* contained accurate descriptions of Vampires, even some supposedly from Vampires themselves. Unsurprisingly, it was quickly banned. Similar fates befell Maximillian Sommers' work *Vampires and Their Kin*, Gottlieb the Stern's *Treatis Necris*, and J. Gotthard Melber's *Encyclopaedia of the Undead*.

Less scholarly accounts of Vampires have gripped the popular imagination, but they are also sources of much contradiction and misinformation. Felix Jaeger, in *My Travels With Gotrek*, tells of his encounters with Vampires in Sylvania, but many details of the story are hard to believe and impossible to verify. Jaeger is a known agitator, outlaw, and adventurer whose word counts for little. To confuse matters, the story was adapted by Wilhelm Konig for the verse drama *Vampireslayer*, which contradicts Jaeger's account on several points and is set a good twenty years later.

The Kislevite poet Vladislav Dvorjetski and Imperial playwright Detlef Sierck have both dedicated sequences of poems to their Vampire loves—the Vampire Tsarina in Dvorjetski's case and the dubious "hero of the Empire" Genevieve Dieudonné in Sierck's—and neither is an ideal or unbiased source. The same can be said of Sierck's play *The Tragedy of Oswald* and *A Life* by Genevieve herself, though both purport to be honest accounts.

"There are many types of Vampires, but we do know certain things that apply to all of them. They can only go out at night. They are repelled by holy symbols, garlic, and onions soaked in urine. They must sleep on their native soil. They cannot cross running water. They cannot enter an abode uninvited. If poppy or millet seeds are dropped at their feet, they must pause and count them. They cannot pass a knotted rope without untying it."

"All of these things point to Vampires as beings of weakness, not strength. In our Empire, split by the Reik and its tributaries, how could a Vampire travel without crossing running water? What threat are they to us if we live modest lives, remaining in our homes at night and decorating them with the symbols of the Gods? Do we have anything to fear from creatures who can be incapacitated by common household ingredients? The Vampires are a threat whose time has passed. We needn't live in fear of them any longer."

—FATHER KNOCK, PRIEST OF MORR

"Every city of the Old World hides at least one nest of Vampires. Some hold several. These Vampires who prey amongst us differ from the tomb-haunting horrors I have faced, the Strigoi with their animalistic features and brute's simplicity. These city-dwellers are smart, and they know how to walk as mortals do. Many of them do not fear garlic or running water, they do not sleep on grave dirt, they are merely weakened by sunlight, and some say not all of them fear our blessed icons. They have all the charm and beauty of our worthiest lords, but behind that hides the same bloodlust and evil more evident in the forms of their Strigoi cousins. We cannot afford to relax our vigilance in the face of this horrifying threat."

—ABELHELM MUELLER, WITCH HUNTER



FROM BEYOND OUR LANDS

The influence and history of the Vampires is hardly restricted to the Empire, or indeed the Old World. Nor are Humans the only race set upon by the masters of the night. All over the world, the sanguine thirst of the Vampires has wreaked havoc.

ESTALIA AND TILEA

In the south, Estalia still bears the scars of its own Vampire war, and the people there have an unforgiving view of the Undead. On the other hand, the Tilean city-states appear to have been free of large-scale Vampire activity, though some Strigoi nests are to be found in the country. Perhaps this is because of the warding influence of the cult of Morr, who are strong in Tilea and hold their great convocations in the Tilean city of Luccini. Perhaps, more sinisterly, the Byzantine politics of Tilea make it easy for Vampires to remain hidden and work their influence from the shadows; the city of Miragliano in particular is rumoured to be a haven for Vampires.

BRETONNIA

The superstitious peasants of Bretonnia know only fear at the mention of Vampires. They have adopted some of the practices of Sylvania, sometimes burying their dead face down so they do not rise again, placing cloves of garlic in the ears of the dead and dried crows' feet in their mouths. Bretonnia was the home of the infamous Blood Dragon called the Red Duke, who was the scourge of Aquitaine, and rumours persist that others of his dread kind dwell in isolated hamlets and forests. These Vampire knights are considered to be worthy opponents by questing knights, who see them as chivalrous, tortured souls. The glamour of the knightly ideal blinds them to the truth of the matter—the Red Duke was

a barbarous killer as are most of his kind. The courtly ideals of Bretonnian nobles make them easy prey for the Lahmians, who have secretly infiltrated Bretonnian society as easily and as thoroughly as they have that of the Empire.

KISLEV

Most of the Vampires who dwell in Kislev are of the monstrous kind, beasts barely better than ruthlessly hunted animals. It is believed that regular consumption of Chesnochnaya, garlic vodka, will keep them at bay. The Kislevites' lack of familiarity with Vampires in their other, more seductive, guise is what allowed the Tsarina Kattarin to keep her rulership of the country even after she became a Vampire. The Kislevites have a long tradition of magic-wielding ice witches holding positions of power, so a pale and beautiful woman with magical abilities holding the throne was not without precedent. Her reign was cut short when the country's boyars realised having an immortal ruling them meant nobody else would ever rise to the top, and they would be reduced to squabbling amongst themselves for greater shares of power. An alliance lead by Tsarevich Pavel finally dealt with Kattarin. Her frozen corpse is still on display in the Frost Palace as a warning to other Vampires.

OTHER LANDS

In Araby, knowledge of necromancy is not suppressed, and so they do not suffer from the ignorance that allows Vampires to gain footholds amongst them as in the Empire. Only the Blood Dragons have a presence there, and that is in the western desert. The people of Norsca and Albion are fortunate not to have had much experience of Vampires, perhaps because their aversion to running water keeps many Vampires from travelling by sea. It cannot be long, however, as even Lustria has learned to fear the Vampire Luther Harkon and his Undead pirates who control the region known as the Vampire Coast.

"It may be three hundred years since we fought the War of Blood, but in Estalia, we have long memories. The Vampire Nourgul razed all of the land between the Irrana Mountains and the Southern Sea before he could be defeated. It was only with the aid of blessed Myrmidia that he was. We would never clamp the Vampires to our bosom as you do in Sylvania. That land is a blight on your Empire that should be burned out and staked."

—CRISTOBAL MENDEZ, ESTALIAN DIESTRO

"They must have short memories, these poets who write of the 'noble' Vampires. Do they not remember how many died? The dead are neither noble nor beautiful. I have been to Mousillon; I tell you this for a fact."

—GERVASE, BRETONNIAN RAPSALLION

"Only men, with their short lives and shorter vision, could have imagined such a loathsome use for magic."

—ITHILWEIL, ELF ENCHANTRESS

"I got nothing to fear from Queen Vampire Bitch and her daughters. My blood's half Bugman's, and there's few Manlings alive or Undead who can stand a drop as potent as that. I'll march in and take that place tonight, piece a' pish. Put some sausages on, I'll be back for breakfast."

—DWINBAR ELDAGNISSON, DWARF TROLL SLAYER (DECEASED)

"Blood is for the Blood God. Not for drinking!"

—HERMANN HACKGUT, FOLLOWER OF KHORNE

ELVES

The Elves see Vampires as yet more evidence of the inherent weakness of Humans. Elves very rarely turn to Dark Magic to lengthen their lives, since they live so long to begin with. The idea is alien and unnatural to them, and the Ghost Striders count Vampires amongst the monstrous threats they mercilessly vanquish. Even the Druchii dislike Vampires, seeing in them evidence of the magical techniques tortured from their ancestors by Nagash.

DWARFS

Vampires find the blood of Dwarfs stale and tasteless and tend to leave them alone. However, the Dwarfs have a lengthy entry in the Book of Grudges for Neferata, whom they call “Queen of Evil” for taking the mountain fastness of Silver Pinnacle from them in a single night. Many Troll slayers still find their heroic deaths there. The Dwarfs have also come to the aid of their Human allies against the Vampire counts on occasion, and at the Battle of Hel Fenn they fought valiantly against the forces of Mannfred von Carstein.

SKAVEN

Sylvania has one of the Old World’s greatest concentrations of Warpstone, which naturally makes it attractive to the Skaven. All of their attempts to take it have been foiled, and even the stealth

teams Clan Eshin occasionally sends to harvest Warpstone are afraid to enter the forests. The Skaven’s masterwork, the Great Plague of 1111, was foiled not only by Mandred Skavenslayer, but by an army of plague victims who rose from their graves in Sylvania and caused great casualties to the Skaven.

CHAOS

The worshippers of Chaos have a strange position on Vampires. Followers of the Blood God see them as blasphemers who steal the blood that is rightfully Khorne’s. Vampires’ immunity to disease makes them distasteful to worshippers of Nurgle. Tzeentch’s followers see them as beings of stasis, unchanged by the years or mutation and abhorrent in their God’s eyes—however many of them he happens to have at that moment. Although some Vampires live lives of pleasure enough to make a Slaaneshi swoon, they are resistant to all things new and prefer to live in idealised pasts rather than embracing new sensations, arousing the cultists’ contempt.

Vampires gain no benefit from watching their herd vanish under a sea of Chaos, and the unholy symbols of Dark Gods pain them as much as any such holy symbols. They have sided with humanity, often secretly, in the war against Chaos. Strange as it may seem from the point of view of Humans, who see only monsters on both sides, the forces of Chaos and Vampires are naturally opposed.

— THE HUNTERS —

Many Vampire hunters are survivors of Vampire attacks. They come home to find their loved ones drained of blood, or they watch their comrades cut down in battle as if they were stalks of wheat, or they are attacked but by some miracle survive. The experience scars them forever, and they leave their old lives behind to seek revenge and protect others from the same fate. Most of them fail, their bloodless bodies left to rot or animated to serve their enemies. Rather than rush straight to their deaths, many begin by collecting bounties offered by the cult of Morr on students of necromancy, hoping to “graduate” to Vampires once they have honed their skills.

Although often loners, Vampire hunters gather together out of necessity to share what they know, huddling in quiet meeting places to swap stories and share information on the weaknesses of their prey. The League of Ostermark is known to be the unofficial home of these Vampire hunters. It is the place to go if you wish to seek them out to join them or ask for their aid. Grim figures in dark clothing, carrying strange equipment and whispering to each other, can often be seen in the province’s taverns. They are distrustful of outsiders, as Witch Hunters have been known to harass them for “knowing more than is good for them,” but they will aid those in need and welcome those with the haunted eyes and dark demeanour as one of their own.





Foster Braybrook

Foster is such a Vampire hunter, a Halfling fieldwarden whose valiant service in protecting his homeland from the Undead of Sylvania resulted in a retaliatory attack on his family by agents of the Von Carsteins. Braybrook is cold and methodical in his treatment of the Undead; the death of his family made him unable to feel pity—or much of anything else.

Sabina Hochstetter

Sabina was an ordinary tomb robber until her partner had his throat torn out in a Border Princes tomb that wasn't as uninhabited as it looked. The experience changed her, and although she is a fearless Vampire killer, her greatest enemy is her own debilitating despair, which can keep her shut in her room for weeks at a time.

FELLOWSHIP OF THE SHROUD

Tilea, where the cult of Morr is strong, is the home of the Vampire hunters who call themselves the Fellowship of the Shroud. The companions of the Fellowship have chapterhouses in other nations, as well, and in the Empire, they are based in Essen and Siegfriedhof. The Imperial chapter of this unofficial branch of the cult, who operate without the sanction of Morr's priests, call themselves the High and Chivalric Order of Deserved Rest, though they are known to most as the Raven Knights for the symbols they decorate their armour with. They are dedicated to destroying all Undead wherever they find them, but many are dedicated

specifically to the destruction of Vampires. They welcome any devout foe of the Undead to their order, whether soldier or academic.

The Fellowship has a definite advantage over independent Vampire hunters in that they possess accurate information on their enemies and their weaknesses. There are many scholars in the Fellowship who, although non-combatants, dedicate their lives to unearthing information about the Undead, such as where they may be found and how best to defeat them. They also have alchemists, herbalists, and engineers who are committed to finding new ways of battling the Undead. However, they are hindered by cult politics with members of the Order of the Shroud who consider them a waste of time at best and heretics at worst—some amongst the Fellowship suggest adopting the heathen practice of cremation to prevent corpses from rising. There are moves to have them investigated by the Witch Hunters, and some within the hierarchy of Morr's cults are already pretending they don't exist.

Leo Schwenkfeld

An Imperial soldier, Leo Schwenkfeld served until he was caught in the explosion of a cannon misfire. He had a religious experience, a vision that told him he had been spared for a reason, to devote himself to the service of Morr. Leo was never a learned man, so he serves Morr the best way he can: as a soldier. At first he didn't understand why the Raven Knights wanted him to learn to read and write—he already knew how to wield a halberd, and what else did he need? Now that he's being sent to track down a Vampire, he wants all the information he can get, even if reading all those books about their history gives him a headache right where his metal plate is.

THE TSAREVICH PAVEL SOCIETY

Tsarevich Pavel was the Kislevite noble who struck the final blow against the Vampire Tsarina, ending her rule of Kislev. In more recent times, a secret society dedicated to his name has been founded within the Empire. Following Pavel's lead, they seek to remove the stain of Vampirism from the noble families. Their motives are not always true, as they care only about those Vampires who threaten the purity of noble blood and their own chances of inheriting, which would drop if their parents became immortal.

The Tsarevich Pavel Society predominantly recruits male nobles. They are vaguely aware of the Lahmian Sisterhood's infiltration of the nobility, but they do not know its extent. Their wealth and prestige gives them advantages over other Vampire hunters, but the only reason for their continued existence is that the Lahmians see them as a potentially useful weapon to be turned against the Von Carsteins when they inevitably try to take the Empire again, and the Von Carsteins do not yet know they exist.

"They are evil, spell-wielding abominations. It seems clear to me Vampires fall within the purview of Witch Hunters. Self-made Vampire-hunting lunatics only get in the way."

—ABELHELM MUELLER, WITCH HUNTER

"What do they want with reading all of them books about Vampires and Undead and other things man bain't to know? Sounds mighty suss if you ask me."

—SIGRUN GWISDEK, PEASANT

"Death to the dead!"

—COMMON VAMPIRE HUNTER BATTLE CRY

"The cult of Morr provides consolation for the grieving, more necessary in these hard times than ever before, as well as valuable funerary services. Gallivanting around the countryside hunting monsters seems like a waste of devout souls."

—FATHER KNOCK, PRIEST OF MORR

Heinrich von Wittington

He was getting close when they put an arrow in his backside. One of their Human agents, Dirk Kette, shot Heinrich von Wittington during a hunting trip. That's what gave the game away, and as soon as he recovers, he'll get in touch with the rest of the Society, and they'll cleanse this damned Vampiric taint from his family tree once and for all.

THE ANDANTI

The Andanti are a hereditary order of secretive Vampire hunters who consider themselves chosen by Morr to be his holy warriors. Membership can be passed on through either sons or daughters, and there is only one Andanti per generation, so although they are all related, they have many names and live in many nations of the Old World. The dynasty traces its roots back to Estalia, where they fought the Undead even before the War of Blood. Now, the Andanti are scattered, and some are born who do not know their destiny as chosen hunters of the dead.

A member of the Andanti is marked by being born with a caul, a thin membrane covering the head. Midwives usually remove

these cauls and press them onto a sheet of paper, as they are believed to bring good luck, especially to sailors. If the baby is lucky, a relative who is also Andanti hears of this and takes a special interest. The relative becomes a mentor, passing on knowledge that is hidden even from the other family members. Each Andanti maintains a small library of lore that would be of much interest to Witch Hunters. The young Andanti are trained in combat techniques that exploit the weaknesses of the Undead, and some are encouraged to spend time in the military to hone their abilities fighting mortals before they take on the dead.

Kirsten Stumpf-nase

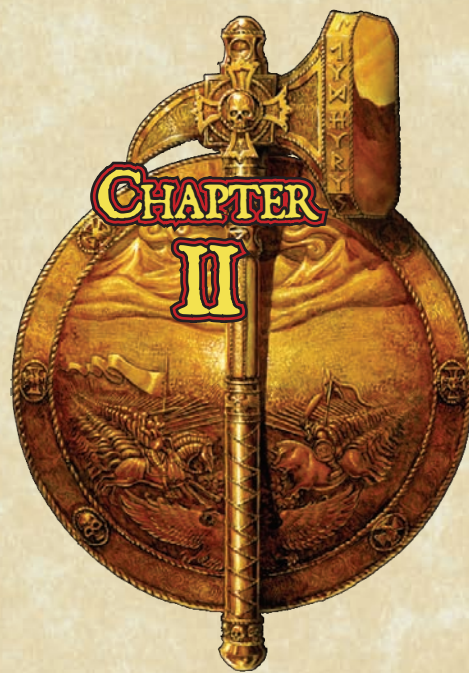
Kirsten Stumpf-nase was still being trained in the ways of Vampires by her uncle, Dagmar Benadamski, when things went disastrously wrong. He took her to the abandoned Axel Mansion, famous for its haunted reputation, so she could have some experience of Ghosts and the lesser Undead first-hand. When they arrived, it was not Ghosts but a powerful Vampire that they found. Dagmar was killed, and Kirsten narrowly escaped with her life. Now she travels the Old World, learning the ways of the Undead and hoping to track down the Vampire who killed her uncle.



A MOCKERY OF LIFE

"You can always tell Vampires by their eyes; they hold disdain and dreadful need in equal measure. But carry a mirror as well."

—KIRSTEN STUMPFNASE,
VAMPIRE HUNTER



What you don't know *can* hurt you, especially if you hunt Vampires. Ignorance is a foe just as dangerous as Undead, and when anyone displaying a depth of knowledge about necromancy comes under instant suspicion, research is

not an easy task. Those who do not have access to forbidden works or the restricted sections of temple libraries may have to make do with incomplete or second-hand sources, such as the dubious *Vermin Alley Diary*.

19th Fore-Mystery

Coming to *Vermin Alley* was a mistake. Since I left the University, money has become a consideration; I had little choice but to take the cheapest of lodgings. The name alone told me all I needed to know about this street. It's infested with rats, cats, dogs, and vermin of the Human variety, from the wastrels of the Lock and Key Tavern down to Filthy Rothbart the gravedigger. Last night I dreamed I had become a monstrous vermin whilst I slept.

20th Fore-Mystery

When you cannot consider things growing worse, they find a way. I was escaping the cold at the Lock and Key when the Watch arrived to read out the Plague Orders. I was so terrified I cannot remember half of them, but for the important part: *Vermin Alley* has been deemed unclean and is to be sealed off for the city's protection, a "Cordon Sanitaire." We

trudged outside, jacks and steins in hand, gaping as they walled off both ends of the street, and the guards took up their positions. The walls are flimsy, but they are a line that cannot be crossed under pain of death. Back doors and windows were nailed shut; there is to be no egress that way either. I am locked in with the guttersnipes with no escape.

23rd Fore-Mystery

Our only contact with greater *Altdorf* comes with the Mortality Bills. A priestess of Shallya and one of Morr come in white and black raiment, like chess pieces. She ministers to the flock, and he pins up the bill, but you can see their true purpose as they eye us for buboes.

As a man of letters, I have been chosen to read the Bill aloud to a crowd of my neighbours. Five dead in *Ragansweg*, it reads. Two dead in *Breichstrasse*. Other streets had been closed off as we were for being breeding grounds of filth that spreads the miasma that, in turn, spreads plague.

A reward was offered by the city for each dead dog and cat in an attempt to clean the streets of the animal ordure that covers them. For a full day the sound of barking and yowling was constant, mingled with triumphant shouts of thugs and urchins as they earned another schilling.

25th Fore-Mystery

The lack of cats and dogs has made the street cleaner, but in their absence the rats have come forth in greater numbers. They are everywhere, bold as brass. One ran across the bar of the Lock and Key until Holz crushed its head with a stein of beer. Then he handed it to me as if it did not matter that half a mangled rat dangled from my drink.

My larder will not last, so I have taken to the tavern for sustenance. Where Holz gets his provender I do not wish to know. My companions there are a rough sort but not as bad as I first thought. Holz keeps a blunderbuss above the bar to keep them in line, but it is just for show. They share camaraderie in these dark days that I envy.

When the priests arrived today they noticed the Stahls were absent, though usually a pious family. The priests went into their house, then emerged ashen-faced and chalked the mark on the doorway. No one is to enter or leave that house until the sickness has done its work. There was little cheer in Vermin Alley today.

26th Fore-Mystery

Everyone is wearing talismans to ward off disease. Some recommend tobacco to ward the vapours. Frau Schadenfreude taught her son to smoke a pipe, though he coughed and cried; others swear by quicksilver clysters. Rothbart is selling moss grown on skulls, apparently a sure-fire ward. I bought a pomander from Frau Kopf. She guarantees the herbs keep sickness at bay, but I wish I could leave the alley to buy a more powerful talisman from the markets.

The house of Blucher was sealed and marked this morning.

28th Fore-Mystery

I have found a new appointment, though one that I doubt would make father proud. I have joined the Durchsuchung, tasked by the priests to enter the sealed houses of Vermin Alley to check whether the



inhabitants live. I am paid with schillings from the sale of their belongings if they do not.

I wear a closed helmet with my pomander in the end of the beak-like face guard to keep away miasma. My hearing is muffled by the helm, but each house is quiet whether it holds living or dead. The diseased sit alone, waiting for the Old Man to claim them whilst their family huddles in other rooms, praying. If no one falls ill for three weeks, the house is declared clean.

In the Meers' house I noticed something peculiar. Fraulein Meer, though sick, bore no signs of plague. She was pale, feverish, unnaturally thin, her breathing was belaboured, and there were spots of blood about her face consistent with a violent cough. I recognise the symptoms from my reading of Gaelen. She has consumption, not the plague, so I removed the mark from their door. Still, it is a contagion, and it cannot hurt to keep her locked in the attic.

Five dead in Breichstrasse according to the Bill.

1st After-Mystery

Last night, by Imperial order, the rules were reversed, and the sick were allowed out whilst the well

stayed in. The gates were opened, and they walked through Vermin Alley. From my shutters I saw the strangest sights. The ground was wreathed in mist that curled up the legs of corpse-like children as they danced in circles, singing rhymes and falling to the ground, only to rise and run off, giggling. The older victims came behind them, muttering and stretching their legs, breathing deeply of the chill night air. The consumption seems limited to Vermin Alley; the afflicted of further afield all bore the traditional plague marks. I saw one poor soul who should have been dead, his countenance was so hideous. His head was hairless, skin grey as stone, mouth drawn back as if his lips had fallen off, ears twisted on his deformed skull, and he walked with the aid of a hunched assistant. His eyes shone with the unnatural vigour one sometimes sees in the deeply unwell as they stare back from the brink of the abyss. One moment I saw them, the next they vanished. It must have been a trick of the Altdorf fog.

2nd After-Mystery

The Schadenfreudes have fallen sick - tobacco does not work after all. Their symptoms are of consumption. Strange that two diseases should spread simultaneously.

I mentioned it to the new priest who arrived today. The old one never gave me the time of day, but this young fellow, Wechsler is his name, seemed fascinated. He made me show him the consumptives, and then he covered their houses with marks of Morr, even hanging his silver raven from the rafters of one. It never ceases to surprise me how the most rational of individuals fall prey to superstition in times of crisis.

Note: I shall have to buy a new pomander from Frau Kopf soon.

3rd After-Mystery

Strange noises last night. It sounded like a Daemon was loose.

4th After-Mystery

The Kopfs are all dead. Yesterday they were well, and today they are dead. It was not the plague or consumption or any disease that killed them, unless

we are witnessing an outbreak of Explosive Pox. Blood coats the walls, their bodies are torn. The source of the strange noises I heard is obvious. Some beast is on the loose, something capable of incredible violence. I shouted myself hoarse at the guards on the far side of the wall, but they would not listen. They have heard every excuse from the desperate souls who plead to be let out of Vermin Alley. My neighbours avoid me and give me strange looks, as if I am mad and that too is contagious.

5th After-Mystery

I am a fool. Wechsler noted the carnage in the Kopf house, and his fears were confirmed. It is not consumption spreading alongside the plague. It is the mark of the Vampire. One of the living dead is here, amongst us, feeding at its leisure. We are trapped like rats. Wechsler says there is no way to lift the Plague Orders until the sickness has passed. But he will help us.

There was a meeting in the Lock and Key. Everyone sat quietly whilst Wechsler spoke. I expected denial and fear, but the people of Vermin Alley surprised me with their resolve. Everyone knows something is wrong. Fraulein Meer's uncle says she raved about a monster that visited her at night before she fell sick. Holz and Rothbart saw the same strange figure as I prowling the Alley at night. Everyone heard the noise as it killed the Kopfs in its rage.

Wechsler explained the banes of Vampires: sunlight, garlic, holiness, hawthorn, and silver. Whilst I write, the others are sharpening stakes, looks of grim determination on their faces. Wechsler has handed out blessed water and holy implements. We pooled our funds, and Holz loaded his blunderbuss with every silver schilling we have. I was mistaken to call these people vermin because they live in filth. They are braver than any noble sitting in a glass plague-cage.

We will move from house to house until we find the real vermin. After days of waiting for death to come to us invisibly, death has been given a face; a face that we can strike at. When we find the monster we will impale it, decapitate it, stuff its brainpan with garlic, and expose that hideous face to the light of day.

I am not afraid to die. Today I noticed a lump in my armpit, the beginning of the buboes that spell my doom. When death comes, I only hope it comes quickly.

Amongst the more complete studies of Vampires is that of Maximillian Sommers, a member of the Raven Knights, written for other members of that order. Those who are not members will find the work hard to come by but worthy of the search.

VAMPIRES AND THEIR KIN

Vampires may be unclean creatures of the night, as abhorrent to the sight of the Gods as they are to ours, yet we must not turn away if we wish to battle them. We must not avert our gaze like frightened children but instead look clearly and dispassionately upon our foes, so we may see to the very heart of them, that we may know how they think and how they act and how they can be made to die.

For die they can. For all their boasts of immortality, the life of an undying one can be ended—but I come to this too soon. We shall see how to end them shortly; first, we must see how they began.

The origins of the Vampires are shrouded, but we know they came from the Land of the Dead, the lost nation of desert and bones that some scholars claim to have been the cradle of Man. It was from the ancient Land of the Dead that the Great Necromancer Nagash came, and in those days the Vampires walked with him. Whether they were his creations or self-made monsters is unknown. Vampires do not often associate with the necromancers who call themselves Nagash's disciples today, but perhaps it was not always thus.

When that land was robbed of life, the Vampires spread their foul contagion to the rest of the world. As the Vampire must feed on the blood of the living, they could not dwell in a nation of bones. The separate breeds scattered over the world, and many came from the ancient world to dwell in the Old World. It is theorised there are yet other lineages in foreign lands, but that is beyond our scope. Let foreign devils deal with foreign dead.

That is how the race of Vampires began. Now let us see how an individual Vampire begins.



"There have been dark whispers of Vampire Dwarfs and members of the other races, but no hard evidence of their existence has yet been found. Some amongst the Elves would have it that only we become Vampires; proof of the inherently Chaotic and debased nature of mutable Man. However, there are those who say the Dark Ones are a degenerate form of Elf, that there is an entire nation of Chaos-worshipping Dwarfs in lands to the east, and even that the Halflings begat the Goblins. Perhaps each race has its evil mirror?"

—FROM TRAUGOTT OF VERENA'S LECTURES

THE DARK KISS

Each Vampire was once an ordinary Human, as you or I. The precise mechanism by which a mortal is made Vampire is unknown to us. Every scholar has a different explanation, and many believe those killed by Vampires are doomed to join them. A likely theory suggests the exchange of blood is vital. Even a mouthful may do; perhaps there are brave warriors who have been doomed by keeping an open mouth whilst battling the foe. They may call you grim or dour or many other insulting things, but the cautious Vampire hunter keeps his mouth closed when pursuing the dead.

This is only theory, however, and there are documented cases suggesting the change is not guaranteed by swallowing blood. One of our brothers who ingested Vampiric blood simply wasted away and died without rising, whilst others are reputedly devout and strong enough of will to shake off the effects after a period of illness. The Undead are canny, and it may be that they drain their victims before tainting them with Vampire blood as part of the ritual. Thus, the victims are already under their sway when the unclean blood enters and are not possessed of enough clean humours to fight back.

After the infection, however it occurs, comes a period of sweats, chills, and sickness that may last a day or a week. Afterwards, the victim dies and arises as a Vampire. He is not the same person, however, and should not be mistaken for such. If one of your comrades should be turned, the only way to save his soul is to commend it to the Gardens of Morr with haste.

Even a freshly turned Vampire is possessed of incredible strength, equal to that of the strongest mortal. He is faster than he was in life, able to avoid attacks whilst barely being seen to move. He feels little pain, shrugging off blows that would cripple a man. He becomes a Lord of Undeath, able to command lesser Undead at will. And he awakens with an insatiable lust for the blood of the living. A Vampire must feed on a regular basis, typically once per week. This need not be enough blood to kill, but few newly turned Vampires care to leave their victims alive.

PREYING ON THE PREDATORS

Vampire hunters must know speed when searching out the Undead, especially in the Empire. By the time reports of Vampire activity reach the ears of the templars of Sigmar it will be too late for much good to be done. Witch hunters typically lack our subtle means of investigation and simply round up locals to put to the question until they find the monster or frighten it off with their clumsy approaches. In hunting the beasts our way, we not only spare victims from becoming food but also from becoming fuel for the Witch Hunters' pyres.

Thusly, it is not enough to simply wait for our foes to rear their heads. We must seek them out, travelling from town to town in our search. Although Sylvania historically has the greatest concentration, there is not a province of the Empire that has not known the Vampire's touch. No village is too small for us to ignore.

"Be subtle in your questions; it is wise not to frighten those you speak to as you risk either terrifying them into silence or rousing them into anger, and the mob is a dangerous thing to awaken. Stir the citizenry into action only as a last resort, as the mob is never easy to quiet, and if they do not find that which they seek, they may turn on another to slake their bloodlust."

—ADVICE FROM A VERENEAN INVESTIGATOR

"There is no Vampiric society, no aristocracy or blue-blooded royalty amongst the Undead. Vampires crave power, and through strength and cunning they take it. Frailty is punished by death—final, true death. There is no natural succession amongst those left behind. No birthright. No passing of the torch from generation to generation. Power is taken with strength."

—STEFAN SAVILUS, ERBSCHAFT

In your travels, there are certain clues you may find. Most obviously, spates of unexplained deaths and disappearances, particularly in regular patterns, but also outbreaks of unexplained illness that could be explained by Vampiric feeding or the effects of their mental control. Many Vampire hunters haunt the Gardens of Morr with an eye out for suspicious deaths, but those admitted to the hospices of Shallya with undiagnosed ailments will also do much to show you if our enemies are active in a given area.

If such signs point to the presence of the arisen, begin making enquiries amongst the populace. Your best chance is to discover their victims and vassals. There are mortals fool enough to offer their services to Vampires in hope of either the short-term gains of power they can offer—or the unlikely long-term gain of being bestowed the Dark Kiss.

Both victims and vassals of Vampires bear the mark of the Vampire's bite, which can range from delicate nail-sized scars in the case of the favoured, to savagery difficult to differentiate from that done by a wolf. Some canny Vampires who operate in our settlements attempt to disguise their feeding by decapitating their victims afterwards, but the relative lack of blood both within the corpse and at the scene of death are clues to the observant that a blood drinker has been involved.

Mortals who have interacted with Vampires are often possessed of a glassy stare, an after-effect of the hypnotic effects some of the Undead use to get their way. Those who have been fed upon repeatedly, yet left alive, may be known by this stare, coupled with paleness, lethargy, and laboured breathing.



Recent arrivals to the area should be surreptitiously spied out. Pay special attention to travelling folk, vagabonds, and other outcasts who may be the minions of your prey. Those citizens whose behaviour has been seen to radically change are also worthy of suspicion. If there are any locals who have taken to unusual degrees of solitude or morbidity, pay them much heed. In these ways will you find them, either through their mortal intermediaries if they lurk in the wilderness or through the gossip of their neighbours if they lair within a settlement.

IDENTIFYING UNDEAD

Vampires in general may be known by their lack of reflections, cold skin, the wearing of large hats when in the sun, hungry looks (especially directed towards the exposed necks of comely youths), avoidance of holy symbols, and not touching their food.

However, this only tells you that you face a Vampire; the key to defeating a Vampire is knowing which kind of Vampire it is that you face.

Some claim Vampires are arranged by bloodlines, by families, but those who have spent their lives chasing these villainous fiends know better. There is no fast and certain way by which one might deduce the inherent weaknesses and characteristics of a Vampire, for they come in a variety of forms and shapes, exhibiting unusual powers and being subject to a range of weaknesses that transcend the normal



means a new Vampire hunter might combat these implacable foes. What we can say are that there are generalities, common trends that apply to different groups of Vampires.

One particular group, in large part responsible for the romanticism of their kind, are the aristocrats, of which the Von Carsteins are the most famous. These Vampires may be immediately identified by their regal bearing and pale, attractive looks. These Vampire nobles are most commonly encountered in the land of Sylvania, which they have at various points in that land's ignoble history claimed to rule. Though they may appear Human, do not be fooled. Their bloodfire eyes, talons, and fangs reveal themselves when the Vampire becomes angered. It may be impractical to drive every Sylvanian you meet to anger to determine if they are mortal, but a hunter should not shy from it if no other means present themselves.

Another common type of Vampire is the beast, the wretched Undead who bear little resemblance to the Humans on which they prey. The Strigoi are the most numerous of this type, and of this breed, they are the most foul, more disturbing than the ghoulish flesh-eaters that infest cursed Mousillon. A Strigoi may be seen for what it is by certain bat-like physical qualities such as elongated ears, claws longer than those of a Ghoul, and in some cases vestigial wings. Their typically greater size and ferocity may also give them away, but many overconfident hunters of the Undead do not live long enough to use that realisation once they have been witness to a Strigoi's fierce attack.

Other Vampires may cleave closer to the Undead nature, more closely resembling the corpses they are. These Vampires seem to have a predilection for the most deadly arts of necromancy to construct vast armies of shuffling Undead. Any hunter can tell you that the most dangerous of these are the Necrarchs, for their mastery of dark magic is feared throughout the land. They have wrinkled, corpse-like skin stretched into unnatural shapes over their ancient bones. Their faces have the features of both rat and bat, with prominent fore fangs, elongated ears, and a high, hairless dome of a skull. The Necrarchs are most often found away from civilisation, preferring to dwell in towers that mock the forms of mortal wizards' dwellings.

In Bretonnia, there is a breed of Vampire that shares many of the characteristics of the aristocratic breed, though by no means are they contained by the borders of that foolish land. They are warriors, dedicated to perfecting their craft and exulting in the power Vampirism affords. Single-minded in their intensity, they are bold, arrogant, and thoroughly vicious. The Blood Dragons, as they call themselves, have the appearance of the most noble-blooded of men until they reveal their true faces in anger. Fortunately, they are brazen enough to wear the icons of their order, proudly displaying the red Dragon insignia on their armour and weapons.

The last of the common breeds is far more secretive than the rest. Generally all female, and intricately beautiful, they were taken to the ranks of the Undead in the prime of youth. With this mysterious kind of Vampire, more subtle means must be used to expose them, such as the strategic deployment of mirrors and holy symbols. It is very important a hunter should not be exposed whilst attempting to determine the true nature of eccentric young noblewomen in this way, as their apparently fragile forms disguise incredible speed and strength the equal of a man's. There is no point discovering a Vampire if one does not live to destroy it.

THE VAMPIRE'S UNHOLY BLESSINGS

Many are the powers and abilities of the damned, and the true hunter does well to familiarise himself with them. As I have said, though their physical forms may not show it, even the weakest Vampires are possessed of strength and speed comparable to that of the best a mortal can attain, and older Vampires far in excess of it. As Vampires grow more ancient, their powers increase, showing none of the signs of age. I have seen Vampires easily lift a full-grown man and hurl him across a room, leap from a high rooftop to the ground without injury, and attain a standing position from lying prone by simply tilting themselves upwards in an uncanny display of bodily control.

The teeth and fingers of the arisen are as sharp as daggers when aroused, though some are able to hide them as a beast hides its claws, sheathing them to pass undetected amongst its prey.

A Vampire's cold flesh is as resistant to harm as an armoured man's. Blows bounce off their skin, and more solid blows cause little damage. Even if you should wound a Vampire, they heal far more quickly than an ordinary mortal and have even been reported to re-grow lost limbs over time.

The senses of Vampires are also enhanced. They are not troubled by darkness and claim the ability to see a man's very blood flowing beneath his skin. They can hear all but the softest footfalls and smell the faintest scent. Approaching a Vampire undetected is almost impossible.

In addition to this, Vampires are spoiled with a wide variety of magical powers. No single Vampire possesses all of these, however, as some are more common and some are only used by certain individuals. Perhaps only some amongst them have divined the full extent of their own capabilities, or perhaps these abilities are inherited as a child may take its parents' aptitudes.

Various base animals' forms can be taken by Vampires, commonly those of bats, wolves, or rats. The animals chosen are not normal examples of their kind, though, being stronger and more fearsome than the common vermin. Even in these lesser shapes, Vampires are dangerous foes. Some can also take the form of a red mist, able to travel through the smallest cracks in doors or windows, impervious to harm. In this form, weapons fashioned by mundane means are worthless, having no effect against these fiends.

Some Vampires have the ability to compel mortals to do their bidding, dominating them with little more than a look. Vampires who can use this ability may surround themselves with beguiled slaves willing to fight for them; against these poor souls your resolve must be firm. If you should stay your hand, your

"Ptra (Sun god?) was angered by this, and as he looked down upon the vile city from his chariot, he did curse them unto the last generation, that they and their (unknown hieroglyph) would be forever (Damned? Cursed? Unclear) in those hours whilst the sky was his."

—TRANSLATED FROM A FRAGMENT OF TEXT FOUND IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD

mercy will not be returned. They will not only shield their masters with their own bodies but fall on you with clumsy fury if you but give them opportunity. Vampires attempt to use this ability on those they do battle with, holding you with their gaze long enough to feed upon you. For this reason, the Vampire hunter never looks his opponents in the eye, or even those he suspects.

As well as commanding mortals, certain Vampires may control animals and surround themselves with swarms of bats and packs of wolves to do their dark bidding. Even the weather may bend to their control, and Vampires have been known to hold winds and storms at their beck and call.

Many of them also master the dark art of necromancy and will have all the powers of a typical necromancer, including the ability to summon other Undead. Even those that do not will often surround themselves with other revenants. It seems the lesser abominations are somehow drawn to the greater, like flies unto excrement.



THE VAMPIRE'S CURSES

Now we come to the crux of things. How may such fearsome foes be defeated? In this endeavour, we are blessed, for the Gods so hate our unnatural enemies that they curse them with varied and debilitating weaknesses we must exploit to the fullest of our abilities if we wish to improve our chances when battling them. Those Vampire hunters who operate alone and with only a head full of superstitious nonsense to guide them rarely achieve more than filling the veins of their first opponent.

However, as the Vampires' strengths differ according to their age, lineage, and the whim of the Gods, so too do their weaknesses. That which works on one Vampire will not be guaranteed to defeat them all. The true hunter is a master of a myriad of techniques that he may always have weapons to fall back on should his first sortie fail.

Firstly, let us deal with superstitions you may know, for there is yet truth to be found in some of them. Certain plants repel Vampires, though millet and poppy seeds are worthless, and garlic is rarely as effective as folklore would have it. Garlic can be used to repel Vampires, but Licaveroort is more useful in warding Vampires from a specific place or victim. Other herbs have a greater effect. Daemonsroot and Witchbane both prove to be

effective against these blackguards.

Religious objects and icons have a far greater effect on most Vampires, not only driving them back but burning their unholy skin upon contact. Simply making hand gestures as the sign of the Hammer, or raising the first and last finger to form the Wolf's Head, will not work as a physical, blessed icon or sacred water, such as the Tears of Shallya or water from a Sigmarite temple's well, will. Holy ground also weakens your enemies if you can force them to tread upon it, but it is rarely practical to lead a Vampire to a temple before dispatching it.

Sunlight weakens these Undead, but it will usually take prolonged exposure to kill. Most Vampires can survive in broad daylight for short periods of time, even more if they are aged. If the skies are covered by dark clouds, then Vampires may travel freely, and the Von Carsteins are known to summon such storms to cover their advances when they go to war. A magister of the Celestial College would be useful if you encounter such a situation, as they have some degree of control over the clouds and other heavenly bodies.

Some Vampires must spend the daylight hours resting on soil of their native lands. This weakness can be exploited by a hunter who finds a Vampire's lair, but it is a weakness you will find is shared by few of your opponents. Likewise, the prohibition against entering an abode of the living without invitation affects few Vampires; although, notably, some suffer from this potentially debilitating weakness.

However, as with the herbal wards, all it requires is a mortal ally to invite such a Vampire to cross a building's threshold for it to wreak havoc upon the inhabitants.

Hunters consider the restriction against Vampires being immersed in running water to be no more than a superstition, but in this instance, they are wrong. Crossing water by boat or bridge does not bother Vampires, but most Undead may be destroyed by complete immersion in running water. As is usual, there are some exceptions to the rule, as Father Schmirelgn discovered when he broke the ice of the frozen Urskoy river as Count von Sangster crossed it, only to have the Vampire walk out dripping wet and dismember Schmirelgn for daring to dampen the Vampire's evening wear. Know your enemy.

These curses that affect only a few of their kind are only to be relied on after extensive research into the particular Vampire you are hunting. Older Vampires you may face will have been fought, and sometimes defeated, by several of your predecessors. Their notes will prove invaluable, should you find them.

THE SILVER AND THE HAWTHORN

Ordinary weapons hurt Vampires if wielded with considerable force, but such wounds are often trifling. Blessed weapons or those made of silver have far more effect. The templars of Sigmar use silver bullets blessed by priests for this reason. Some claim stakes made of hawthorn can transfix a Vampire if plunged through its heart. As with any creature, having a stake driven through the middle is generally lethal. In some cases, Vampires are affected a bit differently. The stake may not kill them; instead, it holds them still. Should the stake be extracted at some later time, the Vampire is

restored and no doubt thirsty.

These are the common weapons we use, but sometimes more exotic tools are required in the hunt. As mentioned, *Graveroot* has an effect on Vampires, as do its relatives *Daemonsroot*, *Bloodrot*, and *Witchbane*. These herbs grow in well-shaded, damp places, preferring swamps and the rich soil of graveyards. Wearing garlands of *Graveroot* and stringing it around windows, doorways, and fireplaces prevents the advance of some Vampires, especially the youngest of them who may still subscribe to superstition even if it would have little actual effect on them if truly tested. It can also be made into a poison capable of affecting Vampires where no other poison will. For giving peasants a sense of security, such herbs are valuable, but a hunter should not rely on such things. It is a simple matter for the minions of your enemy to remove such restraints, assuming the Vampire does not possess will enough to bypass them itself.

Another use for *Graveroot* is the concoction known as *Wound's Warning*. This mixture of herbs and powdered silver must be rubbed into an open wound large enough to leave a scar. The scar, once healed shut, will thereafter throb in warning upon the approach of Vampires. Care must be taken with *Wound's Warning* as Witch Hunters have been known to persecute those with unusual scars, which are seen as evidence of cult membership or the removal of mutations.

One weapon of questionable value that is sought out by hunters of less experience is the mechanical stake-thrower. Although the ability to launch a stake over a distance is undeniably useful, the mechanism was not perfected by its inventor, a Vampire hunter named Mikhail Reingelt, before his suspicious disappearance (that disappearance is doubly suspicious if we consider that he was reputedly working on an invention to project sunlight from a box at the time, another invention that would have proved useful against the Undead).

The application of venom from an Araby tomb scarab to a sliver of bone harvested from one of the Undead, which is then hung from a length of string, creates a pendulum that will swing in the direction of nearby Vampires. This device is even more dangerous than the stake-thrower, as scarab venom never loses its potency and may prove fatal to the user of such a pendulum.

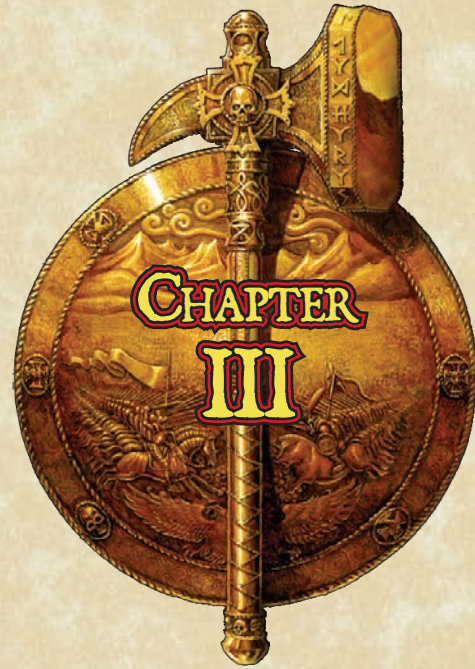
Some hunters believe intoning the last rights of *Morr* over a Vampire is another sure means for destroying these unwholesome creatures. There are accounts of those who have tried with variable success, but by and large, Vampires seem to laugh off such attempts and rip the throats from these pious fools. Should you attempt it, be sure the Vampire is in hand lest you join the countless others who have fallen in pursuit of a Vampire's final death.

Decapitation and cremation remain our most reliable weapons, however; although, some Vampires claim to be able to return from even these deaths. Such boasts are nonsense. None may return from *Morr's* embrace once delivered to it by a true and holy wielder of the faith.

CHRONICLES OF THE UNDYING

"History is the chronicle of the follies of mankind and the triumphs of Vampires. The apparent failures of immortals are, seen over the true course of time, the merest of setbacks."

—COUNT VON SANGSTER



The dark history of the Vampires begins in ancient Nehekhar, the land of the great river, 1,650 years before Sigmar founded his Empire. The people of that land had united under King Lahmizzar to drive out the Great Necromancer, Nagash. After 100 years of war, Nagash was defeated, though not for the last time, and his works were ordered to be destroyed. However, Nagash had been cunning and had planned for an eventuality such as this.

When Nagash was both high priest of the Mortuary Cult, dedicated to seeking the secret of eternal life, and self-declared King of Khemri, he turned the priests of the awakening away from their holy work and towards his darker studies. Some amongst the priesthood resisted Nagash's perversion of their work and were driven out or murdered for their loyalty to the old ways. At the same time, Nagash had the foresight to send several of the priests who were loyal to him out into the world as his spies; believing them to also be the Accursed One's outcasts, the people of Nehekhar took these traitors to their bosom.

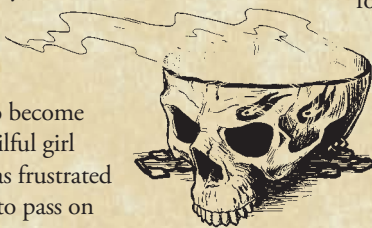
W'SORAN THE WICKED

One amongst these traitors was W'soran, who rose to the trusted position of high priest of the city of Lahmia, the jewel on the edge of the Crystal Sea. W'soran used his position to poison the mind of the young Princess Neferatem, destined to become Queen of Lahmia. Neferatem was a wilful girl fascinated by magic and death who was frustrated by the Mortuary Cult's unwillingness to pass on

their teachings to women. Secretly, W'soran nurtured her thirst for this forbidden knowledge, coaching her in the magical knowledge he learned at Nagash's side. After Nagash's fall, she was only too willing to save several forbidden scrolls from the pyres.

After her father took Nagash's position as King of Khemri, Neferatem began her rule of Lahmia, and behind the locked doors of the palace, she studied the scrolls and began to emulate the simpler necromantic magic. All the while, W'soran was testing the waters of Lahmia's Mortuary Cult, learning which priests were sympathetic to his ends and which would have to be dealt with. Those who could not be twisted to the teachings of Nagash, he warned of Neferatem's dark practices, a calculated act of betrayal that the queen would not learn of for many years. So it was that the priesthood fractured, some loyal to their queen and others set against her. This culminated in an attack on the palace, a rebellion that was only thwarted when Neferatem herself emerged, surrounded by a crackling nimbus of dark energy, and unleashed the full fury of her burgeoning necromantic abilities on her foes.

The remaining rebels were rounded up and executed, leaving only those in the Mortuary Cult whom W'soran could trust. With their aid, he and Neferatem continued their studies, focussing on one ritual above all others: the creation of the Elixir of Life that had granted Nagash his immortality. They eventually found success but in an unexpected form. The version of the Elixir they created gave them immortality, but it also fundamentally changed the nature of their beings. They became the first Vampires.



— NEFERATEM & THE CULT OF BLOOD —

The Mortuary Cult of Lahmia cut all its ties with the priests of other cities and began a reformation of its principles, encouraging female priests to join. The temple was rebuilt using stones taken from buildings of Khemri destroyed on Nagash's defeat, and the chambers of the temple glittered with gold and were decorated with statues and hieroglyphs telling the story of his rise to power. It became the Temple of Blood. The cults of the other Gods found themselves falling out of favour, struggling to be heard at court, and many of those priests left.

Neferatem invited her cousin Khalida Neferher, the Warrior-Queen of Lybaras, to join her cult. Khalida rejected her offer, suspicious of the changes going on in Lahmia and devout in her own worship of Asaph, the Asp Goddess. Worried that Khalida knew her secret, Neferatem accused her cousin of treason and attempted to assassinate her during a feast, drawing her into a duel before all the nobles of the Lahmian court. Neferatem's Vampiric strength gave her victory, and whilst Khalida lay dying, the Vampire bit her own tongue and kissed her cousin, transferring her curse. Devout Khalida prayed as she died, and her prayer was answered; Asaph drew the taint out of her blood and replaced it with poison, granting Khalida a holy death. It is said that although her death was holy, it was not complete, and Khalida lived on as the eternal guardian of Asaph's temple. Neferatem, thwarted in her attempt to gain a powerful ally, cast the remaining priests of the other Gods out of Lahmia.

During this period of change, Neferatem had been secretly feeding on the populace of her city, arousing the suspicion of Abhorash, the love-struck captain of her guards. Abhorash was horrified to discover his love's true nature, but he could not long resist her commands. He drank of the Elixir of Life at her bidding, and as his nature changed, so too did his protests. Neferatem and W'soran spread their curse to many at the Lahmian Court this way, including Chief Judge Maatmeses and the court vizier, Harakhte. So began her Deathless Court, the trueborns who would be masters of the lesser Vampires they created.

Abhorash still felt twinges of his goodness from life and created a set of rules for the trueborn to follow, ostensibly as a way of protecting themselves from discovery. They would only prey on criminals and slaves, not ordinary citizens, from then on. Also, they were forbidden from feuding amongst themselves, and no trueborn could kill another. Thus, when Neferatem's brother Ushoran learned of the Elixir and stole a draught of it for himself, she could not punish him, and Ushoran, the lowly Lord of Masques, was permitted to join the Deathless Court.

Under its ageless queen, Lahmia became a city known for its religious intolerance and the harshness of its laws. Agents of the other cities began stirring up rebellion, horrified by the spread of the Cult of Blood and its veneration of Nagash,

the Great Heretic. When the insurrection came, it was more brutally destroyed by Neferatem than the previous rebellion, earning her the name Neferata, meaning "Beautiful Death."

THE FALL OF LAHMIA

Although the rebellion failed, the other cities of Nehekhara still wished harm to come to Lahmia. General Setep of Khemri, whose legion had conquered lands as far away as the south of what would later become the Empire, was foremost amongst this coalition. Amongst his soldiers was a masterful tactician called Vashanesh, who was of Nagash's own blood. Betraying Setep, Vashanesh travelled to Lahmia to warn them of this planned attack.

Vashanesh so impressed Neferata she gave him the last of the Elixir of Life (which none have been able to recreate since) and made him her husband, King of Lahmia and co-ruler of its growing population of Vampires. Together they plotted to keep the other cities of Nehekhara distant from each other, creating a network of spies that split the nation for centuries, disrupting all attempts to unify the people against them.

After centuries of uncontested rule, it was King Alcadizaar the Conqueror who finally managed to mobilise the disparate armies and bring war to Lahmia by invoking the names of the old Gods of Nehekhara. He laid siege to the city at the head of an army composed of warriors from all of the cities, as well as the territories he had added to the realm, carved out



of Araby and the Southlands. Arriving at the city, they were horrified to be met not only by the military of Lahmia but also by an army of the dead raised from their rest by W'soran. Fighting back their fear, Alcadizaar's troops brought battle to the Undead.

Though outnumbered, the army of Lahmia could be continually replenished, the dead rising as soon as they fell. Their mortal followers proved less reliable, and traitors amongst them turned against their masters and allowed the Nehekharans to storm the city. The chariots of the Jackal Squadron of Marahk coated the streets with blood, and those Vampires who did not flee were forced to do battle on

the steps of the temple. Abhorash lead the defence for a full week, withstanding the spells of Zandri's high priests and the alchemical fire of their war machines. Finally, the temple was burned to the ground, and Abhorash was forced to flee with several of his sons-in-darkness, the last of his compassion for the living finally burned out of him. They travelled far, and their slaughter of the Orcs of what later became the Badlands is still famed.

The other surviving Vampires, including Neferata, W'soran, Ushoran, Maatmeses, and Harakhte fled to the north where they came across a reborn Nagash in the midst of raising an Undead army of his own.

— THE HOUNDS OF NAGASH —

It was no coincidence that the Vampires came across Nagash. Through his agent, W'soran, Nagash had manipulated them from the first and lent them his magical aid from a distance during the siege of Lahmia. When Neferata learned the full extent of W'soran's manipulation, she was furious, even more so when Nagash passed her over to offer his distant relative Vashanesh a position as leader of his forces. Nagash had crafted a ring that would allow the Vampire who wore it to return from the dead even more easily than they already could, but through that ring, Nagash would control all of Vampirekind. Vashanesh accepted the ring, and at Nagash's command, the Vampires led his army to Khemri.

Although at first the Vampires were eager to serve as Nagash's lieutenants to gain revenge on Alcadizaar and regain Lahmia,

it became apparent their survival was irrelevant to Nagash. He hurled them carelessly against the enemy as he would his mindless Undead troops, and he cared not for rebuilding Lahmia and sought, instead, to destroy all of Nehekhar. Bound by the power of the ring Vashanesh wore, they were unable to disobey Nagash or even his second-in-command, Arkhan the Black.

Vashanesh hit on an ingenious solution to the problem. Suspecting the control Nagash exerted relied on a living Vampire wearing the ring, and believing the Great Necromancer's assurance it would return him from the grave, Vashanesh allowed Alcadizaar to cut him down at the height of a battle. The Vampires were freed from their control, and only W'soran remained; the others scattered to the winds



after bickering over where to go and who deserved to lead them. Maatmeses and Harakhte vanished out of history, though there are rumours of Vampires in far Cathay and the Southlands who may be of their lost bloodlines. Ushoran settled in Strigos. Neferata travelled widely, influencing the nations of man from their foundings and inserting her daughters in privileged positions amongst them.

W'soran stayed by Nagash's side whilst he cursed and ranted at the fickleness of Vampires. Upon Nagash's defeat, W'soran took many of his master's writings and studied them with the aid of his acolytes and his apprentice, Melkhior, transcribing his notes in the dread *Grimoire Necronium*. His mastery of necromancy grew so profoundly that he was able to limit the red thirst that drove Vampires to live dangerously close to mankind, though the effect of this change was to hideously twist his line's physical form. His reward for this feat was death at Melkhior's hand.

Vashanesh eventually returned as Nagash has promised he would, and he spent the next few centuries testing the limits of the ring. Even if Nagash had truly died after being abandoned by the Vampires, which seemed unlikely, the ring had allowed Arkhan to control them as well. Who knew how many other favoured servants Nagash had who would be capable of turning the Vampires into their slaves? Vashanesh set about mastering certain magical arts to make the ring his slave, rather than vice versa.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE STRIGOI

Whilst many of the Vampires hid from Nagash, fearing he would control them once more, Ushoran discovered a fledgling nation who worshipped the Accursed One as a God. The country of Strigos in the shadow of the World's Edge Mountains was then ruled by a shaman named Kadon who wore an ancient crown that gave him magical powers. Ushoran recognised this as the Crown of Nagash, which had been borne here by his murderer. Enough of Nagash had been absorbed by the crown that it possessed a reflection of him that could speak through it to the crown's bearer, though this shadow of Nagash was subservient to the will of the bearer. Ushoran saw an opportunity to assert his dominance over Nagash and be the

first of his kind brave enough to form a new kingdom of the undying.

Insinuating himself at the court of Strigos, Ushoran spread his curse to those he saw possessed of a thirst for power like his own, and eventually, his coalition deposed Kadon. Learning a lesson from the rulership of Lahmia, he enforced a strict rule of law, allowing his kind to feed only on criminals. Strigos became one of the most crime-free nations of history.

Proud of his achievement, Ushoran sent messengers to invite his sister to his court that she might bask in his glory. Neferata's contemptuous response was to use her influence over the tribes of man to send them to war with Strigos. Ushoran led an army against this enemy, who were little more than barbarians and no real threat to him. Whilst he was thus distracted, a huge Orc horde swept down from the mountains like a green tidal wave, engulfing Strigos. Ushoran rushed back to his people's aid, and at the city of Mourkain, he did battle with the Orcs. Although he managed to slay their warlord, an Orc shaman defeated Ushoran, and his followers, the Strigoi, were forced to flee as the Greenskins demolished Strigos.

The Strigoi sought refuge with the other bloodlines but found none. The Vampires had strictly segregated themselves, partly for their own safety (reasoning that in small numbers they would be less likely to either court resistance as they had in Lahmia or attract the attentions of Nagash) and partly out of unwillingness to compete for the limited resource of blood. As each of the trueborn stamped their own personality on those they chose to join them, this segregation became exaggerated, until the bloodlines became openly hostile towards each other. Vashanesh contemptuously killed several of the Strigoi who turned to him for aid, Abhorash's Blood Dragons hunted them for sport, Neferata's Lahmians continued to turn Humans against them, and W'soran's Necrarchs used them in their necromantic experiments.

In desperation, the Strigoi began dwelling on the edges of civilisation, in tombs and in graveyards. Normally, Vampires will not feed on the blood of those not recently dead, as it gives little sustenance and tastes of ash. The Strigoi cared not and fed on the blood and even the flesh of those long-deceased. In doing so they became twisted, bestial mockeries of their kind.

— VAMPIRES AND EMPIRES —

Four hundred years after the fall of Strigos, a Strigoi named Vorag Bloodytooth attempted to reclaim their lands. Playing on his kind's kinship with the Ghouls, he united an army of them that he led against the Red Cloud tribe of Goblins. Those he did not kill were enslaved and forced to build a fortress, which still exists somewhere east of the Plain of Bones. Next, he turned his rag-tag army of carrion-eaters on the Grey Hag tribe. It was in battle against them that a missile launched from a bolt thrower pierced his heart and ended the reign of Vorag Bloodytooth.

Over the next two thousand years, many Vampires gave in to the ancient urge that was manifest in Lahmia and Strigos and attempted to found or take their own domains. Neferata stole Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs; Luther Harkon carved the Vampire Coast out of Lustria; Walach Harkon made Blood Keep his own; the Red Duke of Aquitaine cut a swathe through Bretonnia before being slain and then returned from the grave and made another attempt; Nourgul the Necrarch terrorised Estalia in the War of Blood. Almost unnoticed in the annals of history, Vashanesh travelled to the land of Sylvania

that he had first seen as a soldier in the Legion of Setep, and calling himself "Prince Vladimír," he aided Vanhel in crafting an Undead host to defeat the Skaven who threatened the land in the wake of the Black Death. Content with this change he had wrought in history, he returned to hiding for another 700 years.

When he came back, it was under the name Vlad von Carstein.

THE BEGINNING OF THE VAMPIRE COUNTS

At this point, Sylvania was suffering under the rule of Otto von Drak. Von Drak came from a long line of dark wizards and necromancers who had built their castles on gathering points of the mystical energy that pervades Sylvania and had used that power in rituals of sacrifice. He was a madman who stuck peasants' heads on pikes for fun, once arrived at a feast riding a bear, owned a thousand hats, and was convinced he was the reincarnation of Sigmar—at least, whilst he was drunk he was. Bandits and bands of vicious mercenaries harried the people, and their barons treated them little better.

Count von Drak had no heirs and hated his younger brother Leopold, next in line for the throne, with a burning passion. He tried to find a husband for his daughter Isabella from outside the province, with little luck. Von Drak fell ill with suspicious quickness, and whilst he lay on his deathbed, Vlad von Carstein arrived at Castle Drakenhof and asked for Isabella's hand in marriage. Leopold, furious at seeing

his chance to inherit vanish at the last possible moment, protested. Vlad hurled him from the castle's window; historians call this the First Defenestration of Drakenhof.

After they managed to wake the priest, Vlad von Carstein was married to Isabella there and then. Mad old Von Drak died moments afterwards.

After Vlad installed himself as the new ruler of the province, Bernhoff the Butcher, one of the mercenary captains who lived by raiding villages at the head of a company of murderers and scoundrels, heard of the new count and saw a chance for fame and riches. He rode into town and demanded the count pay him tribute. Vlad faced him alone in the town square, and in front of a crowd of his people, he cut Bernhoff the Butcher down and then slaughtered every one of his followers. Vlad's popularity was assured.

Here at last was a count who dealt with the bandits, lowered the taxes to practically nothing, enforced the laws, and never drunkenly ordered random executions for his amusement. He sometimes executed his rebellious liegemen, accounting for the Second through Thirteenth Defenestrations of Drakenhof, and he drove away many of the priests, but still, his people loved him.

When Isabella fell sick with a wasting illness, he had his people's sympathy. Flowers piled up at the gates, but the doctors could not cure her. Vlad finally sent the doctors away, saying he would treat her himself. Thus far, he had respected Isabella's wishes and refrained from passing his curse to her, but he was unable to stand by and watch his true love die. Even the undying ones claim to feel love, and what had started as a marriage of convenience had blossomed into a love stronger even than he had felt for Neferata. Three nights after Vlad gave Isabella the Blood Kiss, she emerged onto the battlements to her people's wonder and relief, looking pale but cured.

The people remained quiet as the years passed by and Count von Carstein rebuilt the estates, even as the Undead began appearing more often on the edges of settlements, quietly standing as if on guard—and even as unexplained deaths became more frequent. Those who opposed Von Carstein, claiming the marriage and his claim to nobility were shams, died mysteriously. They were eaten by wolves, died of fright, or "fell" from high windows (some scholars count the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Defenestrations of Drakenhof amongst these, but it is a matter of heated debate). More loyal subjects, who shared the count and countesses' pallid skin and preference for a nocturnal lifestyle, replaced them.

Over the two centuries of their rule, the Vampires changed their identities many times to hide the fact they never aged, but pretending to be their own heirs was a ruse that could not work forever. The strange deaths and un-aging nobles eventually drew Witch Hunters to investigate, more of them than had been seen since Grand Theogonist Jurgen VI failed in his call for a Crusade against Sylvania. None of them returned from the province.



A VAMPIRE TIMELINE

Date	Event
-1950	Nagash rules Khemri and distils the Elixir of Life from Human blood.
-1650	After a hundred years of war with the priest kings, Nagash flees north. His works are destroyed, except for those that are saved by Neferatem of Lahmia under the influence of High Priest W'soran.
-1590	A rebellion in Lahmia is brutally quashed. Neferatem becomes known as Neferata.
-1200	King Alcadizaar the Conqueror besieges Lahmia and drives out the Vampires. They return for a time at the head of Nagash's army before scattering.
-1151	Nagash performs the Great Ritual, turning Nehekhara into the Land of the Dead.
-1147	Kadon finds Nagash's crown in the frozen grip of a dead man floating in the Blind River, and under its influence, Kadon creates Strigos.
-1020	Strigos falls to the Orcs. Mourkain is razed and its people scattered, butchered, or enslaved.
-600	Vorag Bloodytooth unites the scattered tribes of Ghouls that lurk below Cripple Peak and becomes the first Ghoul King. His army almost destroys the Red Cloud Goblin tribe. The survivors are enslaved and forced to build the Fortress of Vorag, east of the Plain of Bones. Vorag turns next to the Grey Hag tribe, who retreat into their mountain lair. Vorag is hit by a bolt thrower during the siege and is killed. His Fortress is forgotten and falls into ruins.
-40	Nagash is reborn again.
15	Sigmar defeats Nagash, who curses the Vampires for failing to aid him.
876	Norse raiders bound for Lustria capture an Imperial merchant ship, unwittingly taking on board the Vampire Luthor Harkon's body. When the ship arrives, the crew have all been enslaved or made Undead. Luthor creates an empire in southern Lustria, the Vampire Coast.
1116	Vanhel raises an army made of dead plague victims with the aid of the mysterious Prince Vladimir and fights off the Skaven.
1454	The Red Duke, of Abhorash's line, terrorises Aquitaine. He is defeated at the Battle of Ceren Fields, pierced by the king's own lance.
1681	The Night of the Restless Dead. In the aftermath, Sylvania gains its independence from Stirland.
1750	Nourgul the Nocrarch razes all the land between the Irrana Mountains and the Southern Sea in what the Estalians call the War of Blood. After a month-long siege of Magritta, he enters the temple of Myrmidia to steal the Tome of Wisdom. His ashes are later found beside it.
1797	Vlad von Carstein marries Isabella von Drak and becomes Count of Sylvania.
1932	The Red Duke rises again and kills the Duke of Aquitaine. He is defeated once more and flees into the Forest of Chalons. None know if he dwells there still.
1999	The minions of Vlad von Carstein enter Mordheim to collect the Warpstone that fell there. Vlad plans to use the Warpstone to aid him in summoning a legion of the Undead.
2010	On Geheimnisnacht (the night of the Day of Mystery), Vlad von Carstein raises an army of the dead, and the Wars of the Vampire Counts begin. He devastates Ostermark, and his armies rampage between Stirland and the northern border.
2025	The grand master of the Knights of the White Wolf slays Vlad von Carstein.
2026	Vlad von Carstein returns and slays the grand master of the Knights of the White Wolf.
2051	Vlad von Carstein is slain at the Siege of Altdorf. Isabella von Carstein commits suicide in her grief. The remaining Vampire counts bicker over who is to be the next Count of Sylvania.
2056	A string of deaths amongst the nobles of Nuln is blamed on the Undead, creating a Vampire panic that results in the beheadings of several innocents.
2057	Fritz and Pieter von Carstein, two of Vlad's get, besiege Middenheim and Nuln, respectively, in attempts to prove themselves. A silver-tipped arrow ends Fritz before he can cause much harm to the City of the Wolf. Pieter is more successful, butchering many before he is slain by a descendant of Vanhel the Necromancer, Helmut van Hel, who seeks to redress his forefather's sins.

A VAMPIRE TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

Date	Event
2100	Konrad von Carstein, ruler of Sylvania, is stopped at the Battle of the Four Armies.
2121	Konrad von Carstein is defeated at battle of Grim Moor.
2132	Mannfred von Carstein attacks the Empire, almost captures Altdorf in the Winter War, and is forced to retreat back to Sylvania.
2145	The Wars of the Vampire Counts are finally ended when Mannfred von Carstein is defeated at Hel Fenn.
2158	Gottlieb the Stern leads the Cleansing of Sylvania, hoping to prevent the Von Carsteins from ever returning.
2503	Mannfred von Carstein is resurrected.
2522	The Storm of Chaos. Mannfred von Carstein's army breaks Archaon's horde and then returns to Sylvania.

Note: Dates are given according to the Imperial Calendar. Entries are frequently based on unreliable sources, such as the accounts of necromancers, heretics, adventurers, and other undesirables, especially those pre-dating the founding of the Empire. They are approximate and provided as a rough guide only.

In 2010, Vlad decided it was time to reveal his true nature to the world and declare war on the squabbling and divided rulers of the Empire before they united against him, as had happened in Nehekhara. His army contained not only a legion of the dead resurrected by the magic he had learned that was strengthened by the magical bond he had forged between the land of Sylvania and his bloodline, but it also contained his own loyal people. The men of Sylvania marched alongside the Undead all through the Wars of the Vampire Counts. Those battles have been recounted elsewhere and will not be repeated here.

THE RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE COUNTS

Vlad, who was Vashanesh, was killed for the final time by the grand theogonist at the Siege of Altdorf. Countess Emmanuelle died at the Night Siege of Castle Tempelhof. Konrad von Carstein fell at the Battle of Grim Moor and Mannfred at the Battle of Hel Fenn. And so, the Vampire counts passed out of history for a time.

Almost four hundred years later, Mannfred returned due to the foolish actions of a mortal necromancer. Quietly, he began to rebuild his Sylvania. Rumours spread of pale nobles taking land back from the Stirlanders who had been given it in the wake of Hel Fenn. It was not until the Storm of Chaos that the truth behind these rumours, the full extent of Mannfred's return, was made known.

Several Chaos warbands splintered from Vardek Crom after his battle with the

Dwarfs of Karak Kadrin and entered the Empire through Sylvania. The dead rose up against them as if the very land itself was angered, and they were driven out. Angered by this trespass and seeing the threat posed to those destined to be his cattle in the wider Empire, Mannfred went to war sooner than he had planned. At the village of Sokh, he raised a force from those already killed in battle and added them to his existing army. This combined force struck the decisive blow that broke Archaon's horde.

After the Lord of the End Times had fled, the victorious armies of the Empire and the Vampire faced each other silently. Mannfred's army had been raised before he was fully prepared. The Imperial army, though it suffered losses, was united as one, and behind him in Sylvania the remaining forces of Vardek Crom were threatening to sweep down from the mountains like a dark tidal wave. Faced with a grand theogonist as forceful as the one who slew Vlad, and mindful of the lesson of Ushoran and the fall of Strigos, Mannfred turned his army and returned to Sylvania to cement his power there.

The Vampire counts of old may have been monsters, but there are those amongst the Sylvanians today who remember them fondly. They were fearsome yet charismatic rulers, possessed of great strength and obvious intelligence. Vlad's love for Isabella, who was his confidante and the only one who could cool his temper when it flared, is still the subject of romantic poems written by wistful youths.

Mannfred's defeat of the forces of Chaos earned him the respect of many.

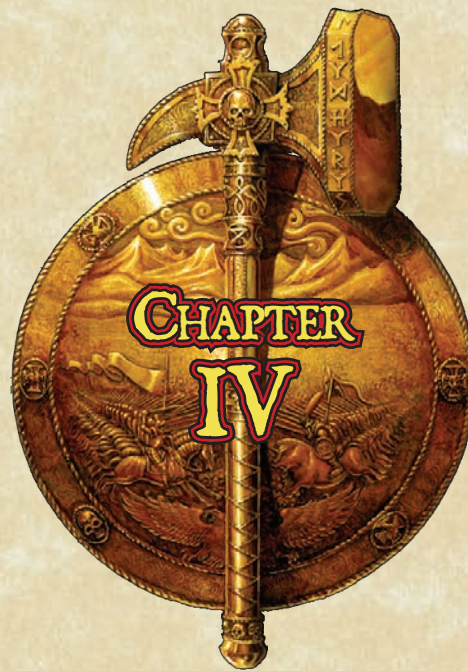
In Sylvania, there are those who would gladly return to the Von Carstein rule, despite the cost.



NATURE OF THE BEAST

"My kiss shall bring you eternity...and the greatest of power."

—COUNTESS LUCRETIA



The life of a Vampire begins in blood. Despite common myth, simply being bitten or drained by a Vampire is not sufficient to turn anyone into a child of blood. The transformation only comes from a shared ritual where both parties drink deeply of each other. It is called the Dark Kiss or the Blood Kiss by romantics both mortal and immortal, but it is nothing so gentle. It is a predatory act, throats torn

open and blood flowing strong and thick down welcome throats. And yet it is well named, for it is also an act of extreme intimacy, considered a gift of great affection by the giver. In most cases, this is also true of the receiver. Although they may fear the unknown that lies beyond, very few are taken unwillingly, and none regret the gift once received.

— THE BLOOD KISS —

Those who are given the Kiss do have reason to be afraid, for the experience is as terrifying as it is exhilarating. The hot, hunting blood of the Vampire flows into the veins, burning out the weak, mortal blood as it goes. What happens to the life and soul of the Human during this transformation is unknown, and every Vampire that speaks of it has described something different. Some mortal priests suggest that they enter the Garden of Morr but are turned back by the God because they are an abomination to his sight. Scholars and wizards sometimes talk of them moving between the realms, trapped forever between this world and the next.

"Let us not be foolish here and talk as if to children. It is painful, extremely so. The flesh tears, the blood gushes forth, the pain is like a blow to the head, knocking one senseless. One feels one's very life is draining away, and with that comes panic and terror. But pain and terror can be weathered and controlled. And what in this world worth having does not come with a price of pain or suffering?"

—LADY ARIETTE VON CARSTEIN

"Do not think of them as the dead, nor as one of the living. These are natural states, and the Vampire is nothing natural. For him, such distinctions lose meaning, and his very existence mocks the black gates that Morr set between these two realms."

—MIKAELUS ÜRLÉN, AGENT OF THE SHROUD

Whatever the truth, every Vampire awakens with a newly forged spirit. They retain the thoughts and memories of the mortal they once were, but within them now is a dark beast, driving them to hunt and prey, to revel in their every twisted vice, and to glory in all their dark desires. Some see this desire as a separate force—the Beast Within—whilst others believe it is simply the benefit of no longer being burdened with the weight of a soul.

The nature of this change is much debated by those with a mind for such philosophising, for it asks a fundamental question about the nature of man.

Such questions are no doubt clouded by the rarefied

selection of those who join the ranks of the Vampires. Although the method of deciding who will receive the gift is individual to each Vampire, each will only choose those who will bring great glory to their bloodline. Such a mortal must be beyond exceptional, a person of great aspect and incredible will. They also typically possess some dark spark, a certain shadow in their soul that their parent-in-darkness can see, coiled and waiting. Although some Vampires are less particular than others, there is no society upon the Old World more fiercely exclusive than the Vampires. Thus the creation of a Vampire is never done lightly or frivolously, but soberly, reverently, passionately, and with fear of reparations should the choice be unwise—for the parent is very often blamed for the sins of the child.

Those who are chosen are inevitably drawn from the admirers and subjects that every Vampire soon enough attracts. The popularity of the Vampire is strong and far-reaching and why not? They are everything mortals aspire to be: physical and mental titans; masters of lands, armies, lore and sorcery; and, freed from the ravages of time, they only increase in stature with each passing year. It is the vast number of adherent mortals who wish to

"Certainly there is much that is unchanged after receiving the Dark Kiss: a mortal seeing an acquaintance turned will still know his friend's manner, mien, and habits, still see in him a reflection of his drives and his dreams. And yet those dreams would now be as if seen through a glass darkly: a shadowed and twisted reflection of those manners and habits, drives without any reign or restriction, and dreams darker than any mortal could ever dream. But is that darkness something added, or does it lie within the mortal already, waiting only for its desperate release? Are we mortals dreaming we are Vampires, or were we Vampires dreaming we were mortal?"

—LORD ARISTARCHUS, NECRARCH PHILOSOPHER

"If I ever had such a thing as a soul or an essence, I did not feel it leave me, nor do I sense its absence now. Indeed, if I am without life, I do not sense that either. And yet my senses are alive and overcome with sensation, as if for all my life until now I had but slumbered in a dark cave and only this day emerged into the light of the world. My eyes are now open and my spirit at last free. They call this madness, but I say it is the only truth."

—DOKTOR VEERHAFEN, EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICIAN LATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NULN

"You come to me with gifts and promises and expect me to be swayed by them? You believe that I owe you the Kiss because of your years of service? You are a greater fool than even I believed, and never shall you join my kin. We are guests at the ultimate masque, and your kind is simply not invited."

—QUEEN NEFERATA

become children of the night that provide another reason for the Vampires to be so careful in their selection—if it was too common a gift, everyone would clamour for it, and their ranks would soon be filled with the weak and stupid.

A few Vampires are so secluded they cannot be as selective as their other brethren. They may give the honour to those Ghouls or necromancers in their retinue who proved themselves worthy enough stewards, students, or lieutenants. Some may grant the gift to apprentices who show truly exceptional talent and a sufficiently consuming obsession with the field. Others are more discerning and have unusual and unique prerequisites in their selections. For example, the Blood Dragons search the world for the greatest warriors, whatever their class or origins. Any that meet their standards—typically that of being able to defend against their attacks—are taken under consideration.

All Vampires, however, maintain a singular prejudice against non-Humans. It is perhaps not impossible for a Dwarf, Elf, or Halfling to be made a Vampire, but it is unheard of for one of the blooded to break their inveterate snobbery towards these races.

— FIRE IN THE BLOOD —

The change is quick. For a few hours, the newborn Vampire is weakened and disoriented, but this soon fades. As it does, so comes the exhilaration of new life and the ecstasy of first-tasted power. Within moments, the Vampire realises all his Human limitations are gone; instead, he is filled with an unholy power and vitality, his strength and speed rushing to supernatural levels as the new blood courses through him.

Their strength exceeds the strongest man; they can

toss an armoured opponent on their backs as easily as if they were a new born-babe. Their flesh and skin toughens as if like leather, their blood refuses to take any poison or disease, and no withering of age or infirmity ever comes

"He had no weapon drawn nor visible. But I saw him draw and cut down two men before my blade was halfway from its scabbard. Four more of my best fell before I could reach him, and then he knocked my sword from my hands like I was nought but a child. So I ran. I never saw anything move like that, and I was charged to fight men, not Daemons."

—DONNEL ARMANSSUN, MERCENARY SERGEANT

upon them. They can see as well in the dark as any owl and as far as any hawk. They can smell like the hunting hound and outrun the wolf in the chase. At will, their nails will become claws, and their teeth grow long and sharp, their jaw strong enough to snap the neck of their prey if need be. They



are the ultimate hunter, a wolf in Human form, and the first blush of that incredible new strength is more thrilling than first love or first blood.

There is something else new, too; something far more powerful than simple physical changes. The mind is cleansed and perfected. Where there was doubt, there is now certainty. Where there was weakness, there is now resolution. And where there was fear of death, there is now unshakeable courage. For the first time, the Vampire is truly the master of his own soul and knows something of what it means to be a God. And with this self-mastery also comes the power to master lesser creatures; the Vampire is master of himself and of all he surveys.

This rush of power and control is intoxicating, often overwhelmingly so. Many Vampires lose themselves in it and begin a rush of excess and glorification in their new strength and control. Innocents are slaughtered by the score, rivals are butchered, old enemies tortured, taboos are broken, and dark heresies committed. This behaviour often brings the hawthorn and the silver down fast, however, so a wise parent-in-darkness stays close to his spawn to make sure they do not lose themselves entirely. Keeping them near at hand, they teach them the ways of their new blood and, more importantly, the ways of their new bloodline.

It is not that Vampires must dwell in secret but rather that there are often better ways of doing things, protocols to be observed, and duties to be attended. To feed too widely or too wildly is oft considered inappropriate. Just as the nobles of the land have a duty to their serfs, even though their lives

are nothing to them, the shepherd must tend the flock even though he feeds upon them. Vampires have a duty to watch over the lesser creatures that surround them—firstly, to protect them so they may provide a steady flow of sustenance but more importantly to give their flock something far greater than each other to admire, something to cause them to know terror, awe, and majesty. Men need kings, they say, but kings need Vampires.

Secrecy, seclusion, and subtlety are useful, too. The wolf hunts best in moonlight, when his prey cannot see him coming. That said, wholesale carnage or other large indulgences are not particularly taboo and are accepted as typical behaviour of the young-blooded. The only requirement is that it be done with the proper care and attitude, as determined by their new blood line and master. Each Vampire has his own traditions and will school his get to follow them.

Just as Vampires are extremely careful in the selection of new blood-kin, so too are they careful to immerse their chosen in the traditions and beliefs of their bloodline from the outset—sometimes even before the Blood Kiss is given. Many Vampires take those they consider to be potential brethren as apprentices, assistants, courtiers, or companions for many years before they bestow the Kiss, as well as after. This gives them time to ensure the quality of their chosen's character and instruct them in how to act. That this arrangement also provides a steady supply of blood is a happy side effect.

— THE RED THIRST —

Another, equally orgiastic addition accompanies the increase in strength and speed—the mind of the predator. Not only do Vampires have the senses of a hunting beast, they can also hear, smell, and see blood, wherever it hides. In a crowded room, a Vampire can hear every heartbeat, feel the blood pouring through thick jugular veins, and smell even the tiniest wound as if it were the aroma of a blazing roast ox. And with the predator's desire also come the predator's skills. The Vampire is naturally adept at moving silently and staying invisible. Without even thinking about it, he is a natural tracker, an instinctual hunter, and a perfect combatant. The wolf needs no instruction to know when to spring and where to drive his fangs deep and neither does the Vampire. He kills by instinct, without any thought or hesitation, and he adores every minute of it.

The price of course is that there remains a need to be a predator, to feed on the blood of Humans. This is the only need a Vampire ever has; from the day he receives the Kiss, he no longer needs sleep, food, drink, warmth, nor even the air, though Vampires can (and many do) still take pleasure in these things. The Red Thirst, however, is not like any mortal hunger. It is a constant awareness of need, a tide of desire that rises and falls but is always present, keeping the predator's instinct never far from the mind. Even after drinking to the fill, the thirst never fully departs, and after long periods without feeding, it becomes an undeniable torment far beyond any mortal addiction to mandrake or other narcotics. Most who try to resist the thirst go mad and fall into a frenzy of killing and devouring, and no feasting from then on, however voluminous, will ever calm them. Others fall into a weakness or malaise that can never be lifted. Although some Vampires continue to seek ways to avoid this need to feed, most learn early and well that the thirst cannot and should not be denied.

There are exceptions; there are always exceptions in creatures that remain so close to a race as prone to variation and Chaos as humanity. The Necrarchs have discovered ways to feed their timeless existence with Warpstone or dark magic, rather than blood. The Strigoi make do with the blood of the dead, or of vermin, by necessity. Most famously, Abhorash, the

great founder of the Blood Dragons, finally sated his thirst forever by drinking the blood of a great Dragon.

Centuries of age dull the need also. Experiments and explorations continue—not because there is any value in the lives of the cattle they need to ingest but because being bound forever to constant and regular dependence on mortals grates upon those who know no other need. Feeding takes time away from laboratories, campaigns, and other higher pursuits.

The Human flavour is unique to each person and even depends on their recent activities. A drunk's blood will be mildly alcoholic to a Vampire; disease can pollute both the taste and the effect; morning blood is lighter and sweeter than that taken at night. Drinking is always enjoyable, however, even for the most abstinent of Vampires, satisfying at once both their great physical urge and their terrible mental need to prey, devour, and dominate. Plus, even when drawn from the lowest of Humans, it tastes good.

Vampires need not drink every night. Newly made Vampires often do, and rare are those who can go more than a few weeks without needing another taste. Those Vampires who have lived a few centuries may only need to feed a few times a year, and the oldest perhaps only a few times a century. Such times refer only to when the lack of feeding causes physical weakness—many feel the desire to feed long before this, and it ebbs and flows like any mortal predilection. Yet even when blood is necessary to prevent weakness, the need still does not countermand reason—the likelihood of losing

themselves in frenzy or other depredations only arises after a much longer denial. There are ways to reduce the need; the Strigoi have found long periods of sleep in their tombs stave off the thirst. Others simply bear the consequences of lapsed feasting—the dried-out flesh, the sluggish movement, the weaker will—without fear and compensate with restoratives and aids as best they can. They will drink only when they are ready, they say, rather than be victims of their body's bestial desires.

Whether drinking for need or pleasure, Vampires rarely take more than a pint of blood, often less. Only in a blood frenzy or some great

*"Let there ever be wine, and blood, and slaughter!
Restraint is for mortals."*

—ISABELLA VON CARSTEIN

"What is it, in this blood, that so dominates my body, mind, and soul? Does the Chaos taint upon the Human race make their blood flow with magic, like some distilled formula of Warpstone? I know none who take sustenance in the magic-devoid Halflings, and there are many great Rituals which depend on the spilling of Human blood. Perhaps it is that the Winds of Magic let us buffet the passing of time, and we have simply found the easiest way for our souls to harness them."

—LORD ARISTARCHUS, NECRARCH PHILOSOPHER

"Halflings are watery and bland, Dwarves thicker to the point of being flat and stagnant. One does not drink such things unless one absolutely has to. Elves are like well-aged claret—rich but often overly sweet, a treat best reserved for special occasions or as a dessert. Personally, I prefer a Kislevite—of Gospodar descent if possible—but they are a little strong to serve at a dinner party."

—LADY ARIETTE VON CARSTEIN

carelessness will more be taken, or if there is some special reason, such as revenge, or a preference for the taste. The best places to feed are the neck and wrist, but some Vampires have more exotic tastes, perhaps favouring eating the eyes whole or drinking only from the thighs. There is also preference in how it is sought; some prefer to take blood from Humans they have hunted down, others only take what is given willingly.

— THE CURSE OF NAGASH —

There are other prices to be paid for the gift of the Blood Kiss beyond the thirst for blood. For their betrayal, Nagash cursed all Vampires, and the curse has been passed down with the blood forever more; with their great strength would come great weaknesses. The curses upon their blood are many, and they may manifest in many ways and intensities. One Vampire's great nemesis may be absolutely nothing to another, though this may not be apparent (to the Vampire or their hunter) until the element is encountered. Therefore—and to ensure their prey remain ever confused—most Vampires take measures against all possible threats.

THE SUN

Of all the curses, this is the harshest of all. The sun is an ever-present threat and burns with a terrible intensity. Vampires sensitive to its touch are weakened instantly upon exposure to its rays, and their un-life is burnt away with every minute they remain exposed. It is an agonising experience and a savage way to die. Almost all Vampires that have lost their un-life whom were not slain by the sword were claimed by the terrible fury of sunlight. There are, however, preventative steps that can be taken.

Covered head to toe in cloak and hood, a Vampire is safe, though the risk of losing the cloak is rather high. Bindings and bandages are sometimes preferred instead. Many Vampires, particularly the Von Carsteins, have the power to gather storms at will, and a thick layer of clouds seems quite sufficient protection. Then there are logistics; it is no accident, for example, that Sylvania has the highest annual rainfall of any province in the Empire. Mountain shadows and thick forests are also favoured domains. It is also not that unusual for a noble to remain inside during daylight hours, especially given the gigantic size of most of Sylvania's castles, or the need for covered walkways and thick shutters to protect against all that rain. Servants can fetch supplies, and there are indoor gardens, tennis courts, and even jousting lists inside great halls to entertain both mind and body.

In some cases, Vampires don't even need to step outside to hunt, their minions hunting for them or their victims eagerly lining up to give their blood to their masters. It is not uncommon, then, for Vampires to become recluses or shut-ins, addicted to the safety and comfort of their familiar walls. Count von Sangster is said to have never set foot outside his great library for over seven hundred years.

In the darker parts of Sylvania, cowed mortals compete for the honour of being tapped by their Von Carstein lords, whilst some Blood Dragons still follow Abhorash's strictures of only feeding upon criminals and villains. Even amongst these rituals, however, there is much variation. As with everything a Vampire does, the habits of feeding are both bound by familial tradition, yet also affectedly individual.

SILVER

Even more than the sun, the Vampire fears silver. The sun is ever-present but easily avoided, whereas a silver blade can be drawn unseen from the assassin's scabbard at any moment. Silver is also the time-honoured weapon of the Vampire hunter, and there is nothing more egregious to the children of blood than those few mortals who would dare try to end the lives of their betters. Silver bites deep into the Vampire's normally resistant flesh. It stings the blood, burns the skin, and the wounds it leaves are slow to heal. Some Vampires are so sensitive to the threat of this metal they can sense it unseen, as a pricking on their skin or smell in their nostrils.

Vampire hunting tradition makes frequent reference to "the hawthorn and the silver." Hawthorn is a sturdy hardwood, excellent for crafting stakes like the one that famously killed Tzarina Kattarin of Kislev centuries ago, but it has no special properties beyond that. It does no more damage than any other sharpened stick, which is to say less than a sword. Yet



SOULS OF MAGIC?

Necrarch scholars believe upon receiving the Blood Kiss, the Vampire's soul becomes an ever-gushing spring of *True Dhar*, the source of dark magic. Whether this is true or not, the magical nature of the Vampire is usually obvious to anyone gifted with Witchsight. To those with Witchsight, Vampires are wreathed in *Shyish*, the Purple Wind, and the aura of *Dhar* like long, flowing coats. Likewise, any non-magically gifted mortal with Sixth Sense feels uncomfortable and inexplicably upset in the presence of such unearthly creatures. There are rumours of Vampires who can cloud their Aethyric appearance, but most magisters do not believe it—or at least tell themselves they do not.

the legend lives on, much to the amusement and benefit of the Vampires.

WITCHBANE AND DAEMONSROOT

The power of garlic is another myth Vampires find amusing, especially due to its source. Being epicures, a dish soaked in the stuff is distasteful to many palettes (though those Vampires who prey in Bretonnia often prefer it). The frightened citizens of Sylvania know of other herbs that do offer some protection, however. The small white flowers of Witchbane and the tangled barbs of Daemonsroot (sometimes also called Graveroot by fearful peasants unwilling to speak the name of such beasts) offer some small defence to a house that bears them. The pain is not great, and a Vampire can typically get past such wards if he wishes too. If he is seeking an easy feed, however, he will skip houses or doorways so adorned in favour of a more expedient feast.

SIGNS OF THE GODS

The power of priests can create a force against creatures of magic and the Aethyr, and this also seems to have power over the unnatural Vampires. But a symbol wielded by an unbeliever is useless—it must be accompanied by faith. The stronger the faith, the more power the wielder can have over the Vampire. Likewise, only the blessing of a true and faithful priest will cause a blade to act like silver, and a temple or shrine will only prevent a Vampire from entering if it is given dutiful worship by a faithful congregation. Gardens of Morr in disrepair are more often havens for Vampires than fortresses against them, and many Vampire hunters have perished with false relics in their hands.

Even a strong faith is no guarantee. Vampires are creatures of incredible will, the kind of will that can cause even the most devout priest to doubt his conviction. The older the Vampire, the stronger he is and the less reliable

are these wards—and some Vampires are, as with all the curses, simply immune. The exception is when Vampires are themselves faithful or were when they were mortal. For these unfortunates, the power of the Gods is much harder to dismiss and has a great hold upon them. The few cases where this has happened, where a monastic Vampire has feared the wrath of his own once-worshipped God, have no doubt given birth to the myth of the symbol's effectiveness.

RUNNING WATER

Just as the sun has turned its back on the Vampire, so too have the other great givers of life: the streams and rivers feeding the lands of the Old World. As such, Vampires are burnt and weakened just as they are by the sun if they try to wade or ford over any running water more than a yard across. Flying or leaping over these bodies of water causes no such damage, nor does using any sort of bridge, from a simple fallen tree to a great viaduct of stone. Rowing or sailing is also safe, but the risk of disaster is very great. Those that seek to cross large bodies of water sometimes take to a deep slumber in their coffins to marshal their strength and prevent any accidents on deck. It was this precaution that allowed Luthor Harkon to reach the distant shores of Lustria, far across the Great Western Ocean.

THE MIRROR

The vanity of Vampires causes many to consider this curse to be the most cruel. Thankfully, outside of the great Hall of Mirrors in the Imperial Palace in Altdorf or the dressing rooms of the great theatres, mirrors of any great size or quality are still a rarity in the Empire. Even noble women are unlikely to have much more than a handheld looking glass—servants are instead employed to apply make-up, and

great portraits are used to remind one of one's beauty and stature. Vampires also use portraits this way, but those who were not born into quality have little sense of what they are missing. More disturbing for a Vampire, regardless of their breeding, is the lack of reflection in everyday things such as

"When the hunt is loosed, the hounds are held back so the fox may make ground and the chase have length in it. Such are our curses too, for the Gods seek to raise the most sport they can from our hunting."

—SIR TIBERIUS KAEI, BLOOD DRAGON

"The sun and the silver cannot harm us—not if we will them not to. Not if we truly believe they will not."

—KONRAD VON CARSTEIN

water barrels, rain puddles, or polished brass. However, the expectation of seeing one's image in such things is so ingrained, its presence is often assumed, and the lack of it goes unnoticed by others. Thus, this curse is less useful for Vampire hunters than one may think, except for those hawk-eyed fanatics whose eyes never stop darting to shined surfaces and who carry a hand mirror everywhere.

Those Vampires who have no reflection typically also cast no shadow, whether from candle, torch, or the sun. Conversely, those who can walk in day are very often found to cast both shadow and reflection. Vampire scholars believe both these afflictions stem again from the sun turning its back on their kind, refusing them the benefit of its light and all others. Others suggest it is simply the never-ending irony of the universe that the world's most beautiful creatures are denied the wonder of gazing upon themselves, even in simple silhouette.

— THE LIFE IMMORTAL —

With great power comes great ambition. Without it, the Vampire's life sinks irrevocably into ennui and, eventually, self-destruction. The average Vampire lives a life of great privilege. Power over others and over his environment comes easily to him, his strength is instantaneously acquired and effortlessly retained, and magic and knowledge are easily mastered. Servants, lackeys, and disciples, both alive and dead, flock to him without any action on his part. Many Vampires do not even need to seek blood, for there is no end to the enamoured mortals keen for the honour of providing it. Nor does the Vampire make obeisance to any God or Daemon, or swear allegiance to any lord or master, or follow any moral or legal code save his own. No fear holds him back from action, and no remorse follows him afterwards. What the Vampire wants is within both his power and will to simply take. Mortals dream of having the freedom to pursue their great desires. Vampires already have this freedom, so instead they must dream dreams far greater than mortals could ever conceive.

So it is that Vampires are rarely content to live a steady life of regularly feeding in safe obscurity and princely comfort. Even the least ambitious find themselves wandering the world, seeking out fresh challenges and new sensations. Few can resist the urge to conquer, none the urge to rule. For some, this typically means holding dominion over lands and armies and using the latter to ever extend the former. Others may also enjoy conquest but with subtlety and seduction, as well as ruling with secret manipulation. Vampires may gather courts around them and plan their conquests of revenge, whilst some, such as the Blood Dragons and the Necrarchs, care little for the conquest of people or lands, preferring instead to conquer abstract goals. The Dragons seek the perfection of knightly skills and disciplines, whilst the Necrarchs seek to master necromancy and the power over life and death that it offers.

There are other common obsessions and distractions: love, lust, art, scholarship, great discovery or grand

FIRE AND THE SWORD

Given how notoriously difficult it is to slay a Vampire, there are great many methods employed by those who would hunt Vampires. Common practices include beheading and burning the parts separately. Others stuff the Vampire's orifices with garlic and Daemonsroot, cut off its arms and legs, nail the parts to a church door, and bury the whole mess in a site where a priest of Morr once voided his bowels. Perhaps the most common method to ensuring a Vampire stays dead is to remove its head, scoop out its heart, chop off its limbs, fill its mouth with garlic, and burn each piece in separate fires at least 13 feet apart. Then, one must collect the ashes and place them in a silver urn, which is packed in a chest full of salt and buried upside down. Only then can a hunter feel confident that his foe is slain.

accomplishment, vanity in every possible form and configuration, indulging the senses to all possible extents and levels, and of course rivalry and revenge. The Lahmians and the Von Carsteins are rife with internecine conflicts, from ancient feuds aimed at nothing short of genocide to pay recompense for heinous crimes, to ten fresh oaths of vengeance sworn before breakfast for the most trivial of perceived insults. Rarely, however, do these conflicts escalate into outright war against their own kind—the immortality of their race has created a slight taboo of taking life from one of their own, except when they face a direct challenge



VAMPIRES AND HUMANITY

Many have wondered if the Vampires' need to feed on Humans makes them irredeemable monsters and undeniable enemies of all humanity. Could a Vampire ever truly care for a Human, despite his predatory nature? Certainly Vampires are free of any fetter of morality; they serve their desires only and know no constraint upon their actions, so the question of good or evil is meaningless to them. They see nothing good or noble in acting for the protection of a man or mankind, just as they see nothing wrong or evil in raising the dead or drinking blood. Many Vampires do look favourably upon mortals, though, and many come to enjoy their company and their ways, even desiring to protect them. However, just as a shepherd may know his sheep well, the Vampires are incapable of seeing their prey as anything approaching their level. A Vampire may indeed care for his flock, but in the end, the sheep is still just a sheep, and even the most charitable shepherd will not shed a tear when it is time for the roasting... unless you're from Averland.

ROMANCE

The legends of Vlad and Isabella and Genevieve and Oswald are not entirely romantic creations. Or perhaps it is better to say Vampires are typically extremely romantic and dramatic creatures, so it is unavoidable that their everyday deeds create poetry, plays, and operas. A Vampire never does anything by halves. So when they do fall in love, it is not unknown for it to be with a mortal, despite their superiority over them. The inevitable conclusion of these affairs is with the mortal being given the Kiss, for what lover could do more for his paramour than give her eternity? And what lover could refuse the chance to be more like her beloved? Similarly, great friends or close family may be made Vampires as well, for to deny them power and immortality would be selfish and cruel.

from a singular enemy (or a disobedient servant). Besides, death is such a short victory, whereas a great humiliation can cause pain for centuries. This rule also holds true for any upstart mortals who dare to inconvenience a Vampire's un-life—death is a small revenge when they could visit agonies upon their wives, their children, their friends and their friends' families, mistresses, cobblers, bakers, butchers, candlestick makers, pets, servants, cousins twice removed, and groups of hired adventurers, all for the next ten generations.

Whether it is epic revenge or grandiose vanity they seek, a Vampire's courtly life provides plenty of opportunities to plan, plot, and scheme about how they will achieve their aims. This is why many legends imply that Vampires are seers, able to predict the tide of battle or the plans of their opponent because they have foreseen all ends. The truth is that a plan formed and analysed over a century has few, if any, flaws and accounts for every counter

move. Whether seeking bloody conquest or mastery of a more abstract domain, the vast designs of the Vampire are little short of perfect—in their impossible conception, their meticulous construction, and in their dazzling execution.

"It seems to me that life is like a fast-flowing stream, and the mortals upon the world are like sticks and leaves caught helpless in its grip, dragged on through life, age, and into death. But we, the children of blood, have stepped beyond the river, rooted outside of its urging flow, standing as stones whilst life and time pass by. Thus we see all things come and go, empires rise and fall, all things once strong become weak. All things, of course, save ourselves."

—MANNFRED VON CARSTEIN

Perhaps the other reason that the plans of a Vampire are so grandiose and irrevocable is that not even death, the great leveller of mortal dreams, can stop them. A Vampire's flesh may be entirely destroyed and his ashes cast to the wind, but the Blood Kiss firmly ties their spirit to this world. It will never depart to Morr's resting garden, and as such, there is always some magic that will restore them to

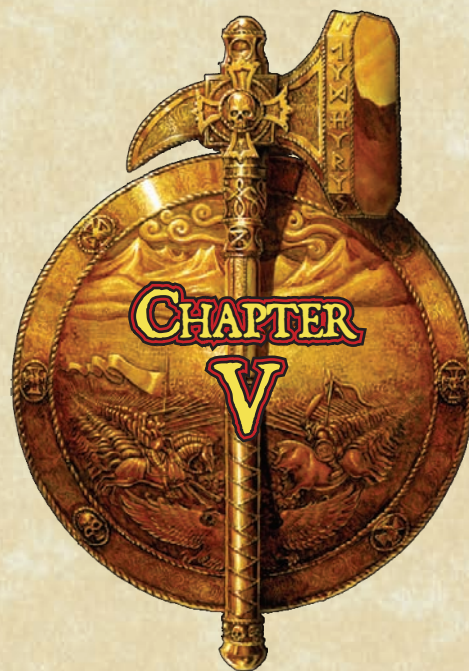
physical form. All that is required is someone with the will to bring them back. This is why, ultimately, the only currency worth anything to a Vampire is dominion over the world and the loyalty of subjects. To die is an inconvenience; to be forgotten is the only true death a Vampire knows—and the only thing he truly fears.



THE BLOODLINES

"And in the east I beheld a great mountain, and in caves beneath it I saw seven great wellsprings, spewing forth tainted blood. And I saw the blood flow down the mountain into seven great rivers. Two flowed to the south, and five flowed to the north, into the lands of the Empire and down into an endless sea. And the men who drank of the river became as beasts, and the cattle died, and the earth turned to ash, and across the land there was nought but sorrow and lamenting."

—FROM THE VISIONS OF SAINT EHRLICH, SIGMARITE FRIAR



All the Vampires of the Old World are descendants of the First Children, the five original Vampires who drank the Elixir of Life: Neferata, Vashanesh, W'soran, Ushoran, and Abhorash. Each passed on their strengths and beliefs to their children-in-darkness, in their blood and in their teachings, and they in turn passed it to their own get. In the thousands of years that followed, the bloodlines have mingled, been polluted, and bred countless variations on the pure forms of the original scions. Whilst some scholars of Vampirism claim

that there are five distinct species, or families, there are a great many more varieties that transcend such convenient limits. Those who have seen one Vampire cannot therefore think to know them all. Yet there is one thing that unites them; they are all, without exception, the deadliest of foes.

This chapter presents a survey of sample Vampire breeds, arranged according to their famous bloodlines and common motivations.

— THE BLOOD DRAGONS: KNIGHTS ETERNAL —

To be a Blood Dragon is to seek perfect mastery of the art of combat. All else is secondary. The other bloodlines care for other things, little things, such as conquest, power, or mastery of magic. The Dragons are beyond such petty concerns. They believe not in a nation or a leader but solely in the purity of their quest. They seek to become the ultimate warriors, to transcend even the pre-eminent nature of the Vampire and become something like Gods. And if that path requires the slaughter of a hundred, or a thousand, or a million, then so be it. Blades must be tested, after all.

HISTORY

The Blood Dragons began with duty. Abhorash was not just the greatest warrior in old Nehekhara but also the greatest servant to Queen Neferata. When he discovered she had become a Vampire, he was horrified, but he was her

bondsman, and her will was his. For her desire, he sought out victims to sate her hunger. For her protection, he sought out criminals and enemies, so the people would not rise up against their lords. And for her favour, he too drank of the Elixir and joined his mistress across death's divide.

But Abhorash was not just a servant to his queen but to an idea: the honour of the Lahmian throne, the nobility of those who sat upon it, and their sacred duty to their loyal citizens. In the name of Lahmia, Abhorash resisted the hunger as long as he could, but eventually he could not hold back his dark desires. When he finally succumbed, his thirst was so great he slaughtered twelve men.

The next day, and every year afterwards on that day, he lit twelve candles in the temple to remember the lives he had taken. From then on, he fed only

"If there be Gods, then they must smile to see their gifts so well used. If there are not, then I am surely the closest thing to them. Life and death are mine to deal, to those whom I consider worthy of each."

—LADY SIGISMUNDA, GUARDIAN OF THE FERLANGEN PASS

OTHER BLOODLINES

History records two other members of the First Children: Maatmeses, the very fat and very corrupt chief justice and Harakhthe, the brilliant and sinister court vizier. After the betrayal of Nagash, however, they were not heard of again. Most believe they were killed by Nagash, but it is also possible they journeyed elsewhere and created their own lines. Marco Polare's writings of Cathay include legends of immortal eunuch sorcerers that drink the souls of men, and there are tales from the jungles of Ind and the Southlands about mad priests who tear out men's hearts to feed to their dark Gods. Perhaps these are the children of Maatmeses and Harakhthe; perhaps one day they may pay a visit to their cousins.

upon the criminals of his city and, even then, sparingly. He also devoted himself obsessively to mastering his gift with swordplay, believing the discipline of the warrior was the way to discipline his new desires.

Abhorash drew up a great charter for the Vampire Lords of Lahmia, so they might follow his example and honour their noble duties, whatever their needs. But the First Children mocked and ignored his charter, particularly the pompous Ushoran, and resumed their lust and decadence. Abhorash knew what this would cost them, but he could not be disloyal to his masters.

Abhorash's predictions proved correct, and the violent and decadent ways of Lahmia did not go unnoticed by the rest of the kingdom of Khemri. Neferata's nephew, Alcadizaar, could not abide the threat the city presented to his power, and the bloodlust of its rulers gave him all the ammunition he needed to destroy them. He raised a gigantic army from across the kingdom and bore down upon Lahmia. There was but one man who could turn them back—Abhorash, now the leader of the city's armies, and dubbed the Lord of Blood.

For months, Abhorash and his men held the much larger force at bay. Thousands of the attackers were slaughtered, yet it was not enough. Slowly, the army of Alcadizaar whittled down Abhorash's men, broke down the walls, and poured into the city, looting, burning, and killing. At the Great Temple of Neferata, Abhorash fought on alone, and none could best him. But around him, the invaders had already won. His city was in flames, his people butchered, and he had let it happen whilst defending a queen no longer worthy of that title, for she had failed to protect her people and had already fled in fear. With this realisation, Abhorash cast away all loyalty to his queen, her house, and her line. Seeing also the unending suffering and devastation created by the armies of Alcadizaar, Abhorash also cast away all his love for humanity, swearing to destroy them as they had destroyed his city. Gathering only his armour and weapons and his trusted lieutenants, he left the city to its fate. From then on, he lit the twelve candles to remind him humanity deserved their extinction, for they were nothing less than animals, and he was a fool to have ever grieved for them.

He travelled northwards, searching the Old World for a sign to give meaning to his existence. Passing through the Badlands, he and his followers let loose the predatory instincts they had so long tried to keep in check upon the

Greenskins that lived there. Such was Abhorash's skill that to this day the Orc shamans still tell the legends of the decimation wrought upon them by the "army" of throat-rippers. Ancient tribes of Humans also have legends of this time, as do the Dwarfs, which speak of the five figures who left nothing but death in their wake. But these and all other feastings did nothing to sate Abhorash's rage or his lack of purpose. That his animalistic drives still held mastery over him made him furious, for it made him no better than the lords he had spurned or the Human vermin that surrounded him. He could never be a true warrior whilst the hunger controlled him.

After many years, Abhorash and his followers came to a mountain whose pinnacle was wreathed in flames. Alone and furious for new destruction, Abhorash climbed to the top to discover a blood-red Dragon of immense size. Legend has it that as the battle between them raged, the mountains shook, and great storms split stones asunder. For a day and a night they fought, until finally, the great Vampire struck down the elder wyrm, and as his foe lay dying, he pounced upon it and drank deep.

Then Abhorash let out a cry of triumph, for his search was over. In the red Dragon's blood, he had found surcease of his bestial yearnings, and with its ending, his fear of the sun faded as well. He was now the ultimate creature, possessing all the strength and power of a Vampire and none of its weaknesses. He had attained perfection, and in that, he had found something new to believe in—himself.

Abhorash urged his disciples to follow his example and hone their martial skills until they became the ultimate warriors, and in doing so transcend Vampirism and all other limitations of the weak, mortal world. His followers swore to do so, and they took the name the Blood Dragons.

SOCIETY AND OUTLOOK

Soon after Abhorash underwent his transformation, he disappeared, leaving his men with no particular idea how to follow his example. So it was Abhorash's favourite lieutenant, Walach Harkon, who gave the Blood Dragons a structure to their goal. Soon after Abhorash's disappearance, Walach came upon a small fortress in the Grey Mountains, northwest of Nuln. Known as Blood Keep, it was home to the Ordo Draconis, an ancient and respected order of Sigmarite knights

whose banner was a black drake on a red field. To Walach, there could be no clearer sign. That very night he entered Blood Keep and challenged each knight to kill him. In the morning, all those he considered weak were dead and raised as Wights, whilst the strongest and most skilful had been given the Blood Kiss. These reborn knights pledged their unives to Walach, their new grand master, and the Knights of the Blood Dragons were born.

There was much in the knightly life to suit the Vampires' quest. The devotion to a higher cause gave focus to their training and testing. However, they valued no lives save their own, had no borders to protect, and were full of Abhorash's disdain for humanity. So it was not long before their knightly ways were rife with indulgence and excess. They fed upon all who travelled in the mountains, without care for Abhorash's old statutes, and they ended each hunt with a banquet of blood.

Soon enough, the corruption of the Ordo Draconis was discovered by the Witch Hunter Gunther Van Hal. He rallied four entire templar orders, and together, they besieged Blood Keep. For three years the siege raged before the walls were finally breached, the Vampires slaughtered, and the fortress smashed to rubble. The Empire believed the darkness had passed. But many of the Vampires survived the destruction of the keep and took its spirit and ideas with them out into the world. Some walked the world alone, whilst others formed their own orders and carried on the traditions of Walach—or their own variation upon them.

As a result, the Blood Dragons are the most irregular and haphazard of all the bloodlines. It is made up of individuals or small groups, each with their own versions of the code of the Dragons, each having little or no contact with the others, and what contact they have is often hostile. If it were not for their iron discipline, the Dragons would have descended into internal conflict long ago. Perhaps, too, they are held in check by Abhorash's parting promise that he would be watching them.

The unifying characteristics of the Blood Dragons are few, but they are indelible. All the Dragons swear by Abhorash's credo: to seek to master their mind and body through mastering the art of mortal combat. This single goal dominates their every thought and action, a fact that causes the other bloodlines to think the Dragons terribly dull and single-minded. However, that they have little desire to conquer or to rule does not mean they cannot do these things. Should the need arise, they can raise armies and rain down dark magic as well as any of their brethren.

And their singular pursuit makes them no less an enemy of humanity. The Blood Dragons are perhaps the most disdainful of all the bloodlines because they see a great potential in Human abilities, a potential that goes wasted again and again, lost in weakness and stupidity. For other Dragons, Human existence is not even worth their consideration—it is not unusual for a Blood Dragon to slaughter an entire village simply to test the new edge on his blade or ride down



a hundred men to practice a new technique. To the Blood Dragons, every Human in the world can be broken down into two categories: a worthy opponent or a training dummy. The only time a Dragon might show mercy is if he encountered an opponent who has great potential to one day be a worthy opponent; it may be better to let such a mortal become something interesting rather than snuff him out with the rest of the vermin.

Despite their aloof nature and singular obsession, even the Dragons sometimes attract followers. If a Blood Dragon finds fame with his particular approach to the quest or a devastating new combat style, others may flock to imitate and learn. So it is that new orders spring up or take root in already existing orders or organisations. The infamous Red Duke of Aquitaine was such a creature, beginning as a lone knight but ending up with an entire army at his command, both mortal and immortal, as word of his martial skill spread across Bretonnia. The Knights of Irrana were a mortal order of Estalian knights until their grand master concluded that the techniques of Abhorash far outstripped those of Myrmidia and brought his whole unit into the darkness to join him. And there are many more such groups, small and large.

The rest are lone hunters, renegades and vagabond knights who roam the Old World alone and unaided. Sometimes they are found guarding remote bridges or fords, testing all who would cross in mortal combat. Others live an austere existence in high mountain fortresses or secret caves, perhaps training those who have the tenacity to seek them out or perhaps just killing them for food. Alternately, they may hide amongst Humans, mixing with the noble classes or slipping amongst the ranks of knightly or monastic orders. A Blood Dragon will be anyone as long as it allows him to practice his swordplay and feed when needed. In the blood-soaked fields and streets of the Old World, the Blood Dragons can hide easily, and after the sinister Lahmians, are the most difficult of all the bloodlines to uncover.

Isolation is not just a practical issue. Many Blood Dragons believe it is necessary to truly follow the example of Abhorash. In isolation, the knight can discover his true

strength and in solitude perhaps find moments of peace from the rage burning in his heart. Such moments are rare, though, for the Blood Dragon is by nature a creature of turmoil, ruled by base desires yet driven to rise above them. It is an enduring testament to the incredible will of the Blood Dragons that so few of them succumb to insanity.

It is their isolation that is their sole weaknesses, however. Without the support of their fellow Dragons or armies of the Undead, a large body of men can sometimes overcome one of them if the Humans are cunning and plan well. The Dragons are not stupid, however, and the worst—and last—mistake a mortal can make is to underestimate what Blood Dragons can and are willing to do.

FEEDING AND BREEDING

The Dragon's discipline allows him to go longer periods than his brethren without feeding, but all except his vanished leader must still partake of blood to survive. However, the Dragons are so steeped in death that this is not something they find difficult. They are well named, for the Blood Dragons are rarely far from freshly spilled blood, and after a Blood Dragon has struck, few are left alive to care that he drinks the blood of his victims before passing on. The Dragons have little fear of exposure anyway, for there are so few who can challenge them. Let the watch, or the soldiers, or the Vampire hunters come—the Blood Dragon can always use more practice.

Unlike all the other bloodlines, Dragons typically find the practice of feeding upon willing suppliers to be decadent and perverse, the kind of thing that leads to taking too much pleasure in the feeding. There is nothing wrong with momentarily relishing the strength that blood provides, but most reject anything more as deterring them from their quest. Blood Dragons will also not lower themselves to the level of the Strigoi, who feed on vermin or the dead.

This is not simply a matter of pride. Men are above animals, so their blood is more potent; Dragons are above men, so their blood is the most potent of all. Therefore, Blood

THE BLOOD DRAGON OATH

The original oath, apparently dictated by Abhorash to his followers after his battle with the wyrm, is short and simple, reading as follows:

"Let your blade be your only truth, let death be your only answer, and let your quest be for nought but to become more than what you are."

This oath is still sworn by most Blood Dragons when they receive the Kiss, but its wording allows much variation of interpretation, and it is even broken outright by some. Many Blood Dragons, for example, do not in fact use swords (those from Breton typically favour the lance instead), and each one has his own idea about exactly what being "more" means for them. It also offers no specific admonishing of drinking blood, nor any demand for exterminating the Human race, so the zeal for these goals also varies. All Blood Dragons agree, however, on letting death be their only answer. Whatever their final goal, it most certainly involves a vast amount of killing.

NIGHT RIDE

The moonlight hit his skin like ice water, fresh from a winter rain barrel. He remembered, dimly, that there had been a time when the sun's first rays at dawn had felt similarly invigorating, but that was a long time ago, and besides, he'd been alive—or something like it.

As he galloped through the forest, he ran the word over his tongue again. *Alive*. It was worse than a joke. It was a cruel deception, a bawd's trick, as if the Gods and their popinjay priests were shysters on the streets of Altdorf—to call that living and, worse, to presume to call this a death. He felt the strength in his muscles as he stood high in the stirrups, strength beyond anything he had ever had, even in his first blush of manhood. He tasted the cool night, savoured the wind in his hair, the smell of the horse's flank, the tantalising tang of battle to come. He felt more alive now than he ever could have imagined. There was a time, he remembered again, when he had longed to ride into battle, to lose himself in the slaughter, free from all concerns but that immediate struggle of kill or be killed. But as he now was, it seemed most every moment was like that. Even without a present challenge of arms, he felt rich with glory, and the thunder of hooves and drums hammered in his heart even when the battles were long passed.

Dead, they might call him, Daemon too, or abomination, but truly, he was beyond such distinctions. Alive or dead, he was a knight. A true and pure creature of battle, with a blood of steel and a soul—if he had ever had such a thing once, he knew he did now—of martial fire. He was a sword made flesh, a master of combat, a storm of destruction and defeat. And there was battle ahead, and he rode hard to meet it, a smile spreading fast across his lips and death coming fast in his wake.

Dragons often seek out the blood of creatures that may be greater than men, in the hope of getting some element of what Abhorash gained from the Dragon. For some this involves eating nobles, or great heroes, or the ancient Elves. Others travel far to drink the blood of great creatures such as Griffons, Wyverns, or Giants. Meloch the Giant Killer is said to sate his thirst for a century—and grow ever stronger—with each Giant he kills.

The Blood Dragons do not view their need to feed as an affliction but rather a passing need, like the need to sharpen a sword or water a horse. Just as they would not trust a knight who does not care for his weapons, they will also not grant the Blood Kiss to one who could not be trusted with the responsibility of feeding appropriately. However, what is considered appropriate varies greatly; some believe whilst they thirst, filling their cup is their lordly due, whilst others see the smallest sip a shameful reminder of their continuing failure. Note, however, the latter types have no problem with reaping mortal lives like so much wheat, only with drinking their blood afterwards. The former is a sign of strength, the latter a sign of weakness.

Far more important than their attitude to feeding is a prospective child-of-darkness' dedication to the art of war. The Dragons seek out only the most exceptional of warriors to receive the Kiss. They must be both incredibly skilled and extremely dedicated to their craft, those who make even their fellow warriors uncomfortable or weary with their endless obsession. Beyond that, however, there are no conditions—the art of war makes no distinction on nationality, creed, or gender. To measure the true calibre of a likely candidate, they often face them down in mortal combat. Those who survive are taken on as a squire and student, and if they continue to show promise, they will be brought into un-life.

There are exceptions. Trusted servants or long-time

companions are sometimes given the Kiss, so they may continue to stand alongside the Vampire as the centuries pass. Occasionally, a Blood Dragon falls in love and gives his beloved the Kiss, so they will not part. Should the others of his line discover that a Dragon has abandoned his quest out of love or other worldly concerns, they remove the fallen knight from their order. However, due to their careful selection processes and their diligent self-regulation, this is a rare occurrence.



DESIGNS AND STRATAGEMS

Blood Keep was perfectly located for the Vampire knights within, as it was situated on a mountain pass remote enough to escape great attention but busy enough to provide a ready supply of bodyguards and mercenaries to battle. Since its fall, other Dragons have sought out similar locations, but there are a limited amount of passes, fords, and bridges even in an Empire as large as Sigmar's. The alternative is to join or overtake a knightly order or group of soldiers. In the ideal case, the order will be remote from its command structure, so the Vampires can go decades without being discovered. They may even take orders from their officers and attend the battles and manoeuvres demanded of them. Who can say how many of the Empire's great victories were won only because the Blood Dragons were secretly amongst the troops?

Of course, should the Vampires be discovered and marked for destruction, the Blood Dragons welcome yet another chance to test their skills. For individuals, this is just another sword fight, but for the more established societies or orders, this can be all-out war. Defending their domain represents the majority of the few times that the Blood Dragons actually ride out to war. The other occasions are typically due to a need to revenge an insult or to remind mortals of their place in the world.

Though they excel in many forms of warfare, their obsession with martial perfection and personal glory on the battlefield is often at the expense of the command of their army. They are also often lacking in necromantic powers, and even those who are so gifted seldom harness those abilities beyond summoning troops. They eschew the dark arts, just as they eschew gunpowder, considering them the weapons of cowards

and fools. The Blood Dragons believe in what is solid and can be tested: the strength of steel, the power of muscle, and the courage of the heart. And time and again, they have proven this is all they need to win the day, and annihilate their enemies.

NOTABLE BLOOD DRAGONS

The following are amongst the most powerful and well-known of the Blood Dragons.

ABHORASH, LORD OF BLOOD

The most legendary of all Blood Dragons was and is their first master, the Dragon Slayer, the Scourge of the Greenskins, the Blade Immortal, the Lord of Blood, Abhorash the Great, Abhorash the Wanderer, Abhorash the Master. But his location is unknown. Some say he wandered north, deep into the Chaos Wastes, or east into the land of the Giants to seek out even greater conquests. Others say he followed the path of Sigmar and became a God; others say he still walks amongst their ranks in the disguise of a young thrall, watching for the most worthy amongst them. Still others think of the tales of other Dragon slayers, like Gilles de Breton and Lord Amara of Hoeth, and wonder how many faces their master might wear in a life as long as his. Whatever the case, none have seen or spoken to him in centuries, and his location and his plans remain mysterious.

WALACH HARKON, GRAND MASTER OF BLOOD KEEP

Second only to Abhorash in fame is the great Walach Harkon. It was he who gave the Blood Dragons their structure as a knightly order, turning Abhorash's ideas into a reality. Harkon does not share his master's piety, however—he does not, for example, feed only on criminals—but he does share his devotion to perfection and believes the vows of knighthood are the best way to achieve it. Many believe Harkon takes this too far, as he insists on mimicking every aspect of knightly ceremony, including, since the death of his great love Aurora, absolute chastity. Harkon hears no argument, however, and considers anyone who does not follow his traditions to the letter to be undisciplined swine, better culled with the Humans than allowed to further insult the purity of the order.

Harkon was also greatly insulted by the mortals who removed him from his glorious Blood Keep. His goal, now that he has returned, is to make both the upstart mortals and his fellow Vampires recognise once again the singular superiority of Blood Keep and its knights. Walach has sent word to all the Blood Dragons that those who consider themselves worthy should join him in rebuilding the keep and in his new vision for the order. This is not just to reinstate the keep but to use it as the centre for his campaign for total extermination of the Human race. With the main body of Empire troops still in the west after the Storm of Chaos, there would be little to stop an army of Vampires from the east, and if Harkon

gathers his strength quickly, he could very easily make his dream a reality.

Walach Harkon

Blood Dragon Vampire Lord, ex-Count, ex-Thrall, ex-Knight, ex-Squire

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
84%	48%	70%	82%	75%	58%	61%	69%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
5	28	7	8	6	4	3	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry +20%, History +10%, Strategy/Tactics +20%), Animal Care, Charm +10%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia +20%, the Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow +20%, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Gossip +10%, Heal, Intimidate +10%, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Read/Write, Ride +20%, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Silent Move, Speak Language (Breton +10%, Classical, Reikspiel +20%, Tilean), Torture

Talents: Dark Magic, Disarm, Etiquette, Lightning Parry, Lightning Reflexes, Menacing, Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Flail, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun

Traits: Blood Gift (Blademaster, Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Piercing Strike, Quickblood, Scent Blood, Unhallowed Soul, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead, Unstoppable Blows

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Greatsword

Trappings: Nightmare with Saddle and Harness, Blood Keep and all its Knights

THE RED DUKE, SCOURGE OF AQUITAINE

In 1454 (or 476 in the Bretonnian calendar) a knight clad in blood-red armour began a campaign of conquest across the western provinces of Bretonnia. There were many theories on his identity, but none ever saw his face. His fame grew however, both as a brutal killer and an unmatched swordsman, and as many Bretons joined his colours for the latter as cursed his name for the former. His rampage was only stopped when he was slain by the Bretonnian King, also known as the Duke of Aquitaine, at the Battle of Ceren Field. Almost five hundred years later, the Red Duke rode out of his grave. He quickly cast a bloody shadow over Aquitaine, burning villages and slaughtering thousands, fighting his way to its current duke and taking his murderous revenge upon him. Once again, the knights of Bretonnia rallied to drive

back this menace, but this time he was not slain. He and his remaining men fled to the Forest of Chalons where they still prey upon travellers and plan their next attack. As it is now over five hundred years since his first return, it seems likely he will not strike soon, if at all.

Why the duke is driven to destroy the Bretons is not known, but again there are many stories. Some say he is a knight who was greatly wronged and falsely disinherited long ago. Some say he is the dark counterpart to the Green Knight, the great swordsman of the Fey, and he exists to test the arms and hearts of the grail knights. Whatever the truth, many questing knights take the quest of seeking him out and ending his evil once and for all. Those few who find him never return.

The Red Duke

Blood Dragon Count, ex-Thrall, ex-Questing knight, ex-Knight of the Realm, ex-Knight Errant

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
85%	38%	75%	80%	73%	50%	67%	62%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	26	7	8	6	1	2	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry +10%, History, Religion, Strategy/Tactics +20%), Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm +10%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia +20%, the Empire), Dodge Blow +20%, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Outdoor Survival, Perception +20%, Ride +20%, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (Battle Tongue) +10%, Shadowing, Speak Language (Breton +10%, Classical, Reikspiel +10%), Torture

Talents: Acute Hearing, Disarm, Etiquette, Lightning Parry, Luck, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun, Sturdy, Very Resilient, Very Strong, Virtue of Audacity, Virtue of Chivalry, Warrior Born

Traits: Blood Gift (Blademaster, Blood Drain, Curse of the Revenant, Furious Charge, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Unhallowed Soul, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Lance, Sword

Trappings: Nightmare with Saddle and Harness, Shield, Black Iron Helm that hides all but his burning red eyes

SIR TIBERIUS KAEI

Sir Kael was once a member of the Knights of the White Wolf, devoting his life to the service of Ulric and to mastering his passions for the sword and for the hunt. When he realised his mortal body would never be able to

match the abilities of the gaunt stranger who had bested him at the ford, he made a very easy choice. Since then, Kael has followed in the footsteps of Abhorash, wandering the Empire and seeking great martial challenges and epic hunts to test his mettle. He sees little point fighting men when nature can provide so many far more brutal and terrible killers. Until he is ready to face a Dragon, he tests himself against Wyverns, Griffons, Trolls and other dark things of the forests and mountains. Kael is no friend to Humans, but the only thing he truly values is the glory and thrill of the hunt. He may therefore be merciful if the Humans can lead him to a truly great challenge, such as a Dragon Ogre or a Giant. On the other hand, he is equally likely to use mortals as bait or as beaters to draw out such a beast. Lacking the presence of such a beast, he instead will give them a night's head start and begin hunting them on the morrow.

Sir Tiberius Kael

Blood Dragon Thrall, ex-Knight, ex-Squire

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
71%	33%	58%	65%	60%	31%	57%	52%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	23	5	6	6	1	1	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, Strategy/Tactics), Animal Care, Animal Training, Charm, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Gossip, Perception, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel +10%)

Talents: Etiquette, Resistance to Poison, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Flail, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Warrior Born

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Terrible Blows, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Lance, Shield, Sword

Trappings: Claws and Scales of great Beasts, Collection of Pelts, Destrier with Saddle and Harness

ADVENTURE HOOKS

All of the following adventure hooks are excellent starting points for designing adventures that feature Blood Dragons prominently.

The Best of the Best

A Blood Dragon Vampire grants a particularly talented armoured a commission to produce a special suite of armour. The payment is more than the man would ever see in his lifetime, and despite his misgivings about his client, he agrees

THE BLOODY GRAIL



The history of the Knights of Bretonnia includes much that may be the influence of Blood Dragons or other Vampires. In 1813, Duke Merovech of Mousillon was censured by the king for his cruelty in keeping criminals impaled in his dining room. The duke responded by challenging the king to single combat. Merovech won, tore out the king's throat and drank his blood from a goblet. Horrified, the other lords waged war on Mousillon and annexed much of its land. Four hundred years later, Duke Maldred, lord of what remained, claimed to have found the Grail of the Lady and had all his knights drink from the wine that flowed from the heavy silver cup. The grail was proved false, and Maldred was routed and Mousillon prohibited from having a lord ever again. But the cup's liquid appeared to give Maldred's knights an unholy strength, and few Vampire hunters believe in coincidences.

Other knights also talk of being visited by the Lady of the Lake in their dreams, only this Lady is clad in dark robes and offers a grail full of blood-red wine, explaining that she must prepare the knights for the blood they soon will be called upon to spill in her name. Most do not drink. Most, but not all.

to take the job. Unfortunately, the suit he is to forge requires special materials that are far beyond this simple man's abilities to acquire. To this end, he hires a group of adventurers to procure the items for him for a cut of his payment. However, as the Characters make ready to find whatever it is that they need, rival armourers who have been spying on the one hired refuse to let their peer have all the coin and glory, and so each sets out to make a suit of his own in the hopes of stealing the contract. Rival adventuring groups are hired to acquire the rare materials, and the PCs must race to collect the goods lest they fail their employer and lose out on what should promise to be a lucrative reward.

Keep on the Borderlands

A once great Vampire withdrew from the world, overcome as he was by the great sadness, and in the time he has spent in his keep, he has wasted away, becoming a shadow of his former self. The Player Characters learn of this creature, and hoping to plunder his vaults, make to put this Undead creature to rest. What they don't know is that a few Blood Dragons have the same idea, except they want to prove their strength by pitting it against this famous Vampire. Thus, what seemed to be a rather easy task reveals itself to be one fraught with peril as the PCs must not only contend with the ancient Vampire but also a number of Blood Dragons who have no intention of allowing such a great and powerful Vampire succumb to the fumbled efforts of fools. His defeat must come at their hands, they believe, and they'll kill anyone seeking to steal their glory.

— THE LAHMIANS: DEATHLESS COURTIER —

The Lahmians may not have the brute strength of some of the other bloodlines, but they more than make up for this lack in cunning, deviousness, and their mastery of others. The Lahmians are secret string-pullers of the world, invisibly exerting untellable control over history. Their immortal plots are difficult for short-lived Humans to see, and some that were set in motion in antiquity have yet to come to fruition.

HISTORY

In ancient Nehekhar, women were forbidden from entering the priesthood and, therefore, forbidden from learning magic. This changed in the city of Lahmia under the rule of Queen Neferata, who created a sisterhood that enabled women to learn what was previously forbidden to them. Many were attracted to this sisterhood, even coming from the other cities to learn at Neferata's feet. By forbidding women from learning magic, the priests of Nehekhar ultimately drove many of them to learning the darkest magic, the necromancy of Nagash. From the most promising of these pupils, Neferata chose those who would become her progeny, Vampires of unearthly beauty and arcane learning.

When Lahmia fell, only a few of the sisterhood survived, fleeing at their mistress's side. First they fled from the forces of Alcadizaar and then from Nagash when he tried to coerce them into being his soldiers and slaves. Rejecting Nagash and the other bloodlines, Neferata and her daughters-in-darkness travelled to the Old World. As strange hermit-women and the exotic consorts of chieftains, the sisterhood gave prophetic advice as they gathered power and influence amongst the primitive tribes they found there. They first exercised this power in an attack of the kingdom of Strigos, which had fallen under the rule of Neferata's brother. After the fall of Strigos, the Lahmians exercised their power a second time, raising an army to take Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs and make it their own.

From Silver Pinnacle, Neferata coordinated the Lahmians and their manipulations. As Human civilisation changed, so too did they, growing from consorts and hermits to eccentric nobles and seductive spies. Remaining in her stronghold, Neferata too changed, growing cold and idle. As she fell into the malaise that claims many ancient Vampires, her control of her agents waned. Their loyalty was tested, and some, like Lady d'Acques of Bretonnia, defied her rules to make get of who they would. Others, like d'Acques' granddaughter-in-darkness Kattarin, the Vampire Tzarina of Kislev, defied Neferata by seeking power, preferring to rule the Humans now rather than at some ill-defined and distant time when their queen deemed it right. For a time, Lahmians squabbled and fought amongst themselves. Those

loyal to Neferata schemed against those who went rogue in a conflict that took place in the shadows and was rarely seen by mortal men.

Eventually, the wisdom of Neferata was proven right. The Vampire Tzarina was cast down by a society of Kislevites, and she became a symbol for the danger of displaying the Vampires' power before the world was ready to kneel before it. However, a fracture remained, and rogue Lahmians who are not of the sisterhood persist to this day. Knowing little of their heritage, they act independently, refuse to partake in the intrigues of Neferata, and bow to no one.

The sisterhood remain hidden, gathering power and invisibly twisting events to their own ends. They have been present at many of history's most important junctures, but none can say how much influence they had over events. Lady Lenore, the Mistress of Mousillon, was present at that city's downfall, but none can be sure whether she masterminded or merely observed the affair. Similarly, Countess Cheveaux is known to have walked the streets of Mordheim shortly after its cursing, and the Vampiress Serutat had the ear of many in Araby's court at the time of

the Crusades. Historians who pry into these matters find in them only their downfall, and many curious scholars have come to curious ends investigating things best left unknown.

"Behind every great man is a great woman. And behind those great women is me."

—NEFERATA, QUEEN OF THE LAHMIANS

PLOTS AND MACHINATIONS

The ultimate aim of the Lahmian Sisterhood is the ultimate aim of Neferata herself: a triumphant return to the city of Lahmia, where she may rule as the queen of a new Cult of Blood that worships only her. This has not proven easy to achieve. Lahmia, indeed the entire Land of the Dead, is controlled by the Tomb Kings. Still, the sisterhood sponsors expeditions to the Land of the Dead to battle these dread-lords or to recover items belonging to them. The tomb robbers, crusaders, and explorers who make up these expeditions are unaware of the true motives of the mysterious women who act as their patrons.

It would not be enough to regain Lahmia through force of arms if it were still a city of ruins. Lahmia must be regained as it was at its height, complete with a population of willing and worshipful slaves. To this end, the sisterhood has devotees amongst the nobility, deluded pawns and lovers who will one day, when their dominion is complete, lead their people south.

Additionally, those people must be willing blood-cattle, unable to fight back. To this end, the Lahmians manipulate religious conflicts, stirring up the age-old enmity between

the cults of Sigmar and Ulric, Ulric and Ranald, Ranald and Shallya, and so on. Simultaneously, they encourage humanistic ideas, helping agitators spread the word that the Gods are deceivers who have grown weak and old and should be disowned. Their hope is to create a world in which the Gods are abandoned, and without holy protection, their prey dare not resist.

The Lahmians have also protected mankind by strengthening them against other threats. It would achieve nothing to rule humanity only to watch them fall before the forces of Chaos. Nor would it do to have the Old World fall to the Von Carsteins, whose control of the nobility of Sylvania and periodic attempts to wage war on the Empire have been thorns in Neferata's side.

Neferata has grown to hate all of the other bloodlines over the years for their failure to hold Lahmia, their betrayal when they allowed Vashanesh to lead them rather than her, and the sin of existing and daring to rival her. Amongst her goals is the downfall and enslavement of the other bloodlines. It was due to Neferata that the primitive tribes attacked Strigos, Nourgul found his passage into the temple of Myrmidia where his doom waited unguarded, and the Tsarevich Pavel Society strives against the infiltration of the Von Carsteins to this day.

SOCIETY

Uniquely amongst the bloodlines, the Lahmians live alongside humanity, not in distant towers, castles, or crypts, but in the mansions and palaces of high society, as befits their station. They move invisibly amongst their victims, performing a dance that has many rules and complicated steps.

At the top of Lahmian society is Neferata. Though she rarely leaves the Silver Pinnacle, she remains in touch with her sisterhood through a network of mortal messengers and magical scrying. Her most favoured servants are given the title *nuncio*; they are her envoys, secret diplomats charged with shaping history. They usually maintain households of loyal servants,

including lower-ranked sisters and mortals who help them maintain the illusion of noble normality. Immediately beneath them are the inter-nuncios who, rather than living in their own mansions and posing as eccentric ladies as the nuncios do, live in the households of others as loyal wives and daughters, gathering information and manipulating those around them through subtle means.

Hiding in plain sight amongst the nobility is an easier task than it may seem. Noble women are expected to behave in a highly codified way, and those who follow the laws of etiquette are allowed their eccentricities. Amongst the things proper ladies do not do is go out hunting, tour the estate, inspect the surrounding villages, or go to war. They remain at home, keeping house and maintaining their complexion. When they do leave the house, it is for social events like gala balls or opening evenings at the theatre. The majority of these events happen to take place at night.

As staying up late is a privilege of the ruling class who do not need to rise early for a hard day's work, it is considered perfectly normal, even fashionable, for the wealthy to stay up until the early hours. Only peasants eat before dusk—high society dines as late as midnight. On occasions when they are required to go out by day, a lady-like parasol can prevent a Lahmian from visibly smoking in the sun should she be forced to step down from her covered litter or coach.

Sunlight is not the only thing a sister needs to avoid. Holy symbols and mirrors can both reveal a Vampire's true self. Although some Lahmians are lucky enough to be immune to holiness, this is not true of the entire bloodline. Part of the training sisters undergo in the Silver Pinnacle is a partial desensitisation to holiness, so the instinct to flinch in its presence is overridden. They may never overcome their susceptibility completely, however, and must spend their time





judiciously avoiding and minimising exposure to the temples, shrines, and priests common in the Old World. No Lahmian wants to be accidentally exposed by a clumsy priest wearing a holy pendant who leans in a little too close.

The hand mirrors carried by some are discs of polished steel that distort any image that they are not held extremely close to and are an unreliable method of Vampire detection. Real mirrors are too expensive for common folk, but in the homes of the wealthy where the sisters dwell, wall mirrors are a status symbol. Another aspect of Neferata's training is the subtle avoidance of such mirrors, ducking to smooth a wrinkle in one's skirts at the right moment or distracting the attention of observers. Sometimes, a sister may resort to the clumsy method of "accidentally" breaking a mirror that threatens to expose her.

In addition to the sisterhood are Neferata's handmaidens, the Deathless Court of the Silver Pinnacle. There they learn the ways of the Lahmians, practising their wiles on the foolish mortals who visit the Pinnacle hoping to trade with that community of isolated, rich strangers, discover the stores of knowledge they are reputed to hide, or gaze upon the most beautiful woman in the Old World. The handmaidens also vie for Neferata's attention, practising their manipulations on each other in the Deathless Court's society in miniature where they may betray whilst smiling sweetly.

There are also Lahmians in the wider world who are not loyal members of the sisterhood but rogue agents who do not bow to Neferata. Some use their abilities for their own ends, rejecting Neferata's dream of Lahmia reborn. Others disobey their queen for gentler reasons; as the example of Neferata and Vashanesh and even Vlad and Isabella shows, the hearts of Vampires are vulnerable to more than merely sharpened stakes. Even the Undead may know something akin to love. More than once, a Lahmian has grown too fond of her mortal target and either refused to end his life when the order came or made him her get contrary to the wishes of Neferata. These rogues are shunned by their sisters, sometimes even hunted down and destroyed, though Neferata's loyal daughters find little pleasure in disposing of their wayward kin.

FEEDING AND BREEDING

To avoid attracting unwanted attention, Lahmians tend to feed on willing victims. Some are men who believe they are engaged in passionate affairs, not realising every torrid memory they have is a suggestion left behind by a sated Vampire. Others are knowing participants, only too willing to bare their necks in return for favours the powerful sisterhood is able to grant. These acolytes of the Lahmians may perform other services for their mistress; love-struck and loyal, they do everything from carrying her litter to guarding her whilst she sleeps. Each dreams of becoming her eternal paramour, but only the rarest of them ever do. The Lahmians can be fickle, and when they tire of their playthings most feel no regrets about ending them.

Lahmians try not to drain their victims dry too often, but when it happens, as it does on occasion, they are never so gauche as to leave a bloodless corpse lying in the street. Such things invite all manner of questions and investigations that can be difficult to cover up and may even involve having those dreadful, scruffy watchmen stomping around the parlour.

There is a distinction between members of the Lahmian bloodline and full members of the Lahmian Sisterhood. Young women with the desirable attributes—allure being one of them—are “invited” to join the bloodline and sent to the Silver Pinnacle where they act as handmaidens to Neferata. Here they train in various arts, magical and manipulative, at the feet of their queen. Those who excel are made members of the sisterhood and sent into the world to further Neferata’s aims, but there are those who do not join the sisterhood and remain at the Silver Pinnacle serving their queen, passing on their knowledge to the youngbloods, and if they are truly favoured by Neferata, tending to her many cats.

Some Lahmians bypass this period of training and make the leap directly from mortal life into the sisterhood. Usually, these are women in positions of power useful to the Lahmians already, such as widows with control over their late husband’s estates or young ladies about to enter into prestigious marriages. They are promoted directly into the sisterhood and trained by their mothers-in-darkness in the field so that they may keep their former identities and maintain the illusion of mortality.

Rarer still are those males who impress them enough to be invited into the bloodline. It has been known to happen that an exceptional man joins the Lahmians, but although they join the bloodline, they are never allowed full access to the inner circle of the Silver Pinnacle and, of course, are never considered members of the sisterhood.

NOTABLE LAHMIANS

The following are amongst the most powerful and well-known of the Lahmians.

LADY KHEMALLA

One of the oldest Lahmians, Lady Khemalla, survived her city’s fall at Neferata’s side. Through the ages she has taken many names and identities. She has been Lady Lenore, the Vampire Mistress of Mousillon, Katrina the Bloody, the Countess Karmilla, Mirkalla von Leicheberg, Eleanor la Voisine, and doubtless many others. As a nuncio of the sisterhood, she travels the world doing Neferata’s will. Her specialty is the elimination of Vampires of the other bloodlines who would threaten the Lahmians’ grasp on power. To keep herself occupied over the years between hunts, Khemalla uses her beauty to attract men of intellectual and artistic genius whose conversation helps her pass the nights until she tires of them. Khemalla has one of the world’s most valuable collections of artwork, containing paintings produced by long-dead masters from da Venzio to Dari, and every single painting is a portrait of her.

CHELSEA JOLI

Lahmian Sister posed as a servant to infiltrate the household of the Thurzo family. The eagle-eyed lady of the house, Erzebet Thurzo, spotted her new servant behaving strangely and discovered her true nature. Believing a Vampire’s blood will keep her young and beautiful, Erzebet has had Chelsea locked up in the tower and hemmed in by holy symbols, periodically draining her blood to bathe in. Word of this has reached the sisterhood, and Erzebet will swiftly be punished.

NEFERATA, QUEEN OF MYSTERIES AND SHADOWS

Neferata, then Neferatem, was the daughter of King Lahmizzash of Nehekhara, and as a girl, she expressed a wish to join the Mortuary Cult. Her father laughed at her and explained that women could not join the priesthood and, indeed, could never learn magic. Instead, she was destined to rule the city of Lahmia when she came of age.

Under the malign influence of High Priest W’soran, one of Nagash’s spies, she used this position to save some of the Great Necromancer’s works from the pyres and studied them herself. With these works and W’soran’s aid, she distilled the Elixir of Life, and they became the first Vampires. They cast the priests out of Lahmia and replaced them with their own cult dedicated to Nagash, based around the Temple of Blood. Not all the people of Lahmia appreciated this. After all, it was Lahmia that first rebelled against Nagash. When the people rose up against Neferatem, she emerged at the head of her court of Vampires to destroy the rebels utterly.

Neferata ruled Lahmia alone for many decades, until a relative of hers called Vashanesh, who was also of Nagash’s blood, brought news that General Setep had ousted her family from the throne of Khemri. Vashanesh had been a commander in Setep’s army and knew much of tactics; Neferata gave him the Elixir of Life and made him her king, much to Abhorash’s jealous dismay. But even with Vashanesh, Lahmia could not stand against all of Nehekhara when the holy war finally came. The Temple of Blood burned, and Neferata and her court fled to Nagashizzar.

Nagash made the Vampires his soldiers, under the command of Vashanesh. Now it was Neferata’s turn to be jealous of him. Her years of worship were repaid with nothing. Nagash made her his vassal and commanded her to attack his enemies like a dog. The anger towards men she had felt as a youth forbidden from joining the priesthood resurfaced. When Vashanesh fell and Nagash’s control was broken, she fled to the north, determined to never again take orders from a man.

Moving amongst the primitive men of the fledgling nations of the Old World, she planted her spies, her network of sisters-in-darkness who have secretly influenced the Humans since the

earliest days. Raising an army of the dead, she took the Silver Pinnacle from the Dwarfs in a single night, an act that earned her the title “Queen of Evil” in the Book of Grudges.

Her home is built in the style of Lahmia, littered with objects saved from its fall. She has a new court composed of the Undead, foolish mortals under her spell, and her cats. Here she lives a life of hedonism and plotting. Hidden behind seven veils, she pulls the strings that will one day put her in control of an army of Vampires to take back the Land of the Dead and enthrone her as its queen.

Neferata still looks like the beautiful young woman she was when she ruled Lahmia, though her sunless existence has given her pure white skin, and her eyes have turned yellow. Long black tresses frame an exquisite face that is still capable of inspiring worship, though it is incapable of expressing pity.

GENEVIEVE DIEUDONNÉ

A rogue Lahmian, Genevieve is the daughter-in-darkness of Chandagnac who was in turn made a Vampire by Lady Melissa d’Acques without the permission of Neferata. In life, Genevieve was a Bretonnian child of court before she was turned at the age of sixteen. For over six centuries, she has travelled the world as an outlaw, a slave, a student, a bodyguard, an adventurer, and many other things. Most notable was her brief role as unlikely hero when she was instrumental in saving Karl Franz from an assassination attempt. She was grudgingly allowed to take up public residence in Altdorf with her mortal lover, the famed playwright Detlef Sierck. Unsurprisingly, this did not



impress many of the locals, including the priests of Morr, but attempts to have her un-life ended, ranging from political machinations to a mob’s public lynching, failed. The sisterhood secretly protect her; despite her status as a third-generation rogue with no place amongst the true Lahmians, she is valued for her ability to influence the minds of mortals into softening towards Vampires, so they will be all the more pliant and willing slaves when Neferata makes them hers.

ANTIOCHUS BLAND

In life, Antiochus Bland was a zealous priest of Morr who politicked his way to the rank of Temple Father of Altdorf. He used his position to begin a popular campaign against the Undead of the city—Altdorf is rumoured to contain a small but thriving community of Vampires, perhaps because its population is large enough, and compressed enough, to hide them. Bland used these rumours to stir the Altdorf mob into a frenzy that reached its strange conclusion when he was turned by a Vampire of the Lahmian bloodline, effectively defusing his war against the undying ones before it could truly begin.

Bland is still temple father, but he controls the Morrian monastery through his puppet Father Knock, who handles most of the drudgery involved with maintaining the site. Bland cloisters himself in a secure cell in the temple, where he speaks to his minion through a window in the door—and where his minion delivers the beasts on which the Vampire feeds. Knock serves Bland because he believes only Morr has the right to strike down one of his own priests, so he refuses to slay the Undead temple father. Thus far, he has maintained the secret, but he fears if word spreads to the rest of the monks, the entire complex would collapse from infighting.

And what of Bland himself? His self-loathing consumes him; he bathes and blesses his unclean new body all night long, and he burned himself on holy symbols before they were taken from him. Father Knock insures that Bland has animals to feed on (though Bland feeds only when his hunger conquers his disgust) and observes him through a peephole, making notes for his treatise on the Undead and how they pose little real threat to the living. Knock believes that the people’s fear of Vampires is mostly unfounded and that the cult has wasted too much time and money hunting exaggerated legends when it should be concentrating on its role helping the bereaved and burying the dead.

Antiochus Bland

Lahmian Thrall, ex-Priest of Morr, ex-Initiate

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
50%	42%	55%	59%	64%	38%	60%	61%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	20	5	5	6	2	4	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Philosophy, Theology), Channelling, Charm +10%, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire, Tilea), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gossip +20%, Haggle, Heal, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Performer (Actor, Storyteller), Read/Write, Ride, Search, Silent Move, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Classical, Reikspiel, Tilean), Trade (Embalmer)

Talents: Dark Magic, Etiquette, Lightning Reflexes, Master Orator, Menacing, Petty Magic (Divine), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Resistance to Poison, Schemer, Strike to Stun, Suave

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Defy the Dawn, Domination, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Note: Bland no longer has access to his divine spells. Whether Morr has withdrawn his patronage or Bland's own self-disgust prevents him from manipulating the Winds is up to you.

Insanities: Heart of Despair

Armour: None

Weapons: Claws, Fangs

Trappings: Prayer Book, Religious Symbol of Morr, Robes, Writing Kit

BARONESS HELENA VON CULPER

Amongst the Emperor's advisors in the Council of State is the Chamberlain of the Seal. Whilst the chamberlain performs the diplomatic duty of managing foreign relations, he is also the unofficial master of the Emperor's spies and assassins. For this reason, the position of chamberlain is one the Lahmians have long sought control over.

The previous Chamberlain, Otto von Bitternach, known as the Iron Graf for his pragmatism and strength of will, was immune to the Lahmians' charms and ploys for the duration of his service, first to Luitpold, then to Karl Franz. When old age finally claimed Bitternach, strings were pulled, and a more pliant replacement was found. Baron Amadeus Mencken is an apprehensive and uncertain man who was easily convinced of a need to clean house when he took over the position, and he appointed Baroness Helena von Culper as a Master of the Kommission of the Imperial Archives, one of the Empire's chief information-gathering agencies.

Baroness von Culper has used this position to collect useful confidence that is then passed on to other members of the sisterhood to allow them to better manipulate their targets. One of her aims is to verify the existence of a rumoured network of magister-spies who are so secret that even the Emperor is not kept aware of their activities. So far, she has found no evidence proving or disproving their existence.

Those spies who report to the Altdorf townhouse in which the baroness dwells are impressed by her cover. She appears to be an independent and striking widow who spends most of her time acting as an aunt and chaperone to the young

socialites of the city, and few would suspect her of being a master of deeper intrigues.

Baroness Helena von Culper

Lahmian Count, ex-Thrall, ex-Spy, ex-Courtier, ex-Noble

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65%	48%	62%	63%	67%	60%	84%	66%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	21	6	6	6	1	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Philosophy), Blather, Channelling, Charm +20%, Command, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia, Dwarfs, the Empire +10%), Concealment, Disguise +10%, Dodge Blow, Evaluate +20%, Follow Trail, Gossip +20%, Haggle, Intimidate, Lip Reading, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Performer (Actor, Dancer, Musician), Pick Lock, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Shadowing +10%, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Breton, Classical, Reikspiel +10%), Torture

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Coolheaded, Dark Magic, Dealmaker, Etiquette, Flee!, Linguistics, Marksman, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Savvy, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying), Suave

Traits: Blood Gift (Aethyric Cipher, Blood Drain, Defy the Dawn, Domination, Familiar Form—Cat, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Unhallowed Soul, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Main Gauche, Rapier

Trappings: Disguise Kit, Noble's Garb, 4 Homing Pigeons, Riding Horse with Saddle and Harness, Jewellery worth 300 gc, Manor House in Altdorf, Network of 10 Spies, Valet, 100 gc

LAIRS OF THE LAHMIANS

Caves, crypts, and dusty keeps are not worthy of Neferata's brood, who will settle only for the finest of lodgings, such as these.

SILVER PINNACLE

Near Karak Ungor, at the highest point of the World's Edge Mountains, is a former stronghold where Dwarfs once mined for silver and precious gems. After the mine was emptied of silver but long before the Dwarfs were prepared to leave it, it was taken from them by force in a single night. A legion of Undead surged through the tunnels, brutally driving out the Dwarfs.

With the Dwarfs gone, Neferata rebuilt Silver Pinnacle, transforming it from a functional stronghold to a mirror of her palace in Lahmia. In the innermost chambers, which are lit by torches, she has rebuilt the splendour of that ancient city. The scents of burning incense and perfumed oils fill the air. The walls are covered in hieroglyphics picked out with gemstones and gold. Statues with lapis lazuli eyes stare down at beautiful Vampire handmaidens wearing the clothes of Nehekhar. Purebred cats of ancient breeds walk where they will and have free reign of the palace. Here, Neferata idly pulls the strings that change history, whilst she drinks the blood of beautiful youths and listens to the music her Undead children make.

Surrounding the court is a network of trapped passages and Undead guards covered from head to toe in black. Only those mortals of the queen's choosing are allowed past them. Certain guileless Knights of Bretonnian and greedy merchants with exotic goods who have heard legends of the beautiful palace hidden in the mountains approach and are given audience with the queen. At the heart of the court is her chamber, where she conducts business from behind seven silken veils. Those who visit the Silver Pinnacle are not informed of the true nature of what they see there, and those who are allowed to leave have spread exaggerated tales of the banquets they are permitted to attend (at which only they seem to have an appetite) and of the wonders they have seen, encouraging others to visit the Silver Pinnacle and, perhaps, never leave.

SONNENTAL

In the northern Border Princes, in the shadow of the haunted Geistenmund Hills, lies the town of Sonnentent. Originally founded by Imperial exiles, Sonnentent now has a darker heritage. The town's walls are guarded by the Undead, not only to keep the marauders and Greenskins out, but also to keep the inhabitants in. The Lahmian Sisterhood rules Sonnentent—a miniature model of how the city of Lahmia will look when its long-lost daughters finally return.

By day, the people of Sonnentent go about their dreary lives. The preferred servants of the Lahmians are allowed out of town to work the farms, always under the watchful guard of the Vampires' Undead servants—Zombies and Wights taken from the barrows in the hills. These servants also travel further afield, kidnapping travellers and those who will not be missed, dragging them back to Sonnentent to replenish the town's ever-dwindling population.

By night, the people huddle in their homes as beautiful figures clothed in the elegant costumes the people slave to create walk the streets, selecting those they wish to feed on.

Those who cooperate with the Vampires may win immunity for themselves and their households, either by informing on those who attempt to escape or organise uprisings, or by crafting especially ornate pieces of finery for their mistresses to wear.

New arrivals to Sonnentent are surprised by how cowed the citizenry are. Partly, this situation is caused by the Lahmians' preternatural ability to dominate those around them, but there is more to it than magic. In the war-torn and unstable Border Princes, Sonnentent is a rare outpost of relative safety, at least to threats from without. Compared to the ravaging hordes wandering the countryside, the Vampires are at least a threat that can be bargained with. Most of the townspeople concentrate on finding ways to make themselves useful to their dark mistresses rather than trying to defeat them—

and those who do plot against them are publicly made examples of, their drained and mutilated corpses gibbeted in the town square for all to see.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

All of the following adventure hooks are excellent starting points for designing adventures that prominently feature Lahmians.

Sisters of Mercy

Just outside Altdorf is a Shallyan retreat, a laundry that gives a home to wayward young ladies and earns money for the cult's good works. The PCs are hired to find a missing girl and discover her there, but not everything is as it seems at the retreat. The girls are overworked, mistreated, and kept locked up, and the mother-healer is a brutal mistress who believes her wards must be cleansed of corruption and deviancy. If word gets out, it will be bad for the Shallyans, who will find their good name tarnished, agitators speaking out against them, and their donations dropping sharply. This is exactly what the Lahmians want. The mother-healer is one of their own with a resistance to holiness who aims to ruin the Shallyans of Altdorf, whose temples would otherwise provide refuge to the citizens when the Lahmians seize control.

The Tomb of Doom

A veiled widow shows the adventurers a map that was amongst the items she inherited from her husband. It details a tomb in the Land of the Dead, filled with treasure. She offers to fund a journey there, asking only for a share of the profits. After a dangerous journey through the desert, facing the elements, the Undead, and devilish traps, they return with the treasure only to find that the widow is a Lahmian who is unwilling to settle for her share and wishes to take the rest of the valuable artefacts by force.



— THE NECRARCHS: DISCIPLES OF THE ACCURSED —

When their great library was burned to the ground by fearful mortals, many Necrarchs remained to burn with it, so strong was their devotion to knowledge. The Necrarchs are the most learned of Vampires, more skilled at sorcery than with the blade. These skills have come at a price, however. The appearance of the Necrarchs has grown so hideous and unnatural that an ordinary man cannot bear to look upon them, and many run screaming at the sight.

HISTORY

Of all the trueborn Vampires, only W'soran, founder of the Necrarch bloodline and so-called "Father of Vampires," was truly loyal to Nagash. Neferata worshipped Nagash for a time but felt betrayed by his choice of Vashanesh over her to lead the Vampires, and the others chose to ally with Nagash only out of convenience. So it was that when Nagash fell, W'soran was the only trueborn at his side to lay claim to the Great Necromancer's works.

With these, and a select group of Nagash's acolytes, W'soran fled from the Land of the Dead to continue working towards Nagash's dream in safety.

W'soran began work on the Grimoire Necronium, which contained not only a distillation of Nagash's magic but also a series of prophecies showing W'soran's vision of the future: a world of bones populated only by the dead and ruled by his bloodline. There was one flaw with this dream of an empire of corpses—the lack of sources of blood. Thus, W'soran searched for ways to relieve himself of the red thirst. Powerful necromantic magic made him less dependent on feeding than other Vampires, so he could go for months or years without blood. There was a price, however. His reliance on pure dark magic, rather than blood alone, to give him power caused his visage to grow hideous and corpse-like.

When W'soran granted the Blood Kiss to his aging acolytes, *this* curse was passed to them as well. By drawing on the power of True Dhar to a far greater degree than other Vampires, their forms grew as twisted as their master's. Over time, their minds twisted along with their bodies, and many sank into madness. One such unfortunate was Melkhior, greatest of W'soran's apprentices, who slew and ate his master.

Fearing for their unives after this coup, the Necrarchs separated. Each suffered paranoid delusions, and although they all worked towards the same end, none of them trusted each other. They settled in all the nations of the Old World, and the paranoid rantings that passed for communications between them slowly grew silent.

Estalia was the chosen land of Nourgul, who had been with W'soran and Nagash in their earliest days. Even then, he dreamed of conquest and had observed Nagash's techniques and tactics closely. In 1750 he followed through on his plans, raised an army of the dead tens of thousands strong, and waged war on the petty kingdoms of Estalia. Wherever he conquered, he gathered grimoires and artefacts, from the pettiest trinkets to the most potent tomes. His ultimate aim was to possess the Tome of Wisdom, which was kept in the city of Magritta. Nourgul's army laid siege to the city for a month, at the end of which the defenders fell strangely silent. Victorious, Nourgul flew into the city on his steed, a gigantic Vampire Bat, and entered the temple of Myrmidia where the Tome of Wisdom was housed. It was in that temple, beside the book he so prized, that his burnt ashes were found. No one has ever explained this turn of events.

Far to the north, in the Forest of Shadows, Melkhior the Ancient pursued the Necrarchs' dream in a much more

subdued fashion. Now hopelessly mad, he saw little but his bizarre visions, occasionally going on a rampage amongst his servants to avoid the tedium. One of these servants, the Necrarch Zacharias, sought to repeat Melkhior's defeat of W'soran and fought Melkhior in

a magical duel. Melkhior was the victor, but years later Zacharias returned, somehow vastly more powerful than he had been, and had his revenge on Melkhior.

Such is the Necrarch way. They are masters of necromancy, alchemy, and all of the natural philosophies but are hampered by the depth of their madness and distrust.

PROPHECIES AND MACHINATIONS

Ever since W'soran had his grand vision of a future made of bones and dead flesh, his Necrarchs have placed great store in prophecy and fate. They spend much time attempting to divine the future, peering through the mists of time and recording their visions. Melkhior the Ancient painted his visions onto canvases of flesh, some of which still screamed at his touch, but most prefer to record such things in tomes like the Grimoire Necronium.

To bring about the fate seen in these prophecies, the Necrarchs conduct their research into the living and the Undead so that they may more fully understand how one is made into the other in preparation for the day when all of the living become their eternal servants. At Geheimnisnacht, when both moons are full, the Necrarchs cast dark spells to

*"Forever there shall be cold under the sun,
Rivers will run dry and the forests wither,
The stars shall grow dim, flicker and die,
And death shall reign from forever to forever."*

—FROM THE BLACK CURSE OF THE NECRARCHS



blight the land, sucking the life out of an area and bringing their plans closer, one patch of scorched earth at a time.

SOCIETY

The preferred dwellings of Necrarchs are forbidding towers in the wilderness. There are several reasons for this. The vantage point of a tall tower gives greater access to Azyr, the Blue Wind of Magic, which the Necrarchs observe to gain insights into the future. A tower is easily defensible, and given their relative lack of a need for blood, the Necrarchs prefer to shy away from civilisation. Most of all, whether they admit it or not, dwelling at the base of the heavens brings the Necrarchs closer to what they see themselves as: Gods. Of all the Vampires, Necrarchs are the most interested in the Undead as replacements for the living, which they see as the weak and flawed creations of weak and flawed Gods. Their towers are shared with improved forms of life, their own monstrous necromantic creations. These patchwork creatures are created from flesh and inanimate objects melded with dark sorceries and forced into a twitching semblance of life.

As well as such necromantic experimenting, Necrarchs seek to master a variety of natural philosophies, depending on their inclinations. A Necrarch may be a master of astronomy, alchemy, engineering, or any of the sciences as a matter of course. They are also masters of self-knowledge. Necrarchs know the strengths and weaknesses of their own kind better than any, and perhaps, this is another reason for their isolation. Betrayal is a constant threat to the Necrarchs. They jealously hoard knowledge from each other; their children-in-darkness are often their apprentices—and it is in the nature of apprentices to seek to surpass their masters even if it means theft and murder. This division is what has prevented them from conquering a nation of their own. Apart from Nourgul's march across Estalia, most Necrarchs refrain from short-term empire-building, preferring to dream of a future free of the living and slowly build their own miniature kingdoms of the Undead and the outcast.

Outcasts are drawn to Necrarchs. Mutants and other freaks find acceptance that they could never find amongst Humans. These dregs of society serve as lab assistants, occasional food sources, experimental subjects, and potential apprentices. They also venture out for supplies and protect their masters during daylight hours, as well as invite Necrarchs across thresholds.

FEEDING AND BREEDING

Necrarchs feel the need to drink blood only rarely. They may go for months or even years without it. When they do feed, it is often on the outcasts they surround themselves with. However, this is not always the case. Some Necrarchs prefer to glut themselves when they feed, bringing along their servants to help them gain access to the abodes of the living, wherein they slay entire families in mad bloodlust before returning to their towers to pass away the next few years in quiet study before they must feed again.

Necrarchs make a point of studying their own thirst for blood. Reducing the frequency with which they feed is not enough; they seek to ultimately free themselves of the thirst completely. Thus far, only Zacharias the Everliving has found the secret to this. Other Necrarchs have experimented with turning themselves into mobile nexuses of dark magic, replacing the need for blood with a need for Warpstone, or recreating the Elixir of Life to Nagash's original recipe, but all have failed. Many have failed catastrophically, becoming even more warped than they already are. They become bloated abominations that cannot walk, bestial creatures worse than the Strigoi, awful things like Chaos Spawn with impossible forms too bizarre to hold together.

Necrarchs typically choose their most gifted apprentices to receive the Blood Kiss. It is rare for a Necrarch to find one they feel safe in granting this power to, as it may be turned against them. This is why they are the least numerous of the bloodlines. Newly turned Necrarchs do not gain their twisted appearance immediately, but it does not take long. Within a month they have been reduced to skeletal figures of nightmare. In these early days of their existence, they hunger for blood as much as a normal Vampire, drinking large quantities to power the second transformation from monster to abomination. This harrowing experience often shatters what little sanity they have left.

During this time, they also develop the powerful Witchsight of the Necrarchs. They see the spirits of the dead as clearly as if they were solid, and the Winds of Magic appear more real than the sky or the trees. Conversely, the real world appears insubstantial and barely there. This causes the Necrarchs to become disconnected from the world. As the endless years pass, they begin treating their surroundings as totally irrelevant.

Traditionally, Necrarchs take a Nehekharan name upon joining their ranks, leaving their old name behind along with their old life. This custom is shared by those necromancers who dedicate themselves to Nagash.

NOTABLE NECRARCHS

The following are amongst the most powerful and well known of the Necrarchs.

DINTOMAZ

The madhouse of Lembrooke was built by the Physician's Guild, not to grant succour to the insane, as the priestesses of Shallya do in their hospices, but as a home for the study of the deranged in a secluded location where only the beasts and trees would be able to hear the screams. Lembrooke was run by doctors Feder and Teer, who were at the forefront of their field, using such forward-thinking techniques as trepanation to let the troublesome Daemons out through holes in the skull, thyroid removal, heated brands, and mild poisoning.

Over the years, a handful of their subjects escaped into the surrounding countryside, but this was only to be expected. The point of building Lembrooke far from civilisation was precisely so that these incidents wouldn't cause trouble with the neighbours. One of those escapees, who suffered from a case of Feder's Vexatious Forgetfulness so badly that he only answered to the name of "Nummersieben" because it was written on the door of his cell, wandered in the wilderness until chance crossed his path with that of the Necrarch Dintomaz. Dintomaz sought help with experiments of his own and found Nummersieben to be a useful servant. When Dintomaz discerned from his servant's ramblings that there was an entire building full of potentially useful servants—and subjects—nearby, he was intrigued.

For one night the screams of the physicians joined the screams of the patients as Dintomaz made it known that Lembrooke belonged to him and that its inhabitants would serve him, whether living or dead.

A grander experiment takes place in those dark halls now. In life, Dintomaz had been a necromancer obsessed with contacting the dead, in Undeath he is a master of controlling

CROSSING THRESHOLDS

For reasons unknown, the Necrarchs have a weakness rare amongst the other bloodlines; they are unable to enter buildings that have been made homes by the living unless they are invited. Some say Nagash cursed them this way. Intending to use the Necrarchs as little more than assistants in his research, he wished to keep them from the distractions of humanity. Others say the Necrarchs' hatred of life is so strong that they are repelled by the places where it is strongest.

An uninvited Necrarch encounters a physical barrier at such a threshold that only an intense application of mental strength will allow him to cross. The Necrarch may spend a full action and make a **Very Hard (-30%) Will Power Test** to force himself through this barrier. Whether he passes or fails, the attempt causes 2d10 Wounds. Given the risk, most Necrarchs prefer to gain invitation by smuggling one of their cronies into the dwelling or controlling the mind of an inhabitant.

The definition of a building that has been made a home by the living is purposefully left vague to suit the purposes of your games. You could decide that specifically only homes are included, and public buildings like temples and taverns do not give sanctuary. If you decide only homes that have been built from the ground up form such barriers, then, in your campaign, Necrarchs will be able to enter caves that have been made into homes, including Dwarfholds or the caves of Parravon.

spirits. By placing the ghosts under his command inside the addled minds of lunatics, he has gained a small army of the living he can control as easily as any Zombie. The Lembrooke lunatics suffer none of the usual weaknesses of the Undead and can easily travel amongst the living, gathering more subjects for Dintomaz and preparing for the day when they cast down the society that cast them out.

LOUIS CYPHER

A Bretonnian Necrarch, Louis Cypher sought to increase his magical abilities by absorbing the stored power of the ancient standing stones that are scattered over the Old World. With each stone he uprooted, his power grew, as did his legion of the damned. Some say those stones were erected by the Elves before their war with the Dwarfs, and Louis Cypher evidently believed this because he took his army aboard a fleet of ghostly ships and sailed to the land of Ulthuan. He has not been heard of since, and whether he was eradicated by the High Elves or if he fights them still for the magic locked into their network of standing stones, none can say.

MELKHIOR THE ANCIENT

Melkhior was the first Necrarch created by W'soran. In his tower in the Forest of Shadows, he continued W'soran's work on the Grimoire Necronium, his visions of the future growing more disturbed over the centuries as his sanity cracked further and further. Eventually, his visions grew so vivid they could not be depicted in prose, and he began painting on canvases of skin. His dungeons were filled with the living for him to torment. He often turned his

mad attentions on his loyal servants as well, until Zacharias challenged him and, eventually, defeated him. Melkhior was not destroyed, however, but slumbers whilst regaining his strength so that he can return to revenge himself upon his wayward student.

MADAME KALFON

The forested Dukedom of Parravon borders on the lands of the Fay, who steal away children gifted with magical talent. Madame Kalfon's parents, seeing the dishes mysteriously leap into the air and then shatter when their baby daughter was in tears, sought to hide her and her obvious gift from the Fay by abandoning her in the mountains, their peasant heads full of nonsense fairytales about kindly hermits who took in foundlings. In a way, the fairytale came true.

Heloise Kalfon was taken in and given her name by a band of Mutants living in the Grey Mountains. A peaceful group, they treated her well despite her lack of deformities and the strange things that happened whenever she threw a tantrum.

Eventually, these Mutants came to the attention of the Necrarch Chigaru, who was investigating the ruins of an infamous castle from his base in the mountains. Chigaru took the outcasts in and provided shelter and food in return for loyal service. Seeing the potential in Heloise and believing her youth would make her easy to control, he made her his get, though she was only twelve years old. This did not do much for her sanity. Neither did watching as Chigaru used the techniques he had learned from a grimoire looted from the castle to further mutate her surrogate family into yet more twisted forms until their bodies broke from the strain. Heloise spitefully pushed her father-in-darkness from the tower for revenge, and the hated man fell onto a spike, impaling him so that he was trapped helpless until the first rays of the sun scoured his presence from existence.

Taking the name "Madame Kalfon" to make her seem more grown-up, the diminutive Necrarch took over Chigaru's tower and made its wondrous toys her own. Over the years, she has mastered the techniques of creating new life with a childlike glee, pulling beings apart and putting them back together in unusual combinations as she would with any doll. Chigaru's tower is now full of the precocious girl's playthings and friends.

Madame Kalfon knows why her parents abandoned her and nurses a special grudge towards the Fay for stealing children like her away. Looking down from her tower towards the Wildwood at the eastern end of Athel Loren she saw a means of satiating her need for revenge and her constant curiosity. Madame Kalfon captured a swarm of the Fay nature spirits called Spites and began using them in her experiments.

Although they were spirits, they were not Ghosts and could not be controlled by the usual necromantic techniques. The spirits had physical forms, but shortly after they died, these forms dissolved, making it impossible to reanimate them. She experimented obsessively until she struck the right combination of preserving chemicals and limb-replacement



BATSPITE

The Batspите is a flying Spite that has had its gossamer wings replaced with more durable bat wings, as well as other cosmetic improvements. Its hands and legs are animal claws, and some of its flesh has been replaced with leathery bat-skin to create a ragged tapestry solid enough to hold together the semi-solid substance Spites are composed of. Now the Batspите flits around Madame Kalfon's tower at night, squeaking its beautiful music to warn her of anyone's approach.

— Batspите Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
48%	0%	19%	10%	46%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	6	1	1	2 (8)	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Dodge Blow

Talents: Flier, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Undead

Special Rules:

- *Mindless:* The Batspите is an animated corpse with no mind of its own. It has no Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship, and it can never take or fail tests based on these characteristics.

Armour: None

Weapon: Claws

to create something solid enough to be reanimated. And so another form of life was conquered and added to her mountaintop menagerie.

Madame Kalfon

Necrarch Journeyman Wizard, ex-Apprentice Wizard, ex-Thrall

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
49%	38%	63%	62%	65%	49%	56%	25%

Se

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	21	6	6	6	2	5	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, Genealogy/ Heraldry, History, Magic +10%, Necromancy +10%), Channelling +10%, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (Bretonnia +10%, Elves, the Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception, Prepare Poison, Read/Write +10%, Ride, Search, Shadowing, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (Magick) +10%, Speak Language (Breton, Classical, Eltharin, Reikspiel), Torture

SPIDERSPITE

Madame Kalfon's early experiments with the Spites yielded many failures. One of the earliest successes came from abandoning her attempts to restore the Spites' ability to fly and instead melding them to the bodies of spiders. She created this miniature horror with the torso of a dead faerie mounted on the body of a furry, black spider. Envenomed mandibles mar its face. The Spiderspите scurries around her tower, getting underfoot and being a nuisance. Visitors who are not immune to its venomous bites will find it more than a nuisance, however.

— Spiderspите Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
48%	0%	20%	10%	46%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	6	2	1	6	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Silent Move +10%

Talents: Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Undead

Special Rules:

- *Mindless:* The Spiderspите is an animated corpse with no mind of its own. It has no Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship, and can never take or fail tests based on these characteristics.
- *Venomous Bite:* An attack that inflicts at least 1 Wound deals 2 additional Wounds unless the target succeeds at a Toughness Test.
- *Wall Climbing:* The Spiderspите can clamber up and down walls with its sticky feet, just like a normal spider. It can climb walls at its normal movement rate.

Armour: None

Weapons: Bite

Talents: Acute Hearing, Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (Dispel, Magic Lock), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Blood-sated, Corrupted Innocence, Deathstight, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Terrifying, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Claws, Fangs

Trappings: Grimoire, Toys, Writing Kit

ZACHARIAS THE EVERLIVING

As a mortal, Zacharias was an apprentice of Dieter Helsnicht, a necromancer expelled from Middenheim who launched attacks on that city from a fortress in the Forest of Shadows. Whilst Helsnicht busied himself with tactics and raising



armies, Zacharias took note of his surroundings. He saw they were not the first to work powerful necromancy in the forest. He saw strange flows in the Winds of Magic, which led him all the way to the tower of Melkhior the Necrarch.

For weeks, Zacharias observed the tower and its guards, plotting to break in through the crypt at the tower's base to steal the Vampire's grimoires. He magically blinded the Undead guardians to his presence but was captured by Melkhior's living servants before he had even made it inside. Zacharias was brought before the Vampire, who saw the great potential inside him and granted him the Blood Kiss.

The newly created Necrarch was horrified by the changes his body underwent and swore to take revenge on his father-in-darkness. Knowing he was too weak to confront the ancient Vampire, he bided his time and studied like a good pupil. Every night, Melkhior would warn Zacharias he tired of his new apprentice and would likely kill him by dawn, but every night the pupil surprised the master with his dedication and growing power.

Melkhior was mad, even by the standards of Necrarchs, and would periodically fall into rages and slaughter his living servants, bathing in their blood. Zacharias avoided his master during these tantrums, finally seeing his chance to steal away the books he had never been allowed to see—the books of Nagash—whilst Melkhior stalked his slaves through the tower. Unfortunately for him, Melkhior was not as unaware as he seemed. The two fought a magical duel that almost destroyed them both and ended in victory for the elder Vampire, his disciple fleeing into the wilds, nursing his wounds.

For a year, Melkhior's minions pursued Zacharias through the Middle Mountains, from cave to cave and night to night. Zacharias fed on wild animals wherever he could, but the constant running exhausted him. Finding a well-hidden niche inside a large, dark cavern, he hid inside it and rested for over ten years.

The cave was the home of an ancient Dragon who returned from a period spent hunting in the lands to the east whilst Zacharias slept. When the Vampire awoke, his thirst was tremendous, and he fell on the Dragon like a newborn on his mother's teat. Over the course of a month he drained the Dragon dry of every drop of blood. In doing so, he discovered the secret previously known only to Abhorash and his Blood Dragon kin. Zacharias became free of the thirst for blood and was filled with unholy power. Raising the Dragon to serve as his mount, he flew back to the hidden tower and nearly demolished it, finally achieving his revenge on Melkhior.

Zacharias now rules the Forest of Shadows from a rebuilt keep, studying the books so long denied to him and planning an eternity as Zacharias the Everliving.

Zacharias the Everliving

Necrarch Lord, ex-Count, ex-Thrall, ex-Journeyman Wizard, ex-Apprentice Wizard

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
81%	56%	79%	79%	74%	79%	74%	43%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
5	28	7	7	6	4	5	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy +10%, Genealogy/Heraldry, History +10%, Magic +20%, Necromancy +10%), Channelling +10%, Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire +10%, Nehekharan +20%), Concealment +10%, Dodge Blow +10%, Evaluate, Gossip, Heal, Intimidate +20%, Magical Sense +20%, Perception +10%, Prepare Poison, Read/Write +20%, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search +20%, Secret Language (Guild Tongue), Shadowing, Silent Move +10%, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (High Nehekharan, Magick +10%), Speak Language (Breton, Classical +20%, Reikspiel +10%, Tilean), Torture +10%

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Alley Cat, Dark Lore (Nagash), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (dispel, lock), Marksman, Meditation, Menacing, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Savvy, Schemer, Sixth Sense, Strike to Injure, Tunnel Rat, Unsettling, Warrior Born

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Blood-sated, Deathstight, Master of the Black Arts, Natural Necromancer, Summon Ancients, Vampires' Curse, Walking Death, Wellspring of Dhar), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Terrifying, Undead

Insanities: The Beast Within, Knives of Memory

Armour: None

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Staff of Kaphamon

Trappings: Army of Undead, Books of Nagash, Circlet of Rathek, Jewellery and Finery, Lair, Library of Academic Books on Necromancy, Scrolls of Semhtep, 12 trusted Servants, and 2,000 *gc*

LAIRS OF THE NECRARCHS

The towers of Necrarchs are often created magically, though some are pre-existing towers that have been taken over (some of these towers were built by the Elves before their war with the Dwarfs), and others were created by Undead labourers. They vary in appearance, depending on the manner of their creation, as well as the whim of their owners, but a typical tower will resemble the one described here.

Crypt

Below ground level is a storeroom for corpses. Some are given proud tombs, such as favoured servants and the Necrarch's former master (betrayed by his apprentice, naturally). Other cadavers are stacked in heaps, awaiting reanimation or dissection.

Servant's Chambers

The ground floor is given over to the living area of the Necrarch's mortal assistant. A visitor would not see anything too shocking in these ordinary rooms, except for the deformed assistant himself. The door is kept secure with the magic lock spell (see *WFRP* page 148).

Library

The Necrarch's collection of scrolls and books are kept here, organised in a manner that would confuse anyone sane. Finding a specific book requires a **Very Hard** (–30%) **Search Test**, the difficulty of the test drops by one degree for each Insanity the seeker possesses.

Lab

This is home to the Necrarch's collection of spell, potion, and ritual ingredients, as well as several works in progress. Anyone who examines this collection must pass a Will Power Test or gain an Insanity Point.

Cells

Subjects for use in experiments are kept locked in here, secured with more magic locks (see *WFRP* page 148). There is always one prisoner kept for the Necrarch's consumption on those rare occasions when he feels a need to feed. It is part of the assistant's job to muck out these cages and feed the prisoners.

Observation Platform

A powerful telescope is mounted here for the Necrarch's use. There is also a lightning rod, which is connected to a slab downstairs in the lab, though its exact purpose is not clear.

STAFF OF KAPHAMON

A gnarled and ancient staff holding a gem that pulses with purple light.

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: As a full-round action, the bearer may activate the staff. If he succeeds at a Will Power Test, several dark, hand-shaped blobs of Shyish pulse from the gem and launch towards his foe. These are a number of magic missiles equal to the bearer's Magic Characteristic; each causes a Damage 4 hit and has a range of 48 yards (24 squares).

History: Kaphamon was a wizard of Araby, and not much is known of him save that he was a master of the death magic that was treated by the people of that land as a natural aspect of life. Kaphamon's staff was unearthed from beneath the desert sands by wandering nomads, and it changed hands many times before it fell into the possession of one who understood its power.

CIRCLET OF RATHEK

The Circlet of Rathek holds a jewel that was sacred to the lost Gods of Nehekara.

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: This circlet grants 4 Armour Points on all locations to its wearer.

History: The Circlet of Rathek was plucked from a dead priest of the Mortuary Cult by High Priest W'soran, from whom it was taken by his apprentice Melkhior, who in turn lost it to Zacharias. Despite its protective power, all those who have worn it have been betrayed, perhaps a final revenge from the lost Gods of the Land of the Dead. As a holy symbol, it is never worn by those Vampires who do not have the power of Unhallowed Soul (see page 109).

ADVENTURE HOOKS

All of the following adventure hooks are excellent starting points for designing adventures that feature Necrarchs prominently.

Madame Kalfon's Playhouse

Having learned of a potent magic item that once belonged to Kalfon's father-in-darkness, the PCs seek out and enter her foul tower. Inside, they discover a macabre place adorned with twisted corruptions bred from the diseased mind of a naughty child. Zombies shuffle about, dressed in party costumes, whilst toys fashioned from rotting flesh litter the floors. Kalfon is fully aware of the PCs and works from the shadows, pitting them against countless horrors in some sick game in which the consequence of losing is death.

WE ONLY COME OUT AT NIGHT

Anhurit watched from the shadows as the man worked, shovelling dirt out of the grave. He was hard to focus on—through her Vampire's eyes, the graveyard was filled with much more interesting things. The ground was thick with Shyish, the Purple Wind, lying low to the ground like fog, occasionally reaching upwards with tendrils like grasping fingers. One played around the digging man, who stopped for a moment as if he sensed something amiss. He turned and looked over the rim of the hole, squinting into the blackness beyond the dim circle of light cast by his covered lantern. He looked directly at the pool of darkness Anhurit stood in but *saw nothing* and soon returned to his labour.

As well as the fog of Shyish, the spirits of the dead wandered through the graveyard, lost and confused. Some wailed over their tombstones whilst others stumbled about repeating the same actions over and over, grasping at things and wondering why they could not touch them, unaware they were dead. Amongst them was the spirit of the butcher whose grave was in the midst of having its sanctity disturbed, playing over his murderous motions, stabbing at nonexistent figures again and again.

There was a thud as the grave robber hit wood. His pace sped up as he frantically cleared the dirt from around the coffin's lid. Without pausing, he worked it open and reached into the coffin; he avoided looking at the corpse's face as he grabbed its hand and worked the ring off its finger. Triumphant, he held up his prize, a smile splitting his filthy face.

He started at the sound: A dry, leathery slapping as Anhurit slowly clapped her hands, standing at the edge of the hole. Terrified, the grave robber backed away, treading on the corpse as he stumbled to the far end of the grave. Anhurit took a step forward and landed gracefully on the narrow rim of the coffin. The man began making noises as if trying to say something.

"Yes," she said to him. "A Vampire."

Losing interest in him, she reached down and took the body's hand. With a sawing motion, as easily as slicing a loaf of bread, she took it off with her claw and then repeated the action with the other hand. Holding up the hands, she appraised them. Yes, they would suit her purposes nicely.

The grave robber soiled himself, and Anhurit remembered he was there.

"You dig quickly," she said. "Therefore, you may live. Keep up your good work."

She waved one of the severed hands at him as if to say goodbye and then leapt out of the grave and walked away. "Yes, they would do very nicely indeed."

Blight Night

On Geheimnisnacht, a terrible blight spreads over the countryside, killing the animals and plants of a previously fertile region. The PCs investigate and discover a Necrarch's tower at the centre of the desolate, poisoned wasteland. They also discover a group of Wood Elves whose forest was magically blighted. Unbeknownst to the Elves or the PCs, one of these arboreal people has forged a vile pact with the Necrarch, exchanging secrets with the Vampire in exchange for his protection over the land. The Elf is so disturbed that he cannot see the effects of the Vampire's presence on his sacred land. The PCs, with the help of the Wood Elves,

confront the Vampire in his lair in the hopes of putting the creature to rest and righting the natural order of the land in the area.

Ultimately, the PCs should succeed in their efforts, emboldened by their good deed. Months later, though, reports from travellers in the area reach the Characters' ears. It turns out that this land has become utterly barren, a poisonous waste filled with malevolence and evil. Curious, the Characters return to the site, only to find that all but one of the Elves has been driven away. The one who remained has claimed the tower and now works to resurrect the Necrarch and restore the unholy pact the two had made.

— THE STRIGOI: BEASTS IN SHADOW —

The Vampires of the other bloodlines play at being mortal and wear the robes of lords, knights, and princes, but underneath, the Vampire is purely a beast. There are those who lose themselves so much in their pretence that they forget this. The Strigoi have not forgotten and do not pretend. They embrace the beast within them, taking all the strength and fury the animal can give them. That strength is terrible to behold, and that fury knows no end.

HISTORY

Every society needs a whipping boy.

It was not enough for Neferata and her brethren to simply be the lords

of the great city of Lahmia. It was not enough they had drunk the Elixir of Life and became immortal. They still had to find more ways to feel superior over others, to exclude their equals from their little cult. It was this childishness of the queen that led her to prevent her younger brother, Prince Ushoran, Lord of Masques, Celebrations, and Festivities from drinking the Elixir and joining the True Blooded—her petty need to keep somebody out of her elite cadre. In order to teach her a lesson, and claim only what he was due, Ushoran stole her precious Elixir and entered into that same state of great un-life without her help.

Of course, this incensed the queen, and she spent the following

"For now, we sleep, and we dream. But one day we will rise, and we will make our dreams real again."

—URZEN THE UNRELENTING

centuries seething at the insult and planning her revenge. She would get her chance, but not until long after the Vampires had betrayed Nagash and scattered to the wind.

Just as Ushoran cared not for the exclusivity of the Vampire cult, he also did not share their fear of Nagash. Whilst the other First Children ran far away to the north and hid from the world, the courageous Ushoran sought out a place to build a new kingdom where he could make manifest the dream of Lahmia—but free from petty squabbling and foolish politics. His dreams were realised when he came upon the valley of Strigos and its capital of Mourkain, where Kadon already ruled as priest-king and had taught the people to worship Nagash as a God. It was a simple matter to replace Kadon with himself and to replace their worship of Nagash with worship of his Vampire line. Kadon had been a cruel and vacillating king; Ushoran brought his people order and prosperity, and they welcomed him for it. He even restored Abhorash's principle of the Vampires only feeding upon criminals and enemy captives, so once again, the people would have nothing to fear from their immortal masters.

Soon, the kingdom of Strigos was vast and powerful. Ushoran then sent word to his four other brethren, welcoming them to his new Vampire state, where they would be free to feed and live luxuriously, just as they had back in Nehekhara, safe from the hand of Nagash. To Neferata, this seemed yet another insult. Her interloper brother would dare to presume his empire greater than her own (though it certainly was) or that he might ever rule over her. As well, the queen saw at last her chance to get her revenge. She slaughtered Ushoran's messenger and at once spread rumours to the other bloodlines, assuring them that Ushoran either meant to enslave them all, or worse, sell them out to the reborn Nagash.

After two hundred years of living with their guilt over abandoning their master and their fear of his revenge, the Vampires had grown bitter and insular. Each bloodline blamed the others for their betrayal and scattering but was prevented from acting on this because of the taboo against harming their own kind. When Neferata gave them a target and a reason to break this pact, the pent-up fury of the other bloodlines exploded in an orgy of violence. They sent mortal armies and Vampire assassins to that kingdom to destroy the interloper once and for all.

The Human armies sent against Ushoran's kingdom were a rabble, but they came from all sides and with an unceasing dedication fuelled by Neferata's get. Strigos was beset, and in turning back the tide, the prince was distracted at a critical time, allowing his kingdom to be ravaged by an immense tide



of Greenskins, no doubt also instigated by Neferata's agents. The prince rushed back to defend his capital, and the battle raged at those gates for days on end. Strigos was beginning to turn the tide when the Orc shaman broke through Ushoran's wards and slew the great prince with a terrible magical blast.

Even this great loss would not have ended Strigos, for the prince's sacrifice had won the battle, and loyal agents of Ushoran remained. But with their forces weakened and their borders broken, they turned to their brethren in darkness for assistance and found them, instead, closing in like jackals. The other First Children were hungry for blood and still in desperate need of a whipping boy.

The Blood Dragons called them dishonourable and hunted them like animals. The Lahmians continued to turn Human armies against them and laughed as they were driven like common mortals into hiding. Many of the surviving thralls of Ushoran ran, pursued to the frozen north where they sought out Vashanesh, Ushoran's favoured brother. But Vashanesh declared he had no time for cowards or weaklings, and he tore out their throats. Others turned to the hermetic Nocrarchs, hoping those lonely few would share their hiding places, but the Nocrarchs also rejected them, fearful of being targeted for a similar destruction by the other bloodlines. The Strigoi became so terrified of exposure and extermination that they were forced to live in dark, secret places, far from Humans and civilisation, and they fed only on indigents and hermits, lepers and Ghouls, or most usually, vermin and the already dead. In a century, the great kingdom of Strigos was no more, and its once great princes turned to yelping dogs, hiding in the shadows and stealing scraps.



Four hundred years later, the shame of this grew too much to bear for Vorag Bloodytooth, later called The Ghoulish King, and he gathered an army of Ghouls and set about rebuilding the lost kingdom. He did create a new capital deep in the Plain of Bones, but his rage was then directed at the Greenskins rather than his fellow Vampires. Once again, fighting that endless angry tide proved deadly, both to him and to his dreams, and his empire fell as Strigos before it.

Yet the efforts of Vorag the Ghoulish King remain an inspiration to the Strigoi. They still dream of rebuilding their great Vampire empire, and they have learnt much from the mistakes of Vorag. They also dream of taking revenge on their brethren for their centuries of debasement and the betrayal that caused it all. The other bloodlines' folly is that they think the Strigoi are a spent force because they are all hiding or in slumber. But in the shadows, ambition burns all the brighter, and in slumber comes renewed strength. With their guards down, the other bloodlines will have no defence when the Strigoi rise again—and rise again they most surely will.

SOCIETY AND OUTLOOK

The scattered nature of the Strigoi means any sort of formal society does not exist, but each individual still remembers the time and ways of Mourkain, and a sense of tradition and history unites their customs. The Strigoi remember what it was like to be lords and kings, and they continue to act as such even though they are currently between reigns.

Their shadow courts and kingly ways are, of course, somewhat changed by the social and physical conditions in which they find themselves, warped into grotesque and often pathetic parodies of what they once were. Their courtiers and servants are now mindless Wights and mad Spirits; their palaces are underground crypts or swamp-claimed graveyards. Their people are nothing but filthy-ridden, bestial Ghouls. Yet, they take their reign seriously, demanding absolute loyalty and proper deference from their subjects, in return offering their dutiful governance as lord protector and keeper of the law and bringing swift reparations on those who enter unwelcome. Some are more lax in their duties than others, of course.

Just as the ways of the Strigoi are rooted in the past so, too, are their minds and memories. Many Strigoi have lost the strength to keep fighting for their return to power and instead have slipped into a grand reverie of their past glories. They relive old battles and *celebrations*, wear their old titles, and obey long forgotten laws of noblesse oblige. For some, the despair has driven them completely into madness, and they can no longer even tell what is of the present or the past—they may wear sackcloth and believe it to be their lordly robes or converse with friends long since dead. For others, the only escape is in dreams, and they sleep almost constantly, dreaming of better days past or still to come.

Then there are those whose madness takes a more overt and dangerous form. Yudas the Shadow King became the terror

DEADFALL

The trap had been very clever. The bridge had looked solid because it was solid—it was the rocks on the opposite side that had been tunnelled into, so that they crumbled away as soon as there was enough weight past the halfway point. One man alone wouldn't trigger it; it was designed to catch whole trains of travellers and smash them into pieces as they fell to the rocks a hundred feet below, horses and all. Fine pickings for the man-eating Ogres who had no doubt spent much of their time and more of their brainpower creating the trap.

The hooded figure could smell the Ogres now, and as his head cleared, he could hear their heavy footsteps, each one twice the size of a normal man, in height and girth. Each of the three held a long, much-blooded club, hefting the trunk-like objects in a single hand. They were grinning; bloody saliva dripped down their fangs in anticipation of their feast. He waited until they stopped in momentary surprise to see just one man caught in their trap, and then he surprised them again. He stood up.

It was only when he reached his full height that he realised his right hand was missing, the stump of the elbow hanging black and greasy in the air. He had a moment to curse the decades it would take him to grow it back before the Ogres overcame their surprise and charged the hooded figure.

Foolishly, they came at him individually. The first came fast, bellowing and driving his great club down with terrible force. The Vampire didn't try to block it but stepped inside the arc and leapt upwards. His claws tore into the Ogre's neck, but he knew he didn't have time to tear through the thick, fleshy throat. In mid-air, his legs twisted with a hideous cracking sound, and the taloned feet grasped tightly onto the still-descending wrist. The club slammed into the ground, and the Ogre tried to pull it up again. That was a mistake, for the grip of the Vampire's feet was like iron, and the Ogre's body tilted back without the arm following it. At that point, with all the Vampire's strength, he drove his remaining hand up against the man-eater's jaw and was rewarded when the shoulder joint completely detached from the neck. The Ogre bellowed in more shock than fear and sat down, nursing his useless arm.

The other two now knew they were facing no man and moved to surround him. He sprang towards the one on his right, sailing above a height even an Ogre could swing a club and came down with all three of his taloned limbs aimed at the great beast's face. Bones as sharp as blades drove deep into eyes, and fleshless fingers followed them down. Once again, his victim toppled over, the weight of the great Vampire snapping his neck as he fell, though, in truth, he was already dead.

The last man-eater kept his back to the rock wall and put his head down low. He brought his arms forward, his huge fists clenching and unclenching with rage, his guard up, his club ready to hold off the coming charge. But the creature did not charge and, instead, fled into the darkness of the cliff's shadow and the half-dawn light. The Ogre blinked, holding its stance, his nostrils flicking up, left and right, seeking the thing that moved like no man he had ever seen. It was fast, yes, but he would smell it before it would be on him, and he could smash it out of the air.

With his back hard against the stone, he took too long to turn around when he heard the noise above him. There was only a clatter of pebbles, and then a rock almost as large as his own huge form smashed his face into liquid.

Fifty feet up the sheer cliff face, the beast pulled its claws out of the stone and swung onto a ledge. His fall down had shattered his arm and broken several of his ribs; a rock that large from this height would certainly cripple the Ogre. The Greenskins or the birds would do the rest and finish what others remained. Prudence suggested he go back down and do the job himself, however, and he would. Just as soon as he found his hand.

of Wissenland when he saw in each young maid the face of his faithless wife. Urzen the Unrelenting still dreams of his martial days, and he drills an army of Zombies and Ghouls through a full parade each night, despite the fact that the mindless creatures can do nothing but obey his every command.

Not all of the Strigoi are lost in their reveries but, instead, use their memories of what they once had and their hunger for revenge as sparks to action and fuel for their great plans. For others, the hunger becomes a cold, terrible resolve, hardened over the centuries into a will unmatched by any other creature. And whatever their mental state, all of the Strigoi are dangerous. Like all Vampires, they take their right to feed upon and dominate all lesser beings as a birthright, and they take just as much offence as their brethren when anything upsets this natural order. A century-sleeping Strigoi may seem like an easy target for the tomb robber or Vampire hunter, but they can awaken in an instant, and their rage at the intrusion will be assuredly terrible. Whilst they lack the

countless soldiers of the Von Carsteins or the martial prowess of the Blood Dragons, the Strigoi are still just as fearsome.

Ushoran could not match the leadership of Vashanesh or the skill of Abhorash, but even when mortal, he was incredibly powerful. Through his blood, his thralls have inherited his might and added to it their Vampiric nature, each one rippling with cord-like muscles and unholy strength. Even a Blood Dragon knows to fear the strength of the Strigoi; if they should ever make a mistake and let those powerful hands get around their neck, their life would be ended in a moment. The Strigoi take great pride in their incredible strength and consider it a sign of their true place amongst Vampire kind—the strongest should be at the top. And there are yet more gifts unique to the Strigoi—but they come with a terrible price.

The lifestyle that forced them into the dark corners of the world has also driven them deeper and deeper into their own dark natures. The more they dwell in the shadows and the



bowels of the earth, the more they come to resemble shades and beasts. All pretence of their humanity has fallen away, leaving only the Vampire hunger and the pure essence of the predator, shaping their flesh to better hunt, kill, and feed. Their bodies curve and bend, their claws become harder and sharper than steel, their fangs grow longer and far more deadly. The most distorted fall onto all fours, their legs and spine twisted, and spikes protrude from their backs. Their ears become pointed like a bat's, and their mouths extend out like that of some sort of daemonic wolf. As time passes, they no longer resemble anything remotely Human; instead, they are creatures of some deformed nightmare.

Eventually, their mind also follows suit, slipping slowly away from their aristocratic delusions, until all that is left is the vague memory of absolute power and the limitless rage at having lost it. Yet, they are still not mindless beasts; all Vampires are princely creatures and no amount of physical devolution can change that. Even as they rave and froth and howl, they rule over their courts, however deranged, and maintain a sense of noble pride, however twisted. Unto the last, a Strigoi is nothing if not lordly.

FEEDING AND BREEDING

The Strigoi are shunned by all other Vampires, and the Lahmians have their agents in almost every town and city. Humans are not good at keeping secrets, particularly not when they have been selected to sate a Vampire, and those drained to death quickly come to the notice of Witch Hunters. Thus, it is extremely difficult for the Strigoi to feed upon the living or dwell amongst them for any lengthy period. The sole exception to this is the travelling people of old Strigos. Without a kingdom, the last remnants of Ushoran's people were left to wander the Old World, feared and hated by all others for their Vampire-tainted past. Isolated and shunned from Human communities, the predations of the Strigoi Vampires upon these travelling folk remain unnoticed, and, of course, there are many amongst those people who rush to welcome their once and future kings. A wise Strigoi does not stay long with these people, however, for they attract Witch Hunters, as well as Vampire agents, for they know the dark reputation of these folk is often based on truth.

In the main, the Strigoi resort to feeding upon the dead instead of the living, a habit which hastens their descent into insanity and bestial appearance. The dead, unlike the living, attract no attention if disturbed, and their blood, if the corpse was killed within the year, can provide sustenance enough for survival. The taste is cold and bitter, however, so the Strigoi feed as little as possible and take no joy in it. Rats and other vermin add variety but only offer the choice between the bitter and the insipid. The luckiest ones have learned to suppress their feeding urge, by sleeping, mental exertion, or some darker power.

Unlike their other Vampire brethren, the Strigoi are not social creatures. For safety reasons alone, it is better that they neither meet nor communicate with any of their

THE UNTERNEHMUNG

When Captain Schluter of the good ship *Unternehmung* took on two of the River Strigany as crew, he paid no heed to the ridiculous rumours of superstitious sailors. The Strigany proved to be hard working and knew their way around a boat as if they were born to it. All this nonsense about being in league with the powers of darkness was clearly rot. Then the food spoiled. Every last morsel on board went bad, weeks out from land. His crew's bellies started grumbling, and so did they. Mutiny was inevitable, and the Strigany, having proven sound fellows, were its ringleaders.

The first order of business was to round up the captain and those crewmembers still loyal to him and lock them in the brig. The second order of business was to haul them back out of the brig and cook them up to replace the spoiled supplies. The *Unternehmung* sailed for weeks with no sight of land, and more and more of the prisoners were eaten. But each time another scapegoat was chosen to go in the pot, the crew only seemed to get hungrier. The hunger was like a living thing, gnawing at their bellies and whispering dark thoughts into their brains.

When Nanosh of the Strigoi finally climbed out of his coffin of grave dirt stowed in the hold and showed himself, his servants had done their work. Every surviving member of the *Unternehmung's* crew was a ravening Ghoul, ready to serve their new captain eagerly if it meant fresh meat. Now, Nanosh and the *Unternehmung* crew sail through seas of blood, launching night-time raids on ships and coastal towns, dragging screaming meat back onto their ship for future meals. Even the pirates of Sartosa fear the *Unternehmung* and her Ghoulish crew.

bloodline. Most find the memories it brings back too painful. Nor do the Strigoi grant the Blood Kiss to anyone, except in the most exceptional of cases. Again, the risk of exposure is much greater after such a deed, and the idea of cursing anyone to live as they do is beyond even the vast cruelty of their dark souls. But it is snobbery as much as mercy that stays them from breeding; when Strigos does rise once again, the kingdom shall be inherited only by those who deserve to do so—those who were so cruelly deprived of it so many years ago. Someone who does not remember that event would only be able to join their number through incredible diligence and deference to the Strigos line.

DESIGNS AND STRATAGEMS

The Strigoi do not wait idly for their past glories to return. Even those lost in reverie or insanity ache to return to power and domination. Snatching moments of dominion over mindless Ghouls or some terrified Strigany is no substitute for true kingship, as if water for wine. But how can they bring back the great kingdom of Strigos whilst they remain so desperate and despised?

The answer lies in the example of Vorag the Ghoul King. He was the first of their line to rise up after the massacre and attempt to take back what was once theirs. Although his plans failed, his methods were sound—he took strength from the powers of the Strigoi and applied them far from the realms of the other Vampires—deep in the Badlands. The other bloodlines, as much as the Strigoi, cling tightly to their lordship over Humans. They care far less about areas where Humans cannot or will not go. Thus, the Strigoi have survived in graveyards, ruins, and dark forests, and it is why Vorag's efforts in the south went unnoticed and were not prevented. If their kingdom is to rise again, then it will do so in places that are similarly lost or forgotten.

Every ruined castle or abandoned graveyard can be a Strigoi stronghold. Every festering bog or desolate wasteland can

be their standing ground. Where the lands are hidden by fog, or thick woods, or high mountains, the Strigoi take root and begin, once again, to build their armies and dream of reclaiming their thrones. A whole country, however, would have to be established somewhere quite far from the Empire and its Human agents. The Badlands present the best alternative currently—mostly empty of both Humans and other Vampires and only partly threatened by Greenskins or Ogres. The fact it was once the land of Strigos is also not lost on the Strigoi kings. Further north and almost as lacking in population are the Border Princes, and these lonely, anarchic lands are also fertile ground for the ambitious Strigoi.

Vorag also showed the strength that can be gained from an army of Ghouls, and these creatures are always the foot soldiers and servants of the Strigoi. Starvation is a constant threat across the Old World; one poor harvest, natural disaster, or lost trade caravan can leave an entire village with nothing to eat but the grass and leaves around them. Soldiers and sailors, too, are often lost miles from supplies and surrounded by the dead. Eating the flesh of men in order to survive is far more common than anyone would ever guess, but once done, this sin forever taints the soul, driving the Human to become a hideous, bestial monster. In this, the Strigoi see much of themselves, so many Strigoi are protective and compassionate towards their hideous servants. Others simply see them as a natural force, like the rats and bats and cockroaches that naturally flock to these creatures of decay—useful but due no more concern than any other beast.

Whatever their master's approach, the Ghouls seem driven by their nature to worship the Strigoi fervently and without question, some travel dozens of miles to seek out their masters, searching through the most hidden of places, or some even feel a call in their blood that leads them unerringly to their goal. Rare is the Strigoi Vampire who has no Ghouls in his court, and all of them welcome such followers, for they provide the greatest gift of all: a chance for the Vampire to feed on the living as opposed to the dry, bitter blood of the dead. Ghoul



blood is sour compared to that of a full Human, but it is a great step up from the blood of the dead.

It is easy to dismiss the Ghoul kings as mad masters of equally mad minions, but the Ghouls provide the Strigoi with both a constant supply of fresh blood and a ready army at hand. What is more, Ghouls fight with the frenzy of Troll slayers, terrifying their opponents far more than even a Zombie, and the fact their hearts still beat makes them immune to all the weaknesses of necromancy. Should the Strigoi's magic ever fail, the Ghouls will fight on.

There are many others who serve the Strigoi, of course. Like all Vampires, they are Natural Necromancers, and their crypts are full of the dead, able to be summoned up to defend their resting place. They have a great fondness for Spectres, again seeing much of themselves in a creature so fired by an inconsolable need for revenge. Wights, too, make very suitable attendants; the Strigoi approve of the Wights' sense of history and propriety, as well as their unyielding determination to serve their liege lords.

The Strigoi's most powerful weapon of all, however, is simply themselves. They have no need of magic or swordplay, or armies, or political subterfuge. They alone are enough to crush all who challenge them. They are gigantic, muscle-bound monsters, their flesh rotted to a thickness almost impossible to pierce or destroy, and their arms strong enough to rip an Ogre in half. Yet despite their size, they can move faster than the eye can see, climb over any surface at incredible speeds, and use their bat or rat forms to overcome all defences. And they are fired with a hatred

purser than anything ever known and a pulsating desire to destroy. They are creatures of nightmare, their hideous nature not hidden behind any Human pretence. To see one is to gaze upon the true image of death in all its terrible glory. Often, the Strigoi have no need of their strength, for their appearance alone has stopped the hearts of many strong, brave men. Especially as their appearance is often a surprise, for they sleep so long that mortals and immortals alike forget them, or think them no longer a threat. This is a mistake they rarely live long enough to regret.

This is the way of the Strigoi; they are forced to dwell in the shadows, prevented from lording over mortal men, but they have kept their pride and their fury. They take what they know they are due and crush those who make the mistake of thinking them weak. And although they stay hidden, they refuse to be cowed by fear of the other bloodlines. Let them come, say the Strigoi. Let them come into the shadows, into our world, where we rule. Let them see what strength we have found in darkness. Let them discover that this so-called dying race has strength enough to kill them all.

And let them know that like Ushoran the First, we are princes, kings, emperors and Gods. We are nobody's whipping boy.

NOTABLE STRIGOI

The following are amongst the most powerful and well-known of the Strigoi. Both Urzen and Gashnag have convinced other Strigoi to rally to their banners, but in general, those of Ushoran's blood remain isolated from the other bloodlines, as well as the world, and the large-scale organised actions of these two are definitely the exception to the rule. But there are others on the hunt. Yudas the Shadow King continues to prey upon young girls as he has for centuries, terrifying all of Wissenland with his unrelenting harvest. The Vampire known only as the Beast of the Färlic Hills claims a caravan on the Dwarf Road once a month as his toll. And whilst Prince Rametep spends most of his time sleeping under Miragliano beside his huge collection of treasured magic items, none of the grave robbers who disturb his lair ever leave again.

GASHNAG, THE BLACK PRINCE

There is more than one Strigoi Vampire ruling a small kingdom in the Border Princes, but the most famous of these is Gashnag. A child-in-darkness of Vorag, Gashnag is determined not to make the same mistakes of his sire. He rose to notoriety slowly, and he has borrowed from the Lahmians the gifts of subtle manipulation. Resisting his brethren's taste for being worshipped as a God, he has instead recast himself as a romantic hero. He has paid bards and storytellers to spread rumours that he is under a terrible curse that causes him to appear beastly and savage but that he was once strikingly handsome. Under the sobriquet The Black Prince, he appears on his battlements only at night and sees no one but his closest advisors, ever-stoking the mystique that surrounds him.

Gashnag also saves all his violence for the enemies of his tiny kingdom, and the only time he does appear in public, his hideous form is hidden beneath a huge and heavy cloak as he swiftly rides to mete out justice or defend the borders. When a gang of Ogres from the Black Mountains began raiding villages under his protection, Gashnag immediately rode into the mountains alone. He returned the next night with a dozen heads on a spike, which he planted in the village square, so his people would know they were safe again. The combination of dedicated security and romantic allusions has caused the province to swell in population in recent years. If this continues, The Black Prince may very well succeed where his sire failed and return the Strigoi to a great power once again—and one far closer to the Empire.

Gashnag, The Black Prince

Strigoi Thrall, ex-Soldier

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
48%	46%	61%	62%	71%	43%	51%	24%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	23	6	6	6	1	2	0

Skills: Animal Care, Command, Common Knowledge (Border Princes, the Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow +10%, Gamble, Gossip, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Ride, Search, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean), Torture

Talents: Excellent Vision, Frenzy, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Rover, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Iron Sinews, Monstrous Mass, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Greatweapon (Greatsword)

Trappings: Air of Mystery, Great Cloak with Hood, Gloves, Mask, Destrier with Saddle and Harness, Red Rose

URZEN THE UNRELENTING

Others have taken a more traditional approach but with a less traditional aim in mind. Urzen the Unrelenting has followed Vorag's example by amassing a great army of Ghouls, camped around his ruined fortress deep inside the Forest of Shadows. His agents are spreading throughout the graveyards of the Empire, conscripting the Ghouls and commanding the Zombies to follow them back to his great staging ground. Each day, his army grows more massive, and Urzen, ever the general, drills them relentlessly each evening.

Urzen isn't building his army to take over the Empire, however, but to attack the Silver Pinnacle and get his revenge on Queen Neferata herself. Urzen was Ushoran's military

advisor, and he has spent more than three thousand years dreaming of his redressing the wrongs done to his master. The only thing that might hinder this is if the Lahmians discover his plans and send Human agents against him before he can bring the full numbers of his troops to bear. To that end, Urzen has instructed his mortal servants to do everything they can to help Vampire hunters—guiding them to Vampire lairs, providing them with the location of great magic weapons, informing them of an individual Vampire's weaknesses—whilst taking care that his hand in things is never discovered and that the hunters target only Lahmians.

Urzen the Unrelenting

Strigoi Count, ex-Thrall, ex-Outlaw

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
63%	40%	58%	69%	79%	50%	60%	27%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	25	5	6	6	1	5	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Strategy/Tactics), Command +10%, Common Knowledge (Border Princes, the Empire +10%), Concealment +10%, Dodge Blow +10%, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Gossip +10%, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (Thieves' Tongue), Set Trap, Silent Move +10%, Speak Language (Reikspiel, Tilean), Torture

Talents: Coolheaded, Frenzy, Lightning Reflexes, Menacing, Rover, Seasoned Traveller, Sixth Sense, Strike Mighty Blow

Traits: Blood Gift (Bat Form, Blood Drain, Iron Sinews, Monstrous Mass, Natural Necromancer, Wolf Form, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Special Rules:

- *Rending Claws:* Urzen's Natural Weapons have the Impact Quality

Armour (Heavy): Sleeved Chain Shirt, Chain Leggings, Breastplate, Helmet (Head 2, Arms 2, Body 5, Legs 2)

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Shield, Sword

Trappings: Army of Ghouls, Nightmare

ADVENTURE HOOKS

All of the following adventure hooks are excellent starting points for designing adventures that feature Strigoi prominently.

The Thirteenth Man

Legend has it that the Beast of the Färlic Hills devours all travellers in a party, unless there are thirteen men in the group. The Characters are hired to join the ranks of a travelling merchant company, so they can make up this

number. Of course, this is just superstition, and the Beast attacks anyway, using his Ghouls first to drive the maddened horses deep into his domain. The caravan members end up far from the road and unsure of their position—and aware that something is hunting them. The Beast picks them off one by one, striking from above and then flying away, enjoying their terror as their numbers are whittled down. Will anyone survive to see the morning again?

Urzen's Hounds

The adventurers receive an anonymous tip that a member of the town council is actually a Lahmian in disguise. Through a great deal of careful undercover investigation, they discover which one it is and summon the Witch Hunters. Of course, the tip came from Urzen, keen to discover under which face his old enemy was hiding, and one of his ghostly agents follows the Characters and reports the discovery immediately. The Lahmian knows who sent them, however, and bargains for their help, showing all the good she has done for the town, describing the monstrous nature of Urzen and his plan to conquer the world—a plan only she can stop. When the Ghoul king's agents come to finish the job, will the Characters protect the beautiful lady who seems so innocent, or will they let vengeance take its course?

The Enemy of my Enemy

When an isolated community in Averland falls under a series of brutal attacks from a band of Greenskins, the Player Characters are hired to help protect the town. Whilst patrolling, the PCs learn from refugees that other villages have been similarly attacked. It seems the entire region lies beneath the shadow of the Orcs. Things take a turn for the strange when a dying man rides into the town, bearing an object wrapped in filthy cloth. With his dying breath, he begs the PCs to destroy the item lest "He" come for it and doom them all.

It turns out that this man was a foolish tomb robber who happened to plunder the wrong vault in the Border Princes. He had inadvertently entered a Strigoï lair, but before he realised his error, he had already removed a few treasures. That night, when the Vampire awoke, he was enraged and immediately scoured the area in search of the thief. In doing so, he disturbed a tribe of Greenskins, who in their fear fled the Vampire's wrath. Dislodged from their normal stalking grounds, the Greenskins have drifted into the Empire and now wreak havoc. The only way they can be stopped is to return the stolen object to the Vampire and hopefully enlist his help in turning back the green tide.

— THE VON CARSTEINS: PRINCES OF DARKNESS —

They say history is made by great men and women. That is certainly true for the Vampires, but none have written that history so boldly or so thick with blood as the Von Carsteins. They are creatures of enormous passion and unbridled ambition, and their most trivial desires shape the destinies of entire nations. They are the greatest of all the bloodlines—and the greatest enemy of humankind. Fear them or fall.

HISTORY

Lahmizzar was the King of Lahmia who led the first revolution against Nagash. Lahmizzar had a son, Lahmizzash, who finally drove Nagash from the land. Lahmizzash had a daughter, and she was Neferata, the beautiful death. After the death of Neferata's mother, Lahmizzash married another, a beauty known as Nefarazi, who was descended from the line of the great Nagash. The son of Lahmizzash and Nefarazi was Nalakhaz, and his son was Lahkashaz, who was the ruler of Khemri until he lost his throne to the usurper General Setep. And there the line was thought ended, for Setep killed all who dwelled in the palace.

But Lahkashaz had a son with one of his concubines: a tall and powerful lad called Vashanesh. He possessed all the nobility of Lahmizzar and all the strategic genius of Lahmizzash, and his

blood carried the command of Neferata and the strength and resilience of Nagash. Vashanesh escaped the purges of Setep, disguising himself for a time as a loyal soldier, and journeyed instead to Lahmia. He knew Setep's rebellion was supported because the people of Khemri could not abide their king ignoring the decadence (and rumours of black sorcery) of the lords of Lahmia. He was determined to find the truth behind the rumours and search for allies against the usurper.

"I fell in love with him the moment I met him. There was something about him—his eyes, the way he carried himself, as if he were something more than Human—even when he was still mortal."

—QUEEN NEFERATA, ON VASHANESH

When Vashanesh arrived at the court of Neferata, he demanded a private audience with the queen. Ushoran the Prince of Masques stepped forward and mocked his arrogance, but Vashanesh simply ignored him and

stepped around him. Abhorash, the great warrior, stepped forward and put his blade to Vashanesh's throat, but Vashanesh did not even flinch. With his eyes still fixed on Neferata, he pushed Abhorash's blade away. With a wave of her hand, she dismissed all her court, even W'soran, her most trusted advisor. In private discussion, Vashanesh told her all he knew of Setep's plans, and she confessed to the truth about her court. She promised to shield Vashanesh from Setep if he would discipline her court and her soldiers, the two of them ruling as king and queen. That very day they were married, and that same night Vashanesh drank deep of the Elixir of Life.

But even with Vashanesh's great wisdom and command, the seeds of tyranny laid by General Setep had run deep and

THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME

Mortal and Vampire scholars alike can find no explanation for the choice of the name Von Carstein. There is not nor has there ever been a village, town, or province in the Old World named Carstein, so the name could not have originated in the natural way. Nor are there any records of the name existing before the coming of Vlad. It seems the name was coined by the prince himself. It obviously had a powerful meaning to him, but any chance of ever knowing that meaning went with Vlad's destruction.

FIVE BROTHERS

Wilhelmina von Garrick, Magister Vigilant of the Amethyst Order, has discovered the true extent of Mannfred's new plans for the Empire and knows they are far from ready to resist him. They need time to rebuild their defences and study the ways of resisting necromancy. And the best way to ensure they have that time is to use the Von Carsteins' tendencies against them. Wilhelmina intends to raise the other four of Vlad's get to life, knowing they will fall into squabbling amongst each other and delay Mannfred's plans. She understands the risks to her soul but believes that just as the priests of Sigmar studied the works of Nagash to hold back Mannfred, the risk is worth it given the danger. There are some within her order who are looking to find some adventurers to stop her without an official incident—but she makes a persuasive argument, and many adventurers might decide instead to join her in her lengthy quest instead.

wide, and eventually the new pretender, Alcadizaar, brought forth an immense army from every province and city of Nehekhara. Despite all their power and skill, the city could not hold against such a force, and it was brought to ruin, its Vampire rulers forced to flee.

Eventually, the seven First Children arrived at Nagashizzar, as Nagash had foreseen. He immediately saw that Vashanesh was the greatest of them all and that Vashanesh saw the great need to control his blood kin lest they destroy themselves. So, much to the bitterness of the others, Nagash presented a ring to Vashanesh, a ring which promised him instant resurrection for every death he suffered, as well as the power to control his fellow Vampires. In return, Nagash demanded the loyalty of all the Vampires, or he would curse them forever.

Of course, it was a trap, and the ring forced Vashanesh to do Nagash's bidding, and through him, all his brethren became slaves of the necromancer. And though Nagash provided the Vampires with new powers and insight to crush Alcadizaar, it soon became obvious that he cared nothing for their battles or aims. Vashanesh cursed the name of Nagash and refused to be subjugated to another's will any longer. He devised a plan to break the hold upon him. Upon the battlefield, he challenged Alcadizaar to a duel. The Khemri king was easily outmatched by the Vampire, but Vashanesh dropped his guard deliberately, and his opponent cut off his head. With his death, the magical hold was broken, and the Vampires fled the lands of Nehekhara at once. Nagash's curse followed them, but they were free.

Of Vashanesh, there was no sign. Yet, he did not die, and centuries later he was discovered by the Strigoi in his remote fortress in Kislev—then he vanishes from records again. Legends of the time of Sigmar suggest he may have aided the God-king in his destruction of Nagash, and there are other tales, but nothing is confirmed. Certainly there were no signs of the decisive actions that so characterised this great man in

his time in Lahmia. And eventually, all trace of Vashanesh disappears.

Then, two thousand years after the betrayal of Nagash, a figure appeared in Sylvania, calling himself Prince Vladimir von Carstein, and he claimed to be the heir of Vashanesh. For some, the pretence was obvious: this was undeniably Vashanesh wearing borrowed robes. Others swore that there was something different, something greatly changed from the Vashanesh they knew. For his part, Prince Vladimir never



PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Far away from Sylvania, scholars of the Reikland have only ever seen the name written down, and there is some confusion amongst them about the exact pronunciation. For the family itself, there is no confusion whatsoever: the a is short as in “cart”, the r is slightly rolled, the s has a hint of the Kislevian zh, and the last syllable rhymes with “wine.” This is a matter of deep family pride, and it is not unknown for Von Carsteins to flay the tongues of those who make the last syllable rhyme with “seen.”

THE FAMILY NAME

Note that there are nobles of the name Von Carstein who are not Vampires (see **Chapter VI: Native Soil** for more on them), and likewise, there are Vampires of the bloodline who have not kept the name. This may be because they belong to another great Sylvanian family, or have married into one, or perhaps because they are not yet considered worthy of wearing this most famous of names, awaiting some great achievement or deed of renown. However, the Vampire is still considered part of the Von Carstein bloodline and, whatever their name, must remember where their allegiance truly lies.

spoke of his past nor did he ever use any other name. If he ever was Vashanesh, he was no longer.

Prince Vladimir's first actions were to help Vanhel master necromancy. They raised a giant army of the dead to turn back the Skaven menace; Vlad then vanished from history again. He appears sporadically in the records of that blighted province over the following centuries, but it was not until that fateful night of 1797 that he once again took a commanding role in the fates of nations. With his marriage to Isabella, he put into action a plan that would drive the Old World into a hundred and twenty years of devastating war—a war that would claim the lives of countless Old Worlders, destroy the strength of the Empire, and which would only be won through terrible sacrifice and amazing luck. The tales of these wars have been told many times in other places and need not be repeated here.

Eventually, Vlad was slain and his dreams followed close behind. All of his get were destroyed in succession, either by each other or by the brave warriors of the Empire: Fritz, Hans, Pieter, bloodthirsty Konrad, and finally even the cunning Mannfred. But countless others of the bloodline survived, continuing as they ever had, and their impact upon Sylvania could not be erased. The world was forever changed by their actions, and when Mannfred returned to life, he found it waiting for him with open arms and ready as ever to support his grand designs for dominion and conquest. The Von Carsteins have returned, and their will shall be made law once again.

SOCIETY AND OUTLOOK

The Von Carstein family traces its lineage back to the founding of the Empire. Ancient beyond compare, they have long ruled the lands of Sylvania with mixed results. Although whispers and rumours abound about their dark nature and unholy character, the people under their rule are more or less content, regarding the nobility no differently than peasants do in other lands. What many suspect but few

know with certainty is that the Von Carsteins have a terrible secret—they are Vampires.

Whilst easily the most famous Vampiric nobles, they are not alone in their Undead state. Throughout the Old World, there are other noble families who harbour the same curse (or blessing), but they either lack the subtlety or the numbers to survive for more than a generation before some Witch Hunter comes a-calling. It is the Von Carstein perseverance, strength, and mythology that places them above the other Vampire nobles and ensures their place as some of the most dreadful Vampires in the Warhammer world.

Many nobles believe deeply in the concept of the peerage to its literal extreme. Nobility, in other words, is in the blood. The upper classes are placed above the lower because only they have the qualities necessary to rule, and these qualities can only be passed through the blood. The Von Carsteins are no exception.

The Von Carstein family does not just apply this theory to the lands of Sylvania or their bondsmen, however. It applies to the entire world and everything in it. The simple truth every Von Carstein knows is that they were born to rule, and everyone not of their bloodline was born to grovel at their feet.

They are, every one, prideful, arrogant, and megalomaniacal—although, one wonders if it is truly arrogance to believe in their own superiority given the endless amount of times it has been proven. The Von Carsteins are naturally theatrical and consummate braggarts, yet over and over they have proven that their words are not empty, and they can indeed do all they boast. Beware the Von Carstein who swears to hunt you to the ends of the earth, for he is not exaggerating, and he will keep that promise.

This is not least because of family pride. The Von Carsteins take their name and noble duties very seriously, and if they swear something upon them, they will move all the earth to see it through. Of course, herein lies the terrible

The Von Carsteins also make time to build up their empires, creating not just grand and beautiful castles but



FIRE AND WATER

The castle burned.

They had been thorough. Clever. Defeated her guardians. Caught her by surprise. Used fire as their ally, driving her towards them, silvered crossbow bolts biting into her flesh. Her mistake had been to come at them with fury; they were expecting that, and only two fled before her angry visage. She squeezed open another two, but they were many, and they were ready. A half-dozen blades sliced at her, and she could not avoid them all. The silver cut deep. Blood soaked her dress, her fine velvet dress—her blood! For the first time in centuries, blood from her veins, running with her life, drained her soul away. And for the first time in centuries, she ran, ran from mortals.

Back to the flames she went, wrapping herself in the thick curtains to stave off the licking fire. She grabbed a dagger then dropped it with a squeal; the heated steel had burned through to the bone. A flaming painting fell to the floor, and she saw the train of her curtain shield catch fire. Behind that, she saw the hunters at the door, kerchiefs over their faces, raising their crossbows at her. She could see their silver points glinting in the flames. She bared her fangs and, with a flourish, threw the curtain at them. She heard the twang of their bows, and then smiled as screams followed, along with the smell of burning flesh. In the same movement, she leapt for the window.

The river was on the verge of freezing, but she hit it so hard she didn't feel the cold. The impact was like the fire, burning every nerve, stripping her skin from her flesh as easily as the dagger had. After that, the icy cold was a blessing, numbing her screaming muscles, flooding her veins with stillness. Only her lungs still burned as they filled with water. Her lungs and her mind.

She struggled to the surface, spat water, tried to stay buoyant, and failed. The water was her blood enemy; it sapped her strength with every second, and she could not fight it. As she went down again, she saw more death—the men had brought an army, peasants only, but they were armed with torches, blades, and hawthorn spikes. A wild mob with no discipline, if she was strong, she could have scattered them, but she was weak, and they were well led. Even if she made the bank, they would swarm over her, she knew, split her apart with their burning silver. She felt the memory of that agony and surrendered herself to the current. Take me, she willed it, take me away. If she was far enough downstream, she could evade her killers, slip into the forest, and vanish.

But as she was carried, she felt her strength fleeing and knew this was a death as well, a cold, certain death. The water's weight was like iron, and her blood mixed with it, flowing from her as fast as the river. She no longer had the strength to swim to the shore, and she was drifting further away from it with each second. It was a certain death, yes, but at least it was a still one, a quiet one. Not the heat of silver, not the fearful tearing of the mob. A death of her choice.

The pain faded. Her limbs felt less trapped, as if the iron of the water was leaking into them, becoming part of her. She felt her heart slow its beating, and she thought of the first time that had happened, when she was given the Blood Kiss all those centuries ago. The dark stranger from Kislev, so warm around her in his furs, his promises so exciting, and she had squealed with pleasure at the touch of his fangs. He had not lied to her; the gift was exquisite, and she had loved him for it. The strength, the life, the timelessness, and all it had granted her. All she had seen. Countless lifetimes had passed, and she had travelled the globe, seen ten thousand sunsets over a hundred different cities. She'd lived well, better than any man could ever hope in one lifetime, better than most Vampires could ever claim. If it had to end, she had no regrets. It was quiet, it was still, it was like falling asleep and never waking again to see another starlit night.

And it was not enough.

The peasant army had split up to watch along the river bank, their lines spreading thin as they grew more and more assured that the icy water had claimed the foul leech. Without a concentration of torches, they missed her pale fingers breaking the black water. In twos and threes she took them, feeding and growing stronger as she went, her wounds closing and her fury returning but controlled now—and jubilant. Exultant.

Fifty good men of Ostermark died that night, their blood staining the grass black as pitch. And the countess smiled to see another sunset.

also improving public works, supporting the peasants, and administering the law. Acutely aware of the need to enshrine their memories, they are the most generous of patrons to artists, minstrels, and architects, and they host the most lavish of parties for their fellow nobles and even organise celebrations for the common folk. Sometimes these events or creations are entirely innocent, or rather, designed simply to improve the Vampire's popularity. Other times, they take a darker aspect. Countess Lavash's bathhouse is a wonder of modern engineering, automatically sluicing the fresh blood spilt by the rotating knives down into her deep bath, heating it en-route, and the great Sun Still sporting festival in Allebrand has the peasants competing for the honour

of becoming their lord's next meal, ensuring the strongest warriors of the village are eliminated. The Allebranders are told their lord sends the best athletes off to the Reikland to fight for the Emperor, but the peasants are becoming suspicious about the lack of letters sent home.

Perhaps the most famous social event, however, was the infamous Danse Macabre of 2010. Vlad and Isabella had re-popularised the custom of dressing as the dead upon Geheimnisnacht, and had invited every noble in Sylvania, and many more from beyond its borders, to attend a great celebration in Vanhaldenschlosse. Thanks to the Von Carstein gifts in propriety and presentation, it was viewed

to be the social event of the decade, and hundreds of nobles flocked to their castle to see and be seen. Of course, as Vlad read his great spell of awakening from the battlements, Isabella and their men fell upon the guests, devouring every one until the massive ballroom was a charnel house, knee-deep in blood and gore. It was the quintessential Von Carstein celebration, combining their two greatest talents: high society and abundant slaughter.

FEEDING AND BREEDING

The reason the Von Carsteins need land and people to tend it is that they share a common desire to domesticate their food source. It is not that they mind hunting—many of them adore it—but they find it insulting that they should have to do it from the shadows, with care, lest the prey lash out at the predator. It is not enough men should die for them; they should die like sheep.

The Vampires of the Von Carstein bloodline do everything they can to remind mortals of their proper place in the world—as either food or slaves. They play upon humanity's natural tendency to be swayed by authority figures, playing upon the feudal system and the role of the noble within it. They provide defence of the lands whilst the peasants provide the food—only literally, in this case. They also make sure their justice is swift and their might visible, so the mortals are awed by their strength and cowed by it. They strongly encourage the romantic image of the noble as shining symbols of greatness, chosen by the Gods because of their inherent superiority. Possessing such a superior, holy nature, it is therefore a simple step to convince people that being fed upon is the greatest honour, a chance to be blessed by these Gods amongst men, and share, if only for a moment, a glimmer of their glory.

And all too often, it works.

And it works not because the feeding is almost painless and gives the victim wyrd-root dreams combined with the courage of good whiskey, nor because of the illicit or romantic image of the transaction, nor because of any dark knowledge or political advantage that might be gained—although, all these do occur. It works because Humans are always ready to believe in their own inherent inferiority and the superiority of other, better men. Nobles, Elves, or Vampires, it is all the same.

In Sylvania, because they can act so publicly, the cult of the Vampire is very strong, sometimes literally, as in the case with the Wiederauferstanden, the Cult of the Risen Dead, who worship the Von Carsteins as Gods. Others serve no less ardently, despite lacking a religious belief; there are towns in eastern Sylvania where the people compete for the honour of being bled, lining up like lambs for the slaughter. Those who miss out on providing sustenance may console themselves by touching their lord's coat or similar, or they may find many other ways to serve him, in his household or without. There is honour and privilege even in scrubbing a

great Vampire's floors—and if the job is done exceptionally, it may lead to greater honours.

Of course, it is not this overt everywhere in Sylvania, and though the instinct to tug the forelock runs deep and wide, there are many in that province who still have not forgotten the true nature of the Vampires. For such people, however, their very fear keeps them equally pacified and controlled. Others have lived so long under a threat constantly shown to be invincible that they give into despair and simply accept their fate. Inevitably, there are few who have the will to resist their predators, and fewer still with the strength to do anything about it, and so the Von Carsteins can feed openly, easily, and without fear. One day, the Von Carsteins believe, all the world will be the same.

Their dependence on the lofty, noble image of the Vampire is why they are so selective in giving the Blood Kiss. There is no point passing on the Von Carstein blood to one who will mingle with the common folk or not uphold the high standards of the family. A Von Carstein must be arrogant to the core, fundamentally assured of both his family's prominent place in the universe and his own. If this is not the case when the Kiss is given, instruction will be provided; indeed, new Vampires are schooled in every aspect of their noble life, including strategy, manipulation, and conspiracy. Likewise, if the Vampire is ever found wanting in his lordly skills and duties, he may (if he is lucky) be prompted to mind the honour of his family name. Nobody is warned twice.

The simplest way to ensure someone has all the appropriate breeding and temperament the Von Carsteins demand is to ensure they are blood relations to the Von Carstein family. By restricting their attention to those of familial blood, they ensure the continuation of the line and expand the true family. Those who would join the Von Carsteins and who are not born to the blood must marry into the family. This is no small matter. Just like the snobbish nobles of Altdorf, Von Carstein Vampires often examine the background of a prospective inclusion with a fine-tooth comb, going back hundreds of years to make sure there are no signs of commoner blood or inappropriate conduct. Of course, such things can be covered up or doctored; Lady Ariette managed to seriously damage the reputation of her rival Lady Carlotta when she encouraged her to embrace the seemingly spotless Lord Engelmier, only to reveal afterwards the scandalous gossip that Engelmier's grandfather had been a crofter.

There are, as always, exceptions to this careful attitude, for nobles are eccentrics by nature, and the Von Carsteins doubly so. Full-blown madness also runs rife through their blood. There are tales of the Vampire counts transforming common stable boys or serving wenches because they liked their looks, not to mention their favourite horses, dogs, and cats. Such exceptions are frowned upon (especially since favourites can be stuffed or resurrected as Zombies), but eccentricities are also seen as the right and privilege of the noble blooded. If one is eccentric enough, he may become the talk of the season and thus redeem his social standing—

one stableboy is an insult, but a harem of half a hundred is a grandiose diversion.

In short, when it comes to the Blood Kiss, as with almost everything in the life of these idle rich, there is a great deal of propriety to be observed—but every rule can be broken if one is powerful enough to do so.

DESIGNS AND STRATAGEMS

The Von Carsteins have links to the majority of the ruling nobles of the land of Sylvania, and as such, their aims are like any noble house—to remain powerful and wealthy and to increase their power and wealth. They go about achieving these goals in much the same way as any other province of the Empire and through the same political system.

The newly returned Mannfred is the ruler of the land, and his nobles owe him allegiance and support. The Vampires of his land are considered the most powerful, followed by those of the Von Carstein line who lack the Kiss, and then the remaining nobles outside the family. Each noble provides land taxes and troop levies to his superior, and each receives military support in return. In practice, of course, it rarely works so smoothly.

Mannfred only holds power because of his military strength, his enduring charisma, and a complex system of alliances and promises he has made with the lesser lords. And his power is relatively limited; if his fellow counts have a strong reason to object to one of his campaigns, they can deny him troops—and pray that Mannfred lacks the manpower to crush them

for the insult. Despite his military strength, Mannfred has to be a political creature as well and must choose actions that will be well supported. Luckily, everyone supports expanding the borders of Sylvania and crushing the armies of the Empire, and this is a constant theme in Mannfred's plans. Also, few Vampires want to make Mannfred angry because few want the responsibility and dangers of his position. Most are content to let him work on the problem of conquering the Old World, as long as they remain assured of their place in his new republic when it comes.

Beyond the provision of troops, however, Mannfred has little official control over any of his subordinates, nor is there any unifying laws or vows that must be kept. Each feudal lord is therefore free to do whatever he wishes with the land he owns and the peasants who are tenants on it, and the only greater consequence of any such actions might be the slightest change in his social standing. Gifted with a cowed and terrified populace, the individual Vampire lords are free to inflict the most cruel and unusual strictures and enjoy the most indulgent and decadent oppression, and pursuing this entertainment indefinitely is often the limit of the evil plans of most Von Carstein Vampires.

It makes up in cruelty for what it lacks in vision, however. The temptation to create more and more savage or bizarre demands upon the peasants—simply to see if they can get away with it—is certainly too hard for many to resist. Count Marcellan von Carstein once ordered his townsfolk to eat nothing but grass, in order to study the effects of such a diet, whilst Lady Carlotta famously forced husbands to execute their own wives if they committed the crime of bearing them more than two children. Her reason was she didn't want her town growing too fast, as it might then spread over her favourite patch of lilies on a nearby hillside.

When not oppressing their own people, the chief aims of the Von Carsteins are, as mentioned, waging war upon each other and waging war upon mortals. Either way, the motivation is the same—to acquire more land—and the mechanics rarely stray far from the common theme. Before outright hostilities begin, there is blackmail, deceit, and manipulation. Afterwards, there are waves of Undead soldiers: Skeletons, Zombies, Wight cavalry on great Nightmares, and more. Against each other, this often results in a stalemate, as each side can simply keep renewing their troops, and the Vampires are usually forced to return to more subtle methods. But against the fragile mortals, the direct approach has a terrible effectiveness.

It is not a subtle strategy, but it has no need to be. No mortal army can stand against one whose troops never die and whose forces grow larger with every conflict, won or lost. Vlad's army was only turned back at Altdorf because of trickery, by one of his own get. Konrad was defeated only because his subordinates tired of serving under his raging insanity. And Mannfred's great campaign was only halted when the grand theogonist damned his own soul by reading from the Books of Nagash—and afterwards, it took every standing army in the entire Empire to drive him home and attempt to end his life.



But no Vampire can truly die whilst there are those who remember him, and if there is one thing every Von Carstein Vampire is good at, it is stamping a legacy hard and deep into the hearts and minds of his people, into their history and their legends, even into the landscape itself. Sylvania can never forget the Vampire counts, and thus, they will return again and again and again, ready and eager to once more rain down death upon the Empire and crush its people under their cruel dominion, until all the world sinks beneath a darkness of their making—a darkness from which it will never awake.

NOTABLE VON CARSTEINS

The Von Carstein family tree is vast, twisted, and blood-stained, and each of its members have left behind enough suffering and destruction to fill a history book. All of them, in short, are notable figures, and those few that stand out have written the history of the world—or will soon enough.

Vlad the Great, his immortal love Isabella, Konrad the Butcher, and Mannfred the Last: these are names known to every history student in the Empire. Other scholars might know Constantin von Carstein, the great scholar and biographer of Konrad and Mannfred. As a vicious killer and consummate swordsman, he had the opportunity to be close to Konrad throughout his entire campaign, and much of the information known about the Vampire counts comes from the scavenged pages of his detailed works. He did not die with his masters, however, and he may be planning to make some history of his own. Count von Sangster is also famed for his scholarship, amongst both mortals and Vampires. It is said his great library is rivalled only by that of Mannfred, and Sangster's recent *History of the Empire* is considered to be the greatest and most complete ever compiled. So much so that Human scholars will gladly risk the association with the author to read a copy—and as he lives in Nuln, access is not difficult to arrange.

History students of the Empire will also know the name of Tzarina Kattarin of Kislev. Her Vampiric nature is less well known, but she is famed for her blood-soaked reign. After trying to resist her need to feed for many months, she went insane and slaughtered thousands of her own people, as well as countless soldiers of the Empire. She was eventually killed by agents of the Lahmian Sisterhood, but her corpse remains preserved in a great block of ice, and there are many who would love to see her returned to power in the frozen north.

LADY ARIETTE VON CARSTEIN, FIRST OF THE NEW GENERATION

Lady Ariette von Carstein is the eldest of the most recent branch of the Von Carstein family. When Hermann Schtillmann performed the dark ritual that brought Mannfred back from the dead, it was young Ariette who was intended to be the count's first meal. However, the three were interrupted by the arrival of Gotrek Gurnisson and his

ridiculous biographer. It took Ariette twelve hours to escape from her "rescuers" and return to look for the handsome man whom she knew could give her everything she wanted.

On her journey back, she formulated a plan to present herself to Mannfred as a young noble girl who'd been carried off unwillingly by a pair of travellers. She explained to Mannfred that she escaped while the two disgusting men slept, and she had watched them kill a poor peasant girl that they had deemed "tainted." She told Mannfred that these travellers aimed to return with reinforcements, and upon learning this, she knew she had to return to warn him at all costs. Impressed by her courage and passion, Mannfred agreed to grant her the Kiss.

Ariette has gone to great lengths to hide her true background. Previously, she was an irrelevant peasant. Now she has power, wealth, and influence and a mind to use them, and she has no intention of ever losing her current status. She enjoys the finer things in life but is not overindulgent. Most of all, she loves to travel. Sometimes, she does this to help re-create the cult around the Von Carstein name in the younger Sylvanian nobles; other times, she just wants to see the world. She has even been known to fall in amongst adventurers because they travel to such exotic places and see so many strange things. Also, as adventurers tend to be rootless vagabonds, nobody complains if she gets peckish en route.

Lady Ariette von Carstein

Von Carstein Thrall, ex-Charcoal Burner

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
47%	26%	59%	66%	74%	47%	37%	41%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	24	5	6	6	1	1	0

Skills: Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gossip +10%, Haggle, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Outdoor Survival, Perception +10%, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface +10%, Search, Secret Signs (Ranger), Shadowing, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Torture

Talents: Disarm, Flee!, Public Speaking, Savvy, Schemer, Sturdy, Very Strong

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Summon Wolves, Vampires' Curse, Wolf Form), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Best Quality Hand Weapon (Sword), Dagger coated in Dark Venom Poison

Trappings: Collection of Books, Fur-lined Cloak, Good Quality Travelling Clothing, Best Quality Noble's Garb, Best Quality Riding Horse with Saddle and Harness, 4 doses of Heartkill Poison, 30 gc

TIMOR NOCTIS

Mannfred always carries Timor Noctis into battle. This massive two-handed sword has a Dragon-scale hilt, a huge black onyx for a pommel stone, and its name—meaning Night's Dark Terror—emblazoned along its blade.

Academic Knowledge: History

Powers: Timor Noctis drinks the blood of its victims and turns it into magical power. If Timor Noctis causes one or more Wounds in a combat round, the wielder may roll one extra die on a spell casting roll made in the subsequent round. The spell must be cast in the very next round to gain this effect; if the sword is used many times before casting, it still only provides a maximum of one die.

History: Timor Noctis appears to be of Dwarfen craftsmanship yet also bears clear marks of Chaos. During his wanderings of the world, Mannfred journeyed east and met the Chaos Dwarfs of Zhar-Naggrund. Somehow, he convinced them to forge him a sword worthy of his stature, and he has carried it with him ever since. Sensing his poor chances at the climax of Hel Fenn, he hid the sword in that swamp to reclaim when he returned to life.

MANNFRED VON CARSTEIN

Mannfred lacks the vision and true genius of Vladimir. It is perhaps the only thing he lacks. Mannfred is exceptionally cunning and devious, more than any other of the counts. He was both willing and able to defeat his sire by betraying him to the enemy. He played a similar part in the defeat of Konrad, whilst also avoiding his brother-in-darkness's brutal rule by being very far away. Indeed, whilst his predecessors were trying to conquer the world, Mannfred stood back and watched them—and the world. He studied everything they did and learnt everything he could. He also wandered the world, returning to the land of Nehekara and the city of

Lahmia, learning everything about the origins of his kind. Over the years, Mannfred has accumulated a library of staggering proportions, but it is miniscule compared to the knowledge he keeps inside his head. Yet, he still considers himself a student and still voraciously pursues every piece of knowledge and experience he can gain. He is wise enough to know there is always something to be learned and that he is never omnipotent nor invulnerable. He does not content himself that his Vampiric powers are enough to save him, nor would he ever trust entirely in a magic item like the Carstein Ring.

If Mannfred has a flaw, it is his need to understand. He could have easily destroyed Konrad at any point and attacked the Empire whilst they were still reeling from Vlad's advance; his delay in order to appear non-threatening and to get the most accurate view of his history and the political situation allowed the cult of Sigmar the time to find the only way to defeat him. However, Mannfred also possesses the rarest of qualities in the powerful—the ability to recognise his own mistakes and learn from them. Mannfred learnt much from his defeat, and he is determined not to make the same mistakes again. If indeed the master tactician has acquired the ferocity of Konrad and the vision of Vlad, then the Empire is surely doomed. It is just a matter of when the blow will fall, and it will surely fall soon.

Mannfred von Carstein

Prince of Sylvania, Last of the Vampire Counts, and True Heir of Vashanesh



Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
82%	58%	91%	80%	93%	70%	89%	89%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	32	9	8	8	4	2	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy +20%, Strategy/Tactics +20%), Channelling, Charm +20%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (the Badlands, Border Princes, the Chaos Wastes, Dwarfs, the Empire, Nehekhar, Ogres, Orcs, the World's Edge Mountains), Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Gossip +20%, Heal, Intimidate +10%, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Pick Lock, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface +10%, Search, Secret Language (Ranger Tongue, Thieves' Tongue), Secret Signs (Ranger, Thief), Shadowing +10%, Silent Move +10%, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (Arcane Elf, Daemonic, Magick), Speak Language (Classical, Dark Tongue, Eltharin, Grumbarth, Khazalid, Nehekharan, Reikspiel), Torture

Talents: Aethyric Attunement, Alley Cat, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Disarm, Lesser Magic (dispel, move, silence, skywalk), Lightning Parry, Master Orator, Menacing, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Rover, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Tunnel Rat

Traits: Blood Gift (Aethyric Cipher, Blood Drain, Call Forth Thunder, Dark Majesty, Natural Necromancer, Pass For Human, Summon Wolves, Terrible Blows, Turn to Mist, Vampires' Curse, Waterwalker), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Greatsword (Timor Noctis)

Trappings: The fate of the Empire

ADVENTURE HOOKS

All of the following adventure hooks are excellent starting points for designing adventures that feature Von Carsteins prominently.

Star-Cross'd Lovers

The Characters come to a town where the locals beg for their assistance. One of the residents—a reclusive, prejudiced gent—discovered his daughter is in love with the local noble.

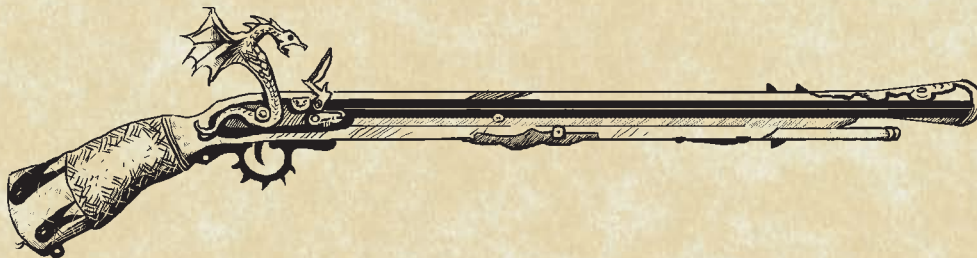
In order to prevent her from seeing him, he locked her in his shed, but the romantic townsfolk are keen to see true love prevail. If the Characters rescue her and escort her to the castle, they will discover the noble is one Count Derrick von Carstein, a charming, earnest and much-besotted young Vampire. The young girl is well aware of this, however, as are most of the townsfolk who have fallen for the romantic image of the old lords of Sylvania. Do the Characters have the heart to cut down the girl's beau in front of her?

Bats in the Walls

The Characters are invited to stay in the castle of a friend or relative, with the particular aim of examining their young son for signs of madness. He claims he can hear voices in the walls, schooling him in black magic and urging him to strike down his father and other dark deeds. Strangely enough, if they are quiet, the Characters can hear it too. The voice is no spirit but a rather nasty Von Carstein noblewoman who was bricked up behind the walls a century ago for her abominable crimes. She has kept much of her strength by feeding on rats, though her mind is somewhat worse for wear. She has come to prefer her life in the walls, controlling the inhabitants indirectly, like puppets on a string. The Characters will have to go into the dark narrow spaces of her domain if they are to put a final end to her evil.

Interview with a Von Carstein

One stormy night in a lonely tavern far from anywhere civilised, the Characters are joined by a mysterious figure seeking shelter. Although obviously wealthy judging by his horse and his purse, he wears a cloak and cowl, gives no name, and has his single servant do all the talking for him. Through curiosity or chance, however, the Characters catch sight of his family crest on his servant's livery or on the lord's signet ring and realise he is in fact Mannfred von Carstein, returned to life. Or he might be. Can they verify his identity without arousing suspicion? And if it is him, why is he travelling incognito? Can they discern his purpose? Can they keep their motives and apprehension hidden when the man suddenly asks them to join him for dinner?

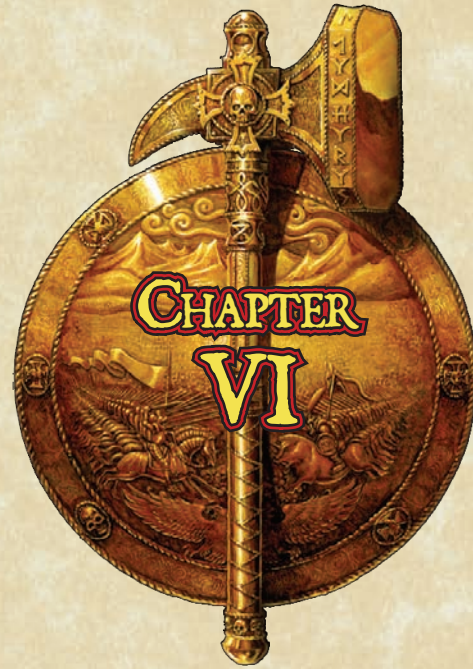


NATIVE SOIL

A GUIDE TO SYLVANIA

"Sylvania is a foreign land, and they do things differently there."

—KRAUSE KRONER, STIRLANDER MERCHANT



As far as most Empire folk are concerned, the county of Sylvania may as well be a different country. Despite its proximity to the Moot and Zhufbar, Halflings and Dwarfs are virtually unknown there. Technologically, it lags behind the rest of the Empire, and gunpowder is treated as a frightening marvel. The emergent middle class of the Empire scarcely exists, and an unbridgeable gap between the peasantry and the nobility persists, even more so than in Bretonnia.

HISTORY

Not much is known of the Fennone tribe who lived in the area that would later become Sylvania. They were a strange and secretive people who spoke their own language and had little to do with the other tribes or the Dwarfs of Zhufbar. They did not join Sigmar's Empire until the "Drive to the Frontiers" encroached onto their land centuries after its founding. Their tongue persists as a second language, usually reserved for use around suspicious strangers.

When Sylvania was incorporated as part of Stirland, there was a mingling of the two peoples, though Stirlanders often say the Fennone blood won out in their dour Sylvanian cousins. Dark rumours circulated about the people dabbling in magic. The Winds blow strong in Sylvania, and not just the cold winds that whip down from the World's Edge Mountains. Sylvania's nobles built

their homes on the points marked by ancient Waystones, nexuses of magical power, though what they used it for is uncertain.

Although still not prominent and in many ways struggling, Sylvania suffered a terrible blow in the twelfth century. The Black Plague boiled up from seemingly nowhere, sweeping across the Empire, wiping out entire communities and leaving anguish and despair in its wake. Nowhere was as hard hit as Sylvania, though, for what records remain of this time, nine out of ten people perished from this insidious plague.

It wasn't until later in that same year that Sylvania's character would become known throughout the Old World. On Geheimnisnacht, Morrslieb seemed to glow, and a rain of Warpstone fell on Sylvania. Naturally, this phenomenon attracted the Skaven, who came into this land to collect the coveted treasure. The foul lords of this land were ready, though, and they called up the plague victims from their graves to defend their country. Under the command of Frederick van Hel, who would later be known as Vanhel, the

Undead horde crushed the Skaven menace and drove them back to the warrens and tunnels of the Under-Empire. Ever since then, the dead have refused to rest long in the cursed, thin soil of Sylvania.

This was to have an unexpected benefit. During the Night of the Restless Dead in 1681, the Sylvanians were uniquely placed to battle the Undead, being more

QUICK DATA

Official Name: The County of Sylvania
Ruler: Count Mannfred von Carstein,
 True Overlord of Sylvania (disputed)
Government: Dictatorship
Capital: Waldenhof
Major Exports: Fear and death



To the east, Sylvania is bordered by the World's Edge Mountains, but in the other directions, its borders are less well-defined. The line between Sylvania and Stirland to the west has been redrawn every time independence has been declared; it has ranged from the edge of the Haunted Hills to

MORTAL VON CARSTEINS

Johann Haifisch was one of several necromancers who wore the guise of a noble in Sylvania. His great accomplishment was a ritual to forever bind his blood to the land using the magic of the Waystones, blood sacrifice, and pacts with dark powers to buy himself and his descendants a foul inheritance of evil and magic. The Haifisch family survived Vlad's rise to power by offering up their beautiful daughters, and through intermarriage with the Vampires, they were eventually given the name of Von Carstein. The magical potency of these mortal Von Carsteins increases greatly when they are made Vampires, so the two lines have existed alongside each other, intertwined for centuries. When Mannfred fell at Hel Fenn, they assumed other names and hid themselves, waiting for his return.

The current heir of the mortal Von Carstein line was named Vlad in preparation for a great honour. Upon Mannfred's return he would be the first to receive the Blood Kiss and become a symbol of the return of the old ways. Young Vlad, however, had other ideas. He ran away from home to pursue his own dreams in the Empire and has not been seen since. The Von Carsteins have agents searching for him, and they believe he is currently making a living as some kind of entertainer in Altdorf.

the abandoned village of Murieste, and it currently stretches from the ruins of Mordheim down to the edge of Bylorhof Marsh. In the north, the River Stir provides a border with Ostermark. To the south Sylvania stops at a barren region historically claimed by Averland, but currently held by Stirland; however the haunted reputation of that place's stinking marshes and fallow hills results in both Grand Provinces largely ignoring the area. The south-western corner of Sylvania edges onto Mootland, a narrow border that is steadfastly patrolled by Halfling Fieldwardens.

The jagged shadows of the mountains stretch over this land of night, and cold winds blow down from the peaks. It is a land of harsh winters that paint the ground blindingly white. To go out after dark in such a winter is almost certain death, but to go out at night in a Sylvanian summer is little safer.

Storms frequently come down off the mountains along with the winds and snows. This makes for damp land with many bogs and lonely moors: Dark Moor, Grim Moor on the southern edge of the Grim Wood, the Bylorhof Marsh, Morrfenn, and the twisted Hel Fenn that witnessed the fall of Mannfred von Carstein. The Fennone people disposed of their dead in these bogs for hundreds of years, and many of the Von Carsteins' Undead troops come from there. Though the unstable ground and threat of Undead makes them dangerous places, the Sylvanians are forced to visit them as they are the source of the peat that fertilises their fields and fuels their fires over the winter, and the area is also home to edible berries like the sweet cowberry.

It is in Sylvania that the woods of the southern Empire become dense forests, shadowy places patrolled by packs of large, perpetually hungry wolves. In the northwest is Verhungern or Hunger Wood, where the canopy of trees is so tangled that a permanent night is created underneath them in which many strange fungi grow. In the northeast is Grim Wood, which is haunted by an unseen monster that takes only maidens who dare to

tread there. To the south is Ghoulish Wood, said to be ruled by one of the Strigoi who has thrown in his lot with the Von Carsteins and lent them the aid of the flesh-eaters.

Bisecting the land is a string of chalk hills that make good sheep-herding country if nothing else, the Warten Downs in the northeast stretching down to the Haunted Hills in the west. Even when it isn't chalk, most of the soil of Sylvania is a thin and useless stuff on which the people struggle to eke out a living.

THE PEOPLE

Sylvanians often have a blasé attitude towards death and the dead that is at odds with their neighbours. They take a perverse pride in the harshness of their life, seeing others as "soft" for living in warmer climes, using blackpowder weapons, or associating with the other races. Sylvanians believe in the worst stereotypes, and it is common to find they believe Dwarfs drown cats, and Halflings routinely eat each other. This attitude goes all the way back to the Fennones of old, who refused to deal with the Dwarfs they encountered in the foothills of the World's Edge Mountains because they came from the same place as the marauding Greenskins who raided their land.

The largest towns of Sylvania would still be considered rural backwaters by cultured Empire folk, half-empty places where everybody wears codpieces that haven't been fashionable for over fifty years. These towns support only a few burghers, as few can afford their bills, and most are merely overgrown villages that happen to have been built on slightly better land. As Sylvania's population never recovered from the Black

Plague and the countless contagions that followed, overcrowding has never been a problem.

In addition to disease, mutation is rife amongst the peasants. The thin soil has been riddled with Warpstone since 1111, giving Sylvania one of the highest

Stirlander: The dead are rising!

Sylvanian: Be it Konistag already!

—CARTOON PUBLISHED IN THE
ALTDORF SPIELER

SYLVANIAN SUPERSTITIONS

Centuries of religious persecution under the Von Carsteins have changed the attitudes of Sylvanians. Priests and temples are rare, but the people have adapted, developing a widespread belief in superstition to replace religion. Rather than praying to the Gods, Sylvanians watch for omens and perform good-luck rituals. It gives them a feeling of control over their lives that they would otherwise lack.

"Spilled salt, spilled tears." Spilling salt is unlucky. The only remedy is to take a handful of salt and run around your dwelling three times without spilling a grain.

"Magpies bring messages." If you see a magpie sitting on a wall, it means a message is coming for you.

"Sweep away dust, not luck." Sweeping on Festag is bad luck.

"Candles for the dead." On Geheimnisnacht, Sylvanians light a candle for each dead family member and then place the candles in the windows of the rooms where they died (family members who died outside the house have their candles placed on the doorstep). Some unlucky villages are so brightly lit on Geheimnisnacht it seems like daylight.

"Whistlin' past the graveyard." If you do not whistle whilst passing graves you may breathe in a ghost, bringing bad luck.

"We won't be weeping long." Spending too much time in grief for the dead brings bad luck and may even cause them to rise as Undead.

"Scissors in storms." It is good luck to cut your hair during a storm.

"Spy your reflection, spit in its face." A Sylvanian catching a glimpse of his reflection in a pond will spit in the water to avoid bad luck. Although mirrors are rare in Sylvania, the same behaviour is followed. This odd habit has only added to their uncultured image in the eyes of the rest of the Empire.

rates of mutation in the Empire. The most deformed Mutants are cast out into the woods or sent to Drakenhof, but many who would be burned elsewhere are accepted in Sylvania. Hunchbacks, walleyes, and those with additional digits are treated no differently from others.

With the low yield of crops, starvation is a constant threat, and most accept hunger pains as a normal part of life. Turning to "sweet pork," the Sylvanians' euphemism for Human flesh, is considered distasteful but not evil. Desperate times can call for desperate measures, and the Ghouls that raid the villages often lived amongst their victims the winter before.

All this has led to the Sylvanians becoming an insular people. They harbour resentments towards the Empire, especially Stirland. They avoid all contact with the outside world, and many know embarrassingly little about it. It is not uncommon for Sylvanians to not realise they are a part of the Empire, and many could not name the current Emperor if asked. Those who do know a little of the lands beyond their own know that they will not be accepted there, and Empire folk have as low an opinion of Sylvanians as Sylvanians do of the Empire folk.

The life of a typical Sylvanian is as harsh, brutal, and short as that of any Old Worlder, and they see the Vampires as merely another aspect of that. Sometimes the crops fail, sometimes the winter is harsh, sometimes Chaos Warriors raid from the mountains, sometimes the plague comes, and sometimes the Vampires come. They keep garlic and other herbs around their windows as a matter of course, yet they willingly give up the children they cannot afford to feed for the blood tax

and turn over foreigners foolish enough to spend the night in their inns.

The blood tax is the only tax paid by many Sylvanians, a tradition dating back generations. The amount paid differs from place to place, depending on the Vampire who controls the land. In Nachthafen, Countess Gabriella refuses to feed on the lowest peasants and only taxes the relatively affluent townspeople who can afford more than one set of clothes. She prefers to leave them alive after feeding, most of the time, to increase their loyalty to her. In Eschen, the tax demands the firstborn daughter of every family, who is never seen again, leading to some parents attempting to disguise their girls as boys to avoid payment. The smaller villages are typically only taxed once per year, though the amount varies based purely on whim. Those few who are foolish enough to hide from the count's men when they come to collect are dealt with harshly, and the blood tax is raised in those places where they are found. This leads to situations where neighbours turn in their neighbours to avoid offending their masters.

SIGNIFICANT PLACES

The following entries are amongst some of the most infamous sites found within Sylvania.

BYLORHOF

Bylorhof is home to the worship of Bylorak, God of the Marshes, believed by some scholars to be an aspect of Taal or Manann. To the residents of this settlement, though, Bylorak

OPTIONAL RULE: SYLVANIAN PROVINCIAL FEATURES

A Sylvanian gains the following skills and talents:

Skills: Common Knowledge (the Empire) *or* Speak Language (Sylvanian), Gossip *or* Outdoor Survival, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Two random talents

Special Rules: If you take Common Knowledge (the Empire) you gain a +10% bonus to tests that deal with your native province of Sylvania. If you do not start with the skill, the bonus applies once you gain it.

Notes: If you choose not to take Common Knowledge (the Empire) your Character is considered to be from one of the isolated villages in the east of Sylvania. Your Character does not know the name of the current Emperor and may not even know that Sylvania is part of the Empire.

is no scholar's aspect—he's *their* God, and they're proud to be his holiest site. When Vlad von Carstein began to drive the priests out of Sylvania, Bylorhof's priests of Sigmar, Shallya, and Morr all fled, but not the priest of Bylorak. Going underground, he maintained his cult amongst the thousand souls of Bylorhof, ignored by the Vampires who considered them worshippers of the worthless "God of the swamp behind the chicken pen."

This changed when Count Ranelf von Feuerfliege was given control of the town after Mannfred's resurrection. Eager to prove his abilities, he took on the cult of Bylorak and lost. His decapitated body is now staked to the bottom of Bylorhof Marsh. In the sudden vacuum of power, the priests of Bylorak took control, reassuring the people they would be safe from retribution. They reopened the town's temples and invited priests from Stirland to administer them, and they began petitioning Wurtbad to bring them back into the fold, subtly suggesting they would turn to Averland for assistance if they did not.

With four temples operating and the belief in the God of the marshes at an all-time high, Bylorhof glows painfully with holiness when seen with Vampire's eyes. It is the only place in Sylvania to have successfully resisted the Vampire counts, at least, so far.

CASTLE DRAKENHOF

Castle Drakenhof squats on the mountainside far above the town that is its namesake, like a coiled serpent eyeing its prey. The jagged peaks behind it are mirrored by the jagged towers thrusting skyward from this gigantic, black edifice. Ravens circle the towers, perching on the gargoyles that ring the battlements.

The castle was built by the Von Drak family, and some whisper that it was done with the assistance of the unliving. The spot chosen for its construction was long considered cursed. During the starfall of 1111, a gigantic chunk of Warpstone called the Jewel of Morrslieb is said to have impacted on the very spot. Some dark influence certainly spreads from the place and did so even before Vlad von Carstein made it the home of his bloodline.

Over the centuries, Castle Drakenhof has been partially destroyed and rebuilt many times. In 2158's Cleansing of Sylvania, one entire wing was demolished, though the rest was left standing when the workmen began turning on each other and voraciously devouring each other's flesh. Since his return, Mannfred von Carstein has dedicated himself to rebuilding it to recapture its former glory. This is not a simple task. The labyrinthine structure has been renovated and added to many times before, and attempts to modify it are sometimes resisted by the walls themselves.

These are some notable locations within Castle Drakenhof.

The Black Library

This huge, dome-shaped chamber was hollowed out of the earth under the castle by the necromancer Immoliah Fey when Konrad was head of the Von Carsteins. Stalactites hang down over one of the Old World's largest collections of forbidden lore, shelves upon groaning shelves of mouldering grimoires filled with dangerous knowledge dating back as far as Nehekharan times.

The Drill Hall

Vampires prefer to do everything indoors, even prepare for war. This is where both Vampires and the castle's mortal guards practise for combat, their shouts and the clash of steel on steel echoing in the wide, torch-lit expanse.

The Duelling Hall

A single gallery overlooks this long hallway in which the Von Carsteins settle their familial disputes. Burn marks from some forgotten violent incident mar the walls. This hall is sometimes home to indoor jousting, the Vampires thundering down the hallway and plunging lances into each other in attempts to strike each others' hearts to settle old scores or simply pass the time on sunny days.

The Great Hall

Two galleries overlook this hall, in which sits the grand obsidian throne of the Sylvanian counts of old. It is said to protect whoever sits in it from magical attack or observation. From the throne, the count passes judgement on everything

PRESENTED TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, ELECTOR COUNT ALBERICH HAUPT-ANDERSSEN,
GRAND COUNT OF STIRLAND, PRINCE OF WURTBAD, AND OVERLORD OF ALL SYLVANIA

A MAP OF HAUNTED
SYLVANIA
and the other territories of
EASTERN STIRLAND
MAY MORR AND SIGMAR PRESERVE US ALL



Your Highness,
I am compelled to admit the farthest I have travelled into the County of Sylvania is the ill-defined border lying in the shadow of Königstein Tower. When I read warnings carved into an ancient border marker I found there (which also boasted a reliquary housing the holy remains of a nameless hero who died in Morr's service), I realised I could better serve your Highness elsewhere; so, I returned to Wurtbad and studied your libraries instead of your land. This chart is the result of that work, and depicts everything I could learn of your eastern holdings. However, as many of the relevant sources are extremely old—some dating back to the first Vampire Wars—I am unable to guarantee the accuracy of this map. The only way to be sure of the details would be to mount a Survey Expedition, a task that would require very brave, or very foolish, men. I have also taken the liberty to detail the three south-eastern Provinces of Stirland—those wrongfully contested by ambitious Averland—to aid your highness with any future taxation plans concerning those isolated territories.

Hr. S. Kaplin, Cartographer of Stirland



from charges of treason to land disputes between bickering neighbours, though the brutal justice of the count is such that many would prefer their cases not come to this. Over the centuries, the great hall has been witness to rich feasts, exotic entertainments, and horrifying atrocities, sometimes in the space of a single night.

The Pit

Central to the extensive dungeons under Castle Drakenhof is a gladiatorial ring in which prisoners and beasts are pitted against each other for the amusement of the audience in the massive stands that surround it.

The Portrait Gallery

In the heights of Castle Drakenhof is a narrow hallway that displays the paintings that betray the Von Carsteins' vanity. As you open the velvet drapes and walk down this quiet corridor, the portraits you pass increase in antiquity and value. Many of the older portraits have been defaced, however, as later Von Carsteins have felt the need to make their mark by either slashing or childishly scrawling over the images of their forebears.

The Rookery

This tower, overlooking the courtyard where the kitchen staff throws out the scraps, has become so infested with the ravens who perpetually circle Castle Drakenhof that it is now considered to belong to them. The echoes of their barking calls can be heard constantly, and their nests cover every available ledge. The young ravens hoard shiny trinkets, and sometimes terrified servants will be sent to the Rookery to search for missing jewellery and heirlooms.

The Servants' Quarters

A staff composed of mortal servants lives here above the kitchens and great hall, seeing to their master's every need. It is considered in poor taste to kill the servants, especially the useful ones, since a castle as massive as Drakenhof doesn't clean itself. There is an entire abandoned wing buried in dust that the servants are currently tasked with restoring, and several have vanished in there, never to be seen again. It is not a safe position working at Castle Drakenhof, but the servants are amongst the best-fed citizens of all Sylvania.

NACHTHAFEN

Countess Gabriella von Bundeabad is rare amongst Von Carsteins in that she prefers to maintain the status quo and is more interested tending her herd in the town of Nachthafen, just as they tend their sheep and goats, than uniting the country and waging a dangerous war on the Empire. To that end, she secretly aided the Stirlander exiles who were Sylvania's former rulers, helping them hide from Mannfred's minions and organise a mercenary force to fight for them. Unfortunately, they were betrayed by one of their own, and this coalition was defeated.

She still rules Nachthafen and plays along with Mannfred's schemes for the moment, including providing troops for his march towards Middenheim. Should evidence of her betrayal ever be found, it could spark a civil war.

THE RED ABBEY

The Red Abbey was a Sigmarite monastery perched on the edge of the World's Edge Mountains, where it was ignored by Vlad during his purge of the priests. The monks considered themselves blessed, protected by Sigmar's aura of holiness, until Konrad came to power and proved them wrong. They were wrong, not only because some Vampires may tread on the holiest ground but also because they did not realise their piety would not protect them from the Zombies raised by Konrad's pet necromancers. The monks of the Red Abbey were slaughtered to a man, and Konrad was well pleased with the work. Afterwards, the curse of Sylvania kept the Red Abbey's inhabitants from finding their deserved rest, and the skeletal remains of the monks still walk its halls whilst the bell tolls the hours without making a sound any mortal can hear.

REGAKHOF

Baron Trentino Regak, the last of his line, attempted to join the aristocracy of the night by the clumsy method of drinking the blood of virgin youths, convinced this would grant him immortality. Instead, it had the opposite effect. Regak came to the attention of Ostermark, and a band of Vampire hunters aided by the Knights of the White Wolf burned him out. They congratulated themselves on saving the townspeople and claimed Castle Regak for Ostermark. Regakhof, however, remained inside the border of Sylvania, sitting on the wrong bank of the River Stir.

For over ten years, the people of Regakhof ruled themselves, electing a burgomeister from amongst their shopkeepers to govern them. It could not last, however. When Mannfred von Carstein rose again, he had the burgomeister impaled and set alight in the town's square and let his men take who they pleased from amongst the townspeople in a display as terrifying as anything Baron Trentino Regak could have managed.

SUMPFDORF

The small village of Sumpfdorf sits above the water of Dark Moor, the buildings built on stilts and connected by planks and ropes. The inhabitants of Sumpfdorf live on an unvaried diet of fish and swamp vegetables, knowing that, since the only way to approach the village is by boat, they are safe from the Ghouls and Zombies of the Dark Moor. Still, once a year, the count's men from Castle Wartenhof fly in and collect the blood tax.

WALDENHOF

The cursed capital of Sylvania is Waldenhof. Although it is the capital, the province is ruled from Castle Drakenhof,

which Mannfred is attempting to repair and reinvigorate. Whilst Mannfred is away, his retainers in Waldenhof have free reign. They spend their nights carousing and feeding as they will and have passed a reverse curfew law that forces all taverns to stay open at night. It is considered uncouth to feed on the tavern staff, but any others they come across are fair game and will be hunted through the streets for sport. The residents of Waldenhof lock and bolt their doors after dark and will not open them no matter how much the prey begs.

OTHER PLACES

What follows is a brief overview of other locations found in this blighted land.

Drakenhof

A place of horror. Some dark influence, possibly that of nearby Castle Drakenhof, has permeated this town so deeply that few children are born here without mutations. The damned and diseased monstrosities who are too mutated even for Sylvanians to accept as neighbours come to near-deserted Drakenhof, where they find shelter and a small community of those like them.

Eschen

A relatively large town that was fortified to protect it from the Vampires. Those same walls now protect the Von Carsteins who rule it.

Leicheberg

The ruler of this town openly encourages the cult of Morr, a direct challenge to the Von Carsteins that will not be tolerated long.

Templehof

This town is named for its famed temple of Morr, which has not seen a priest in 800 years.

EXAMPLE SYLVANIANS

These characters represent two sample NPCs one might find in Sylvania.

BARON DEREK VON BITTE, VAMPIRE NOBLE

Derek von Bitte was poised to inherit a tiny nothing of a barony in Stirland before he was given a parcel of land in Sylvania. It wasn't much of an improvement and nothing near what he felt one of the select deserved. When the Vampires returned, he saw an opportunity for something better than a life of taxing peasants for turnips and complaining about the quality of his wine. He betrayed his fellows eagerly, selling their locations to the Von Carsteins in return for a better future as one of them.



Derek von Bitte is everything the Empire's nobility represents: class, breeding, and a certain brand of snobbish brutality. He may be a Vampire, but he still has the dignity not to drink from the tap like a common alehouse drunk. He carries a pewter tankard that he fills with blood directly from his victims' open veins, drinking toast after toast to his noble kin, pausing only to remember another distant branch of the family tree and belch into his kerchief in a gentlemanly fashion. Von Bitte is that variety of brute who is easily offended by the slightest impoliteness, willing to kill a man for bustling him in the street or spilling his drink, yet completely incapable of the simplest civility himself.

Von Bitte revels in being a Vampire. From the moment of his awakening, he has seen the world through different eyes, learning the truth of his existence and exulting in his dark nature. He truly believes he is a God amongst men.

Baron Derek von Bitte

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
65%	42%	62%	63%	66%	45%	70%	65%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	21	6	6	6	1	0	0

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy), Channelling, Charm +10%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (Border Princes, Bretonnia,

the Empire), Consume Alcohol, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Gossip +10%, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Shadowing, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (Breton, Classical, Reikspiel), Torture

Talents: Blood Gifts (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Pass for Human, Transfixing Glare, Vampires' Curse), Dark Magic, Disarm, Etiquette, Frightening, Keen Senses, Master Orator, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying), Undead

Armour (Medium): Full Mail Armour (Head 3, Arms 3, Body 3, Legs 3)

Weapons: Claws, Fangs, Main Gauche, Rapier

LUCRETIA, MUTANT PEASANT

Lucretia was born with a third arm growing out of her back. It was a difficult birth, and her mother didn't survive it. Her father blamed her and made Lucretia's childhood a living hell until she was old enough to take a cleaver in that third hand and hack him to death. Now she lives alone on the farm, her father's body fertilising the turnips. It's hard trying to scrape a living together out of a patch of almost-worthless dirt, but Lucretia suffers no illusions. She's had to keep her arm hidden under a cloak whenever strangers stop by. She knows that anywhere else in the Empire she'd have been burned by her own neighbours by now. Those foreign fools will happily drown their own children for having an extra finger whilst letting filthy Dwarfs live amongst them.

It's a hard life in Sylvania, but it's the only life Lucretia will ever know, and she'll happily turn travellers into fertiliser if they discover her secret.

Lucretia

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	25%	31%	41%	30%	29%	26%	29%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	12	3	4	4	0	5	0

Skills: Animal Care, Animal Training, Common Knowledge (the Empire), Concealment, Drive, Outdoor Survival, Performer (Singer), Set Trap, Silent Move, Speak Language (Reikspiel), Trade (Cook, Farmer)

Talents: Excellent Vision, Flee!, Hardy, Resistance to Poison

Special Rules

- Lucretia gets a +10% bonus to Common Knowledge (the Empire) Tests concerned with Sylvania.
- Lucretia has the Extra Limb mutation (see *Tome of Corruption* page 38). Whilst this grants no mechanical benefits, it may give her the element of surprise if she attacks with it.

Armour: None

Weapons: Hand Weapon (Cleaver)

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Use the following adventure hooks as foundations for adventures of your own design.

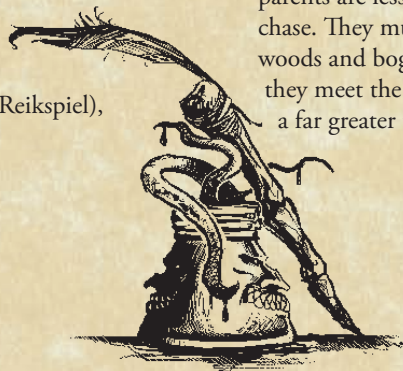
Who Will Think of the Little Ones?

Undead attacks on the Moot have been growing more savage as hordes of Zombies cross the border and swarms of Vampire bats carry off entire villages. Stirland mobilises a force to go to their neighbours' aid, and the PCs join them. The fight is hard, and little progress is being made. They notice some strange behaviour amongst the knights they fight alongside, and soon it comes to light that one of them is an agent of the Von Carsteins. Sir Schmettern, a petty Stirlander noble with no prospects, has made a deal with Sylvania. He secretly aids the Undead in their attacks, planning to wait until the Halfling province is on its knees before riding to the rescue, as the Vampires conveniently withdraw their troops. The ultimate aim is to convince the Emperor that the Moot is incapable of defending itself so that it will be placed under Stirland's rule, and Schmettern will finally have his own land, even if he has to answer to Sylvania afterwards.

Assuming, that is, that the Sylvanians don't double-cross him and take the land for themselves.

Back from the Dead

A cult calling themselves Wiederauferstanden, or the Risen Dead, becomes active in Middenheim after the events of the recent Chaos incursion. Worshipping the Von Carsteins as their saviours, they participate in blood sacrifice and necromancy. When the PCs get close to them, they flee to Sylvania, taking a kidnapped girl with them. The captive's parents are less than thrilled and convince the PCs to give chase. They must follow the trail through the dangerous woods and bogs of Sylvania, catching the Risen Dead before they meet the real risen dead at Castle Drakenhof, who pose a far greater threat than a band of cultists.



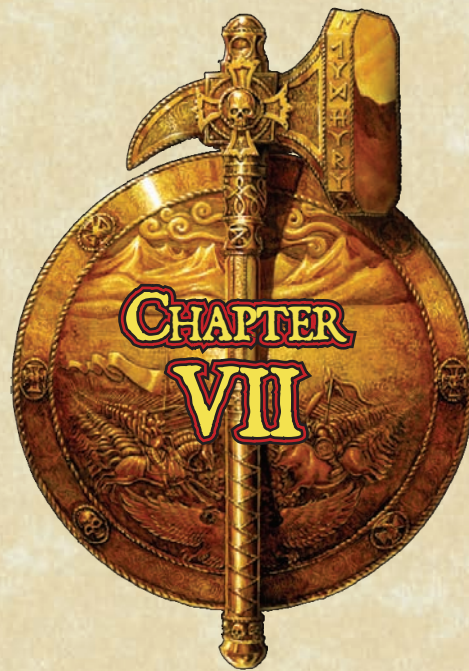
RULES OF THE NIGHT

*"It's a game, yes, but there are rules.
There are always rules, except for us."*

—ISABELLA VON CARSTEIN

"Today is a good day to be dead"

—ZACHARIAS THE EVERLASTING



Vampires may seem all-powerful, but like any creature in *WFRP*, they have limitations. Such limitations are expressed in the mechanics that define them. In this chapter then, you'll find all the rules you need to create Vampire adversaries, including details on their powers, abilities, needs,

and weaknesses, as well as mechanics to help those heroes (or fools) who hunt them. It also expands greatly on the art of necromancy, including new spells, rituals, magic items, and an in-depth look at their Undead servants.

— VAMPIRE HUNTERS —

Whether soldiers of the Empire, wandering adventurers, or the lone fanatical Vampire hunters, there are many in the Empire who have had the misfortune to encounter Vampires and their servants. The following entries describe tips, tricks, and techniques Vampire hunters and similar types use to combat Undead menaces.

DETECTING VAMPIRES

Some Vampires do nothing to hide their nature, but most prefer the anonymity their Human origins provide them. Thus it is essential to determine if Vampires are present before they can be hunted.

Most Vampire hunters rely on a combination of methods to identify their enemies. If, after watching a suspect for many weeks, they never seem to come out during the day, seldom take a riverboat, don't eat or drink to excess, do not own a hand-mirror and avoid puddles, appear sickly when brushed up against with Daemonsroot, make wizards nervous in their presence, and seem to cause the Warning Wound to flare up when nearby, then there is a very good chance they are a Vampire. The trick is acquiring all this information without tipping off the Vampire to the investigation process; some

hunters will spend years as "sleeper agents" in a town, court, or organisation, not making the slightest move until they are absolutely sure who is and who isn't a child of darkness. Unfortunately, the "is" list often ends up including everybody but the Vampire hunter.

MIRRORS

A mirror is one of the more reliable methods, but purchasing a suitable looking-glass is quite expensive (at least 10 *gc* in a large city and much more elsewhere). Observing someone's reflection without being noticed by them (or anyone else) also requires a Sleight of Hand Test. Those who lack that skill may make a **Hard (-20%) Concealment Test** instead.

Note that peering into a mirror hidden in one's sleeve is considered, at the very least, eccentric behaviour and may cause the surgeons, the Watch, or the Witch Hunters to be summoned (mirrors, after all, are common tools of witchcraft). Wealthy merchants or nobles might also be insulted by the implication and demand the PC be flogged for impugning their good name. Characters hoping to catch glimpses in puddles or polished surfaces must make a **Very Hard (-30%) Perception Test** to be sure there is no

reflection, and they may also have to make Shadowing or Concealment Tests to do this unobserved.

DAEMONSROOT AND WITCHBANE

More noticeable, but more effective, is forcing the suspect into the presence of Daemonsroot or Witchbane (but not garlic, which is often useless, as almost anyone who isn't a reeking Bretonnian has the good sense to be repulsed by this noisome bulb). If one of these herbs is correctly harvested and prepared, requiring a successful Trade (Herbalism) Test—or purchasing such a thing from an honest trader if you can find such a person—and is brought within two yards of a Vampire, the Vampire reacts adversely if it fails a Will Power Test. This may be modified by the strength of the dose, as the GM sees fit. Note again that most people react with hostility when people lunge at them with vegetables, so this may cause a lot of false accusations. A similar test can be applied with silver, but the Vampire has +20% bonus to the Will Power Test, and again, nobody is particularly pleased when somebody lunges at them with a coin or a spoon, let alone a sword.

WARNING WOUNDS

Those who are foolish enough to self-inflict a Warning Wound must first take a dagger attack to their own flesh (inflicting 3 Wounds). Then, a successful Arcane Knowledge (Necromancy) Test must be made to correctly prepare the silver paste. Since this paste prevents the wound from healing properly, the Character loses one Wound permanently from his Secondary Profile. Thereafter, the wound produces a dull throb when the Character is within twelve yards (six squares) of a Vampire. Distinguishing this from other aches and pains requires a Perception Test and, again, can lead to a lot of false accusations. The power of a Warning Wound fades after 2d10 months, and the process must then be repeated, at which point the individual must wound their flesh again.

If the silver paste is not properly prepared, the Character will realise it when his wound swells up with a terrible infection. A Character so afflicted takes a -20% to all Weapon Skill, Ballistic Skill, Strength, and Agility Tests until medical treatment is obtained. If the surgeon fails his Heal Test to cure this by more than one degree, however, the body part

bearing the wound is lost. Thus, most Vampire hunters put their Warning Wounds on their arms rather than their chests—though some swear that putting the wound over the heart makes it much stronger and longer lasting.

WITCHSIGHT

Yet another method of detecting the presence of a Vampire is through viewing them with Magical Sense. A magister who makes a successful Magical Sense Test sees dark tendrils of both *Shyish* and *Dhar* surrounding a Vampire. Of course, such an aura might also surround one under the Vampire's thrall, or a necromancer, or indeed an Amethyst magister, or a priest of Morr who often deals with the Undead. The Winds are rarely clear or easily interpreted. Those who work with *Shyish* are better able to detect its subtleties, and those individuals gain a +10% bonus to this test. However, many in the Amethyst Order have theorised that even just examining such dark magic is enough to draw a magister under its spell—and they have lost enough magisters to necromancy to believe it.

KILLING VAMPIRES

There are no special rules for killing Vampires. Although they are far more deadly than any mortal, their necks and hearts are made of only flesh. However, there are ways and means to do more damage to that flesh as quickly as possible, striking at vulnerable areas and using special weapons. The following talent lets hunters target their foe's soft necks without penalty, hacking away until their heads come off—undeniably the most reliable way of killing a Vampire.

NEW TALENT: FOCUSED STRIKE

Description: You can make aimed strikes with exceptional accuracy. When you take the Aim action, your next melee attack gains a +20% Weapon Skill instead of the normal +10%.

You may take Focused Strike in place of Strike to Injure in any career that offers the latter, or you can acquire both in such a career, at 100 XP each.

VAMPIRES OR WITCHES?

Although many Vampire hunters will go on to be Witch Hunters and vice versa, there is a great difference between the two professions. Chief amongst these is that apart from the most reckless and deranged rogues, Witch Hunters have the support and sanction of both cult and state, either implicitly or explicitly. Thus, they may challenge people with unquestioned authority and carry out justice with relative impunity. Vampire hunters have a similar lot to those who hunt the Skaven, for the threat of the Vampire counts is now distant, and excessive knowledge of them and their abilities is strongly suppressed. The average person knows little of Vampires and certainly does not believe the ridiculous tales about their omnipresent threat. Worst of all, many believe Vampires to be wrongly tarred by such slander, and they do what they can to hinder, chase off, or even injure the hunters who would dare raise a hand against their handsome masters. Even if they have not been so deluded, very often the friends and relatives of the Vampire hunter also abandon him to what they consider a foolish and fantastical quest, driving him into isolation and bitterness and making it even harder for him to save them.

SILVERED AND BLESSED WEAPONS

Weapons blessed by a priest (or, indeed, a cultist of a Chaos God) have a greater effect on the flesh of Vampires. The same is true for weapons made of silver. If a blessed or silvered weapon inflicts at least one wound on a Vampire, it does a further three wounds of damage.

However, these weapons are hard to come by. Truly blessed weapons can only be created by a priest with a Divine Lore, and the blessing lasts only a week per degree of success of the Channelling Test (no degrees means the blessing lasts only a day). Priests may also suggest a donation for the needy in exchange for their services in this regard. For more on blessed weapons, see *Tome of Salvation*.

Chaos or Daemon weapons also can pierce a Vampire's defences, as can weapons imbued with Chaos energy. *Tome of Corruption* (see **Chaos Weapons** page 183) goes into such weapons in extensive detail, but any cultist with the Dark Magic Talent may temporarily imbue a weapon with Chaos energy by making a Channelling Test. If the cultist rolls doubles on the test, he gains a mutation for his presumption.

Of course, the would-be hunter can simply invest in silvered weaponry to deal with Undead foes. There are two broad types of silver weapons: those plated in silver and those wrought of silver. Silver plating is a common practice and preferred by many hunters of Undead because of its affordability. Such items are only useful for a short time before the silver wears off from use, and though plating a weapon is cheaper than investing in a silver weapon in its own right, the process is still expensive. On the other hand, solid silver weapons are impractical and do not hold up as well as those of iron or steel.

Silvered weapons and blessed weapons behave normally against other opponents. Blessed weapons also count as magical and may do damage to creatures immune to non-magical weapons. Hawthorn stakes, garlic-soaked blades, and magic potatoes purchased from travelling men with honest faces have no improved effect on Vampires whatsoever.

Silver-Plated

All Average Craftsmanship or better melee weapons (except for gauntlet, unarmed, shields, and whips) and spears, throwing axes/hammers, throwing daggers/stars, arrows, and bolts can be plated with silver. A Character that has a one ingot of silver (25 s) can do the work by making a **Challenging (-10%) Trade (Weaponsmith) Test**. When silvering a two-handed weapon, the Character needs two silver ingots. One ingot is enough to silver five arrows or bolts. To purchase a silvered weapon outright, double the weapon's price or increase the weapon's price by 2 gc, whichever is greater. These are approximations and a GM is encouraged to modify the pricing as suits the circumstances.

These weapons retain their silver plating for 1d10+5 successful attacks. After this time, enough silver has worn away as to remove any special advantages such weapons might afford.



Solid Silver

Weapons fashioned from solid silver never lose their efficacy; however, silver is an inappropriate metal for weaponry. Generally, all weapons that can take silver plating can also be fashioned from solid silver. These weapons cost the same as Best Craftsmanship weapons. A Character wishing to forge a silver weapon must supply half the cost of the weapon in materials and succeed on a **Challenging (–10%) Trade (Weaponsmith) Test**.

When used in combat, a solid silver weapon imposes a –10% penalty to Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Tests. On a successful parry with this weapon, the wielder must also make a **Challenging (–10%) Agility Test** or the weapon breaks. In addition, on any attack roll of 96–99, the weapon becomes blunted, reducing the damage it deals by 2 until a Trade (Weaponsmith) Test is made. On a test roll of 00, the weapon snaps and becomes useless.

New Lesser Magic: Rebuke Undead

Casting Number: 10

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 hour/Magic Characteristic

Range: Touch

Ingredients: A vial of blessed water (+2)

Description: Your touch wards a target against Undead. No creature with the Undead Talent can close within 2 yards of the target unless it makes a successful Will Power Test. If the creature is mindless, its controlling necromancer makes the Will Power Test instead. You may cast this spell on yourself.

VAMPIRE HUNTER CAREERS

Besides the Vampire Hunter Career, there are many professions that could lead to crossing paths and, indeed, swords with the Undead and their shadowy masters. Included here are new careers to provide plenty of opportunities for such thrilling encounters.

AGENT OF THE SHROUD (ADVANCED)

The splinter order of Morrites, known as the Fellowship of the Shroud, takes a much more active view of their duties to Morr than the mainstream cult. Its members include warriors, priests, and Vampire hunters, but in many situations, a far subtler hand is needed, and such are the abilities of the Agents of the Shroud. These scholarly types are trained in careful observation, medical examination, and logical deduction, so they may identify Vampire or Undead activity without being detected. Some of them turn their results over to more martially skilled members of their cult, but they are quite capable of enacting their own justice and putting an end to those the Fellowship call “the Enemies of Life.”

The Agents of the Shroud investigate any suspicious death for signs of necromancy or dark magic, so they are often involved in murder mysteries that turn out to contain no mystical

elements. Their services are appreciated by the victim's family regardless, and the Agents are happy to help any departed spirits rest.

— Agent of the Shroud Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+10%	+10%	+10%	+20%	+20%	+30%	+10%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy, Theology, plus any one), Charm, Common Knowledge (The Empire, Tilea), Concealment, Disguise, Follow Trail, Gossip, Heal, Intimidate, Perception, Read/Write, Search, Silent Move, Shadowing, Speak Language (any two)

Talents: Coolheaded or Stout-Hearted, Keen Senses or Sixth Sense, Savvy or Suave, Schemer

Trappings: Medium Armour (Leather Jack, Mail Shirt), Best Hand Weapon, 4 Stakes, a braided rope of Garlic, Religious Symbol

Career Entries: Barber-Surgeon, Fieldwarden, Initiate (Morr), Scholar, Student, Tomb Robber, Vampire Hunter

Career Exits: Killer of the Dead, Priest (Morr only), Scholar, Spy, Vampire Hunter, Witch Hunter

BLACK GUARD (ADVANCED)

Whilst the cult of Morr has few, if any, official templars, they do have the Black Guard. These universally dour and serious warriors have an even more serious responsibility: to guard both the living and the dead from the endless malice of the Undead and those who would raise them. For the most part, they are a defensive order, protecting the great temples and graveyards of the Empire and the dignitaries of the cult, only riding to war in exceptional circumstances, such as during a crusade against the Vampire counts. Unlike most knights, they are trained in the use of ranged weapons to prevent their enemies from bringing their strength to bear in close quarters. This, along with their foreboding black obsidian armour and their strict vow of silence when on duty, means they are shunned by most other knightly orders, but such is the price of duty.

— Black Guard Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+25%	+15%	+10%	+15%	+15%	+5%	+20%	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+4	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy, Theology), Dodge Blow, Intimidate, Perception, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (any two)

Talents: Menacing, Mighty Shot or Strike Mighty Blow, Sharpshooter or Sure Shot, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Crossbow or Longbow, Two-handed), Stout-Hearted

Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Crossbow or Longbow, Lance

Trappings: Blessed Water, Destrier with Saddle and Harness, Medallion of the Raven

Career Entries: Knight, Priest (Morr only), Sergeant, Squire, Vampire Hunter, Witch Hunter

Career Exits: Captain, Champion, Priest (Morr only), Knight of the Inner Circle, Knight of the Raven, Vampire Hunter

EMBALMER (BASIC)

Not everyone wishes to be interred in Morr's Gardens. Some prefer a more preserving process after their death, for themselves or their animal companions, and they turn to the embalmers. These masters of pickling, preservation, and taxidermy are not just a fad of the wealthy. The individuals increasingly have a hand in the growing field of medicine, and money can be made hand over fist in selling their curios to customers with a particular purpose in mind. Many priests of Morr (and much of the general population) consider cutting bits off people and putting them in jars to be an assault on both the body and spirit of the deceased, and Witch Hunters are well aware of how easily such merchants turn to the dark arts. As such, many embalmers choose to hide their Human exhibits behind their animal displays or their surgery services until the day scientists of their calibre are finally given the respect and recognition they deserve.

Embalmers don't usually encounter the Undead, but they work hand-in-glove with grave robbers and tomb robbers who often do. They also tend to know a lot of necromancers—not that they would ever reveal their customer's identity, of course.

VAMPIRE HUNTER ORGANISATIONS

There are no specific careers for members of the Tsarevich Pavel society or the Andanti. Players should use Vampire Hunter, Agent of the Shroud, Killer of the Dead, or other warrior careers to model the skills they are bringing to their particular organisation.

— Embalmer Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
—	—	+5%	+5%	—	+15%	+10%	+5%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy, Science), Evaluate, Haggle, Heal, Perception, Read/Write, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (Classical), Trade (Apothecary)

Talents: Dealmaker or Streetwise, Resistance to Disease, Surgery

Trappings: Abacus, Ether-Soaked Apron, Spare Hand, Trade Tools (Barber-Surgeon), Writing Kit

Career Entries: Barber-Surgeon, Student, Tradesman

Career Exits: Apprentice Wizard, Burgher, Grave Robber, Physician, Scholar

Note: Embalmer is a Basic Career and may be entered at any time for 200 xp. With your GM's permission, you may substitute embalmer for barber-surgeon when rolling for your Starting Career.



AGENT OF THE SHROUD



BLACK GUARD



EMBALMER

GRAVE WARDEN (BASIC)

In the Old World, the grave warden's responsibilities are heavy. He not only has to bury the dead six feet deep in the cold, hard ground but also guard against those who would disturb their rest, be they rats, bone pickers, grave robbers, or worse. In small towns and rural areas, a grave warden cannot rely on the town militia or Morr's Black Guard to keep away the restless dead and hungry Ghouls. Meanwhile, few value his company, for he carries the stench of death and sodden mud wherever he goes. It is a lonely life, but many grave wardens come to prefer the company of the dead to that of the living.

— Grave Warden Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+5%	+10%	+10%	—	—	+10%	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Theology), Common Knowledge (the Empire), Dodge Blow, Drive, Evaluate, Perception, Outdoor Survival, Search

Talents: Resistance to Disease, Stout-Hearted or Very Strong

Trappings: Shovel, Stench, Wheelbarrow

Career Entries: Bone Picker, Rat Catcher, Peasant

Career Exits: Grave Robber, Initiate (Morr only), Militiaman, Vampire Hunter, Watchman

Note: This is a Basic Career and may be entered at any time for 200 xp. With your GM's permission, you may substitute grave warden for grave robber when rolling your Starting Career.



GRAVE WARDEN



KILLER OF THE DEAD



KNIGHT OF THE RAVEN

KILLER OF THE DEAD (ADVANCED, SPECIAL REQUIREMENT)

Few survive the life of a Vampire hunter. Of those who do, many quickly turn to other careers, such as the legitimacy of Witch Hunter or the better provisions of knighthood. Those who do not become Killers of the Dead. Having seen the true horror of the Vampires and the infinite legions of the restless dead, they can never look away, and they devote their every waking moment to destroying this unrelenting enemy. Even more shunned and mistrusted than Vampire hunters, these fanatics typically become hermits or outlaws, stealing what they need to survive, so they have no distractions from their cause. Their devotion to their mission means these killers often get good enough to earn notoriety amongst the Vampires—and knowing this, every killer sleeps restlessly, stake in hand, waiting to feel fangs upon his neck and hear the sound of vengeful laughter in his ear.

Special Requirement: You must have at least 5 Insanity Points to enter this career.

— Killer of the Dead Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+35%	+35%	+15%	+20%	+20%	+15%	+30%	+5%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+6	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Concealment, Follow Trail, Intimidate, Outdoor Survival, Shadowing, Silent Move, Torture

Talents: Alley Cat or Rover, Fearless, Focussed Strike, Frenzy, Lightning Reflexes, Menacing, Mighty Shot or Rapid Reload, Sixth Sense, Specialist Weapon Group

(Throwing or Crossbow), Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Stout-hearted, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Unsettling, Very Resilient or Very Strong

Trappings: Blessed Water, 6 Stakes, Silvered Weapon

Career Entries: Agent of the Shroud, Black Guard, Flagellant, Knight of the Raven, Vampire Hunter, Witch Hunter

Career Exits: An unpleasant, and likely messy, end

KNIGHT OF THE RAVEN (ADVANCED)

The Fellowship of the Shroud believes in taking the battle to the enemy. Their very best warriors form an order known as the Knights of the Raven, and their mandate is very clear: destroy every Skeleton, Zombie, and Shade upon the earth and exterminate the necromancers and Vampires who summon them. Unlike their sister order the Black Guard, the Knights of the Raven are ruthless and aggressive, seeking out their enemy rather than waiting for Undead to come to them. At the moment, a great many of the knights are stationed in the town of Siegfriedhof of Stirland on the border of Sylvania. So far, they have only conducted raids, but as their numbers and intelligence grows, and the truth about Mannfred's return becomes undeniable, they will begin a crusade to take that bleak land away from its dark lords once again.

— Knight of the Raven Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+35%	+15%	+20%	+20%	+20%	+15%	+30%	+10%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+8	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (History, Necromancy, Strategy/Tactics, Theology), Animal Training, Common Knowledge (any), Dodge Blow, Follow Trail, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Secret Language (Battle Tongue), Speak Language (Breton or Kislevian)

Talents: Cool-headed or Sixth Sense, Focussed Strike or Sharpshooter, Lightning Parry, Marksman, Master Gunner or Quick Draw, Rapid Reload, Seasoned Traveller, Specialist Weapon Group (Crossbow or Longbow, Parrying or Two-handed), Stout-hearted, Strike to Injure, Strong-minded

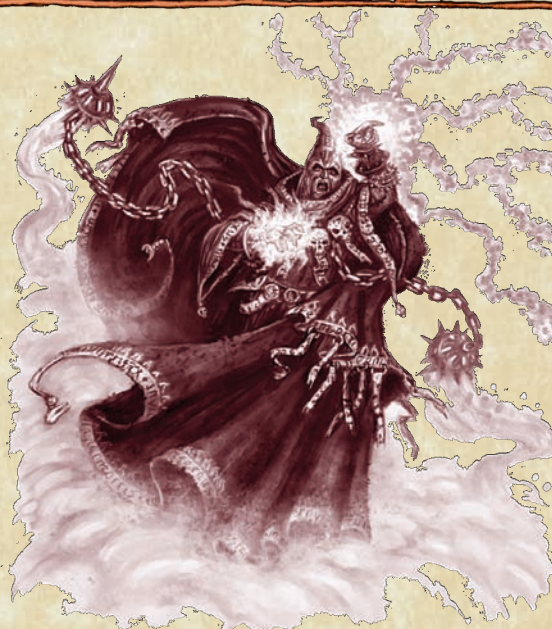
Armour (Heavy): Full Plate (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)

Weapons: Lance, Longbow or Crossbow or Two Pistols, Shield or Sword-Breaker or Greatweapon, 1 Silvered or Blessed Weapon, 4 Hawthorn Stakes,

Trappings: Blessed Water, Symbol of the Raven

Career Entries: Black Guard, Knight, Knight of the Inner Circle

Career Exits: Captain, Champion, Killer of the Dead, Knight of the Inner Circle, Witch Hunter



MASTER VIGILANT

MAGISTER VIGILANT (ADVANCED, SPECIAL REQUIREMENT)

The Colleges of Magic are loath to leave their dirty laundry to be washed in public by the Witch Hunters or other authorities. Consequently, each Order employs its own watchdogs and investigators, devoted to discretely exposing those who break their oaths and practice dark magic, necromancy, or diabolism. Since Vampires are so often students of these black arts, these observers also take pride in hunting and destroying the princes of darkness. Magisters vigilant still pay their dues to their College, as per a magister lord, but they are not expected to take apprentices. Their duties across the Empire prevent them from attaining the control of magic that many of their colleagues possess, but they have many other skills and talents useful in other sorts of situations, and they command great respect and fear amongst their own kind.

Special Requirement: Characters with the Dark Magic Talent or any Dark Lore cannot enter this career; the magisters will not allow it and can usually tell. Usually.

— Master Vigilant Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+15%	+10%	+5%	+10%	+20%	+25%	+30%	+15%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+5	—	—	—	+3	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Daemonology, Magic, Necromancy), Channelling, Common Knowledge (the Empire and any one), Gossip, Intimidate, Magical Sense, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Search, Speak Arcane Language (Daemonic, Magick), Speak Language (any two), Torture

Talents: Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any four), Menacing, Mighty Missile, Schemer, Stout-Hearted, Strong-minded

Trappings: Trade Tools (Apothecary), two Magic Items, Silvered or Magical Blade

Career Entries: Journeyman Wizard, Master Wizard

Career Exits: Master Wizard, Spy, Witch Hunter, Wizard Lord

STRIGANY MYSTIC (BASIC, SPECIAL REQUIREMENT)

The people of Strigos were scattered to the winds when their lands were destroyed and have since taken up a nomadic life. They roam the Empire in caravan trains or river barges, making money where they can and stealing when they can't. Their history under the Vampires ensures they maintain their



STRIGANY MYSTIC

— CREATING VAMPIRES —

Before revealing the secrets for creating Vampires, it should be noted that these rules are designed for GMs to make Vampire NPCs. Vampires, as a race, are thoroughly unsuited for Player Characters in *WFRP*, no matter how badly a

TRAITS

Traits are talents that cannot be acquired through careers. Instead, they function as an expression of a particular type of creature or race. Talents from *WFRP* that qualify as traits include Flier, Frightening, Hoverer, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Resistance to Chaos, Resistance to Magic, Terrifying, and Undead. All of the new talents described in *Old World Bestiary* count as traits.

travelling lifestyle, marking them not just as thieves and cutthroats but also necromancers and servants of darkness. In truth, most of them are simple woodsmen, entertainers, or vagabonds, but a few do know something of witchcraft, a little of fortune telling, and a large amount of Vampire lore. These mystics were taught the true and complete history of their people, and they carry the secret knowledge from those ancient days, as well as the promise of their Strigos lords to one day return and lead them back to glory.

Note: Strigany mystic is only available to those of Strigany blood. Being of that blood imposes a -10% penalty to all Fellowship Tests when dealing with a person of the Empire. With your GM's permission, you may substitute Strigany mystic for vagabond when rolling for your Starting Career. If you have the *WFRP Companion*, you may apply the River Strigany Traits to your Strigany mystic.

— Strigany Mystic Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+5%	+5%	—	—	+5%	+5%	+10%	+10%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+2	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (Necromancy), Charm, Drive or Ride, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Hypnotism or Trade (Apothecary), Performer (any), Secret Signs (Astrologer or Ranger), Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (Strigany)

Talents: Sixth Sense, Rover or Seasoned Traveller

Trappings: Deck of Cards, Eldritch Jewellery

Career Entries: None

Career Exits: Astrologer (see *Sigmar's Heirs*) Bone Picker, Charlatan, Entertainer, Hedge Wizard, Rogue, Seer (see *Tome of Corruption* page 148), Thief

Player wants to play one. Should a PC receive the Blood Kiss, its Player needs to crack open *WFRP* and roll up a new Character since his old one is now an NPC.

There are two methods for creating Vampires: randomisation and customisation. The randomisation method generates a Vampire from scratch but offers enough variability to make certain that no two Vampires are the same. This is the preferred method for swiftly generating a Vampire adversary, usually as a one-shot opponent.

Customisation is a far more rewarding method, for it describes how a living NPC joins the ranks of the Undead. Using this method, you generate an NPC using the normal rules and then overlay the Vampire template, modifying characteristics, skills, and talents, depending on the type of Vampire that caused the transformation.

Before starting work on generating a new Vampire, consider the nature and role the Vampire will play. Do you want the Vampire to be a member of one of the major bloodlines or be a unique Undead creature, distanced from the scions of long dead Nehekharas? If you can't decide, or you'd rather the dice decide for you, roll percentile dice on **Table 7-1: Types of Vampires**. See **Chapter V: The Bloodlines** for details on the various types of Vampires found in the Old World.

RANDOMISATION METHOD

This method is used to generate a new Vampire quickly, without having to create a mortal first and then apply a number of careers. These Vampires should closely resemble the sample Vampires described in the *Old World Bestiary* (page 114). The characteristics listed for each bloodline already take into account the typical career advancements of those likely to be invited into each line. Note that Vampires do not get Shallya's Mercy—they are beyond the favour of any Gods or Goddesses.

STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS, AND TRAITS

Vampires created using this method gain the following skills, talents, and traits.

Common Skills

Command, Common Knowledge (any one), Dodge Blow, Magical Sense, Perception, Search, Speak Language (any two), Torture. In addition, Vampires gain extra skills, depending on their bloodline.

- *Blood Dragons*: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Strategy/Tactics), Charm, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (any three), Dodge Blow +10%, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Ride +10%, Scale Sheer Surface, Speak Language (any three)
- *Lahmian*: Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Philosophy), Channelling, Charm +20%, Common Knowledge (any three), Concealment, Disguise +20%, Evaluate +20%, Gossip +20%, Haggle +20%, Intimidate, Perception +10%, Performer (any two), Prepare Poison +10%, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (any three)
- *Necrarch*: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy +10%, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Magic +10%, Necromancy +10%), Channelling +10%, Charm, Common Knowledge (any three), Concealment, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Prepare Poison +10%, Read/Write +10%, Ride, Shadowing, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (Magick) +10%, Speak Language (any four)
- *Strigoi*: Concealment +10%, Perception +10%

TABLE 7-1: TYPES OF VAMPIRES

Roll	Type
01–10	Blood Dragon
11–20	Lahmian
21–30	Necrarch
31–40	Strigoi
41–50	Von Carstein
51–100	Independent

- *Von Carstein*: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy), Channelling, Charm +10%, Command +10%, Common Knowledge (any three), Evaluate, Gossip +10%, Intimidate, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Speak Arcane Language (Magick), Speak Language (any three)
- *Independent*: Charm, Concealment, Disguise, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move.

Common Talents

Vampires that do not descend from a particular bloodline gain two talents. In *WFRP*, roll twice under the Human column of **Table 2-4: Random Talents** (page 19). Otherwise, the Vampire gains talents according to their bloodline, as follows.



TABLE 7-2: VAMPIRE CHARACTERISTIC GENERATION

Characteristic	Blood Dragon	Lahmian	Necrarch	Strigoi	Von Carstein	Independent
Weapon Skill (WS)	2d10+60	2d10+50	2d10+40	2d10+50	2d10+60	2d10+40
Ballistic Skill (BS)	2d10+30	2d10+30	2d10+30	2d10+20	2d10+30	2d10+20
Strength (S)	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+40
Toughness (T)	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+40
Agility (Ag)	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+50	2d10+40
Intelligence (Int)	2d10+30	2d10+30	2d10+40	2d10+30	2d10+30	2d10+30
Will Power (WP)	2d10+60	2d10+60	2d10+60	2d10+50	2d10+60	2d10+50
Fellowship (Fel)	2d10+30	2d10+50	2d10+5	2d10+10	2d10+40	2d10+30
Attacks (A)	3	2	2	2	2	1
Wounds (W)	—Roll 1d10 and consult Table 7-3: Starting Wounds—					
Strength Bonus (SB)	—Equal to the first digit of Strength—					
Toughness Bonus (TB)	—Equal to the first digit of Toughness—					
Movement (M)	6	6	6	6	6	5
Magic (Mag)	1	1	2	1	1	0
Insanity Points (IP)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fate Points (FP)	0	0	0	0	0	0

TABLE 7-3: STARTING WOUNDS

Roll	Blood Dragon	Lahmian	Necrarch	Strigoi	Von Carstein	Independent
1-3	18	16	18	20	18	18
4-6	22	20	20	24	21	20
7-9	26	24	22	28	26	22
10	30	28	24	32	31	24

- *Blood Dragons*: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
- *Lahmian*: Dark Magic, Etiquette, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying)
- *Necrarch*: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any two), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)
- *Strigoi*: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
- *Von Carsteins*: Dark Magic, Disarm, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying)

Common Traits

All Vampires created using this method gain the following **Traits**: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer,

Vampires' Curse), Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, and Undead. New traits are described in this chapter.

- *Blood Dragons*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human plus any one Blood Dragon), Frightening
- *Lahmian*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human plus any one Lahmian), Frightening
- *Necrarch*: Blood Gift (any one Necrarch), Terrifying
- *Strigoi*: Blood Gift (any one Strigoi), Frightening
- *Von Carsteins*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human plus any one Von Carstein), Frightening
- *Independent*: Blood Gift (any two), Frightening

EXAMPLE RANDOMISED VAMPIRE

Rob sits down to create a new Vampire adversary. Needing one quickly—the game is in a matter of hours,

IMMUNE RESPONSE

You should be wary of creating Vampires with too many immunities or too few weaknesses (*i.e.* Aethyric Cipher, Blood-Sated, Defy the Dawn, Persistent Image, Silvered Blood, Unhallowed Soul, and Waterwalker), partly because these extremely powerful creatures need weaknesses to allow adventurers to defeat them. Far more importantly, the weaknesses of a Vampire are a key part of their character and mystique. The idea that the sun and the water and the Gods have turned their backs on Vampires helps to reinforce their unnatural nature, making them disturbing. Naturally, nobody wants a villain who is so riddled with weaknesses he becomes a joke, but by the same token, a Vampire who walks around in the sun, enjoys looking in mirrors, walks into temples, and shaves with a silver blade is hardly a Vampire at all.

Finally, it is important to remember each weakness provides a mirror of a strength. If the Vampire is weak in the day, then the heroes will come to fear the last moments of sunset more than anything else. If the Vampire cannot cross running water, then the other side of the stream becomes almost supernatural in the comfort and security it offers. Not only does this produce great drama, it also means battles become focussed on controlling the time and place of conflict, rather than a straight-up fight, with each side trying to arrange the battle to occur when they have the advantage. From such conflicts come great stories.

after all—he chooses the randomised method. He decides he'd like something bestial and picks a Strigoi Vampire. He rolls characteristics as if creating a new character from scratch and records them on a sheet of paper.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
62%	38%	63%	63%	62%	46%	60%	25%
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	28	6	6	6	1	0	0

He then looks to his starting skills and talents. Since most of his choices are made for him, he simply records the information onto the sheet. He gets one more Blood Gift Talent, so he rolls 1d10 on Table 7-4: Blood Gifts and gets Curse of the Revenant.

Skills: Command, Common Knowledge (any one), Concealment +10%, Dodge Blow, Magical Sense, Perception +10%, Search, Speak Language (any two), Torture

Talents: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow

Traits: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Curse of the Revenant, Natural Necromancer, Vampires' Curse), Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead

From here, it would be just a matter of picking appropriate trappings, but Strigoi are more monstrous than civilised, and therefore, Rob's confident the creature's claws and fangs will be sufficient to give the PCs trouble.

CUSTOMISATION METHOD

Rather than simply generating a Vampire as another monster the PCs must defeat, you can go the extra mile and create a compelling villain that can serve as a recurring adversary for

an adventure or even over the course of an entire campaign. This method is far more involved than the previous, since you must take a normal, living mortal and transform him or her into a foul creature of the night.

The first step in customising a Vampire is to generate the mortal before he gained the Blood Kiss. As described throughout this book, Vampires pass on their curse to Humans. Halfling and Dwarf Vampires, if they even exist, are so rare that most believe they cannot become Vampires. If an Elf has ever been transformed, there is no record of it. Create the Character as you would any other NPC, select career, apply advancements, and so on. Realise, though, that the more careers the Vampire gains in life, the more powerful he will become as Undead. Avoid giving the mortal more than two or three careers. Once you have the base Character created, apply the Vampire traits. Note that modifiers to characteristics are *not* career advances but flat modifiers that are applied immediately. They do not affect career progression at all. Note Vampires do not gain Fate Points, and therefore, any remaining Fate Points are lost.

Main Profile							
WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+10%	+15%	+15%	—	+10%	+10%*
Secondary Profile							
A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+1	+6	—	—	+2	+1	—	0

* If the Character was given the Blood Kiss by a Necrarch or Strigoi, instead of adding +10%, reduce the Character's Fellowship by half (round up).

In addition to the modifiers to the Character's characteristics, a newly blooded Vampire gains the following **Traits**: Blood Gift (Blood Drain, Natural Necromancer, Vampire's Curse), Keen Senses, Frightening, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs), Night Vision, Undead.

If you are using Bloodlines, the Vampire may gain additional talents or traits depending on their sire:

- *Blood Dragons*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human).
- *Lahmian*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human)
- *Necrarch*: Terrifying
- *Strigoi*: Frenzy
- *Von Carsteins*: Blood Gift (Pass for Human)

NEW TRAITS: BLOOD GIFTS

The blood of Vampires contains more than just strength and hunger. The skills and powers of the First Children are passed down into each generation, giving great strength and ancient magical ability in all of their descendants. Blood Gifts encompass the various powers a mortal gains upon transforming into a Vampire. Vampires of particular bloodlines are more likely to gain some Blood Gifts over others, but the lines have been muddled since the time of the first seven Vampires, and thus, traits of different lines have a tendency to manifest in unexpected places.

As a Vampire grows more powerful (advancing in Vampire careers), he acquires new Blood Gifts. Every time a Vampire enters a new Vampire career, he evolves, gaining one Blood Gift from his own bloodline and one Blood Gift from another bloodline of your choice. You may generate these gifts randomly by rolling on **Table 7-4: Blood Gifts** or you may select them. Some Blood Gifts can be acquired more than once, as noted in their description. If rolling for Blood Gifts and you get a duplicate Gift that cannot be taken more than once, roll again.



Aethyric Cipher

Your natural mastery over the Winds of Magic allows you to cloak and dissipate the Aethyric distortions around you. Those with Witchsight observing you must make an opposed Will Power Test and achieve at least one degree of success in order to detect anything unusual about you. You are also immune to Daemonsroot, Witchbane, and any other similar wards.

Bat Form

As a half action, you may transform into a Vampire Bat. You gain the characteristics, skills, talents, and traits of your new form, though you retain your own Intelligence, Will Power, Wounds, Magic, and Insanity Points, as well as all of your own skills, talents, and traits. All weapons, armour, and trappings that you wear or carry are absorbed into your new form and reappear when you regain your normal form. You can remain in your new form for as long as you wish. Changing back to your Vampire form requires another half action. You may use this trait as often as you wish.

— Vampire Bat Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	0%	31%	30%	34%	*	*	*

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	*	3	3	2 (8)	*	*	0

*Use your characteristics instead.

Skills: Dodge Blow, Perception +20%

Talents: Strike Mighty Blow

Traits: Enhanced Senses, Flier, Frightening, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Teeth

Enhanced Senses

You can see in complete darkness out to a range of 30 yards, using a form of echolocation very similar to that used by ordinary bats. This ability is not silent, and a Character within range may attempt a Perception Test to hear your high-pitched squeaks.

Blademaster

You are a master of every style and variation of hand-to-hand combat, enabling you to predict every action your opponent will take. As a free action, at the start of your turn each round, you may reduce the Attack Characteristic of one opponent by 1 for 1 round. If this reduces the Attack Characteristic to 0, the opponent may not make any attacks (standard, charge, and so on), though he may still dodge, parry, and perform any other non-attack action. In addition, Characters whose Attacks are reduced to 0 do not count towards any advantage gained from outnumbering you.

TABLE 7-4: BLOOD GIFTS

Roll	Blood Dragon	Lahmian	Necrarch	Strigoi	Von Carstein	Independent
1	Blademaster	Aethyric Cipher	Blood-Sated	Bat Form	Call Forth Thunder	Blood Burst
2	Furious Charge	Corrupted Innocence	Dark Majesty	Blood-Sated	Dark Majesty	Carrier
3	Iron Sinews	Defy the Dawn	Deathsight	Curse of the Revenant	Defy the Dawn	Host
4	Piercing Strike	Domination	Deft the Dawn	Iron Sinews	Ethereal Mist	Malformed
5	Quickblood	Ethereal Mist	Mastery over Flesh	Monstrous Mass	Persistent Image	Psychic Drain
6	Terrible Blows	Familiar Form	Nehekharan Scrolls	Summon Ghouls	Silvered Blood	Ravenous
7	Unhallowed Soul	Noble Blood	Noble Blood	Summon Vermin	Summon Wolves	Scent Blood
8	Unholy Regeneration	Quickblood	Silvered Blood	Unhallowed Soul	Transfixing Gaze	Stench
9	Waterwalker	Transfixing Gaze	Summon Ancients	Walking Death	Walking Death	Swarm Form
10	Wolf Form	Unhallowed Soul	Wellspring of <i>Dhar</i>	Waterwalker	Wolf Form	Wings

Blood Burst

Whilst you need blood to survive, your body does not process the fluid, so once you draw forth the nutrients from it, the excess fluid collects in pockets formed of your Undead flesh. Whenever you lose at least 1 Wound from an attack, one or more of these sacs burst, spraying gobs of old, tar-like blood at all adjacent creatures. Such creatures must succeed on Agility Tests or take a -20% penalty to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests for 1d5 rounds.

Blood Drain

You may drain blood with your fangs. If you inflict at least 1 Wound on an enemy whilst grappling, the victim also loses 1d10% from his Strength Characteristic. If the victim survives the encounter, he regains 1% of his Strength each hour.

Blood-Sated

You may abstain from drinking blood for twice the standard period (see **Feeding** on page 112). Once beyond this limit, you must make a Will Power Test to resist every second interval.

Example: *Sir Kael is a Thrall with the Blood-Sated Trait. He has a Toughness Bonus of 7. Without this trait, he could go seven days without feeding, but because of this trait, he can go 14 without having to make a Will Power Test, and after this period, he only needs to make a Will Power Test once every two days instead of every day.*

Genevieve Dieudonne, on the other hand, is a count with the Blood-Sated Trait and a Toughness Bonus of 6. She can abstain for 12 weeks without weakening and afterwards must make a Will Power Test every fortnight!

Call Forth Thunder

Once per day, as a full action, you may call forth a huge and terrible storm, even from a completely blue and quiet sky. The storm makes flying impossible and all Ballistic Skill Tests take a -10% penalty. The storm protects all Vampires within a mile of you from sun damage. If you are killed, the storm quiets immediately. Otherwise, it lasts for a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic.

Carrier

Your indiscretions about feeding have infected you with a horrid contagion. Whenever you use your Blood Drain Trait, the target must also succeed on a Toughness Test or contract Scurvy Madness (see *WFRP* page 137 for details). At your GM's option, other diseases can be substituted.

Corrupted Innocence

You are either so exquisitely beautiful or so obviously vulnerable it is absolutely unconscionable to strike at you. You gain the Unsettling Talent.

Curse of the Revenant

You have such a terrible burning desire to keep living that you can defy death. All Critical Hits dealt to you have their Critical Value reduced by 2, to a minimum of 1.

Dark Majesty

You are such a powerful figure that you can command mighty armies of the Undead. You may control a number of creatures with the Undead Trait equal to your Will Power Characteristic plus thirty at any one time.

Deathsight

You can see spirits and souls that are normally invisible, as per the Lore of Death spell of the same name. This trait functions continuously.

Defy the Dawn

Your will is so strong, you can overcome even the terrible power of the sun. If you pass a Will Power Test, you can walk in the sun without taking any damage or penalties. You must pass another test after each hour of exposure, at a cumulative -10% penalty per hour spent in the sun. Failure indicates your characteristics halve, and you begin to take damage for every minute of exposure, as normal. If this power is rolled or chosen a second time, you obtain complete immunity to damage from the sun, and you may walk in it without any consequence.

Domination

You can force weak-willed mortals to obey your every command. As a full action, you may use this power on any Human, Dwarf, Elf, Halfling, Orc, Skaven, Beastmen, Goblin, or similar creatures you can clearly see within 6 yards (3 squares). This is an opposed test, pitting your Fellowship against your opponent's Will Power. This ability cannot be used in combat, as the mind is too alert for danger. If you win the test, you gain complete control over your target and can compel him to do anything you wish (this is a free action). After 1d10 rounds, the victim may attempt another opposed test to break free. You may end the effect any time as a free action. If you attack the dominated target, its effects immediately end.

Ethereal Mist

Once per day, as a full action, you can reduce your body (and all carried, worn, or held items) to vapour. The mist is entirely magical, under your control, and does not behave according to nature. Whilst in this state, you gain the Ethereal (see **Chapter VIII: The Vampire Campaign** page 137) and Hoverer Traits. Your fly speed is equal to your Movement Characteristic. After 1d10 hours, you may make a Will Power Test. Success means your body coalesces. If the test fails, you must wait another 1d10 hours before trying again. Whilst in mist form, you do not truly exist in the world and are beyond all but magical effects. Vampires often use this power to fake their deaths, allowing them time to regroup and return for their vengeance.

Familiar Form

As a half action, you may transform into any small animal of your choice. You gain the characteristics, skills, talents, and traits of your new form, though you retain your own Intelligence, Will Power, Wounds, Magic, and Sanity Points, as well as all of your own skills, talents, and traits. All weapons, armour, and trappings that you wear or carry are absorbed into your new form and reappear when you regain your normal form. You can

remain in your new form for as long as you wish. Changing back requires another half action. You may use this trait as often as you wish.

— Familiar Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
20%	0%	10%	10%	38%	*	*	*

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	*	1	1	6	*	*	0

*Use your characteristics instead.

Skills: Concealment, Perception +20%, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move, Swim

Talents: Alley Cat, Flee!

Traits: Keen Senses

Armour: None

Weapons: Teeth

Furious Charge

Whilst charging, you attack at the precise moment to produce the most devastating effect, driving your weapon through your foe's defences. If you succeed on a Weapon Skill Test that's made as part of a Charge Action, your Damage Total ignores your opponent's armour.

Host

Your body is host to a colony of vile insects and worms. They crawl through the rotten flesh of your body, feasting on the blood you ingest and the slippery flesh of your innards. Whenever you lose 2 or more Wounds from a single attack, your body haemorrhages a stream of biting beetles, scurrying roaches, and undulating worms. Witnessing this unexpected development is enough to drive right-thinking people mad. The first time a mortal witnesses such an expulsion, he must succeed on a Challenging (-10%) Will Power Test or gain 1 Sanity Point. After 1 round, the generous vermin use their own excreta to seal the wound.

Iron Sinews

You grow to huge proportions, gaining an ungodly strength. You gain the Unstoppable Blows Trait (see page 137).

Malformed

Your body is twisted and grotesque, an abomination to behold. Worse, the ill-advised structure of your transformed body allows unsightly bulges to form, pressing out against the flesh until the skin thins so that it pops with a sickening wet splatter. Just as soon as the bubo explodes, the flesh knits back together again as another bulge begins to form elsewhere. Hard (-20%) Will Power Tests must be made to resist any fear or terror you cause.

Mastery Over Flesh

You are naturally gifted at manipulating and controlling the flesh of the dead. When casting *curse of Vanhel*, *hellish vigour*, *raise the dead*, *re-animate*, or *spell of awakening*, you gain a +4 bonus on the Casting Roll. You must meet all the usual requirements of casting the spell. This bonus also applies to Greater Necromancy (see page 128).

Monstrous Mass

Over the ages, you have grown to huge proportions, flesh and sinew building over and over itself. As a result, blows that would fell a normal creature are often nothing but a scratch to you. When an opponent inflicts a critical hit on you, he rolls twice on **WFRP Table 6-3: Critical Hits** (page 133) and takes the higher roll.

Natural Necromancer

You can control the Undead just as necromancers do. If you have the Dark Lore (Necromancy) Talent, you never gain side-effects from using Necromancy spells.

Noble Blood

You can trace your legacy directly back to the warrior-priests of Nehekhar. The range of your command over Undead extends to 200 yards (100 squares).

Nehekharan Scrolls

You have preserved some of the ancient lore of the Land of the Dead. Select one spell from the Lore of Necromancy or the Lore of Death. You may now cast this spell as if it were on your list. You gain an additional spell every time you gain this trait.

Pass for Human

You can retract your claws and fangs and soften your features, enabling you to appear Human. In this form, you lose the Frightening and Terrifying Talents if you have them. Switching back and forth between appearing Human is a free action.

Persistent Image

The light of the sun has not rejected you. Your image is reflected in mirrors and any other reflective surface. You also cast a normal shadow from the sun or any other light source.

Piercing Strike

Whenever you attack with a weapon, you put the full force of your might behind the swing, delivering gruesome injuries. If you inflict a critical hit, you may roll twice on **WFRP Table 6-3: Critical Hits** (page 133) and take the lower roll.

Psychic Drain

It is not enough to sip the blood of your victims; your Undead form requires far more energy to sustain itself. You become an emotional sink, draining the will and emotion

from living creatures around you. All living creatures within 8 yards (4 squares) must succeed on Will Power Tests each round or take a cumulative -10% to all characteristics on the Main Profile. You cannot reduce any of an opponent's characteristics below 1%. These penalties fade at a rate of 10% each hour the Character is removed from you.

Quickblood

You are so fast you can dodge a shot fired from a pistol or snatch an arrow out of the air. You may make Dodge Blow Tests to avoid missile attacks. You may still only dodge once per round.

Ravenous

The scent of blood is enough to drive you into a mad frenzy. Gain the Frenzy Talent. You may only enter a Frenzy if you are within 16 yards of a bleeding creature (i.e. a lightly wounded Character).

Scent Blood

You have the uncanny ability to smell the blood of living creatures within 16 yards. Concealment Tests made to hide from you automatically fail as do spells that obscure a mortal's presence from sight such as *pall of darkness* or *shroud of invisibility*. You can pinpoint the presence of any living creature within range of this trait.

Silvered Blood

Through some twist of magic, the argent metal already courses in your veins. Rather than weakening your flesh, the



TABLE 7-5: SUMMONED CREATURES

Roll	Time (Rounds)	Ghouls or Vampire Bats	Dire Wolves	Wolves or Giant Rats	Rats, Bats, or Other Vermin
1-3	2	3	4	5	14
4-6	3	4	5	6	16
7-9	4	5	6	7	18
10	5	6	7	8	20

presence of silver in your body makes you immune to its dreadful effects. Silvered weapons behave as normal weapons when used on this Vampire.

Stench

You exude the particularly loathsome stench of a charnel house. All living creatures within 6 yards (3 squares) of you become sick by your stink. They take a -10% penalty to all tests whilst they remain within the range of your stench and for 1d5 rounds thereafter. Creative Characters can circumvent your odour—Dwarfs are quite fond of wrapping scarfs soaked in their own urine around their nose and mouth, though such techniques often have a similar effect.

Summon Ancients

You can sense the remains of long-dead warriors and call them to fight on your behalf. When casting *re-animate* or *spell of*

awakening, one more creature than normal is summoned. When casting *raise the dead*, you summon an extra 1d10 creatures.

Summon Ghouls

Once per day, as a full action, you may summon Ghouls to attack your enemies. Roll 1d10 on the Ghoul column of **Table 7-5: Summoned Creatures** to determine the number of Ghouls and the time it takes for them to arrive (in rounds). When the Ghouls appear, they act on your Initiative, and they obey all of your commands. Refer to the *Old World Bestiary* for Ghoul statistics. The Ghouls wander off after a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic (minimum 1 hour). This power assumes there are Ghouls nearby. If it is impossible for Ghouls to be anywhere in the vicinity, then you may not use this Blood Gift.

Summon Vermin

Once per day, as a full action, you may call forth a tide of bats, rats, or other tiny creatures to attack your enemies. Alternatively, a crowd of giant vermin such as Vampire Bats or Giant Rats may be summoned. Roll 1d10 and refer to **Table 7-5: Summoned Creatures** to determine the number of creatures and the time it takes for them to arrive. When they appear, they act on your Initiative, and they obey all of your commands. Refer to the *Old World Bestiary* or *WFRP* for statistics. These creatures are real, not summoned from the Aethyr, and must be found naturally in the environment where this power is used. The creatures disperse after a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic (minimum 1 hour).

Summon Wolves

Once per day, as a full action, you may summon a number of wolves or dire wolves to do your bidding. Roll 1d10 and refer to **Table 7-5: Summoned Creatures** to determine the number of creatures and the time it takes for them to arrive. When they appear, they act on your Initiative, and they obey all of your commands. Refer to the *Old World Bestiary* or *WFRP* for statistics. These creatures are real, not summoned from the Aethyr, and must be found naturally in the environment where this power is used. They disperse after a number of hours equal to your Magic Characteristic (minimum 1 hour).



KNIGHTLY VIRTUES

It is not unknown for knights in Bretonnia to fall to the Vampires' Curse. The Blood Dragons, in particular, are keen to recruit these first-class warriors, and their philosophies are not so different from each other. If you have *Knights of the Grail*, you can combine Knightly Virtues with Blood Gifts. Knights who are turned lose the Virtue of Chivalry (and may nevermore call upon the Lady) and the Virtue of the Quest if they have them, but all other Virtues remain active, including Grail Virtues. If a Knight of the Realm or a Questing Knight becomes a Vampire, they will not find the Grail; the Lady can tell which of her servants are still true men. They may however, at the GM's option, find the Dark Lady, whose Blood Grail may provide the equivalent of their Grail Virtue, or other, darker boons.

Swarm Form

As a half action, you may assume the form of a swarm of beetles, flies, ravens, or cockroaches (choose one when you gain this trait). Whilst in this form, you may not attack nor may you be injured—stomping on your constituent roaches is definitely uncomfortable, even painful, but not lethal as you are Undead after all. Your swarm form can move through any space that one of your constituent creatures could fit through. You may remain in this form for a number of minutes equal to your Magic Characteristic (minimum one minute). Once you revert to your normal form (a free action), you may not use this trait until the next sunset.

Terrible Blows

Your great strength and incredible speed allows you to rain blows of terrifying force on your enemies. Whenever you make a melee attack using the Standard Attack or Charge actions, you may roll one extra damage die than usual and take the higher result. If the weapon you use has the Impact Quality, you instead roll three dice and choose the highest. If you have Furious Charge, both benefits apply.

Transfixing Gaze

You can immobilize your opponents with nothing more than a gaze. This requires a half action and may be used on any victim within 6 yards (3 squares). This power may be used in combat. The target may resist Transfixing Gaze with a successful Will Power Test. Failure means the target is transfixed and may take no action whatsoever, and he is considered helpless for one round. You may maintain this ability as a free action. The target is freed from Transfixing Gaze at anytime you move out of his view or something comes between you and your target.

Unhallowed Soul

You are truly cognisant of your freedom from the spiritual realm, and thus, you fear no God or Daemon. You are immune to the repulsing powers of places or objects of faith, including those of the Chaos Gods. Magical weapons (including those *blessed* by someone with a Divine Lore) and objects retain their effectiveness, however.

Unholy Regeneration

Your wounds heal at a startling rate. At the start of your turn, each round, you regain 1d5 Wounds. Wounds caused by silver weapons are not recovered by this trait. If you are slain, this trait ceases to function.

Vampires' Curse

Vampirism grants many benefits, but it also has severe drawbacks. There are common vulnerabilities, but these are not always assured. Each Vampire gains six vulnerabilities. Unless specified otherwise, a Vampire is assumed to cast no reflection and be vulnerable to Daemonsroot and Witchbane, Religious Symbols, Running Water, Silver, and Sunlight. See **Weaknesses** on page 113 for details.

Walking Death

Your presence is so terrifying that your opponents flee before you. Gain the Terrifying Talent. If you already have this talent, Characters must succeed on Challenging (–10%) Will Power Tests to resist Terror caused by you.

Waterwalker

Your will is so strong you may overrule the curse on your blood. If you make a successful Will Power Test, you may cross running water without taking any damage or penalty. You must re-roll for each new body of water or for every hundred yards of travel. If this power is chosen or rolled a second time, you gain complete immunity from this aspect of this curse and may cross any body of water of any size without any negative effects.

Wellspring of Dhar

Your soul is so corrupted with dark magic that it has become a natural pool of *True Dhar*. All wizards within 24 yards of you (including yourself) add your Magic Characteristic to their Casting Rolls when casting a spell using Dark Magic. Anyone within the range casting a spell from another Lore acts as if they have the Dark Magic Talent and *must* roll the extra die. You may be affected by multiple instances of this trait at a time. If three Vampires with Wellspring of *Dhar* are within range of each other, each gets the benefit three times over. This is one reason Necrarch Vampires take apprentices. You may suppress and reactivate this ability as a free action.

Wings

A pair of leathery wings tears free from your back. Riddled with crimson veins, they are nearly impossible to conceal—not that it matters much to you. Gain the Flier Talent. Whilst flying, your Movement Characteristic is twice your land speed.

Wolf Form

As a half action, you may transform into a Doom Wolf (see page 137 for statistics). You gain the characteristics, skills, talents, and traits of your new form, though you retain your own Intelligence, Will Power, Wounds, Magic, and Insanity Points, as well as all of your own skills, talents, and traits. All weapons, armour, and trappings that you wear or carry are absorbed into your new form and reappear when you regain your normal form. You can remain in your new form for as long as you wish. Changing back to your Vampire form requires another half action. You may use this trait as often as you wish.

VAMPIRE CAREERS

Once a mortal is transformed into a Vampire, he adds Vampire Thrall to his career exits. The benefits of these careers are clear; not only can the Vampire resist the impulse to feed, but he acquires more and more Blood Gifts as he unlocks the power of his blood. A Vampire need not move into another Vampire career; such a Character may always enter a career found on the career exits of his last non-Vampire career.

As a Vampire moves through the thrall, count, and lord careers, he unlocks new traits and powers found within his blood. Each time a Vampire enters a new Vampire Career, he gains 1 Blood Gift Trait associated with his bloodline and one trait from any other bloodline as described on **Table 7-4: Blood Gifts** on page 105. Independent Vampires select or roll for one trait from the Independent column and another

from any column.

THRALL (ADVANCED, SPECIAL REQUIREMENT)

Vampire thralls are Vampires who have sought out a mentor, usually the Vampire who created him, to learn some measure of self-control and to understand his limitations and powers as a creature of the night. Thralls rarely drift far from their advisors, since these more powerful Vampires protect them from Vampire hunters and other enemies of Undead.

Special Requirement: You must be a Vampire to enter this career.

— Thrall Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+10%	—	+20%	+15%	+20%	+10%	+10%	+10%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
—	+5	—	—	—	—	—	—

Skills: Command, Common Knowledge (any two), Dodge Blow, Magical Sense, Perception, Search, Speak Language (any two), Torture. In addition, Vampires gain extra skills depending on their bloodline.

- **Blood Dragons:** Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Strategy/Tactics), Charm, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface
- **Lahmian:** Academic Knowledge (the Arts, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy, Philosophy), Channelling, Charm, Concealment, Disguise, Evaluate, Gossip, Haggle, Intimidate, Performer (any two), Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer



THRALL



VAMPIRE COUNT



VAMPIRE LORD

STRIGOI COUNTS AND LORDS

The bodies of Strigoi counts begin to deform into a bestial state. Their claws grow terribly sharp, gaining the Impact Quality. This makes them clumsy with holding weapons, however, and they take a -10% to their WS when not using their Natural Weapons. They suffer the same penalty when using any skill requiring fine manipulation.

Strigoi Lords are so deformed they can no longer wear armour. However, their flesh typically hardens into a thick bony carapace. They acquire Armoured Skin upon entering the career, giving them 3 Armour Points to all locations.

Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move, Speak Arcane Language (Magick)

- *Necrarch*: Academic Knowledge (Astronomy, Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Magic, Necromancy), Channelling, Charm, Concealment, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Prepare Poison, Read/Write, Ride, Shadowing, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Arcane Language (Magick)
- *Strigoi*: Concealment
- *Von Carstein*: Academic Knowledge (Genealogy/Heraldry, History, Necromancy), Channelling, Charm, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Speak Arcane Language (Magick)
- *Independent*: Charm, Concealment, Disguise, Evaluate, Gossip, Intimidate, Scale Sheer Surface, Shadowing, Silent Move

Talents: Vampires gain talents based on their bloodline. If not of a bloodline (meaning Independent), the thrall career offers no talents.

- *Blood Dragon*: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Specialist Weapon Group (Cavalry, Two-handed), Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure, Strike to Stun
- *Lahmian*: Dark Magic, Etiquette, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Quick Draw, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Parrying)
- *Necrarch*: Aethyric Attunement, Dark Lore (Necromancy), Dark Magic, Fast Hands, Lesser Magic (any two), Meditation, Petty Magic (Arcane)
- *Strigoi*: Frenzy, Rover, Strike Mighty Blow
- *Von Carsteins*: Dark Magic, Disarm, Master Orator, Petty Magic (Arcane), Public Speaking, Schemer, Specialist Weapon Group (Fencing, Parrying)

Trappings: None

Career Entries: Any

Career Exits: Vampire Count*

*Vampires retain the career exits of their last non-Vampire career.

VAMPIRE COUNT

Vampires who have reached the level of count have grown, matured, and consolidated their powers and abilities. They are no longer the terror of mere towns and hamlets, nor are they content to prey on isolated individuals. Their influence is felt across the land, and they dominate mortals, Undead,

and several of their Vampire kin as well. The Vampire count is nothing like the wild, bestial creature he started out as; instead, he is a patient and meticulous hunter of men. He is also a man with a plan and the means to carry it out, and he fears no rag-tag group of adventurers who think they can stop him.

— Vampire Count Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+20%	+10%	+25%	+20%	+20%	+15%	+20%	+15%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+2	+7	—	—	—	+2	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any two), Common Knowledge (any one), Charm, Command, Concealment, Dodge Blow, Evaluate, Follow Trail or Shadowing, Gossip, Heal, Intimidate, Perception, Read/Write, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (any), Silent Move, Speak Language (any three), Torture

Talents: Aethyric Attunement or Sixth Sense, Dark Lore (any) or Strike Mighty Blow, Dark Magic, Menacing, Petty Magic (Arcane) or Specialist Weapon Group (any), Public Speaking, Quick Draw or Swashbuckler, Schemer, Seasoned Traveller or Tunnel Rat

Trappings: Evil Laugh, 1 Magical Item, 1000 gp worth of Jewellery, Sizeable Lair (Keep, Manor House, Large Crypt, Citadel, Spire or similar), Rampant Megalomania, 1000 gp

Career Entries: Thrall

Career Exits: Vampire Lord*

*Vampires retain the career exits of their last non-Vampire career.

VAMPIRE LORD

A Vampire who has reached the level of lord is incredibly powerful in both his own abilities and his temporal domain. The world shakes at his will, and the bravest heroes tremble to hear his name. Only the best of the Vampires reach this rank; it is not enough to simply control kingdoms or to have lived for centuries, the Vampire must also be a true master of dealing death, of dominating minds, and of harnessing his strength to the utmost effect. The Vampires have no Gods; the Vampire lords are close enough to suffice.

— Vampire Lord Advance Scheme —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
+35%	+20%	+30%	+30%	+30%	+30%	+35%	+30%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
+3	+11	—	—	—	+3	—	—

Skills: Academic Knowledge (any four), Charm, Command, Common Knowledge (any four), Concealment, Evaluate, Follow Trail, Intimidate, Navigation, Perception, Prepare Poison, Ride, Scale Sheer Surface, Search, Secret Language (any one), Secret Signs (any one), Shadowing, Silent Move, Sleight of Hand, Speak Language (any four)

Talents: Alley Cat or Rover, Arcane Lore (any one) or Strike to Injure, Armoured Caster or Sturdy, Contortionist, Disarm, Etiquette, Fast Hands or Lightning Parry, Fearless, Lesser Magic (any four), Master Orator, Meditation or Specialist Weapon Group (any one), Resistance to Magic, Resistance to Poison, Strike to Stun, Unsettling

Trappings: Army of Undead, Ambition beyond Possibility, Control over the Fate of Kings and Empires, 2d10 Fanatical Devotees, Enormous Lair (Palace, Castle, Labyrinth, Stronghold, Tower, etc.), 3 Magical Items, Pride beyond Hubris, Wealth beyond Avarice

Career Entries: Vampire Count

Career Exits: Infamy Across The Ages

— THE VAMPIRE UN-LIFE —

Upon acquiring the Blood Kiss, every aspect of the Vampire's life undergoes a profound transformation, from the deep and abiding thirst for blood to the inhuman power he attains. The Vampire transcends mortality to embrace the true power of the Lords of the Dead.

BLEEDING

When a victim is grappled, the Vampire may spend his round draining his prey's blood. If this happens during combat or is otherwise resisted, the victim loses 1d10% from his Strength Characteristic as well as any Wounds rolled normally. If his Strength reaches 0% from such an attack, the Character is killed. If he survives, his Strength returns at 1% per hour.

Those who have fallen under the sway of Vampires may offer their blood willingly, allowing the Vampire to feed with more control. In such a case, the Vampire rolls 2d10 and chooses which result to inflict. This controlled feeding does a maximum of one Wound as well. However, if the Vampire rolls doubles on his roll for Strength drained, his natural blood-lust causes him to lose himself in the feasting, and he instead drains the sum of the two dice in Strength.

A Vampire accelerates the rate of Wound recovery whenever he feeds. If the Vampire is lightly injured, he regains 1d10 Wounds after feeding. If heavily injured, he immediately regains 1 Wound.

Whether bled willingly or unwillingly, those drained are effectively Stinking Drunk for one hour afterwards (see *WFRP* page 115). Anyone having their Strength drained below 10% (again, whether willingly or unwillingly) must make a Will Power Test or gain an Insanity Point. Vampires also become Frightening whilst feeding if they were not before.

FEEDING

Vampires need a regular supply of fresh Human blood to stay alive. However, only the youngest need to feed every day. It

takes discipline and resolve to control the hunger for blood, and the eldest and most powerful Vampires can master their impulses.

All Vampires must feed, but the time depends on their experience. Vampires who have yet to enter a Vampire career measure the time between feedings in a number of hours equal to their Toughness Bonus. Thralls measure their time in days, counts in weeks, and lords in months, all equal to their Toughness Bonus. Older Vampires may be able to go longer, but that's entirely up to you.

Once the respite has passed, the Vampire feels a strong need to drink. The Vampire is entitled to a Will Power Test, and if he succeeds, he may wait an additional hour (day, week, or month). After this time, if the Vampire has yet to feed, he must make an additional Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test. Each succeeding Will Power Test worsens by one step to a maximum of Very Hard (–30%). If the Vampire fails a Will Power Test, he is overcome by the need to drink and must drink—the Vampire has no choice and must immediately seek out a victim.

Not feeding is not only difficult to resist but hard on the health. For each successful period of abstaining, the Vampire loses 1d10% of his Strength. They also lose this Strength if they fail the test and cannot find blood to sate them—usually blood from one adult Human is enough.

Regardless of the time since their awakening or the state of their hunger, Vampires in this new-born stage act as if they have the Frenzy Talent. Note that going into Frenzy still requires a round and a conscious decision. As soon as the Vampire feeds, it regains 10 points of lost Strength per Blood Drain attack, if any was lost. This cannot take their score above what it was before the loss began. This first feeding also removes the Frenzy Talent.

Abstinence has its risks; if the Will Power Test to resist feeding is ever failed by three degrees or more, the Vampire reverts to the bestial state in which he began. He must feed

immediately or lose Strength every hour, and he temporarily gains the Frenzy Talent again as described previously. This same state is entered if the Vampire's Strength drops below 10% due to continued abstinence. In both cases, the Vampire also gains an Insanity Point. If the Vampire's Strength drops below 0 due to abstinence (forced or voluntary), he becomes almost too weak to move. WS, BS, and Ag are reduced to one tenth their value, and his Movement becomes 1. At this point, he typically relies on minions to provide him with sustenance; feeding instantly removes all these penalties, and Strength returns normally at 10 points per Blood Drain.

Those that lack minions may recover through falling into a deep hibernation. In this hibernation, the Vampire regains 1 point of Strength per year of uninterrupted "sleep." A year is interrupted if the Vampire is awake for more than an hour or takes any damage. The year must then begin again. The Vampire need not wait until he is fully recovered and may awaken from hibernation at any time. In fact, few Vampires use this option since there is usually an abundance of animals and old people on which it might feed to slake its unholy thirst.

BREEDING

The Blood Kiss is almost always done upon willing victims, but occasionally, when the irony is particularly sweet, it is done on the unwilling. On willing targets, use the controlled feeding rules for both participants. For unwilling targets, the Vampire must first reduce the victim to 0 Strength using Blood Drain. Then, too weak to resist, the Vampire forces them to feed. They will appear dead if left at that point but will rise in 1d10 days, full of hunger. If the Vampire is unwilling to use force, the Dominate power is also sufficient.

Vampires also sometimes rely on their personal charms to convince a person to willingly accept a bite or the Kiss. This can be modelled with an opposed test of the Vampire's Charm against the victim's Will Power. The victim gets a +30% bonus to this roll due to the unnatural nature of the request, though the GM is free to adjust this modifier due to circumstances. For example, someone dying from a critical hit is much more likely to accept the gift of immortality.

Victims who are not brought to near-death will not slip into a death-like state after the Kiss. Instead, they are simply Stinking Drunk for 1d10 hours, full of fevered dreams and strange sensations as their new strength asserts itself. It is during this time that their soul is attacked by the spirits caught between life and death. Those taken unwillingly are typically unconscious for this process, and many willingly bitten pass out from the effect. Regardless of whether they are sensible during this experience, any Characters undergoing the transformation into a Vampire must pass a Will Power Test or gain an Insanity Point. Those who wake up in a coffin, six feet under the soil, may, at the GM's option, be forced to make another Will Power Test to avoid a second Insanity Point.

TABLE 7-6: VAMPIRE'S CURSE

Roll	Weakness
01-05	Barriers
06-10	Counting
11-20	Daemonsroot and Witchbane
21-25	Fire
26-30	Garlic
31-35	Gromril
36-40	Ithilmar
41-50	No Reflection
51-55	Religious Symbols
56-60	Sawdust
61-65	Silver
66-70	Stakes
71-80	Sunlight
81-85	Tears
86-90	Warpstone
91-00	Running Water

Regardless of whether this roll is a success or a failure, the personality of the Character is entirely and irrevocably altered by the experience. The new Vampire does keep his memories and his personality, but both tend to fade quickly and are forgotten. The truth is that much of the old personality is simply irrelevant in this new state, just as the personality of a sheep is of little use to a wolf. Ideas about friendship, morality, and duty are fundamentally changed when one becomes a wolf amongst Human sheep. Some people are able to act kindly towards sheep, of course, but in the end, they are there to be herded, killed, and eaten.

WEAKNESSES

All Vampires suffer from the Blood Curse placed upon them by Nagash. The curse places the following six restrictions upon the Vampire. The most common involve the inability to cross running water, the inability to cast a reflection or shadow, the urge to drink blood, vulnerability to sunlight, weakness to certain herbs, and a weakness towards silver. However, as the bloodlines have crossed and become muddled, there is no guarantee that a Vampire has all of these weaknesses and may have others instead. All Vampires must drink blood, but the other weaknesses are not assured. Roll or select five weaknesses from **Table 7-6: Vampires' Curse**.

Barriers

This Vampire cannot enter any other structure not owned by him unless he is first invited. Once the Vampire is invited, he

may enter and exit freely. The Necrarchs typically have this vulnerability.

Counting

These Vampires have a curious obsession with counting. Whenever confronted with a number of small objects, such as poppy seeds, coins, or pieces of string, the Vampire must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Will Power Test or count the objects—an act that usually takes 1d10 minutes. If the Vampire succeeds on the test, he takes a –10% penalty to all tests whilst the uncounted objects remain in view.

Daemonsroot and Witchbane

Some Vampires are repelled by Daemonsroot and Witchbane. Vampires with this vulnerability must succeed on a Will Power Test to come within 2 yards (one square) of these herbs.

Fire

A few Vampires are vulnerable to purifying flame. These Vampires cannot use their Toughness Bonus to reduce damage from fire (magical or otherwise).

Garlic

Many Vampires have an unusual weakness for rare roots and plants, as can be seen with Daemonsroot and Witchbane. A few are saddled with vulnerabilities to more common plants such as garlic. Such Vampires take a –20% penalty to all tests whilst within 6 yards (3 squares) of this substance.



Gromril

The touch of Dwarfen Gromril is anathema to some Vampires. Whenever such Vampires are injured by Gromril weapons, they may not use their Toughness Bonus to reduce the damage.

Ithilmar

The silvery steel of the Elves is said to hold uncanny magical power. Whilst much of this material is used for armour and decorative items, the Elves are famed for their potent weapons wrought from this ore. Should the Vampire lose at least 1 Wound from an attack made with a weapon forged from Ithilmar, the Vampire must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test or catch fire. See **Fire** in *WFRP* page 136.

No Reflection

Many Vampires are cursed, so they can never behold their visage in the surface of a mirror or in a shadow cast by the moonlight. Mirrors or other reflective surfaces do not show the appearance of these Vampires.

Religious Symbols

The power of belief is quite strong in the Old World, and mortals who present icons and symbols of their Gods can sometimes repel Vampires. A Vampire that is vulnerable to such items must succeed on a Will Power Test to close within 2 yards (1 square) of a person presenting a religious symbol. As well, they must succeed on a Hard (–20%) Will Power Test to enter a temple or grasp a religious icon. The GM may modify this test depending on the strength of faith of the temple's believers or the icon's wielder.

Sawdust

A few Vampires can be repelled by the accoutrements of those who handle corpses, such as sawdust or embalming fluid. A Vampire with this vulnerability must make a Terror Test when he comes in contact with these substances.

Silver

The mere touch of silver burns the flesh of Vampires with this weakness. If the Vampire loses at least 1 Wound from a silvered weapon, he automatically loses 3 more, ignoring armour and Toughness Bonus.

Stakes

Plunging a stake through the heart of any creature is traumatic enough, but when used against Vampires with this weakness, any attack with a stake is enough to drive these creatures away. The stake must be fashioned from a special wood, such as ash, hawthorn, or rosewood. If the Vampire is struck by such a stake and takes at least 1 Wound, the Vampire is immobilised until the stake is removed (a half action). Whilst immobile, the Vampire may not take any action that involves physical movement, except for the Standard Attack or Swift Attack actions.

Sunlight

A Vampire in direct sunlight halves all characteristics (rounded down) and suffers 1 Wound per minute of exposure, regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour. If a Vampire is reduced to 0 Wounds in this way, use the Sudden Death Critical Hit rules. This penalty does not occur if the day is significantly overcast (80% or more cloud cover), but a Vampire walking outside on such a day must roll 1d10 every hour. On a roll of a 1 or a 2, the sky clears enough to cause him damage. Each round a Vampire remains in direct sunlight, he must succeed on a Challenging (–10%) Toughness Test or burst into flames. See **Fire** in *WFRP* (page 136) for details on catching fire.

Tears

A rare few Vampires cannot suffer the tears of a virtuous mortal, and therefore, they never feed on innocents, preferring instead to feed on the corrupt, the vicious, or criminal. These Vampires often pose a number of questions to their victims to assess the quality of their morals before attacking.

Warpstone

Warpstone is particularly loathsome to these Vampires. They cannot tolerate its presence, and if they come into contact with the substance, they experience dreadful changes. A Vampire that comes within 6 yards (3 squares) of Warpstone must make a Fear Test. After each hour of contact, the Vampire must re-roll one of his weaknesses and one of his Blood Gifts.

Running Water

Some Vampires are unable to cross running water, receiving grievous damage if they attempt it. For the purpose of this curse, the water must be at least a yard across, a foot deep, and have a current. Simply splashing a Vampire with water is not enough, nor is rain, or dumping a bucket of water on a Vampire's head. Attempting to cross such a body deals 1d10 Wounds of damage per round spent in or on the water, regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour. If the Vampire is reduced to 0 Wounds, use the Sudden Death Critical Hit rules. Flying, jumping, or riding or using a vehicle or vessel to cross negates these penalties, as does using a bridge.

OTHER WEAKNESSES

Due to the immunities offered by the Blood Gifts, not every Vampire suffers from the full six curses. As well, Vampires are also vulnerable to many things that plague ordinary mortals. Vampires are immune to normal weapons or injuries, and they must heal at the same rate as any creature, though they can use both blood and necromancy to mend their wounds more quickly. Vampires can also die from their wounds just like a mortal. They are only unique in that, because they lack a true soul, their spirit does not depart for Morr's Garden or

the fury of the Realm of Chaos, thus allowing them to be summoned back to this world more easily than any other creature.

Vampires are also vulnerable to Insanity, perhaps even more so than mortals. Vampires may gain Insanity Points in the following ways.

Banquet of Blood

Vampires who gorge on blood often become addicted to it. If a Vampire drinks blood more than twelve times in one day, he risks gaining an Insanity Point. For each drink beyond twelve, the Will Power Test to resist this becomes harder by a cumulative 10%.

The Beast Returned

As described under **Feeding** (see page 112), a Will Power Test to resist the desire to feed that fails by three degrees or more, or a reduction in Strength due to persistent denial, both causes the bestial stage of the first feeding to return and grants the Vampire 1 Insanity Point.

The Blood Kiss

As described under **Breeding** (see page 113), receiving the Kiss often troubles weak minds.

Critical Hits

Although they no longer fear death, they do fear the ending of their glorious un-life. Vampires gain 1 Insanity Point for every Critical Hit they take from silvered or blessed weapons, fire, or sunlight.

The Melancholy of Age

Vampires may gain an Insanity Point for every century they live after being given the Blood Kiss. For each passing century, the Will Power Test to resist this becomes harder by a cumulative 10%. Time spent in hibernation does not count towards this. Once the test is failed, the penalty resets to 0%.

Other

Vampires are also likely to gain Insanity Points from magical mishaps and encounters with Chaos entities. However, their closeness to death makes them immune to Insanity Point gain due to a failed Terror Test. Likewise, they are typically inured to the horrors of extreme violence, torture, and suffering.

VAMPIRES AND INSANITY

Vampires follow the same rules for Insanity as all other Characters. In the situations listed above where the gain is not automatic, they must make a Will Power Test. If the test is passed, they gain no Insanity Points, but if the test is failed, they gain the number decided upon by the GM. If the Vampire gains 10 or more Insanity Points, he must immediately make a Will Power Test. If the test is

TABLE 7-7: VAMPIRE INSANITIES

Roll	Insanity
01-10	Blasphemous Rage
11-20	Exquisite Agonies
21-30	Firebug
31-40	Godly Conviction
41-50	Heart of Melancholy
51-60	Lost Heart
61-70	Profane Persecutions
71-80	Pursued Perfection
81-90	Steeped in Death
91-100	Venomous Thoughts

successful, nothing happens. But his Insanity Point total remains unchanged, and he must take the test again when he next gains an Insanity Point. If the test is failed, the Vampire develops an Insanity but loses 10 Insanity Points. As with mortals, the type of Insanity should be chosen to reflect the personal history of the Vampire and the events that pushed him over the brink. Alternatively, Vampires may roll on **Table 7-7: Vampire Insanities**, which contains those Insanities most commonly suffered by the children of darkness.

This table includes some new Insanities peculiar to Vampires and their twisted minds and habits, though there is nothing to stop mortals from acquiring these Insanities as well. Vampires may gain any Insanity from *WFRP*, though these often become crueller or more dangerous when suffered by a Vampire. A Vampire with a Lost Heart might give his paramour the Blood Kiss, certain she will eventually love him for the gift. A Vampire who is Desperate and Doomed is in a position to bring about the end that he has foreseen of the world.

Vampires are typically permitted to be as eccentric as they like. Consequently, many Vampires acquire two, three, or even more insanities over their long lives. Some Vampires even welcome insanity as a sign that they are reaching a kind of immortal perfection. Madness, whilst accepted by most Vampires, can be seen as a sign of weakness, and many Vampires destroy those creatures that have slipped too far into the grip of insanity.

EXQUISITE AGONIES

The Vampire existence is extremely long and prone to melancholy and ennui. The only reliable defence against boredom and despair is to strive for more exotic and intense sensations. A Vampire desiring Exquisite Agonies has come to understand that there is no sensation more exotic or intense

than pain and has dedicated his life to drinking deep from this well.

Although some have predilections one way or the other, most cursed with this Insanity are as happy stripping their own flesh from their bones as they are tearing it from an unwilling victim. Vampires with this Insanity are, thus, easily spotted, for their flesh is typically scarred, pierced, or mutilated from where they have been the subject of their own experiments. This appearance forces them to make Fellowship Tests at a Hard (-20%) and take a -1d10% to their Strength Characteristic.

There is so much more that can be done with a captured mortal, however. Those with this Insanity must make a **Hard (-20%) Will Power Test** whenever they have a mortal captive under their power. Failure means they must spend at least 1d10 hours torturing their victim, during which the victim loses 1d10 Strength permanently. After this time, the Vampire may make another Will Power Test or continue for another 1d10 hours. The Vampire only stops if attacked or if his subject reaches 0% Strength and dies. When the latter happens, the Vampire becomes morose and immediately searches for a new victim. If one cannot be found, the Vampire must make another **Hard (-20%) Will Power Test** or begin work upon his own flesh again. Their need for living victims means they always take prisoners, which may give the mortals a chance to escape.

Vampires with this weakness should have 1d5 fewer Wounds due to their perverse whittling of their flesh.

GODLY CONVICTION

Arrogance is inherent to a Vampire, as well as delusions of Godhood. A Vampire who gains Godly Convictions takes his arrogance to a whole new level, however. He becomes convinced, unshakably, in his own supremacy and dominion, not just over mortals, but his own kind, his own weaknesses, and the entire world. It is a small step, after all, from a Vampire observing he can bring up a storm at will to believing he commands all storms as master of the air and winds. For one who feeds upon the souls of the living, it is easy to conclude he is the ultimate arbiter of life and death.

Vampires with Godly Convictions are even keener to conquer the world than their fellows and destroy all those who persist in denying their divinity. Far more dangerous, however, is their assumption of inviolate invulnerability; what fear, after all, has a God of a mortal, or even another Vampire? What danger can the sun hold for the master of the heavens? Adamant in their omnipotence, Vampires with Godly Conviction refuse to take precautions, thus opening the door to their own destruction.

In battle, the Vampire must make a Will Power Test if he wishes to take any sort of defensive action (Dodge, Parry, Defensive Stance, or Disengage). He must make a **Very**

Hard (–30%) Will Power Test to leave a combat, retreat, or surrender, no matter what the odds or how temporarily. If the Vampire succeeds on the test, he is distraught and confused, halving his Will Power for 1d10 days, and he thirsts for a rematch to prove his true divinity.

HEART OF MELANCHOLY

Death cannot claim a Vampire, and time is of no consequence. All art, all music, all sport, all combat, all achievements, all learning, the wonder of nature, the paragon of animals—none of these can truly continue to excite the intellect as the centuries roll on. And so, Vampires often fall victim to great melancholy.

Since nothing brings them pleasure, they soon simply stop looking for it. They remain in their castles or palaces, unwilling or unable to go anywhere or do anything. Of course, their indolence only increases their crushing ennui and boredom and causes whatever interests they may have had to fall away—their loved ones desert them, their castles collapse into ruin, their great projects go unfinished. Eventually, they lose even the will to feed and begin wasting away or slipping into lengthy sleeps. The scattered Strigoi, their lands gone and their race decimated, often fall victim to this Insanity.

A Vampire with this affliction reduces his Will Power and Fellowship each by 10% (minimum 1%). He must also pass a Will Power Test to actively seek out mortal blood. If he has gone beyond the period without blood thirst (see the rules for **Bleeding** on page 112), he need not roll to resist feeding—he succeeds automatically. However, he suffers the usual Strength loss for each interval.

As a creature of will and passion, this is a terrible death of spirit for a Vampire—and the closest they come to suicide. Many seek a cure by fleeing into the arms of other Insanities, such as Exquisite Agonies or Terrible Thirstings (see *WFRP* page 200-209), which may alleviate the effects of this madness as determined by the GM.

PURSUED PERFECTION

Vampires are frequently obsessive, as they have the time, the power, and typically the wealth sufficient to devote their lives to trivialities. For the Vampire who suffers from Pursued Perfection, this devotion becomes fanatical and all consuming, the sufferer focusing all his will on one single, narrow aspect.

For some, this might be collecting physical things, or experiences, or types of people, a collection they must complete before they will rest. For others, it will be perfecting an aspect of their behaviour, routine, or dress. It might even be a mastery of a skill or talent or the completion of a single epic task. Whatever the case, the accomplishment that the sufferer seeks to complete is either effectively impossible (such as destroying the sun) or is made so in his mind. A Vampire desiring to collect every

book ever published will keep hearing of new ones he lacks; a Vampire aiming to be the world's greatest swordsman will invent challenges and standards that are always beyond his abilities; a Vampire who wishes to keep his castle in total order will find that the wind or evil spirits keep moving his statues several millimetres to the right, no matter how many times he puts them back. Even if his goal is something completely concrete (such as slaying a Dragon or a Giant), upon completing it, the sufferer will either invent a new aim or downplay the achievement (it was only a small Dragon, so it doesn't count).

Like those who suffer Lost Heart, no amount of rebuffing or disappointment deters them from their quest, nor will they ever abandon it for being impossible or be distracted by other concerns. They also become enraged should anything disturb or hinder their quest. Sometimes, their drive to achieve perfection is relatively benign to those around them. Other times—such as when Demesh the Mad decided to collect the skulls of all the nobles in the Empire—it is deadly in the extreme.

STEEPED IN DEATH

In a life as long as a Vampire's, there are countless battles and endless wars. The tide of blood never seems to stem or slow. As the corpses and skulls pile higher, the Vampire's heart grows blacker. Eventually, he becomes so acquainted with death he cannot do anything but kill.

The victim of this Insanity soon becomes insensible to almost all other sensations except the thrill of brutal combat and the crushing of bodies beneath his furious blows. When not fighting, his heart becomes empty and his mind weak, as if a Mandrake addict denied the healing root. What is more, with each passing battle the joy fades faster, and he craves even greater slaughter in the next instance.

Every week, the sufferer must make a Will Power Test or seek fresh slaughter. If none can be found, the Vampire takes a –10% penalty to his Intelligence, Will Power, and Fellowship Characteristics until he sheds blood. If the Vampire encounters a combat—any combat—he must make a Will Power Test to avoid immediately joining the fray. Should he have allies, he will not slaughter them until all enemies are dead, but then he must immediately succeed on a Will Power Test or start on them. The Vampire may make a Will Power Test each round to cease his attacks, but this test takes a –10% penalty for each combatant the Vampire has already slain in the current combat.

This anti-social behaviour tends to leave the Vampire isolated and hated, and many seek consolation from this by further surrounding themselves with the symbols of death: resting on a bone throne, sleeping only in a coffin, covering their castle floors with the skulls of men, dressing in clothes of Human flesh, and so on. Some even come to believe they are the incarnation of Death itself, for everywhere they go, they bring certain slaughter and leave desolation behind.

— THE BLACK ART —

The black art of necromancy has a long history that may be traced ultimately to the Elves of Ulthuan. Though the Elves knew of the power of *Dhar*, undiluted Dark Magic, for years they turned their backs on it and instead studied the safer Winds. Those who finally gave in to temptation were the first of the Druchii, the Dark Elves.

When Nagash ruled Khemri, three of the Druchii were brought before him as slaves. Through years of torture he slowly teased the secrets of magic out of them and began his experimentation with what was to become necromancy.

Today's practitioners of the black art use a form of necromancy that has been shaped by other students over the

centuries; the work of Vanhel and Kadon, amongst others, supplements the fragmentary translations of Nagash's work that survive. The works of these necromancers may be flawed, be missing passages, or contain traps set by their creators to ensnare the unwary. It is said the complete copy of Vanhel's *Liber Mortis* held under lock and key by the Sigmarites is capable of devouring the souls of any who read it and once summoned a Daemon made entirely of fingers.

Nagash's original form of necromancy still survives, however. It has been maintained by the Vampires, particularly those of the Necrarch line, passed down from master to apprentice over the centuries along with the history of their kind.

Lore Skill: Speak Arcane Language (High Nehekharan)

DURATION AND RANGE

To make finding all the information easier in spell descriptions, *Night's Dark Masters* adds two extra lines to the spell entries—duration and range.

Duration

Entries include all of the following.

Instant: This entry indicates that the spell does not have a duration and that its effects are resolved immediately.

1 hour/minute/round: The spell lasts for one hour, minute, or round.

1 minute or triggered: The spell lasts for 1 minute (6 rounds) or until the circumstances of the spell's effect are triggered, whichever occurs first. For example, a spell might give you the ability to re-roll failed Strength Tests. At any point within the spell's duration that you re-roll a Strength Test, the spell is discharged.

See description: The spell has a special duration as described in the text.

Time/Magic: The spell lasts a number of rounds, minutes, or hours per point of your Magic Characteristic.

Triggered: The spell remains in effect until a specific circumstance triggers it. You gain no benefit from casting such spells multiple times.

Range

You: The spell may be cast only on yourself.

Touch: You must touch a target for the spell to take effect.

Touch (you): As touch, but you may also cast the spell on yourself.

Yards (squares): The spell has a range measured in yards.

LORE OF NAGASH

Blight

Control Undead

Fountains of Blood

Gaze of Nagash

Hellish Vigour

Raise the Dead

Re-Animate

Ride Through the Night

Spell of Awakening

Withering Wave

Blight

Casting Number: 27

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Instant

Range: 1 mile

Ingredient: The roots of a carnivorous plant (+3)

Description: You suck the life out of an area up to one square mile. Plants wither, animals sicken, water becomes poison, and soil turns to dust and ash. Animals instinctively avoid this land, and it will gain a reputation for being haunted. *Dhar* pools here, allowing its users to add an extra die to their Casting Rolls. No crops can be grown unless the ground is first sanctified by a Jade magister with the *cure blight* spell, which reverses all the effects.

Control Undead

Casting Number: 17

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 24 hours

Range: 24 yards (12 squares)

Ingredient: A piece of wood from a desecrated coffin (+2)

Description: You bend one of the ethereal Undead to your

NEW LESSER SPELL: SHADOWBLOOD

Casting Number: 14

Casting Time: Full action

Ingredient: The blood of a Vampire (+2)

Description: Burning blood leaps from your hands and ignites a target within 12 yards (6 squares). This is a *magic missile* causing a Damage 4 hit that affects a number of targets equal to your Magic Characteristic. Its duration is instant. If you spend 5 Wounds cutting yourself to provide blood for the spell, you may double the number of targets.

will. You can target any one creature with both the Ethereal and Undead traits within range. The creature is entitled to a Will Power Test to resist this spell.

Fountains of Blood

Casting Number: 6

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 minute/Magic Characteristic

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A leech (+1)

Description: All living creatures within range begin to bleed more freely than before, as if their lifeblood is eager to weep from their bodies. Any creature in the area that takes damage and loses at least 1 Wound loses an additional Wound.

Special: This spell is especially handy for Vampires. The increased blood flow makes it easier for Vampires to feed; the effects of their *Blood Drain* special ability are doubled, causing the victim to lose 2d10% from their Strength Characteristic.

In the case of controlled feeding, the Vampire rolls 3d10 and chooses which two dice to inflict. If doubles come up on any of the dice, the Vampire sums all three dice and drains this amount from the victim instead.

Gaze of Nagash

Casting Number: 12

Casting Time: Half action

Duration: 1 round/Magic Characteristic

Range: 24 yards (12 squares)

Ingredient: A necromancer's eyeball plucked from its socket (+2)

Description: Bolts of *Dhar* fly from your eyes, and what flesh they touch blackens and withers, peeling away completely to reveal bleached white bone beneath. This is a *magic missile* with Damage 3. You may launch one bolt each round as a half action.

Hellish Vigour

Casting Number: 15

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: 1 minute/Magic Characteristic



Range: 24 yards (12 squares)

Ingredient: The finger bones of a warrior (+2)

Description: You infuse a number of Undead equal to twice your Magic Characteristic with *Dhar*. Affected creatures move swiftly, empowered by raw malevolence. Each round, these creatures may re-roll one failed Weapon Skill Test.

Raise the Dead

Casting Number: 22

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Instant

Range: 24 yards (12 squares)

Ingredient: Dust from a mummy (+3)

Description: As *re-animate*, but you create 2d10 Skeletons or Zombies.

Re-Animate

Casting Number: 8

Casting Time: 1 half action per corpse

Duration: Instant

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: Dust from a grave (+1)

Description: You re-animate the dead, creating a number of Skeletons or Zombies equal to your Magic Characteristic. You must have fresh corpses for Zombies or aged remains for Skeletons. If the corpse is incomplete—missing a head, arm, or leg, the Skeleton or Zombie's statistics should be modified accordingly as if the creature has suffered a permanent injury from a critical hit.

Ride Through the Night

Casting Number: 11

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: See text

Range: 12 yards (6 squares)

Ingredient: A tooth from an Araby steed (+2)

Description: Your mount, and up to five others, is invigorated by the power of *Dhar*. From nightfall till sunrise, the mounts gain one point of Movement and may take the Run action even if they have the *Shambling* special rule. They also gain the Ethereal Trait (see page 137), as do their riders and any coaches they pull. This spell is used by Vampires to catch those who flee from them before sunrise. In the midst of the chase they will ride straight towards their target, uncaring of mortals whose dwellings they gallop through.

Spell of Awakening

Casting Number: 24

Casting Time: 2 full actions

Duration: Instant

Range: 12 yards (6 yards)

Ingredient: A circlet of iron quenched in Human blood (+3)

Description: As *re-animate*, but you create Wights instead.

The remains used must be those of a Character with an advanced career.

Withering Wave

Casting Number: 21

Casting Time: Full action

Duration: Instant

Range: 18 yards (9 squares)

Ingredient: Five pinches of Vampire ash (+3)

Description: With a wave of your hand you unleash devastating necromantic forces that drain the life from your opponents, shrivelling their skin, turning their blood to dust, and shattering their bones. A number of living beings equal to your Magic Characteristic within range are affected. They each lose 1d10 Wounds, regardless of Toughness Bonus and armour.

— RITUAL MAGIC —

The grimoires holding the secrets of those who have shaped necromantic magic contain a wealth of ritual magic, some of it dating back over four thousand years. Necromancers are famed as masters of ritual magic, as much as those who utilise the yellow Wind or Chaos Sorcery. The rituals here are only a few of those available to practitioners of the black art.



Father W'soran's Architect

Type: Arcane

Arcane Language: High Nehekharan

Magic: 3

XP: 300

Ingredients: A piece of stone from a Nehekharan building, a map of the tower drawn with the blood of a mason, the skull of a Stone Troll.

Conditions: You must have the Trade (Stoneworker) Talent to perform this ritual.

Consequences: If you fail the Casting Roll, one of your hands turns to stone. From now on, you suffer a -20% penalty to all tests relating to manual dexterity.

Casting Number: 20

Casting Time: 4 hours

Description: A 50-foot tall stone tower rises out of the ground in the place where this ritual is performed. The caster determines the internal layout of the tower when he draws the map ingredient.

Legion of the Dead

Type: Arcane

Arcane Language: Magick

Magic: 3

XP: 300

Ingredients: The sword arms of ten dead soldiers, a drum made of bones and Human skin, a fragment of Warpstone the size of a skull, and a barrel of rum.

Conditions: Whilst you perform the ritual, an assistant must continuously beat the bone-drum.

Consequences: If you fail the Casting Roll, the summoned Undead turn on you. If you are slain or flee, they either

CONTROLLING SUMMONED UNDEAD

Many of the Undead have no minds of their own, and those that do may be wilful, resenting the control exerted over them by a necromancer. Young, inexperienced necromancers struggle to maintain this control whilst remembering how to manipulate their own limbs at the same time. Spellcasters with a Magic Characteristic of 2 or less must be in line of sight, as well as within 48 yards (24 squares) to retain control of summoned Undead. It takes a half-action each round to issue commands to these Undead, though they may command all of their minions simultaneously.

Necromancers with a Magic Characteristic of 3 or more are considered powerful enough to master this delicate art and may issue commands as a free action. They do not need to be within line of sight to do so and may control Undead through the thickest of walls as long as they remain within range. They may even see through their minions' eyes, which manifest as coloured witchlights in corpses too decayed to still have eyes.

return to the grave or battle the living, according to their temperament in life.

Casting Number: 22

Casting Time: 4 hours

Description: A regiment of the dead rises to fight for you. As many as 30 Skeletons or Zombies may be raised in this way, depending on how many corpses are at hand and their state of decay. These troops do not count towards the usual limit of how many Undead you may control and remain under your command no matter how far away from you they travel. Created Undead remain until destroyed, even if you are slain.

Rain of Blood

Type: Arcane

Arcane Language: Magick

Magic: 2

XP: 200

Ingredients: The hearts of five followers of Khorne or Shallya or a combination of both, a Griffon's feather, a calf born in the last spring in the lands targeted.

Conditions: The ritual must be cast on the highest ground in the area to be affected.

Consequences: If you fail your Casting Roll, the clouds are summoned, but they rain holy water instead of blood.

Casting Number: 17

Casting Time: 4 hours

Description: This ritual summons a host of dark clouds that rain blood over an area of five square miles for one hour, which may result in flooding. The blood is ordinary blood of the same species as the hearts used in the

casting (the blood will be a mixture of that of different species if hearts from different species were used). This ritual has been used to feed Vampires on the march in wartime and also to dishearten the enemy.

Rebirth in Blood

Type: Arcane

Arcane Language: High Nehekharan

Magic: 4

XP: 300

Ingredients: The hands of a midwife, the last drop of a Human's blood, a Dragon's tooth, the womb of a cow raised on blood, the remains of a Vampire.

Conditions: This ritual may only be cast in an accursed location. An accursed location is one in which a terrible, large-scale tragedy occurred. Specifics are for the individual GM to decide, but it could include a battlefield that bore witness to a slaughter, a ghost town in which everyone died of plague or turned to cannibalism, or Mordheim.

Consequences: If the casting roll is failed, you suffer the same fate as the inhabitants of the location you have chosen to cast in—you could catch the plague, join the shambling Undead, or be gorily dismembered by ghostly blades.

Casting Number: 27

Casting Time: 4 hours

Description: This ritual may bring a deceased Vampire back to un-life. If the Casting Roll is beaten by 5 or more, the Vampire is returned to full health, appearing as he did before death, though he loses any equipment and clothing he had. If the Casting Roll is beaten by less

SPEAK ARCANES LANGUAGE (HIGH NEHEKHARAN)

High Nehekharan is the ancient tongue of the nobles of that dreaded land. The written form of this language is based entirely in pictograms and has no traditional alphabet, making it extremely difficult for Old Worlders to comprehend. Indeed, many necromancers do not use this difficult language, as it is possible to use Lingua Praestantia in almost all necromantic castings because of how exhaustively specific that language is. This true necromantic tongue is only used by those necromancers who have need of it for specific rituals or seek to learn the forms first set out by Nagash.

than 5, then the Vampire is not restored, but the ritual is not treated as a failure. It must be repeated in a new location with new ingredients, but the Casting Roll will be one point lower. The new accursed location may not lie within twenty miles of any previous ones. The ritual can be attempted indefinitely until successful, though in past instances, repeated attempts have consumed years of the caster's life.

Summoning the Ship of the Damned

Type: Arcane

Arcane Language: Magick

Magic: 2

XP: 200

Ingredients: The birth caul of a sailor, a ship that sank with her crew, the hands of a drowned priest of Manann, a

ship's manifest written in blood, a fist-sized chunk of Warpstone.

Conditions: You must have the Dark Lore (Necromancy) Talent to perform this ritual.

Consequences: If you fail your Casting Roll, you are tormented by visions of drowning in an ocean of damned souls. You gain 2 Insanity Points.

Casting Number: 18

Casting Time: 4 hours

Description: You raise a sunken ship from its resting place with a full crew. The ship does not need wind to fill its sails and travels at an even speed no matter the weather. Although the ship remains as decayed as it was on the ocean's floor, it rots no further. The crew is made up of either Skeletons or Spectres (see *The Old World Bestiary* page 108 and 110) at your choice, and there are as many of them as there were crew when the ship sank.

MAGIC ITEMS

Over the course of their lives, average citizens of the Old World will be fortunate to see a single magical item. Vampires, however, have the span of centuries to acquire such useful objects, either by creating them, manipulating others into creating them, or stealing them outright.

Algrund's Orrery

A clockwork model of the nearby planets, as well as both moons and their orbits.

Academic Knowledge: Astronomy

Powers: Algrund's Orrery gives a +20% bonus to Academic Knowledge (Astronomy) Tests, excepting rolls made to determine its function. It can also be used to create darkness in an area of ten square miles. The darkness has the appearance of true night; it is as if a black sheet is suddenly drawn across the sky making the sun vanish and the stars come out. This effect lasts for one hour and can be used once per day.

History: Uniquely, Algrund's Orrery accurately depicts the erratic orbit of Morrslieb, which makes it invaluable to astromancers. The Orrery was created by the Dwarf Algrund Nolagrundson and obtained by the Celestial College in the same way they acquire all of their artefacts—with gold.

The Orrery's ability to create darkness is of obvious use to Vampires, and the Lahmians currently have an agent tasked with infiltrating the College to obtain it. The astromancers tend to sleep all day, so they can observe the stars all night, making a Vampire in their midst less suspicious than she would seem elsewhere but also hampering her ability to move freely at night.

Asp Bow

Although ornate and intricately carved with serpent imagery, this bow seems utterly mundane. It reveals its true character when a wielder notches an arrow, at which point the

arrowhead assumes the character and likeness of a hissing, venomous snake.

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: Arrows fired with the Asp Bow deal Damage 4 and function as if poisoned. If the arrow causes at least 1 Wound, the target must succeed at a Toughness Test or lose an additional 2 Wounds. On a Ballistic Skill Test result of 96–00, the arrow turns and bites its owner on the hand. Resolve this as you would an ordinary attack from the bow (Vampires are immune to the poison).

History: Tomb robbers unearthed the Asp Bow in the city of Khemri, along with several other artefacts bearing the marks of a Nehekharan snake Goddess named Asaph who claimed dominion over magic, beauty, and vengeance. When the tomb robbers returned to the Old World, a strange curse seemed to fall upon them, and all those who possessed items from the expedition died mysteriously. The Asp Bow eventually found its way into the hands of Neferata, and it is now used by her most favoured assassin.

Blood Chalice

In a mockery of the Grail Knights, the Vampires of Blood Keep drank fresh blood from a great metallic chalice so heavy that an ordinary mortal would have trouble lifting it one-handed.

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: The bearer of the Blood Chalice may use it as a full-round action. It has two effects: drinking from the Blood Chalice restores 1d10 Wounds to the drinker, and using the Blood Chalice to coat a weapon causes flames to leap up along it, granting a +2 bonus to damage.

History: Shortly after claiming Blood Keep, Walach found the chalice and filled it with the blood of his most respected opponents, including the former Master of

the Order. Over the years, he added splashes of blood from other knights, holy men, and Witch Hunters. When his Vampire bride, Aurora, was slain during the siege of Blood Keep, he added her potent blood to the mixture. When the siege finally succeeded, the Chalice was not found; it is unknown if Harkon took it with him or if it was destroyed in the attack.

Carstein Ring

This is the fabled ring of Vlad von Carstein himself.

Academic Knowledge: History

Powers: If Vampires of the Von Carstein bloodline wear this ring, they gain 3 Armour Points on all locations and, at the start of each round, regenerate 1d10 Wounds. If the wearer is killed, he returns to un-life at dusk completely healed.

History: Legend has it the Carstein Ring was created by Nagash himself as a gift for Vashanesh. Through the ring, Nagash was able to control the Vampires and make them his warrior-slaves. To free the Vampires from this control, Vashanesh killed himself, knowing that the ring would eventually return him to un-life and that, without the Vampires, Nagash would fall.

The Carstein Ring was most famously worn by Vlad von Carstein during the Wars of the Vampire Counts, during which it saved him from final death many times. It was stolen from him by an Imperial thief, though rumour has it the thief would not have been able to approach Vlad if it wasn't for the treachery of Mannfred von Carstein who magically aided him, shielding the thief from Vlad's gaze. It has not been seen since.

The Dagger of Jet

This is a long dagger. Both its handle and blade are as black as pitch.

Academic Knowledge: Magic

Powers: Anyone wounded by the Dagger of Jet loses 10% from either Strength or Toughness, at the wielder's choosing. Neither characteristic may be reduced to 0. If the victim survives, 1% of both characteristics regenerates each hour.

History: The Dagger of Jet was used in the executions of criminals in ancient Lahmia under the Cult of Blood. Condemned criminals had their throats cut with it, and their blood was consumed by Neferata and her court. After centuries of tasting blood, the Dagger of Jet gained Vampire powers of its own.

Lady Zmada's Portrait

A painting of a beautiful lady with an enigmatic expression.

Academic Knowledge: The Arts

Powers: A Vampire may step through the empty frame of this portrait during the day and shelter there until dusk. During that time, the Vampire appears as an unmoving

portrait of itself. If the painting is destroyed, the Vampire is slain.

History: Vampires, unable to see themselves in mirrors, sometimes become obsessed with their images. The great Tilean master Belardo was famously hired by the Von Carsteins to paint portraits of them, for which he was justly rewarded—a mob burned him alive on top of a pyre made of his own works. It is unknown whether Belardo or another painter created portraits of the Zmada family, and the artistic dispute was silenced when the Zmada family's mansion burned to the ground. Only this painting survived. It passed into the collection of a private individual thereafter, and its current whereabouts are unknown.

Necrotic Powder

A grey powder carried in an alchemically treated pouch.

Academic Knowledge: Necromancy

Powers: Necrotic powder magically ages anything it touches, whether living flesh or solid steel. Only practitioners of necromancy are immune to this effect. Usually the necromancer blows a handful of the substance at a target (Ballistic Skill Test if the target is not stationary), which immediately inflicts 2d10 Wounds. Necrotic Powder may be used to rust metal, rot wood, or cause paper to decay into dust.

History: Developed by Necrarchs using methods first described by Nagash, Necrotic Powder is *Dhar* distilled into a physical form using Warpstone dust as a base. Those who carry Necrotic Powder have proven impossible to capture because a handful of the substance is enough to eat through any lock, as well as several guards.

Vampire's Bane

This is a silver greatsword with a skull device on the pommel.

Academic Knowledge: Theology

Powers: The bearer's Strength Bonus is doubled when using Vampire's Bane against Vampires.

History: All the weapons of the Black Guard are traditionally blessed by priests of Morr before being used against the Undead, but Vampire's Bane has gained power of its own over the years. It was used to behead Dragan the Ghoul King and wielded by Captain-Justiciar Ortelius when he slew the noble Count von Sangster. It has thirsted for the blood of Vampires ever since.

Ortelius was slain when Von Sangster's servants returned the Vampire to un-life. Ortelius's corpse was then re-animated as a Zombie and sent back to the temple with a long and insulting letter nailed to his head. Vampire's Bane has not been seen since.

The Wailing Blade

Vlad's weapon of choice was a beautifully crafted longsword with a screaming face upon the hilt. As it moves through the air, the blade screams and wails hungrily for the blood of men.

Academic Knowledge: Necromancy

Powers: The terrible wailing of the blade forces anyone within 6 yards (3 squares) to re-roll all successful Fear and Terror Tests. The blade also demands blood, and once drawn in battle, the wielder must make a Hard (–20%) Will Power Test to sheath it whilst living combatants remain for it to feast upon.

History: The Wailing Blade was crafted by the Dark Elves

of Naggaroth, and it was carried with those explorers from that land who first came to ancient Nehekhar. It was presented to Vashanesh by Nagash along with the Von Carstein Ring, and it was used by Vlad in his great campaign against the Empire. After his fall at the Siege of Altdorf, the blade was believed buried with Vlad under the temple of Sigmar, but in the tide of war, few are sure the right blade was seized.

— THE RESTLESS DEAD —

The Vampires are potent individuals, but they owe much of their power to their ability to summon and control their armies of the Undead. A Vampire is never far from his Undead servants, for the dead are under every patch of land in the Empire and every city street—and what commander would ever refuse soldiers who need no rest, know no fear, and feel no pain?

A Vampire's servants are most often drawn from the bodies of mortal men, but how they appear and walk again amongst the living varies greatly.

GHOULS

"Don't look at me like that. It was this, or bein' too weak to walk home no more."

—ANTON HAAS, GHOUL

In the Old World, starvation is common, and all too many men come so close to death that they commit the ultimate sin and feed on the flesh of their fellow men. But whatever the reason, Morr has set his law firm and absolute: those who eat Human flesh are irrevocably cursed with the taint of the Ghoul.

Their bodies become twisted and stooped, their flesh putrid and infected, their skin blotched and filthy. Hideous bloodshot eyes swell out of their sockets and shine with inhuman rage. Their lips peel back to reveal blood-stained teeth, which they file to cruel points to better tear apart their prey. Worse, their minds follow their bodies, growing ever more degraded, bestial, and frenzied. The more flesh they eat, the hungrier they become, until their bodies and minds know nothing but an eternal gnawing need to find and devour the corpses of men.

The early stages of the curse are slow, however, and few have the stomach to kill their neighbours or relatives when they begin to present the symptoms. Their loved ones and friends consider it merciful to drive the Ghoul away from society, but this only allows him to feed more freely. Crypts and graveyards become their castles and their feast tables. The only thing that can draw Ghouls away from such places is the call of their masters; their tainted souls are under the thrall of Vampires and necromancers. They must come to any who call them, and indeed, will often come unbidden, drawn to those who are lords of life and death as if to the lodestone.

All the Vampires find uses for them, especially as warriors. Their slaving ranks cause more fear than a steady line of Skeletons, and their splintered claws drip a black ichor that

seeps into wounds, causing the flesh to swell and fester. The Ghouls also require no magic to control, and they fear no priest or holy ground.

The Strigoi seem to value the Ghouls most of all, perhaps seeing something of themselves in their outcast status. There are many tales of the vast armies and giant cities of Ghouls controlled by the Strigoi lords. Such places are beyond perception. When lacking the flesh of the living or the dead, the Ghouls turn on one another, ripping each other apart in an orgy of violence. If the Strigoi kingdom ever rises again, these still-living monsters will be their champions.

SKELETONS AND ZOMBIES

"I would rather face a thousand Orcs than a hundred of these things."

—GENERAL MORRSHEIM, MARSHAL OF THE TALABECLAND ARMIES

These are the Vampire's most trusted foot soldiers. There is hardly a field in the Empire that has not known past slaughters, so a Vampire need not even bring troops to the field—he can simply raise them from the earth, under his enemy's very feet. Cut them down, and they spring up anew, and any losses suffered by their enemy will only add to their numbers. They are uncountable in number and infinite in returning.

They are soldiers that require no rations, are not slowed by wounds, suffer no exhaustion, nor pine for the comforts of home. They cannot be frightened, confused, or distracted. They have no intelligence, no thought, and no desire to improvise. When generals dream, they dream of soldiers like the Undead—soldiers who appear on the field exactly where you want them, when you want them, and never break or flee, no matter what the odds. On such a foundation, almost any victory can be assured.

The raising of a Zombie or Skeleton is the easiest of spells. Anyone with any experience in necromancy can achieve it; the only variation is the amount of corpses that can be raised with each casting. Experienced necromancers think nothing of creating a dozen or more—assuming sufficient corpses are available to be raised. It is this reason that Zombies are more commonly seen than Skeletons, as the freshly dead are more easily located and closer to the surface. In action, however, there is little difference between the two; they are both equally capable of exterminating the living.

They also make excellent servants and guardsmen away from the battlefield and are so easily summoned that necromancers are rarely without them. Any adventurer with any contact with necromancy will face them over and over. Yet they remain frightening—the stink of the grave, the stilted movement, and empty eyes. But most of all, Zombies and Skeletons terrify mortals because they are the incarnation of their fear of death. The Zombie shows them how the worms will eat them away when they fall, and the Skeleton's grinning skull is the emblem of death's winnowing hand.

Their only limitation is that they can follow only simple orders, such as march, guard, protect, or attack, and they must remain close to their commander—and should his magic ever falter, they fall to pieces. The necromancer must always guard himself with his Undead legions to prevent this destruction, but it is hardly a problem because each and every time his troops are cut down, he can bring them back in but a moment.

SPECTRES, WRAITHS, & OTHER SPIRITS

"It came out of the mirror. Right out of the mirror, with five bony fingers and flesh like spiderwebs. It grabbed Karl's heart and crushed it in a moment. The blood frothed out of Karl's mouth like fatty tallow as he died, and I stopped my thieving that very night."

—MARIUS FIGNELL, PRIEST OF MORR

When a mortal dies, his essence dissipates, leaving only a shell behind. Skeletons and Zombies are those shells returned to life without essence. Spirits are the opposite—the shell is gone, but the essence remains, trapped in the mortal world. What remains is not the same as what was there in life but an echo of rage and guilt and dark determination. This perversion that perseveres is of great use to the Vampires and necromancers.

Ghosts and Poltergeists are minor spirits, whose anger and power quickly fade. The Spectre and the Banshee, however, are creatures of a far purer force. They are cursed by their own crimes, be they murder, defilement, or the violation of a sworn stricture or solemn vow, and their punishment is their imprisonment between the realms, eternally chastised by their own guilt. This torment soon drives them mad, and they lash out at the living with incoherent rage. The Spectre can draw away the life of a Human with a touch, whilst the Banshee can do the same with a scream. Those who survive such attacks are rarely sane afterwards.

The Wraith is an even more powerful spirit. It too is driven to violence and insanity, but its rage is far greater. Wraiths are the spirits of great necromancers who experimented with the blackest magic in order to acquire immortality—and failed, leaving only an echo of their identity on the Winds of *Dhar* they manipulated. To come so close to their goal yet be denied drives them instantly insane and fills them with an unimaginable hatred for the living, whose souls they take great pleasure in draining away. They carry ethereal scythes and are often confused with images of Morr—and they most certainly bring only death wherever they pass.



TABLE 7-8: RANDOM UNDEAD ATTRIBUTES

Roll	Attribute
01-05	Armoured: The mortal was buried in a fine set of mail armour that, though rusted, has lasted through the ages and still bears a familiar coat of arms. Add 2 Armour Points to each location.
06-10	Child: The mortal died whilst under the age of twelve yet is just as mindlessly bloodthirsty as any Undead. Its small size means it has -10% to its WS and -1 to its damage rolls. Whoever destroys the creature must make a Will Power Test at the end of the battle. Failure means they gain an Insanity Point.
11-15	Enraged: This creature has brought back a particularly strong hatred for the living. It attacks with terrible fury, gaining +1 to all its Damage rolls. Those facing the creature also suffer -10% to their Will Power Tests to avoid Fear.
16-20	Familiar Face: Choose one Character fighting the creature. The creature is someone the Character knew in life or strongly resembles such a person. They may even resemble the Character! The luckless mortal must make a Will Power Test to overcome this shock. Failure indicates he is Stunned for one round.
21-25	Fragile: The flesh or bones of this creature are all but rotted away into dust, a cloud of which rises off it with each movement. Its Toughness Characteristic is reduced by 10%.
26-30	Free-Willed: This Undead has somehow retained some spark of intelligence. It does not fall if the necromancer who summoned it is killed. It also is less intent on following orders, and if left alone, wanders off in search of bloodshed.
31-35	Fresh: The body was not in the ground long before it was raised into service again—just long enough to become disgusting. Its bloated organs burst from its skin and trail on the ground, and maggots crawl in pus-filled abscesses. Anyone attempting to attack the creature must pass a Toughness Test each round or lose a half action gagging and retching.
36-40	Half-Eaten: Either before or after death, some wild creature has enjoyed a feast of the creature's flesh. It has a huge gaping hole in its body and 3 fewer Wounds as a result.
41-45	Headless: The mortal was killed by beheading and his head buried elsewhere. The body has risen without this important appendage, but this in no way impedes its ability to fight. All successful attacks to the head count as missed.
46-50	Infested: A great crowd of bugs or beetles buzzes and crawls through and around this creature's body, feeding on the rotten flesh. They get into the nose and mouth of any attacker and go scurrying up his arms or into his hair. As a result, the attacker takes a -10% penalty to his Weapon Skill Tests to attack this creature.
51-55	Large: The creature was a giant of a man in real life, standing almost seven feet tall. Add 3 to its Wounds Characteristic.
56-60	Legless: In clawing its way out of the grave, the creature has wrenched its leg-bones from their sockets. It has a Movement Characteristic of 1 and cannot take the Run action. All hits that would have hit the legs are counted to have hit the body.
61-65	Mutant: The creature has a mutation still obvious even after death and decomposition, such as a horrible hunchback, a third eye-socket, or horns on the skull. This may just be a cosmetic effect, or you can select an appropriate mutation from <i>WFRP: Old World Bestiary</i> , or <i>Tome of Corruption</i> .
66-70	Oozing: An acrid black slime coats the bones of this Skeleton or suppurates from the flesh of this Zombie. Anyone who damages this creature is struck with globs of the stuff and must make a successful Agility Test or take a Damage 2 hit to a random location.
71-75	Plague-Ridden: The signs may still be obvious upon the flesh, or they may have faded, but the disease is still very much present. Any mortal who comes into contact with this creature must make a Toughness Test or contract the Green Pox or Neiglish Rot—GM's choice—(<i>WFRP</i> page 136).
76-80	Poisoned: Perhaps killed by poison or buried in poisoned earth, this creature (and any weapon it carries) has an unappealing green tinge to it. Anyone damaged by the creature must immediately make a Toughness Test or lose 2 Wounds, regardless of Toughness Bonus or armour, from poison.
81-85	Quick: For some reason, this Undead moves much faster than most other corpses—as fast as any normal Human, in fact. Add +20% to its Agility Characteristic.
86-90	Resident: The creature has risen with a living creature inhabiting its corpse, such as a snake wound through an eye-socket or a rat dwelling in its chest cavity. This extra creature may attack once per round as well. See <i>WFRP</i> or <i>Old World Bestiary</i> for stats of likely vermin.
91-95	Skewered: This mortal was killed in battle and still has the weapon that killed him imbedded in his body. This is typically a hand weapon, spear, or halberd, but others are possible. If a Character attempts to extract the weapon, he may do so by making a Strength Test. However, whilst the Undead is still active, it gains a free attack against them whenever an extraction attempt is made.
96-00	Veteran: Before death, the creature was an experienced combatant, and it has somehow preserved some of that knowledge in its Undead state. It gains a +10% bonus to Weapon Skill Tests.

To even behold a Wraith, Spectre, or Banshee can be enough to scare a mortal to death. As spirits, they are all also invisible to the naked eye and immune to mundane weapons. They can pass through all barriers and fly across the land at incredible speeds. They can thus single-handedly devastate any armies who have not already fled in terror.

However, the force of will that keeps the spirit present means that summoning and controlling them is far from simple. Vampires prefer to use them as guards, luring them to specific locations where they will happily slaughter any trespassers. A powerful Spectre can protect an entire castle from intruders for millennia and thank his master for the constant supply of souls.

WIGHTS

“Unquestioningly loyal. Infallibly brave. The pinnacle of the necromantic arts. If I had a hundred such as them, I could conquer any nation, rout any army—and never lack for camaraderie either. Although, they are typically poor conversationalists.”

—LADY ARIETTE VON CARSTEIN

Here is necromancy at its peak—a creature with the dark will of the Spectre combined with the bodily strength and unflagging discipline of the Skeleton. Though their flesh may rot, their bones remain strong, and their minds retain their mastery of the art of combat and their lust for slaughter. As the Skeleton is to the Empire's foot soldiers, the Wight is to its great generals and heroes.

However, the creation of a Wight requires the deepest study of the black art. As such, it is typically only done for those whose mortal existences marked them as worthy of such immortality. Vampire lords may occasionally bestow the gift on close friends or family, but in the main, the honour goes to their greatest warriors and generals, so they may continue their martial careers in death. There are also Wights that come to life through some magical accident or ancient curse. The races that lived in the Old World before the coming of Humans buried their dead in barrows entwined with ancient magic. Their Skeletons have been known to rise up to defend their resting grounds or respond to a summons from a powerful Vampire.

Regardless of their origin, they are skilled in the ways of war, and all have an eternal thirst for battle and warfare. Most carry terrifying Wight Blades that cut through armour like the cold talons of a Spectre, and many are mounted on hideous skeletal Nightmares. The image of the Wight riding into battle with lance and sword is so common that, amongst the Vampire armies, Wights are often known as “Black Knights.”

Their personalities are not as complete as that of a Vampire, but their intelligence is deep and their goals often extensive. Wight lords are sometimes found ruling small duchies or necropolises or harnessing armies of Skeletons, just as their Vampire masters do. They also lack the great charisma and noble bearing of the Vampires, but since Wights have little taste for political machinations anyway, they are quite happy to leave such things to their masters. Like any good warrior, the Wight knows his station and seldom exceeds it.

FIGHTING THE UNDEAD

The Undead do not suffer from all the curses that plague Vampire kind, but they do have weaknesses. Blessed weapons do extra damage against them just as with Vampires, and they or the necromancer controlling them must pass a Will Power Test to enter blessed sites.

In their favour, the Undead have their mindlessness, their immunity to Fear and Terror, and their unholy strength. GMs wanting to simulate even more powerful Undead, such as the terrible Wights of the Hell Knights or an ancient and godlike Spectre should use the creature careers in the main rulebook. Adding some of the Vampire Blood Gifts would also be appropriate for powerful creatures.

The other strength of the Undead is their unnatural, terrifying nature. This has a rules effect (all Undead are Frightening), but the GM should also make sure to describe just how unsettling their opponents are. Their empty eyes, their relentless, returning assaults that no amount of slaughter can stop, their unresponsiveness to fear, pain, or damage, plus all the unpleasantness of death: the hideous stench, the half-rotted flesh, the infestations of insects, the eruptions of disease and decay, and the horror of fighting what was once your comrade or companion. GMs looking to make their Undead encounters more varied, individual, and disturbing should roll on **Table 7-8: Random Undead Attributes**. The modifiers listed can apply to single creatures or (in most cases) to an entire force.



— GREATER NECROMANCY —

There is an inherent problem with necromancy; it is designed primarily to re-animate the corpses of Humans, and Humans are rather pathetic creatures in the grand scheme of things. It is much more preferable, for example, to harness in Undeath the strength of an Ogre or the power of a Griffon. It is said that the priests of Nagash in ancient Nehekharra could raise from death great Carrion Birds, mighty Giants, and even Dragons. Such extremes might be beyond necromancers of today, but great things are possible for someone with the knowledge of the ancient ways and the time and patience to experiment.

Vampires and Human necromancers wishing to attempt such experimentation must have the Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) Skill and a Magic Characteristic of 2 or higher. They must also have access to an ounce of Warpstone for every Wound possessed in life by the creature being animated. This is added to the carcass to aid the revivification—it does not offer any bonus to the spell's Casting Roll. Getting this Warpstone—and indeed, the carcass of a great creature—could be an adventure in itself!

The more powerful the creature being raised, the more difficult the spell is. See **Table 7-9: Spell Roll Modifiers for Greater Necromancy** on page 129 to find the modifier applied to the Casting Roll. The power of the creature is measured by its Slaughter Margin (see *Old World Bestiary* page 76). Creatures with a Slaughter Margin of Impossible cannot be raised without a Ritual. Two or more creatures can also be combined into one. To do this successfully requires a **Hard (-20%) Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) Test** before the spell is cast. If the roll is successful, find the modifier for the highest Slaughter Margin of the two and double it. The Warpstone required is the sum of the two creatures' Wounds, again in ounces.

Once the necromancer has determined the difficulty modifier, he makes a Casting Roll and applies it, along with all the usual modifiers (including the bonus from Mastery over Flesh if they possesses it). The spell cast is the equivalent of Spell of Awakening and has a Casting

Number of 24. The Meditation Talent can also be used to boost this roll. If the Casting Roll succeeds, the creature is raised as desired. If it fails, the carcass and the Warpstone are consumed, and the Vampire must start again from the beginning.

Regardless of success or failure, Tzeentch's Curse may be triggered as normal. If it is, a Human necromancer automatically acquires a side-effect (see *WFRP Table 7-6: Side-Effects* on page 159 or *Tome of Corruption Table 17-1: Expanded Chaos Side-Effects* on page 210), regardless of the Curse rolled. Vampires gain a side-effect if doubles are rolled on the roll for the nature of the Curse.

Note also that creatures raised in this way lose all Intelligence, Will Power, and Fellowship and can never take or fail a test based on them. They also lose any skills, talents, or special rules that depend on these attributes. To preserve these characteristics as they were in nature, treat the Slaughter Margin as if it was one level higher. If this makes the Slaughter Margin Impossible, the creature cannot be raised with its mind preserved. Whether they preserve their Intelligence or not, the rest of the creature's Main Profile remains the same, except for their Weapon Skill and Agility. Each of these decreases by -1d10% due to the inherent weaknesses of dead flesh. In return, however, the creature gains the Undead Trait and is now an obedient slave that knows no fear, needs no food, and does not age. It also gains the Frightening Trait if it did not have it before.

If two creatures were combined, each new characteristic is determined by whichever is the better of the two (including Wounds—these are not added together!). They gain access to all skills, talents, traits, and special rules that are not lost with their Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship. Note also that the increase of Slaughter Margin to preserve these abilities is applied before the cost is doubled. If both creatures were Frightening before their combination, the final chimaera becomes Terrifying.

Example: *Madam Kalfon wishes to combine a Giant Spider with an Ogre to create a strong and agile manservant to help her travel through the mountains. She also wants it to be able to act independently. The Slaughter Margins of the Ogre and the Giant Spider are both Hard. Adding Intelligence raises the Slaughter Margin to Very Hard, producing a final dice modifier of -18. She obtains the required 39 ounces of Warpstone and passes her Academic Knowledge (Necromancy) Test to stitch the two beasts together—attaching the upper body of the Ogre to the Giant Spider's torso.*

Madame Kalfon has a Magic Characteristic of 4, plus Mastery over Flesh and her Natural Necromancer Blood Gifts. She also meditates before casting, gaining a total of +11 to her Casting Roll, and she performs the ritual

TABLE 7-9: SPELL ROLL MODIFIERS FOR GREATER NECROMANCY

Slaughter Margin	Modifier
Average or Less	0
Challenging	-3
Hard	-6
Very Hard	-9

near a corrupted Waystone to gain one extra casting die. As this is Dark Magic, she must also roll an extra die and drop the lowest. She rolls an 8, 8, 6, 2, 3 and 7, adds 11, and subtracts 18 for a total of 25—a success! However, she has triggered Tzeentch's Curse. She rolls for effect on **Table 7—2: Minor Chaos Manifestation** in WFRP (page 143) and gets a 66—*Haunted*. Ghostly voices scream through the night air as she performs her twisted ritual—voices that alert the local villagers that something evil is afoot—evil they might ask passing adventurers to look into.

Since she rolled doubles on the effect roll, she also gains a necromantic side-effect (see WFRP **Table 7—6: Side-Effects** on page 159 or *Tome of Corruption* **Table 17—1: Expanded Chaos Side-Effects** on page 210). Madame Kalfon rolls a 37, *Debilitation*, and her Toughness is decreased by 1d10% to a 7. Not a huge problem now that she has her Spider-Ogre to do her heavy lifting for her! She rolls for WS and Ag loss for her creature and gets a 2 and a 5. Thus are the creature's final statistics:

— Spider-Ogre Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
36%	21%	46%	45%	55%	22%	35%	20%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	25	4	4	6	0	0	0

Skills: Common Knowledge (Ogres), Concealment +10%, Consume Alcohol, Gamble, Perception +10%, Search, Silent Move +10%, Speak Language (Reikspiel)

Talents: Disarm, Specialist Weapon Group (Two-handed), Street Fighting, Strike Mighty Blow,

Traits: Fearless, Keen Senses, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Poisonous Bite, Terrifying, Undead, Wall-Climbing

Armour: Armoured Skin (Head 2, Arms 2, Body 3, Legs 2)

Weapons: Greatweapon

Slaughter Margin: Very Hard

Trait: Poisonous Bite

A Spider-Ogre that is grappling an opponent may spend a full action to bite its opponent. This is a Damage 3 attack that also injects a paralytic poison. Targets that are bitten must make a Toughness Test or be paralysed for 1d10 rounds. Paralysed Characters can take no actions and are considered helpless.

Trait: Wall Climbing

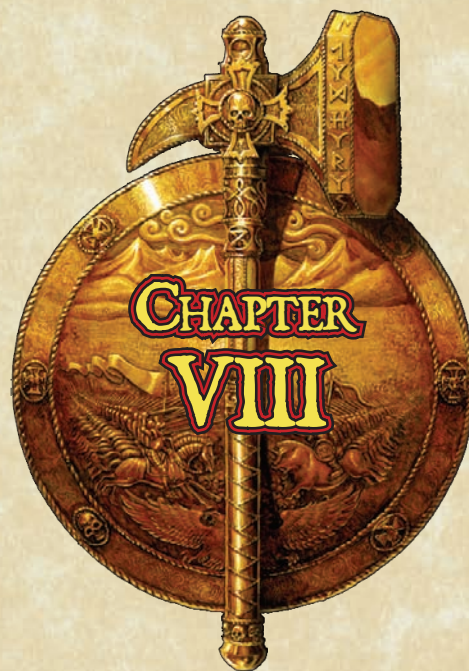
Spider-Ogres can clamber up and down walls with their sticky feet, just like spiders can. They can climb walls at their normal rate of movement.



THE VAMPIRE CAMPAIGN

"I don't torture you because I enjoy it. I do it because I need you to understand what I am capable of, because I need you to be afraid."

—MANNERFRED VON CARSTEIN



By now, you should have a good understanding of the power, character, and motives that drive Vampires, but one question remains: how does one use Vampires in a campaign? Certainly, a Vampire serves as a splendid villain, but what kinds of roles do they play? What sorts of objectives

are they after? Who serves Vampires and why? Are Vampires suitable for Players to play? This chapter examines these and many other questions to provide you all the tips and tools you'll need to incorporate Vampires into your *WFRP* campaign.

— PLAYERS AS VAMPIRES —

The rules included in the previous chapter may appear to discourage the idea of having Players take on Vampire Characters. This is entirely deliberate, for a few reasons.

First of all, the *WFRP* system does not do well with such high-powered Characters. The closed nature of the attribute range means that said Characters would have nowhere to advance, nor could many things challenge their abilities. A Character that can neither fail nor advance is not much fun to play.

Secondly, Vampires in the Old World do not make good protagonists. They are entirely amoral, selfish, and self-obsessed, and what's more, most of them are quite content with the power they have. Vampires are the status quo and, as such, are not particularly built for adventure. They are also loners—singular individuals with no time for others. Thus, forming and remaining in a cohesive adventure party is not something that happens naturally.

Finally, Vampires are absolutely brilliant villains, so using them as heroes is a terrible waste of dramatic potential. However, this does not mean that a game featuring a Vampire Character or group of Vampires could not be a lot of fun and produce some great adventures. The many stories about

Genevieve Dieudonne are proof enough of that, and a GM wishing to run such a game can learn much from their example.

One clear constant of Genevieve's adventures is that although she often joins groups or has companions for a while, she always ends up travelling alone. Most Humans feel distinctly uncomfortable around her, and she is unwilling to form deep bonds with her prey. GMs should likewise be cautious about allowing a mixture of Vampires and mortals in the same party. Players playing Humans would most likely take a dim view if other members of the party view them as a food source. What's more, there will likely be a large power difference, with the Vampires' abilities far outstripping their mortal allies, leaving those Players feeling useless and excluded.

Of course, having a party composed solely of Vampires still has problems. The natural arrogance and selfishness of the children of darkness does not predispose them towards teamwork or cooperation. Although not as naturally as divisive as the Skaven, Vampire parties may need a stronger reason to work together than any mortal group. They are also unlikely to be motivated by the kinds of things that

lead mortal groups to adventure. Vampires typically have little need for money; they are rarely moved by the plight of others, and they follow no credo or ethics beyond self-preservation.

LUST FOR POWER

The thing motivating all Vampires beyond saving their own skin is power. Domination is like a drug, and for most Vampires, they can never get enough of it. This is true both on a personal level and a worldwide one—Vampires certainly put aside their differences to achieve a goal that promises to increase the power or dominion of all Vampire kind. This may be something they have discovered or conceived—or the plan of a great superior, such as Mannfred or Neferata. In the latter case, success in their goal will not only make the world better for Vampires but also raise the Vampires in question higher in the esteem of their order's elders—a double success. An order or request from such a worthy would also be plenty of incitement to get Vampires motivated and working together, at least temporarily.

The Blood Dragons who are members of an order, of course, follow commands without question as their duty, and the dangerous hierarchies of the Von Carstein and the Lahmians provide much the same effect with fear and the promise of power. The lonely Strigoi and the reclusive Necrarchs are a more difficult proposition, however. Yet they too are obsessed with power. The Strigoi will wake from their repose if a quest promises a chance of revenge or the possibility of a return to glory. The Necrarchs, meanwhile, crave knowledge and magical power and would go to the ends of the earth to gain a lost tome or powerful artefact.

COMBINING BLOODLINES

For variety's sake, the GM may wish to combine bloodlines, but this opens up even more potential for betrayal and in-fighting. No bloodline works willingly with a Strigoi, the Necrarchs consider most of their brethren as traitorous rebels, the Blood Dragons hate the Lahmians, and the Lahmians despise the Von Carsteins. Any mixed group would need an extremely tight reign to stop them devolving into in-fighting, such as the presence of an extremely powerful Vampire lord who harshly punishes any such behaviour. Of course, Players may resent having such a character bossing them around, so this must be done with a deft hand.

The alternative is simply to let them fight amongst themselves. A campaign dealing with powerful, warring Vampires could be immensely entertaining, and making this a sub-plot of any other adventure could also be a lot of fun. As long as the GM is happy to play nothing more than referee, groups should feel free to let Vampires be Vampires and relish in the bloody consequences.

Indeed, a far worse option would be to go the other direction, Players giving their Vampires good hearts or noble intentions to make them more suitable for the game. This is very



much against the spirit of the *Warhammer* Vampire and the nature of the setting, and such moves should be discouraged, especially if it leads to any questions of morality. Whilst some Vampires may be less reluctant to destroy the world or slaughter millions like sheep, none of them have any concerns about their eating habits, nor do they place any particular value on Human life. Players should always seek external

reasons for these amoral creatures to work together, rather than changing their natures to better suit the story.

Finding these reasons, as with every part of creating and running a Vampire campaign, will not necessarily be easy. Both GMs and Players will need to step carefully and plan ahead, but from a willing and enthusiastic group could come very rich rewards.

— THE VAMPIRE VILLAIN —

Although they can make anti-heroes or even temporary allies of heroic types, the Vampires of the Old World are at their best when they are villains. They are perhaps the greatest villains of the setting. Why? Because they are singular, unique individuals. Their power is so great that, on their own, they can match almost any force your Players can bring to bear, yet their singular nature means their threat becomes personal, even intimate. The Skaven, the Greenskins, and the beasts of Chaos may be led by charismatic individuals, but they still come in hordes. You can fear a horde, but you can't hate it. Hate requires personality. And Vampires have personality in spades.

Vampires are not only naturally rich emotional villains, but they also fit naturally in narratives and campaigns. Their power makes them often relatively unassailable, allowing them to visit the Characters, get to know them, and perhaps exchange barbs, without the heroes being able to end the campaign with a lucky blow. Destroying their vast power and influence is a task of epic scale, comprising countless adventures and incredible danger, and even at the last moment, the Vampire's own individual powers are so great he might still emerge victorious. Vampires have all the complexity of a mastermind and all the deadliness of a Dragon. And, like all the best villains, they just keep coming back.

There are many different ways to craft a Vampire villain. Here are five of the best archetypes to inspire you.

THE BEAST

"So nice. So fresh."

—YUDAS THE SHADOW KING

Possibly the simplest and most visceral way to use the Vampire is to reduce him down to just a physical threat. The Vampire is the ultimate predator and need be nothing more. He is the mighty tiger, the terrifying monster of the wood, predator of the deep, or the perfect hunting machine. He is incredibly fast, incredibly strong, and unbelievably deadly. In the darkness, he is all but invisible. He can take other forms and is the master of disguise. He can hunt his prey unerringly, over any distance, and he never, ever gives up. Unlike all other predators, he never tires from the hunt or seeks easier prey. Unlike a Human hunter, he has no concept of mercy, pity, or compassion. He doesn't feel pain. He doesn't know fear. And he absolutely will not stop until his prey is dead.

In beast scenarios, the Vampire becomes almost part of the environment, a threat of nature itself. In this way, the Vampire loses most of that personality that makes him such a great villain but not all, and it is the remaining touches of humanity that add the edge to the fear. The creature is a soulless, almost mindless, predator but it can still think like a man, out-manoeuvring its opponents, using their weaknesses against them and understanding emotions like revenge and pride. A killer tiger is scary. A killer tiger that only attacks people of the same blood, seems to understand Human technology, or takes trophies from its victims is terrifying.

The urban equivalent of a tiger is of course the serial killer, and Vampires fit this mould perfectly. They blend in, appearing like every other Human, and they are easily able to frame others for their crimes. In a large city like Nuln or Altdorf, a Vampire could feed for years without ever being suspected. The terror comes again from the killer's ability to seemingly strike without warning and with supernatural effectiveness, destroying life in a second and then vanishing once again. The fear is that there is nothing that can stop it and that life and death are determined randomly by the whims of the hungry predator waiting in the shadows. This is a visceral, almost instinctual, fear and all the more potent for it.

Stories using this type of villain follow a typical structure. The Characters become aware of a string of strange deaths. They track their prey and have some close calls, revealing some of the extent of its powers. The more they follow it, the more they are awed by what it is capable of. And finally, they figure out how to track it to its lair, and they desperately try to finish it off. Forest or city, this plot works almost anywhere, and it is used so often precisely because it is so effective. The only difficulty is making sure the beast truly causes fear by again and again exceeding expectations of its abilities.

The Strigoi are the best examples of the forest-dwelling beasts, the inhumanly strong super-predator of the wild. But a particularly bloodthirsty Blood Dragon or Necrarch could also fit the bill, and a Lahmian or Von Carstein would be perfect as an urban serial killer.

THE INSANE SCHOLAR

"Tell me, does it hurt? Please be descriptive."

—MADAME KALFON

The insane scholar's driving goal is raising the dead and using magic to tamper with the fundamental natural laws of nature.

The Vampire is perfectly placed to be such a villain. His supernatural abilities, ridiculously high characteristics, and his long life automatically give him an unfair advantage. Even when they are in the same career as a Player Character, they will assuredly be better at it: a better shot than the marksman, faster than the assassin, stronger than the Daemon slayer. And no matter how far or how fast the Character goes through his careers, the Vampire progresses as well, and the PC can never, ever catch up.

This can apply to achievements as well as prowess. The villain may master some spell or technique the Player Character dreams of achieving. The villain may join a knightly order, great college, or noble house that won't admit the Players, seduce the woman they love, own a larger boat, house, castle, or harem of women, steal an even bigger gem, defeat a larger Dragon, or simply have more stories sung about them. In an adventure, a more critical aspect could be the Vampire reaching the magical tome minutes before the Players can destroy it, or he might complete the ritual seconds before they arrive to stop it, for example, adding personal insult to the injury no doubt done to the world.

The flip side of the paragon is, of course, the tempter. When it becomes obvious that the mortal Character can never beat his rival, his rival may offer him the advantage he has been forever lacking. With one bite, the Vampire will give him the physical strength he cannot attain, the entry into the society that has been barred to him, the wealth to obtain the woman, boat, or house he desires, the power to attain all his wildest dreams. From the Vampire's point of view, this is not

a trick at all: he is quite convinced that his way of life is by far the superior one, and if the rival is particularly talented, the Vampire would be proud to have him and end the pointless rivalry once and for all. For Vampires, it's not a temptation to damnation but a job interview, and it may be a very convincing one to a Player Character.

Other Vampires, however, enjoy exerting their nature over mortals, particularly those who beg for such an honour. Vampires are on the great immortal adventure, and everyone else isn't invited. And again, the exclusive nature of this club, a club that, no matter what, the Player Characters will never be allowed to join, is a wonderful instigator of hate.

Given the combat-ready nature of many PCs, the Blood Dragons make the best paragons and tempters. The Necrarchs may offer a similar temptation to wizards, however, and the wealth, power, and influence of the Von Carsteins and Lahmians also make them natural paragons, ever ready to frustrate or seduce the ambitious.

THE PUPPET MASTER

"She kills their children, she kills their wives, she kills their parents and their parents' friends, and she kills the man who collects their taxes and the people who live across the street. And then, just like that—she's gone. Nobody is ever caught. And nobody ever believes."

—PRISONER #234, OLD TEMPLE PRISON, MIDDENHEIM

The paragon is unfair because the Vampire cannot be beaten. The puppet master is unfair because he cannot be seen. It is not just that he plays games with kings and empires but that he does the same with the lives of the heroes. Precious little is as annoying as discovering that you've been manipulated, and it's even worse when you've been manipulated into doing exactly what your enemy wanted or betraying your principles.

This is the power of the puppet master, and he is scary because his power is so absolute and so inviolate. He works in the shadows, and for much of the campaign, the heroes might not even know he exists, making it impossible for them to find him, let alone strike against him. And even when they think they are striking against him, they may discover that they have in fact done the opposite. Despite all their efforts, they find themselves manipulated into being at best ineffectual, striking at shadows and changing nothing. The grey men in their grey towers go on just as before, moving their pieces around their chess board, untouchable and unknowable, and their schemes so twisted around the heroes that everything the Players do to fight the puppet master only makes them more tightly bound.

The terror created by the puppet master is the fear of impotence. Against the long-lived, vastly powerful Vampires, it is very easy for a Character to feel very small and weak, if not helpless. Nobody likes to feel as such, especially not Player Characters, and they will go to great lengths to try to hurt anyone who makes them feel that way.



The other fear created by the puppet master is paranoia. The puppet-master has agents everywhere; he knows everything about you, even your darkest secrets. What's more, his tendrils of power mean he can get to your weak spots, no matter how hard you hide them or how fast you run. If the puppet master wishes it, he can click his fingers and have your loved ones slaughtered by his agents on the other side of the Empire. If you run, he has agents in every town waiting for you. He may, in fact, already be controlling someone you trust—after all, he must have received information on you from someone. Which means you can't trust anyone.

Paranoia is really just another type of impotence. It takes away the Character's ability to rely on his friends or, indeed, anyone. Vampires are uniquely placed to have the kind of domination over society to make this a reality. They mix with the highest echelons of nobility, have access to powerful sorcery and mind control, and most importantly, they naturally attract fanatical devotees willing to do anything commanded simply for the thrill of being near their master. Others may be less adoring, but that same feeling of impotence breeds countless followers, for when your enemy is all powerful, the only possible sane response is to join his side.

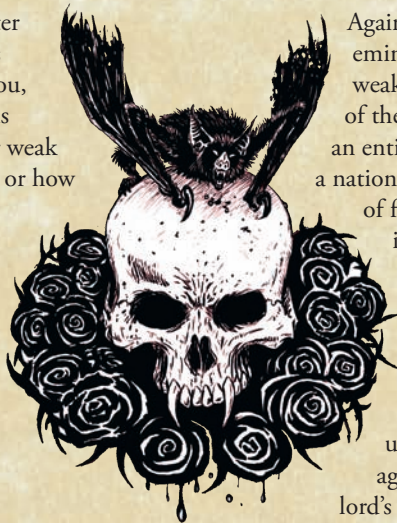
The Lahmian sisterhood is, of course, the master of manipulation and has been using its skills to change history into the form they wish for centuries. So many events have played into the Lahmians' hands that the Characters may believe that doing their will is, in the long run, all but avoidable. However, the Blood Dragons and the Von Carsteins are also masters of crawling into Human institutions and taking them over from within, and they have just as many mortals ready to welcome their presence.

THE DREAD-LORD

"This land is my home, my birthright. The wind and rain are my allies. The trees and stones are my foot soldiers. The very earth will rise up against you should you try to take it from me. And my people will feast on your bones."

—MANNFRED VON CARSTEIN

The puppet master acts in secrecy because he must. If his true nature came out, too many enemies would be able to move against him. The dread-lord is something different. The world is already aware of just how evil he is and how far his power stretches. And either nothing can be done about it, or it's approved of. Most villains aim to conquer and rule. The dread-lord has already succeeded. He may not have the whole world, but he has a large section, and there, his power is absolute and his word law. He has the resources of an entire kingdom at his hand to make sure this does not change and that other nations soon join his empire.



Again, the terror of the dread-lord is that his eminence and omnipotence makes the heroes feel weak and helpless. Defeating an enemy like this is of the league of toppling an emperor, of crushing an entire nation. The heroes no doubt belong to a nation or serve an emperor, so the contemplation of fighting such an enemy has a terrible implication—that there are likely agents out there who are contemplating doing the same to them, who are even now plotting to kill the heroes' emperor or conquer their nation.

The dread-lord appears terrifyingly unassailable. The puppet master may have agents everywhere, unseen, but the dread-lord's troops are all too visible. In theory, every single citizen of a dread-lord's nation is an enemy, every soldier a threat. Simply walking across the border means coming under his dominion and risking discovery. Defeating the dread-lord can only be done by defeating his country, and that means something far more than most adventurers will ever deal with. It means war from without or rebellion from within. It means playing with the fate of nations and changing the history of the world.

The sheer magnitude of this task and the blood that will need to be shed causes many to shy away—far better to leave the villain in place, where he seems to be doing no great harm to the rest of the world, than risk everything to destroy him for good. And after a while, people just learn to accept it as inevitable and unchangeable. It becomes a natural law. The Von Carsteins rule Sylvania. Who is going to do anything about it? And afterwards, will they wipe out all Chaos, drain the ocean, and go live on Mannslieb?

The dread-lord is thus more worrying than viscerally scary, but he can still inspire hate. As both ruler and enemy, he creates a very iconic target, which provides a clear, inspirational goal. The war to destroy his domain becomes the war to bring down the evil tyrant and end his reign of terror. And unlike with the puppet master, it is now very clear where the enemies lie. Every soldier and servant of the dread-lord is fair game, and every one of them killed brings the heroes closer to defeating their master. There's something nice and simple about all-out war. But simple doesn't mean quick or bloodless—wars tend to be the opposite, not to mention great fodder for an epic campaign.

The Von Carsteins are the epitome of the dread-lords. On a smaller scale, plenty of Strigoi, Blood Dragons, and Lahmians have set up their own small kingdoms in remote areas of the Empire. Or as a twist, the Player Characters might live in Sylvania or discover that their own lord is in fact a Vampire, a lord to whom they might have previously sworn impassioned allegiance. Now they are part of the evil armies that the outsiders have come to exterminate. Will they lead a revolution against their own lord and become turncoats against their own people?



— THE VAMPIRE CAMPAIGN —

Deciding on the nature of your villain is only the first part of creating a campaign. The question remains as to how to weave that into a continuing series of adventures that build to a satisfying climax.

The key with any long-term campaign with a singular villain is maintaining a narrative “distance.” That is, there must be some reason why the Characters cannot simply identify, find, and defeat the villain right from the start. With Vampires, this distance is readily available. Those that don’t like to hide tend to operate from a well-protected position. More importantly, their high abilities protect them: any low-powered Character who engaged a Vampire would almost certainly end up dead. Of course, it might often take the Players a few attempts to realise this, which is also something a GM needs to be prepared for.

The problem with distance is that it often prevents the Characters from knowing their enemy. This detachment destroys the whole appeal of Vampires as mentioned: they are individuals the Players can come to know and, thus, hate on a personal level. There are two solutions to this. The first is to let the Players come to know the Vampire through his works: Let the beast or the insane scholar type leave behind one babbling victim who can only repeat the name of his torturer. Have the minions of the puppet master or the dread-lord assure the heroes that nobody escapes the web of their master. Make sure the locals rave about the paragon’s skill.

The second way of overcoming distance is to have the heroes actually meet their enemy. The tricky part of this is that you don’t really want your Players to attack because they’ll either kill your villain, or they end up dead. The Vampire might be in disguise, or be temporarily helping them out, or just passing through; whatever the case, he’ll want to leave quickly after introducing himself (Turn to Mist is a good power for this). Another idea is for him to communicate through messages: a letter, a note, or just an initial to tell them that their nemesis was present—and he has no fear in them knowing that.

Once the heroes get to know their enemy, you won’t have to use his name. They will come to know him by his handiwork and his trademarks, and these will also become his messages to them. The campaign can then progress with an ever-increasing exposure to the villain’s evil nature and intent. For beast and insane scholar stories, this usually means more and more brutal killings or sick experiments. For puppet masters, it means further and further unravelling of the depth of the conspiracy, and for dread-lords and paragons, it means more and more examples of their terrible abilities. This builds as the

heroes get closer and closer to the villain, both physically and emotionally. As they come to discover more and more about their enemy, he, in turn, learns more and more about them and their weaknesses, getting closer and closer to defeating them. Finally, the heroes and the villain confront each other and fight to the death.

A note about how Vampires fight: It is often easy for Vampires to be or appear to be easily defeated because of all their weaknesses. The thing to remember is that Vampires are intelligent, experienced combatants and are acutely aware of their own vulnerabilities. They hunt only during the night, and anyone wishing to attack them during the day must come into their domain to do so. They make sure they live far away from running water or in towns full of bridges. They are always on the lookout for holy men or those wielding silvered blades to strike them down. And finally, they are almost never too proud to run away. They are immortal and have plenty of time to seek revenge when the battle is more to their advantage.

Vampires do more than simply survive, however. Vampires are, by their nature and habits, evil creatures who prey upon Humans, and indeed, the goal of a campaign may simply be to find and destroy a powerful Vampire who is doing nothing more evil than feeding regularly. Indeed, a single adventure could revolve around simply surviving a night in a Vampire’s lair. However, more can be made if the Vampire is actively pursuing a greater goal than seeking his next meal. This evil aspiration gives the heroes more to do than simply kill their enemy and provides a whole extra source for adventures.

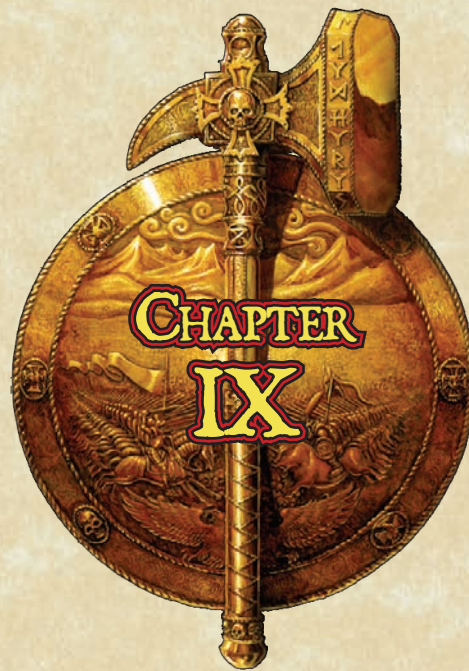
What do Vampires want? Generally, they want to increase their own power until they rule the world or master their chosen field, and like any megalomaniac, anything that can speed up the process is most appreciated. It is these short cuts—opportunities for sudden and dramatic gains in power—that cause the Vampires to take risks, which make them vulnerable to the heroes. They might be seeking a powerful magical artefact, planning a powerful magical ritual (see the examples in the previous chapter), or attempting a daring assassination of an elector count. They might be trying to stir up trouble between two bordering nations or raise an army without being noticed. There are endless possibilities and countless books and movies to borrow from, not to mention a host of adventure hooks in **Chapter V: The Bloodlines**. Almost any evil plot imaginable could be conceived by the Vampires and will only be improved by the addition of these most malevolent princes of darkness.



CREATURES OF THE NIGHT

"My children are often hungry...and they do so love to play."

—MADAME KALFON



The *Old World Bestiary* lists all the standard forms of Undead and typical Vampires and their servants. These are designed to be used straight out of the book. But there are many more creatures of darkness in the graveyards, fens, and castles of the Old World that also prove useful to the Vampires, to say nothing of the endless varieties of horrors that stalk the land. Other Undead mentioned in this book are summarized at the end of this chapter.

NEW TRAITS

Creatures listed here include the following new traits, originally seen in the *Old World Bestiary*.

Ethereal

An ethereal creature is insubstantial and weightless. It can pass through solid objects, including walls and doors. Note that this does not give any ability to see through solid objects, only pass through them. An ethereal creature partially hidden inside an object gains a +30% bonus on Concealment Tests. An ethereal creature that wishes to be is completely silent, with no need to make Silent Move Tests. An ethereal creature is also immune to normal weapons, which simply pass through its body as if it wasn't there. Daemons, spells, other ethereal creatures, and opponents armed with magic weapons may all injure an ethereal creature normally. An ethereal creature can't normally affect the mortal world and, thus, can't damage non-ethereal opponents unless it has a suitable special ability or talent. Creatures with the Ethereal Trait can damage other creatures with the Ethereal Trait normally.

Mindless

The creature has no Intelligence, Will Power, or Fellowship Characteristics. It can never take or fail tests based on these characteristics.

Not All There

The creature is incomplete or does not have a normal anatomy. Use rules for Sudden Death Critical Hits for these creatures.

Scales

The creature has tough scales that protect it like armour. The creature gains a number of Armour Points on all locations equal to the number noted in parenthesis. For example, a creature with Scales (2) has 2 Armour Points on each location.

Unstoppable Blows

A creature with this trait is so large and strong that its attacks are incredibly difficult to parry. Opponents suffer a -30% penalty to parry attempts.

DOOM WOLVES

Dire Wolves are common features of the armies and castles of the Vampires, but they lack cunning. Occasionally, a Vampire lord will select a wolf of great intelligence and strength to be the leader of their Undead packs, using special rituals to preserve these abilities in their Undead forms. Such beasts are known as Doom Wolves, and many Vampires keep them as special companions, both on the hunt and in the home. Like



Dire Wolves, Doom Wolves are covered in black fur cut with streaks of gore, topped by skull-like heads with burning red eyes. Doom Wolves are often found leading great packs of Dire Wolves, turning those monsters into a killing force of terrifying effectiveness.

— Doom Wolf Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
40%	0%	46%	40%	36%	12%	40%	0%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	12	4	4	9	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment, Follow Trail, Perception +20%, Swim

Talents: None

Traits: Frightening, Keen Senses, Leader of the Pack, Natural Weapons (Claws, Teeth), Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Slaughter Margin: Average

Leader of the Pack

Doom Wolves are able to command packs of Dire Wolves to bring down dangerous prey, swarming upon the most vulnerable members. If Dire Wolves are joined by one or more Doom Wolves, treat every Wolf in the pack as if they have Concealment (thus gaining surprise), and they lose the Shambling trait (enabling them to take the Run action).

GRAVE GRASS

It is not known whether Grave Grass grows naturally or is created by the presence of *Dhar*, but it is a common menace in graveyards, battlefields, or any other place rich with its primary food source—rotting flesh. On the surface, only a light cover of soft green grass is visible, but underground, the extensive root systems grow bunches of five-foot-long barbed spikes of incredible hardness, coiled like springs. When the plant senses pressure on the grassed areas above, it shoots these spikes out of the earth at blinding speed, impaling the unwary. Tomb robbers and Vampire hunters have tried to develop systems for determining which pieces of grass contain these deadly pressure points but with little success. Others simply let their dogs or lackeys walk ahead of them, for once the spring has been released, the grass is harmless.

— Grave Grass Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
30%	0%	42%	34%	1%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
4	24	4	3	0	0	0	0

Skills: None

Talents: None

Traits: Immobile, Mindless, Natural Weapons, Roots, Spring Attack

Armour: None

Weapons: Coiled Spears

Slaughter Margin: Average

Immobile

Attacks against Grave Grass automatically hit and deal an extra 1d10 damage, as if attacking a stationary object.

Roots

Attacks made on the surface against Grave Grass can never reduce it below 16 Wounds, which it subsequently regenerates at 1 Wound per day. To kill the grass, attackers must dig down to the roots and attack them. Digging far enough to kill a patch of Grave Grass takes an hour plus 1d10×10 minutes, assuming access to a decent shovel—double the time if not.

Spring Attack

Anyone stepping on the exposed section of Grave Grass must make a Hard (–20%) Perception Test. If they fail, Grave Grass gains surprise, otherwise Characters who succeed sense something wrong about the grass and may step off (or bend down to investigate). Grave Grass makes all four of its attacks as its first action (each attack is one spear). After this, Grave Grass cannot attack for another twenty-four hours as it re-grows its spears.

SCUTTling HANDS

A hand cut from the corpse of a murderer, called a “Hand of Glory,” is well known by necromancers and magisters alike for its magical properties. It is a common ingredient in spells, but it has other, more amusing, uses. Vampires have perfected a way of reanimating these hands for use as assistants, attendants, and even familiars. They are only capable of causing a paltry amount of damage in a fight but can be used as a distraction at a vital moment.

— Scuttling Hand Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
33%	25%	15%	12%	50%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	3	1	1	3	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +10%, Dodge Blow +10%, Scale Sheer Surface, Silent Move +20%

Talents: Street Fighting

Traits: Mindless, Not all There, Undead

Armour: None

Weapons: Fist

Slaughter Margin: Very Easy

SHINERS

Shiners are a type of giant amoeba (some four feet in diameter) that has evolved to live beyond the water, creeping into damp swamp castles and half-flooded crypts. Once inside, they coat surfaces with their thin oily flesh, giving the item a shiny appearance, hence the name. This makes paintings, furniture, and jewellery seem more preserved and thus more valuable, drawing the curious or greedy towards them, whereupon the shiner shoots out burning acid. Humans are usually strong enough to survive the attack, but many a tomb robber with a ruined face will tell you that all that glitters should not be trusted.

— Shiner Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
35%	0%	22%	14%	25%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	16	2	1	1	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +20%

Talents: None

Traits: Acid Attack, Engulfing Attack, Mindless, Ooze

Armour: None

Weapons: Amorphous Appendages

Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Acid Attack

As a full action, Shiners can expel a viscous, corrosive acid. The acid automatically hits any one combatant within 1 yard (in the same square), dealing a Damage 5 hit to a randomly rolled location. If the attack hits the target's head, however, he must make a Challenging (–10%) Agility Test or be blinded for 1d10 rounds. Blinded Characters can only take a half action each round, take a –20% penalty to all combat-related (and most other) tests, and automatically fail any test relying on sight.

Engulfing Attack

If a Shiner attacks with an appendage and inflicts 2 or more Wounds on a target, the target's hit location becomes engulfed. Engulfed Characters take an automatic Damage 4 attack each round to the affected hit location. If a limb is engulfed, the Character may not use it until it is free. If the location is the head, use the standard Suffocation rules (*WFRP* page 136). The Shiner will only release the body part if it is reduced to fewer than 4 Wounds. Attacks to the engulfed area deal equal damage to both the Shiner and the victim.

Ooze

Shiners are amorphous blobs that are resistant to normal attacks. Attacks with normal weapons inflict a maximum of 1 Wound per hit. Fire, magical weapons, and spells do damage as normal. All hits are assumed to be to the Body, and the Sudden Death Critical Hit rules apply. During combat, Shiners may only take the Standard Attack and Move actions or use their Acid Attack. Shiners are immune to Fear, Terror, poison, disease, and all spells, skills, and effects that involve manipulation of emotions and the mind.

UNHOLY BLADES

When great warriors die with a vow unfulfilled or a curse still upon them, they sometimes return to life as Wights. Other times, the spirit of the warrior passes directly into the sword he used in battle. These dark blades contain the bloody thoughts of their wielder and are driven by a dark madness to be used for more slaughter. In the main, it lies still, waiting for someone to pick it up, whereupon it tries to dominate the mind of the holder and drive him to kill. If no one picks it up, it is also able to animate and attack without a wielder. Only shattering the blade will stop its relentless pursuit for blood.

— Unholy Blades Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
56%	0%	42%	60%	33%	5%	46%	8%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	10	4	6	0	0	0	0

Skills: Perception +10%

Talents: Disarm, Lightning Parry, Strike to Injure

Traits: Dominate, Not all There, Wight Blade

Armour: None

Weapons: Itself

Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Dominate

Anyone touching the hilt of an Unholy Blade must immediately make a Hard (–20%) Will Power Test, or they must immediately seize the sword and do bloody murder with it. The victim must try to kill every living being he can see and then seek out more. The only way to stop this bloody rampage is to remove the sword from the target's hand. If the victim is stunned, unconscious, or dead, this action requires no roll, but if the victim is active, a successful Disarm must be made. Anyone making a Disarm attempt without a weapon or otherwise handling the unholy blade must succeed on an Easy (+10%) Agility Test, or they touch the hilt and risk becoming Dominated.

Wight Blade

This blade counts as a magical weapon and deals SB+2 damage.

WICKER MAN

Wicker Men are tall, wooden automatons that mimic the Human form. Necromancers and hedge wizards (and witches and warlocks) craft them from pieces of wood, metal, and sackcloth and animate them with a dark and secret ritual, similar to the creation of Fenbeasts. Wicker Men typically have monstrous heads and are equipped with long, curved blades attached to their hands. Around their necks hang the



talismans that give them life. These talismans are usually a maimed creature or damaged body part—a hand will be missing a finger, a cat missing a paw. The missing part goes into the construction of a marionette used to control the Wicker Man. Attacking the talisman or the puppet is the best way of harming this horror; although they look fragile and gangly, the magic that animates them also makes them resistant to harm.

— Wicker Man Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
48%	15%	44%	52%	75%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
2	15	4	5	5	0	0	0

Skills: None

Traits: Frightening, Mindless, Natural Weapons (Makeshift Claws), Sorcerous Construct

Armour: None

Weapon: Makeshift Claws

Slaughter Margin: Challenging

Sorcerous Construct

Wicker Men are created with ritual magic unknown to the Colleges of Magic. They are not truly alive, and they require magical controllers. A magic user with a Magic Characteristic of at least 2 must remain within 1 mile, manipulating the marionette, or the Wicker Man falls apart. The controller need not have line of sight to the Wicker Man; however, if he does not, the creature takes a –10% penalty to all tests. A Critical Hit to the head breaks the talisman around its neck, also causing the Wicker Man to fall apart. All other Critical Hits have no effect unless they cause death. Wicker Men are immune to Fear, Terror, poison, disease, and all spells, skills, and effects that involve the manipulation of emotions and the mind.

WINGED NIGHTMARES

These monstrosities are created from the flesh and bones of Griffons, Hippogriffs, and sometimes even Wyverns, a feat considered the pinnacle of necromancy. They combine all the terrible ferocity of the original creatures with the addition of unholy strength. They typically also have additional tusks, horns, claws, and spikes added to their forms to make them even more dangerous. These abominations are favoured by Vampires as beasts of war, partly in mockery of the war Griffons ridden by the Emperor and his knights but mostly because their terrifying appearance alone has been known to rout entire forces.

— Winged Nightmare Statistics —

Main Profile

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
56%	0%	64%	52%	44%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
3	46	6	5	6 (9)	0	0	0

Skills: None**Talents:** None**Traits:** Flier, Impaling Tusks, Mindless, Natural Weapons (Beak, Claws, Horns, Tusks), Night Vision, Scales (2), Terrifying, Undead**Armour:** None (Head 2, Arms 2, Body 2, Legs 2)**Weapons:** Beak, Claws, Horns, Tusks**Slaughter Margin:** Very Hard**Impaling Tusks**

When a Winged Nightmare performs a Charge action, its attack counts as having the Impact quality.

WRAITHWISPS

When a powerful necromancer dies, his spirit can cling to existence as a Wraith. Lesser necromancers need help to go on existing. Masters often drag their apprentices into un-life in the form of mad half-shades called Wraithwisps. A Wraithwisp has roughly the same appearance as a Wraith—an ethereal figure wrapped in a cloak. However, only glimpses of the figure are seen—a shimmering hood, willowy tendrils of cloth, and two thin, grasping hands. Wraithwisps retain only a fragment of personality, as they retain only a fragment of physical form. The part that remains is filled with the typical rage of Wraiths but is far more incoherent and unfocused. Hating anything living, Wraithwisps attack on sight, grasping with their cold hands and choking the life from their victims.

— Wraithwisp Statistics —**Main Profile**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
22%	0%	20%	20%	22%	16%	29%	0%

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
1	5	2	2	4	0	0	0

Skills: Concealment +20%**Talents:** None**Traits:** Chilling Attack, Ethereal, Natural Weapons, Night Vision, Semi-Solid, Undead**Armour:** None**Weapons:** Clutching Hands**Slaughter Margin:** Very Easy**Chilling Attack**

A Wraithwisp can injure mortal enemies with its touch. These chilling attacks suck the life out of their targets, and armour offers no protection against them. Chilling attacks can be dodged but not parried.

Semi-Solid

Although capable of moving through solid objects, Wraithwisps can still be harmed by mundane weapons.

ZOMBIE DRAGONS

Deep in the Southlands lies the Plain of Bones. In ancient times, great Dragons came here when their long lives were drawing to an end, each titanic skeleton adding to a mountain of bones. There they lay, until Nagash the Black performed his Ritual of Awakening. Ghostlights sparked in their empty skulls, and the carrion giants rose again, prowling the Plain of Bones, seeking to vent their fury on the living. After the time of Nagash, the Zombie Dragons fell silent again, but on rare occasions, a Vampire lord is strong-willed enough to raise and control one of these beasts and ride it into combat. Then, the world shakes, great armies are broken, and the Gods themselves know fear.

— Zombie Dragon Statistics —**Main Profile**

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	WP	Fel
52%	0%	67%	62%	25%	—	—	—

Secondary Profile

A	W	SB	TB	M	Mag	IP	FP
6	54	6	6	6 (8)	0	0	0

Skills: None**Talents:** Excellent Vision, Strike Mighty Blow, Strike to Injure,**Traits:** Cloud of Flies, Flier, Mindless, Natural Weapons (Claws, Fangs, Horns, Wings, Tail), Night Vision, Pestilential Breath, Rending Attacks, Scales (5), Terrifying, Undead, Unstoppable Blows**Armour:** None (Head 5, Arms 5, Body 5, Legs 5)**Weapons:** Claws, Fangs, Horns, Wings, Tail**Slaughter Margin:** Impossible**Cloud of Flies**

Zombie Dragons are constantly surrounded by a black cloud of flies that buzz incessantly. When fighting, the cloud flies into the eyes, mouths, and nostrils of their opponents. This terrible distraction causes anyone in melee combat with the Zombie Dragon to take a -10% to their Weapon Skill.

Pestilential Breath

As a full action, Zombie Dragons can breathe a deadly black vapour. Any flesh this vapour touches shrivels and dies. Use the cone template. All creatures affected take Damage 8 hits. If this causes a Critical Hit to an Arm or Leg, the limb is lost unless a Fate Point is spent. If the Critical Hit is to the Head or Body and a Fate Point is not spent, the Character wastes away to death within seconds.

Rending Attacks

The Zombie Dragon's natural weapons are so sharp they count as having the Armour Piercing and Impact qualities.

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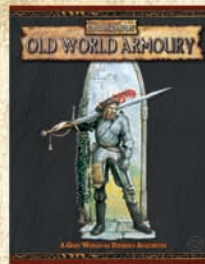
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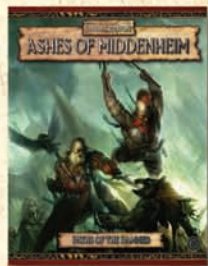
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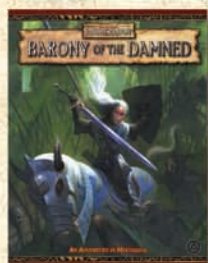
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